

AP U.S. Government and Politics

Summer Assignment

The assignment is due by 9:15 AM on Monday, August 18, 2025.

PART 1 MANDATORY

1. Read the United States Constitution. [Click here for the Constitution](#)
2. Use the guiding questions below to facilitate the reading. The main elements of the Constitution, beyond its purpose, are its powers and limits for the federal government. Click [here](#) for the layman's version of the Constitution to assist you.
3. On your own lined paper and handwritten in black or dark blue pen, **answer the first 10 questions of the guiding question** in complete and legible sentences. Turn in with your name written on the upper right hand corner.

CLARIFICATION: You are NOT required to answer ALL of the questions; only the first 10 questions.

HOWEVER, you will be required and expected to have read the U.S. Constitution thoroughly and in using the guiding questions as the course will be referencing specific articles, sections, and clauses.

PART 2
MANDATORY

- Watch the first five episodes of the first season of *The West Wing*. (required)

Episode 1: The Pilot
Episode 2: Post Hoc, Ergo Propter Hoc
Episode 3: A Proportional Response
Episode 4: Five Votes Down
Episode 5: The Crackpots and These Women

The West Wing is available through stream on Max, for purchase on Amazon, YouTube, and iTunes, and probably for check out at a Miami-Dade public library.

You are encouraged to watch additional episodes, especially if you enjoy the series.

- *The West Wing* character guide is available below Summer Assignment to become more familiar with the main characters and their roles.
- List each of the first five episodes and then include a summary of the relevant plot element(s) of the episode and of constitutional articles and amendments, clauses, and sections most relevant to each episode.
 - o Example:
 - Episode 9: The Short List –
 - The episode includes a scene focused on Article 2, Section 2, Clause 2 dealing with the President’s power to appoint federal judges including the U.S. Supreme Court and seeking the advice and consent of the U.S. Senate for judicial appointments.
 - o Example:
 - Episode 11: Lord John Marbury –
 - The episode includes a scene illustrating Article 2, Section 3, Clause 4 dealing with the President’s responsibility in receiving ambassadors and Article 2, Section 2, Clause 1 dealing with the President’s role as Commander-in-Chief.
 - Write in complete sentences. All responses should take the form of grammatically-correct sentences that express complete thoughts reflective of AP-level writing and reasoning ability.
 - o **All responses must be handwritten in black or dark blue ink. No typed work will be accepted.**
 - o Write your name on the upper right corner of the paper.
 - o Turn in attached to required Constitution questions assignment.
- These episodes will be referenced during the course. But most importantly, the course will play additional episodes throughout the semester and this will provide a foundation of familiarity with the plot and characters of the series.

PART 3
VOLUNTARY

- Watch the first ten episodes of Season 2 of *Parks and Recreation*. (required)
 - o You are encouraged to watch additional episodes, especially if you enjoy the series.
- *Parks and Recreation* is available through stream on Peacock, stream and/or purchase on Xfinity OnDemand, for purchase on Amazon, YouTube, and iTunes, and probably check out at a Miami-Dade public library.
- Additional shows to watch (optional): *Veep*, *House of Cards*, *Designated Survivor*, *Madame Secretary*.

US Constitution Guiding Questions

Write in complete and legible sentences.

REQUIRED TO BE ANSWERED

1. **Write out the Preamble of the United States Constitution. No abbreviations.**
2. **What branch of the government does Article I establish? Where is its power vested?**
3. **What does the Congress consist of?**
4. **What are the enumerated powers of Congress as established under Article I, Section 8? List each power and describe the power (research it).**
5. **What branch of the federal government does Article II establish? Where is its power vested?**
6. **What branch of the federal government does Article III establish? Where is its power vested?**
7. **According to IV, Section 4, what does the Constitution guarantee to all states?**
8. **According to Article V, how much of each house of Congress is necessary to propose a constitutional amendment and how much of state legislatures is necessary to ratify a constitutional amendment?**
9. **According to Article VI, what is the supreme law of the land? List all.**
10. **According to the Constitution, who or what possesses the power to establish the government of the United States? What are the responsibilities of the Constitution?**

TO BE USED FOR GUIDED READING OF THE CONSTITUTION

11. Baron de Montesquieu's *Spirit of the Laws* outlines the concept of separation of powers. How many branches of government does the Constitution establish? Describe each branch's general responsibilities.
12. Which branch does Article I of the Constitution establish? What is the proper term for this branch's institution?
13. Define bicameral. What are the two houses of the legislative branch?
14. How many years are in a term for a member of the House of Representatives? How many terms may a member of the House of Representatives be elected to?
15. What are the qualifications to become a member of the House of Representatives?
16. Who chooses the Speaker of the House?
17. What power does the House of Representatives solely possess?
18. How many Senators does each state possess?
19. How many years in a term for a member of the Senate? How many terms may a Senator be elected to?
20. What are the qualifications to become a Senator?
21. Who is the President of the Senate? What are the responsibilities, if any, of the President of the Senate?

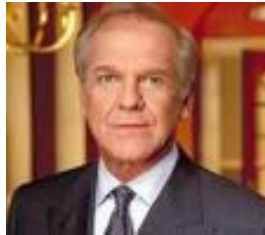
22. What is the President pro tempore?
23. What power does the Senate solely possess?
24. Who or what is responsible for the way members of Congress are elected?
25. Each house may censure any of its members. How is a member of each house expelled?
26. Which house of Congress is the only house to introduce a bill for raising revenue? Does the other house have any affect on the bill?
27. For a bill to become law, it must be passed and approved by what entities?
28. List all powers of Congress from Article I, Section 8.
29. Congress may not issue a writ of habeas corpus. What is a writ of habeas corpus? Are there any loopholes for Congress to issue a writ of habeas corpus according to the Constitution?
30. Congress may not issue a bill of attainder. What is a bill of attainder?
31. Congress may not issue an ex post facto law. What is an ex post facto law?
32. List the limits of Congress.
33. List the prohibitions of the states.
34. Which branch does Article II establish? What is the proper term for this branch's institution?
35. How many years are there in a presidential term?
36. How is the president elected? How is representation determined in the Electoral College?
37. What are the qualifications to become a president?
38. What are the powers and responsibilities of the president?
39. For which offenses can the president be impeached/removed from office? Describe said process.
40. Which branch does Article III establish? What is the proper term for this branch's institution?
41. What are the term limits for federal justices?
42. What is original jurisdiction? What cases does the Supreme Court have original jurisdiction?
43. What is appellate jurisdiction? What cases does the Supreme Court have appellate jurisdiction?
44. How is treason defined? How may one be convicted of treason?
45. What overall concept is defined by Article IV?
46. Describe the full faith and credit clause.
47. What does Article IV guarantee for citizens of each state?
48. What does Article IV guarantee for every state?
49. Article V outlines the amendment process. How is an amendment passed?
50. In Article VI, what does the clause "supreme Law of the Land" mean in regards to the Constitution?
51. Who is bound to the "supreme Law of the Land" in Article VI?
52. What are the first ten amendments of the Constitution collectively known as?
53. In Amendment I, what does "make no law respecting an establishment of religion" mean?
54. In Amendment I, what freedoms are guaranteed?

55. What is guaranteed by Amendment II?
56. What is guaranteed by Amendment III?
57. How are people and property protected in Amendment IV?
58. What are the guarantees in Amendment V?
59. What are the guarantees in Amendment VI?
60. What is guaranteed in Amendment VII?
61. What is guaranteed in Amendment VIII?
62. What does Amendment IX guarantee?
63. What does Amendment X guarantee?
64. What is guaranteed by Amendment XI?
65. Describe the electoral process for the president and vice president in Amendment XII.
66. What does Amendment XIII prohibit?
67. What does Amendment XIV, Section 1 guarantee?
68. How does Amendment XIV, Section 2 enforce the right to vote?
69. What is guaranteed by Amendment XV?
70. What power is authorized by Amendment XVI?
71. How does Amendment XVII change the way senators are elected? Be sure to describe the original and the change.
72. What is acknowledged by the 18th and 21st Amendments?
73. What is guaranteed by Amendment XIX?
74. What is addressed in Amendment XX?
75. How are presidential terms affected by Amendment XXII?
76. What is guaranteed by Amendment XXIII?
77. What is prohibited by Amendment XXIV?
78. Describe the process for presidential succession in Amendment XXV.
79. What is guaranteed by Amendment XXVI?
80. What is established by Amendment XXVII?

The West Wing was a dramatic television series based on the inner workings of a fictional presidential administration. The show focused primarily on the duties of the president's White House staff. The President was designated as a supporting character for the show's purposes, but is without a doubt the series' main point of interest. The series uses the President's supporting staff to address various political, social, and sometimes personal issues encountered by a presidential administration.



President Josiah Bartlet – The popular Democratic president from New Hampshire. He was raised Catholic and briefly considered to become a priest. He studied at the University of Notre Dame and eventually became a Nobel Laureate in Economics. He served in the House of Representatives before becoming New Hampshire's governor. He is described as the ideal president with a realistic approach, compassion, integrity, and warmth. He promotes a liberal agenda in his policies.



Leo McGarry – Bartlet's White House Chief of Staff and best friend. He is an authoritative figure among the senior staff, acting like a father figure in some cases. He is the one most responsible for inspiring Bartlet's run for president. He served in the U.S. Air Force and served as Secretary of Labor in previous years. He is very politically connected and well-respected among top government officials, even from the Republican Party.



Josh Lyman – The White House Deputy Chief of Staff and protégé of Leo McGarry. He is very self-confident, but arrogant. He is well-versed in the art of politics and promotes a liberal agenda. He is an idealist, but will limit his means of persuasion for the sake of the administration. He is a strong supporter of Bartlet since he believes Bartlet stands up to his principles.



Toby Ziegler – The White House Communications Director. He advises on the administration's responses to issues and events, including writing speeches, advising the Press Secretary, and conducting meetings with the media and other groups. He also is the administration's domestic policy advisor. He is passive-aggressive and stubborn on his principles.



C.J. Cregg – The White House Press Secretary. She handles the duties of delivering the administration's press releases to the media and public. She demonstrates a rigid and witty confidence and holds her own among the media and the rest of the male-dominated senior staff.



Sam Seaborn – The White House Deputy Communications Director. He is Toby Ziegler's right-hand man. He is an exceptional speechwriter on par with the likes of Toby. Like many of the Bartlet staff, he is an idealist with a strong sense of faith in the American political process. He also has tremendous principles which he believes rise above all else, even if it means costing the administration politically.



Will Bailey – The White House Deputy Communications Director. He replaces Sam Seaborn in the series when Sam runs for a House seat in California. He is quite capable of performing up to his responsibilities, but eventually pursues other endeavors such as the Vice-President's Chief of Staff. He does become well-respected among the other senior staffers.



Charlie Young – Personal Aide to the President. He becomes somewhat of a de facto gatekeeper for the president toward his staff and a personal confidant to Bartlet. The relationship between Charlie and Bartlet is a strong father-son bond.



Abigail Bartlet – The First Lady. She is Bartlet's loyal and witty wife. She is an accomplished physician and is mother to Bartlet's three daughters. She wholeheartedly supports her husband and her President. In some cases, she is his best advisor.



Senator Arnold Vinick – A Republican senator from California running for president after Bartlet's administration. He is a social moderate and a fiscal conservative. Described as a maverick, he earns popularity by being very direct with his principles. He is a proponent of limited government conservatism and is reluctant to embrace the Religious Right. He is popular among conservatives, independents, and conservative Democrats.



Representative Matthew Santos – A Democrat representative from Texas running for president after Bartlet's administration. He promotes liberal policies, both socially and fiscally. His major campaign agenda is education. Josh Lyman admires his passion and integrity as it reminds him of his admiration for President Bartlet.



Vice-President Bob Russell – The current Vice-President under Bartlet running for president after Bartlet's administration. He served as a representative from Colorado before being named to replace John Hoynes as Vice-President by Bartlet, though he was not Bartlet's first choice. He has been criticized for his connections to the mining industry. He becomes the early frontrunner in the campaign to succeed Bartlet.



John Hoynes – The former Vice-President under Bartlet running for president after Bartlet's administration. He formerly served as a Democratic senator from Texas before being selected as Bartlet's running mate. He resigned as Bartlet's Vice-President when his extramarital affair and national security leak was publicly exposed. He recovered his status and became a second or third possibility to succeed Bartlet in the Democratic primaries. He is a moderate Democrat with the most political experience among Russell and Santos.