

# A.P. Government - Unit One Reading Guide

## A.P. Government Reading Guide

- Use the “Detailed Contents” at the beginning of the book to guide your notes.
- Always carefully examine the charts/graphs in each section.
- Be sure to know and be able to “use” the vocabulary in this guide.
- Pay attention to Supreme Court cases mentioned in each section.
- Note that this reading guide is just that – a **guide** for your **reading!** It is **not** meant to be all-inclusive, i.e., there may be material not covered by this guide that appears on quizzes and/or exams.

**Ch. 1; 2-16:** Why do politics matter? Understand the policymaking system.

Vocabulary: political participation, single-issue groups, policymaking system, linkage institutions, policy agenda, policymaking institutions, public policy

**Ch. 1; 16-20:** Understand the principles of traditional democratic theory, the three contemporary theories of American democracy, & the challenges to democracy.

Vocabulary: democracy, majority rule & minority rights, pluralist theory, elite & class theory, hyperpluralism, policy gridlock

**Ch. 1; 19-22:** Identify the key components, and oftentimes conflicting values, of American political culture.

Vocabulary: political culture, liberty, egalitarianism, laissez-faire, populism

**Ch. 2; 30-40:** What are the ideas/beliefs (esp. John Locke’s ideas) that gave birth to our Constitution? Understand how the events that occurred between 1776 and 1787 led to the Constitution.

Vocabulary: natural rights, consent of the governed, limited government, Articles of Confederation, Shays’ Rebellion

**Ch. 2; 40-48:** What did those writing the Constitution agree upon? What were the differences between the Virginia Plan and the New Jersey Plan? What were the equality, economic and individual rights issues addressed at the Convention?

Vocabulary: factions, New Jersey Plan, Virginia Plan, Connecticut Compromise, writ of habeas corpus, ex post facto laws

**Ch. 2; 48-51:** What is the “tyranny of the majority”? How does Madison propose to prevent it? How does our Constitution favor the status quo? Know the basic checks & balances in the Constitution.

Vocabulary: separation of powers, checks and balances, republic

**Ch. 2; 51-65:** Who were the Federalists & Anti-Federalists? What were their differences? What are the formal processes for amending the Constitution? What are some informal ways in which the Constitution is changed?

Vocabulary: Federalists, Anti-Federalists, Federalist Papers, Bill of Rights, Equal Rights Amendment, *Marbury v. Madison*, judicial review

**Ch. 3; 68-81:** Thoroughly understand what federalism is and why it is important? Understand the constitutional basis for federalism. Identify how the national government has gained power over the states.

Vocabulary: supremacy clause, enumerated powers, implied powers, *McCulloch v. Maryland*, elastic clause, commerce power, *Gibbons v. Ogden*, *U.S. v. Lopez*, full faith & credit, extradition, privileges and immunities

**Ch. 3; 81-90:** Understand the difference between dual federalism and cooperative federalism. What is fiscal federalism? Understand how grants are used to distribute federal money. What are mandates and how do they affect state and local governments?

Vocabulary: dual federalism, cooperative federalism, fiscal federalism, categorical grants, block grants, project grants, formula grants, mandates, unfunded mandates

**Ch. 3; 90-96:** How does (has) federalism create(d) advantages and disadvantages for democracy? Examine the charts and explain how welfare & education provide examples of federalism in action.

Vocabulary: no new vocabulary

**After** these readings, you should be able to answer the following questions:

### Chapter 1 – Introducing Government in America ([online review](#))

1. Define government and identify the functions that governments perform. What is the role of politics in government?
2. What are the principle components of the policymaking system? Explain how a political issue travels through the policymaking system by using an example.
3. What is the definition of democracy? What are the basic principles of traditional democratic theory?
4. Compare, contrast, and critically evaluate the three theories of American democracy: pluralist theory, elite & class theory, and hyperpluralism.

### Chapter 2 – The Constitution ([online review](#))

1. In what specific ways did the philosophy of John Locke influence the origins of the American national government & the Declaration of Independence?
2. What philosophical views did the delegates to the Constitutional Convention share? How did they influence the nature of the Constitution?
3. How did the colonial experience shape the policy agenda at the Constitutional Convention? What issues comprised the agenda and how were they resolved?
4. What is the Madisonian model of government? How is it reflected in the structure of American government? What issues or problems does it raise?
5. Explain the process by which the Constitution was ratified. What were the major arguments raised by the federalists in favor of the Constitution? What were the major arguments raised by the anti-federalists in opposition to the Constitution? How were some of these latter issues resolved?
6. What are the formal and informal processes by which the Constitution is changed? Be able to give examples of formal amendments and informal amendments.
7. In what ways was the original Constitution both democratic and undemocratic? How has the Constitution become democratized throughout American history?

### Chapter 3 – Federalism ([online review](#))

1. Define federalism. How is federalism different from unitary governments and confederations? Why is federalism important to understanding American government?
2. What does the Constitution have to say about national versus state power? How was the supremacy of the national government established in the American federal system?
3. Explain the obligations that states have to each other. Give examples to illustrate your answer.
4. Why does cooperative federalism, as compared to dual federalism, best describe the American federal system today? Why is fiscal federalism important to intergovernmental relations?
5. Compare & contrast the different types of federal aid and grants given to states and cities. What is the nature of the competition for federal grants? Under what conditions might states not want to receive federal aid?
6. What are the advantages and disadvantages of federalism for democracy? Give examples to illustrate your answer.
7. How and why has federalism contributed to the growth of the national government?