

AP United States Government

Advanced Placement United States Government Frequently Asked Questions

What is AP US Government?

The AP U.S. Government and Politics course involves the study of democratic ideas, balance of powers, and tension between the practical and ideal in national policymaking. Students analyze and discuss the importance of various constitutional principles, rights and procedures, institutions, and political processes that impact us as citizens.

Why should I take AP US Government?

Students who understand and are willing to accept that academic classes will become increasingly rigorous through high school and college often take AP classes to prepare themselves for these challenges. AP classes are weighted more than other classes and they look great on college applications if you're willing to put in the necessary work. The AP Exam, taken at the end of the year, offers the opportunity to earn college credit (often worth thousands of dollars in tuition) while still in high school.

How much and what type of work will I be doing?

A 90-minute class typically includes discussion of a current event for about 15 minutes and notes and lecture about a specific historical topic for about 30 minutes. The remainder of the class is usually spent doing an activity such as class debate, group work or reading discussions.

You should expect to work one-to-two hours each night. Homework typically consists of a reading assignment and a written activity, such as a first-person journal entry or writing sentences that include vocabulary words.

Here is an example of a homework assignment:

Read pages 500-520 in *Magruder's American Government*. Create a chart comparing two constitutional amendments. Submit a 250-word essay summarizing your findings.

What are tests and quizzes like?

You'll have reading quizzes every other class and tests at the end of each unit. The test typically includes multiple choice, matching and an essay question. In mid-May, each student will take the AP Exam.

What is the AP Exam?

The AP Exam is the end-of-course test for AP US Government. It is administered by the College Board. There are two parts on the AP US Government exam: a 60-question multiple choice section and four free-response questions. Each section counts for fifty percent of the score. Students have about three hours to take the exams. Scores range from 1 to 5 and students who get a 3, 4, or 5 stand a good chance of receiving college credit for their score.

Who can I talk to if I need more information?

It's likely that some of your friends and acquaintances have taken an AP class before, and talking with them might give you an idea of what's in store. The best way would probably be to speak with Mrs. Smith. You can email her at sherri.szwyldeksmith@nn.k12.va.us. You can also visit the College Board's AP US History website here: <https://apstudent.collegeboard.org/apcourse/ap-united-states-government-and-politics>.

Information on AP courses was provided by The College Board. See [AP Courses](#) for more information.