

Advanced Placement Government and Politics Curriculum Summary

The purpose of the summary is to present an overview of the curriculum. Parents, community, and teachers of other disciplines are the intended audience of the curriculum summary.

Unit I -- Constitutional Underpinnings
A. Considerations that influenced the formulation and adoption of the Constitution B. Separation of powers C. Checks and balances D. Federalism E. Theories of democratic government
Unit III -- Political Parties, Interest Groups and Mass Media
A. Political parties and elections <ul style="list-style-type: none">1. Functions2. Organization3. Development4. Effects on the political process5. Electoral laws and systems B. Interest groups, including political action committees (PACs) <ul style="list-style-type: none">1. The range of interests represented2. The activities of interest groups3. The effects of interest groups on the political process4. The unique characteristics and roles of PACs in the C. The mass media <ul style="list-style-type: none">1. The functions and structures of the news media2. The impacts of the news media on politics3. The news media industry and its consequences

Unit II -- Political Beliefs and Behaviors
A. Beliefs that citizens hold about their government and its leaders B. Processes by which citizens learn about politics C. The nature, sources, and consequences of public opinion D. The ways in which citizens vote and otherwise participate in political life E. Factors that influence citizens to differ from one another in terms of political beliefs and behaviors
Unit IV -- Institutions of National Government
A. The major formal and informal institutional arrangements of power B. Relationships among these four institutions and varying balances of power C. Linkages between institutions and the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none">1. Public opinion and voters2. Interest groups3. Political parties4. The media5. State and local governments

Unit V -- Public Policy

- A. Policy making in a federal system
- B. The formation of policy agendas
- C. The role of institutions in the enactment of policy
- D. The role of the bureaucracy and the courts in policy implementation and interpretation
- E. Linkages between policy processes and the following:
 - 1. Political institutions and federalism
 - 2. Political parties
 - 3. Interest groups
 - 4. Public opinion
 - 5. Elections
 - 6. Policy networks

Unit VI -- Civil Rights and Civil Liberties

- A. The development of civil liberties and civil rights by judicial interpretation
- B. Knowledge of substantive rights and liberties
- C. The impact of the Fourteenth Amendment on the constitutional development of rights and liberties