

AP Government
Summer Web Research

In order to prepare for the study of American government next year, it is important to lay the groundwork for an understanding of the way our system of democracy works. Because of the limited time we have in a one-semester class, it will be necessary for you to locate background information on your own before class begins in either August or January. Please answer the following questions. You may use whatever resources you have at your disposal. You may wish to do some research on the Internet; if that is the case, I would suggest using the following websites:

www.house.gov
www.senate.gov
www.whitehouse.gov
www.findlaw.com

Basic Principles of Government

Define the following:

State –

Sovereign –

Pure democracy –

Representative democracy –

Dictatorship –

Autocracy –

Oligarchy –

Unitary Government –

Federal Government –

Confederation –

Presidential Government –

Parliamentary Government –

Public Policy –

Limited Government –

Origins of the American Government

What was the significance of the following documents:

Magna Carta (1215) –

Petition of Right (1628) –

English Bill of Rights (1688) –

What were the three types of colonial governments in the American colonies?

What was the Revolutionary War? By what other name(s) is it called?

How did the Revolutionary War differ from the Civil War?

What was the purpose of each of these documents:

Albany Plan of Union –

Articles of Confederation –

Declaration of Independence –

Constitution –

Who were the Framers? By what other names were they called (as a group)?

Copy the Preamble of the Constitution below.

What aspect of the government is covered in each of the following parts of the Constitution:

Article I –

Article II –

Article III –

Article IV –

Article V –

Article VI –

Article VII –

What are the first ten amendments to the Constitution collectively called?

What is the power of judicial review?

What is the Necessary and Proper Clause? How is it used?

How many times has the Constitution been formally changed? What is that process called?

What is it called when an amendment is approved to be added to the Constitution?

In what two ways may an amendment be proposed?

Structure of the Government

What are the three branches of the government?

What does each branch do?

What is meant by the system of checks and balances?

Who are the current members of the Supreme Court? Mark the Chief Justice's name with a *.

What is the official title of the presiding officer of the Senate? By what other title does he or she go?

Who currently holds that office?

What is the name for the presiding officer of the House of Representatives? Who currently holds that office?

Who are the current senators from Texas?

What is your Congressional district number? _____ Who is your Congressional Representative in the House of Representatives? (NOT your state legislator!)

Which political party currently holds the majority of the seats in each house of Congress?

Who is currently the President of the United States?

What is his political party affiliation?

Who is the Vice President and what is his party affiliation?

List the positions in the President's cabinet and the name of the person who currently holds that position:

Name the two major political parties:

What animals are their symbols?

What are the names of the current Majority Floor Leaders for each house of Congress?

What are the names of the current Minority Floor Leaders for each house of Congress?

What are the names of the current Majority Floor Whips for each house?

What are the names of the current Minority Floor Whips for each house?

Elections and Voting

To what does the term “gerrymandering” refer?

What are primary elections?

What kind of primary does Texas have?

What is the electoral college?

How many electoral votes does Texas have?

****Please be sure that the information you have written down is the most current information.**

Be prepared to turn this in on your first day of class regardless of which semester you have AP Government.