AP United States Government and Politics Summer Assignment

Dear Students,

Welcome to AP U.S. Government and Politics! You will have the opportunity to earn college credit for this course through the College Board at the end of the year by taking the AP Exam in May of 2021. This is a very rigorous and fast-paced course. It is important that you are aware of the year-long commitment you are about to undertake as a student of this course. Please make sure to read the summer assignment completely and carefully so that you will be ready to fully and successfully participate when class begins for the upcoming 2021-2022 school year.

AP Government requires different thinking and writing skills than you used in U.S. History. Writing for government requires the understanding and analysis of abstract concepts and principles. You will depend less on the study of chronology of facts and events than on your interpretation of facts and events. Throughout the year you will become aware of politics in general and, specifically, have an opportunity to explore your political self, and where you fit into our political world. This summer assignment is designed to help you to transition from thinking historically to thinking and writing from a political perspective.

You have a choice of assignments for this year’s summer assignment. Optional extension activities have been provided as well. Your teacher will give you directions for how to submit the assignment and when it will be due on the first day of school. All students will have an opportunity to work on the assignment during the first quarter if they were not able to do so over the summer. It will help you feel more prepared for the class to complete it over the summer.

If you have any questions about the summer assignment you can reach us at the e-mail addresses below. I hope that you have an enjoyable, relaxing, and productive summer.

Sincerely,
Mr. Loftus, Ms. Hecox, and Mr. Nappo

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Summer Assignment Choice 1
Research a political topic and create a fact sheet

General Description

For the summer assignment you can choose to complete this assignment or the next assignment in the packet. For this option you will research a political topic and create a fact sheet that presents both sides of the issue. Your fact sheet should give equal weight to each side and be unbiased. Your teacher should not be able to determine which side of the issue you are on. The fact sheet should have a purpose of informing others so that they can form their own opinions on the topic.

Rubric

You can find a full rubric for the project here. Students will be assessed based on the unbiased presentation of the topic they choose, as well as the research they do on the topic. If you would like more guidance on the topic a template to use for research has been provided below. You can also reach out to any of the teachers for help!

Formatting Guidelines and Templates

Your final product should be a colorful and visually appealing pamphlet or flyer that includes all of the information in the rubric. You can complete this assignment in any way that you are comfortable with. Some examples include Google Docs, Google Slides, Powerpoint, Microsoft Word, Venngage.com, or on paper. If you use Google, remember to use your school account.

- You may use this optional template to organize your research and ideas
- You may use these optional slides to create your final product
- In addition to the final project you will also need to include a bibliography of sources in MLA format.
- Student Sample 1
- Student Sample 2

(note: these student samples are in pamphlet form, your design does not have to be a pamphlet it can be a flyer, slide show, or packet instead)

Submitting the Assignment

Your teacher will give you instructions on how to submit the assignment on the first day of school.
Summer Assignment Choice 2

Use a provided fact sheet to write a letter to an elected official.

General Description

For the summer assignment you can choose to complete this assignment or the one on the previous page. For this option you will choose a topic to contact an elected official about. Unbiased fact sheets on a variety of issues at the state and local level are provided below. You will choose one of these to outline in order to determine your opinion prior to drafting your letter. Your letter will address an elected official with a call to action.

Rubric

You can find a full rubric for the project here. Students will be assessed based on the outline they complete as they research their topic as well as the professional email they write to an elected official. Templates for guidance are provided below. You can also reach out to any of the teachers for help!

Formatting Guidelines and Templates

Use these sources to choose topics and research.

- Maryland Issues
- Montgomery County Issues

Your final product should be a professional email that includes all of the information in the rubric. You will also be submitting an outline of your research process to your teacher. Templates for each portion of the assignment are provided for you below. Remember to use your school google account.

- Template for Research Outline
- Template for Professional Email
- Sample Professional Email

Submitting the Assignment

Your teacher will give you instructions on how to submit the assignment on the first day of school.
Optional Extension Activity #1 - Constitution Textbook Assignment

This assignment will give you the opportunity to get some background information on American Government. It is a great way to practice independent reading skills and checking yourself for comprehension. It also will help you to begin focusing on the government in a reading rather than the history. You should focus on the perspectives and goals of the people more than dates.

The reading and guiding questions can be found here

Optional Extension Activity #2 - Explore the Constitution online

Check out Constitution Center and get to know the Constitution! The Constitution is the founding document for our government. It outlines the powers the government has as well as the protections that the people have from the government. We will use this website throughout the year, and by the time of the AP Exam in May you will need to know this document. You can start by familiarizing yourself with the topics. Any notes you take, or outlines you make will be of great help to you throughout the year.
Optional Extension Activity #3 – Mr. Nappo’s Summer Binge Watching Recommendations

TV/Netflix:
- The West Wing
- Madam Secretary
- VEEP
- The Newsroom
- Parks and Recreation

Movies:
- 12 Angry Men
- 13 Days
- All the King’s Men (2006; 1949)
- All the President’s Men (1976)
- The American President (1995)
- Can Mr. Smith Get to Washington Anymore?
- Caucus
- Charlie Wilson’s War (2007)
- Dave (1993)
- The Distinguished Gentleman
- Fed Up
- Food Inc.
- Frost/Nixon (2008)
- Game Change
- Gideon’s Trumpet (1980)
- Good Night and Good Luck (2005)
- Hamilton
- Head of State (2003)
- Mr. Smith Goes to Washington (1939)
- Primary Colors (1998)
- Sicko (2007)
- Unprecedented (2002)
- Wag the Dog (1997)

Soundtracks/Podcasts (great for car trips!):
- Your Weekly Constitutional (podcast)
- 60 Minutes Podcast
- Frontline Podcast
- Face the Nation Podcast