

AP UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

AP UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT IS A RIGOROUS ACADEMIC COURSE DESIGNED TO PROVIDE HIGH SCHOOL STUDENTS WITH A COMPREHENSIVE UNDERSTANDING OF THE AMERICAN POLITICAL SYSTEM, ITS INSTITUTIONS, AND THE PRINCIPLES THAT GUIDE GOVERNANCE IN THE UNITED STATES. THIS COURSE COVERS KEY TOPICS SUCH AS THE CONSTITUTION, FEDERALISM, CIVIL LIBERTIES, POLITICAL BELIEFS, AND THE ROLES OF VARIOUS BRANCHES OF GOVERNMENT. STUDENTS LEARN TO ANALYZE GOVERNMENTAL STRUCTURES, POLITICAL BEHAVIOR, AND POLICY-MAKING PROCESSES, PREPARING THEM FOR THE AP EXAM AND INFORMED CITIZENSHIP. MASTERY OF THIS SUBJECT NOT ONLY ENHANCES CRITICAL THINKING SKILLS BUT ALSO DEEPENS AWARENESS OF THE COMPLEXITIES WITHIN U.S. GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS. THE FOLLOWING ARTICLE EXPLORES THE CORE COMPONENTS OF THE AP UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT CURRICULUM, ITS SIGNIFICANCE, AND EFFECTIVE STRATEGIES FOR SUCCESS.

- OVERVIEW OF AP UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT
- FOUNDATIONS OF AMERICAN GOVERNMENT
- POLITICAL BELIEFS AND BEHAVIORS
- INSTITUTIONS OF NATIONAL GOVERNMENT
- PUBLIC POLICY AND CIVIL RIGHTS
- EXAM PREPARATION AND STUDY TIPS

OVERVIEW OF AP UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT

THE AP UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT COURSE PROVIDES A DETAILED EXAMINATION OF THE FUNDAMENTAL STRUCTURES AND FUNCTIONS OF THE U.S. GOVERNMENT. IT EMPHASIZES CONSTITUTIONAL PRINCIPLES, POLITICAL PROCESSES, AND THE INTERPLAY BETWEEN DIFFERENT GOVERNMENT BRANCHES. THE CURRICULUM IS STRUCTURED TO DEVELOP STUDENTS' ANALYTICAL SKILLS THROUGH THE STUDY OF POLITICAL THEORIES, LANDMARK SUPREME COURT CASES, AND CURRENT POLITICAL EVENTS.

THIS COURSE IS TYPICALLY TAKEN BY HIGH SCHOOL JUNIORS OR SENIORS AIMING TO EARN COLLEGE CREDIT OR ADVANCED PLACEMENT. THE AP EXAM TESTS STUDENTS' KNOWLEDGE THROUGH MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS AND FREE-RESPONSE ESSAYS, REQUIRING A SOLID GRASP OF BOTH FACTUAL INFORMATION AND CRITICAL ANALYSIS.

COURSE OBJECTIVES

THE PRIMARY OBJECTIVES OF THE AP UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT COURSE INCLUDE:

- UNDERSTANDING THE CONSTITUTION AND ITS INTERPRETATION
- ANALYZING THE ROLES OF CONGRESS, THE PRESIDENCY, AND THE JUDICIARY
- EXPLORING THE IMPACT OF FEDERALISM ON STATE AND NATIONAL GOVERNANCE
- EXAMINING CIVIL LIBERTIES AND CIVIL RIGHTS PROTECTIONS
- STUDYING POLITICAL PARTICIPATION, PUBLIC OPINION, AND INTEREST GROUPS

IMPORTANCE OF THE COURSE

TAKING AP UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT EQUIPS STUDENTS WITH A ROBUST KNOWLEDGE BASE ABOUT THE U.S. POLITICAL SYSTEM AND ENHANCES CRITICAL THINKING ABOUT GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND POLITICAL BEHAVIOR. IT PREPARES FUTURE VOTERS AND LEADERS TO ENGAGE RESPONSIBLY IN DEMOCRATIC PROCESSES AND UNDERSTAND THE CONSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK GOVERNING THE NATION.

FOUNDATIONS OF AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

THE FOUNDATIONS OF AMERICAN GOVERNMENT ARE ROOTED IN THE PRINCIPLES ESTABLISHED BY THE CONSTITUTION AND THE PHILOSOPHICAL IDEAS THAT INFLUENCED THE NATION'S FOUNDERS. THIS SECTION OF THE AP UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT CURRICULUM FOCUSES ON THE ORIGINS, STRUCTURE, AND POWERS OF GOVERNMENT.

THE CONSTITUTION AND FEDERALISM

THE U.S. CONSTITUTION SERVES AS THE SUPREME LAW OF THE LAND, ESTABLISHING THE FRAMEWORK FOR GOVERNMENT AUTHORITY AND INDIVIDUAL RIGHTS. FEDERALISM DIVIDES POWER BETWEEN THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT AND STATE GOVERNMENTS, CREATING A SYSTEM OF SHARED SOVEREIGNTY.

KEY TOPICS INCLUDE THE SEPARATION OF POWERS, CHECKS AND BALANCES, AND THE AMENDMENT PROCESS. STUDENTS STUDY HOW FEDERALISM IMPACTS POLICY-MAKING AND GOVERNANCE AT MULTIPLE LEVELS.

KEY PHILOSOPHICAL INFLUENCES

THE COURSE EXAMINES THE INFLUENCE OF ENLIGHTENMENT THINKERS SUCH AS JOHN LOCKE AND MONTESQUIEU, WHOSE IDEAS ABOUT NATURAL RIGHTS, SOCIAL CONTRACTS, AND THE SEPARATION OF POWERS SHAPED THE AMERICAN POLITICAL SYSTEM. UNDERSTANDING THESE PHILOSOPHIES HELPS EXPLAIN THE STRUCTURE AND PURPOSE OF U.S. GOVERNMENT INSTITUTIONS.

POLITICAL BELIEFS AND BEHAVIORS

POLITICAL BELIEFS AND BEHAVIORS ARE CENTRAL TO UNDERSTANDING HOW GOVERNMENT FUNCTIONS AND HOW POLICIES ARE SHAPED. THIS SECTION ADDRESSES THE ATTITUDES, VALUES, AND PARTICIPATION PATTERNS OF THE AMERICAN ELECTORATE.

POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION AND PUBLIC OPINION

POLITICAL SOCIALIZATION REFERS TO THE PROCESS THROUGH WHICH INDIVIDUALS ACQUIRE POLITICAL BELIEFS AND VALUES. FACTORS SUCH AS FAMILY, EDUCATION, MEDIA, AND SOCIAL ENVIRONMENTS INFLUENCE POLITICAL OPINIONS.

PUBLIC OPINION POLLS AND SURVEYS PROVIDE INSIGHT INTO VOTER PREFERENCES AND POLITICAL ATTITUDES, WHICH ARE CRUCIAL FOR PREDICTING ELECTION OUTCOMES AND POLICY SUPPORT.

VOTING AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION

VOTER TURNOUT AND PARTICIPATION RATES VARY ACROSS DEMOGRAPHICS AND REGIONS. THE COURSE EXPLORES BARRIERS TO VOTING, THE IMPACT OF CAMPAIGNS, AND THE ROLE OF POLITICAL PARTIES IN MOBILIZING VOTERS. UNDERSTANDING THESE DYNAMICS IS ESSENTIAL FOR ANALYZING DEMOCRATIC ENGAGEMENT IN THE UNITED STATES.

INSTITUTIONS OF NATIONAL GOVERNMENT

THE AP UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT COURSE DEDICATES SIGNIFICANT FOCUS TO THE THREE BRANCHES OF THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT: LEGISLATIVE, EXECUTIVE, AND JUDICIAL. EACH INSTITUTION HAS UNIQUE POWERS AND RESPONSIBILITIES THAT BALANCE ONE ANOTHER.

THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH

CONGRESS, COMPOSED OF THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND THE SENATE, IS RESPONSIBLE FOR MAKING LAWS. THE COURSE COVERS THE LEGISLATIVE PROCESS, COMMITTEE SYSTEMS, AND THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN CONGRESS AND OTHER BRANCHES.

THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH

THE PRESIDENCY HOLDS SIGNIFICANT AUTHORITY IN ENFORCING LAWS AND DIRECTING NATIONAL POLICY. TOPICS INCLUDE PRESIDENTIAL POWERS, EXECUTIVE ORDERS, AND THE ROLE OF THE BUREAUCRACY IN ADMINISTRATION.

THE JUDICIAL BRANCH

THE FEDERAL JUDICIARY INTERPRETS LAWS AND ENSURES THEIR CONSTITUTIONALITY. THE SUPREME COURT'S ROLE IN SHAPING PUBLIC POLICY THROUGH LANDMARK RULINGS IS A CRITICAL AREA OF STUDY.

PUBLIC POLICY AND CIVIL RIGHTS

PUBLIC POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND CIVIL RIGHTS PROTECTIONS ARE ESSENTIAL COMPONENTS OF THE AP UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT CURRICULUM. STUDENTS EXPLORE HOW GOVERNMENT RESPONDS TO SOCIAL ISSUES AND PROTECTS INDIVIDUAL FREEDOMS.

POLICY-MAKING PROCESS

POLICY-MAKING INVOLVES MULTIPLE ACTORS, INCLUDING CONGRESS, THE PRESIDENT, INTEREST GROUPS, AND THE COURTS. UNDERSTANDING THE STAGES OF POLICY DEVELOPMENT—FROM AGENDA SETTING TO IMPLEMENTATION—IS KEY TO ANALYZING GOVERNMENT EFFECTIVENESS.

CIVIL LIBERTIES AND CIVIL RIGHTS

THE COURSE EXAMINES CONSTITUTIONAL PROTECTIONS SUCH AS THE BILL OF RIGHTS AND LANDMARK SUPREME COURT DECISIONS THAT HAVE DEFINED CIVIL LIBERTIES AND CIVIL RIGHTS. TOPICS INCLUDE FREEDOM OF SPEECH, EQUAL PROTECTION UNDER THE LAW, AND VOTING RIGHTS.

EXAM PREPARATION AND STUDY TIPS

SUCCESS IN THE AP UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT EXAM REQUIRES DISCIPLINED STUDY AND EFFECTIVE PREPARATION STRATEGIES. FAMILIARITY WITH CONTENT, PRACTICE WITH EXAM QUESTIONS, AND CRITICAL ANALYSIS ARE VITAL.

STUDY STRATEGIES

1. REVIEW KEY CONCEPTS AND VOCABULARY REGULARLY TO BUILD A STRONG KNOWLEDGE BASE.
2. ANALYZE PAST EXAM QUESTIONS AND PRACTICE WRITING CLEAR, CONCISE FREE-RESPONSE ANSWERS.
3. CREATE OUTLINES OF MAJOR TOPICS TO ORGANIZE INFORMATION LOGICALLY.
4. ENGAGE IN GROUP STUDY OR DISCUSSIONS TO DEEPEN UNDERSTANDING OF COMPLEX ISSUES.

UTILIZING RESOURCES

STUDENTS BENEFIT FROM USING A VARIETY OF RESOURCES, INCLUDING TEXTBOOKS, REVIEW BOOKS, AND REPUTABLE ONLINE MATERIALS FOCUSED ON AP UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT CONTENT. CONSISTENT PRACTICE AND SELF-ASSESSMENT IMPROVE EXAM READINESS.

FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

WHAT ARE THE THREE BRANCHES OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT?

THE THREE BRANCHES OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT ARE THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH, THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH, AND THE JUDICIAL BRANCH.

WHAT IS THE MAIN FUNCTION OF THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH?

THE MAIN FUNCTION OF THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH IS TO MAKE LAWS. IT CONSISTS OF CONGRESS, WHICH INCLUDES THE HOUSE OF REPRESENTATIVES AND THE SENATE.

HOW DOES THE SYSTEM OF CHECKS AND BALANCES WORK IN THE U.S. GOVERNMENT?

THE SYSTEM OF CHECKS AND BALANCES ENSURES THAT NO ONE BRANCH OF GOVERNMENT BECOMES TOO POWERFUL BY ALLOWING EACH BRANCH TO LIMIT THE POWERS OF THE OTHERS.

WHAT IS THE SIGNIFICANCE OF THE CONSTITUTION IN THE U.S. GOVERNMENT?

THE CONSTITUTION IS THE SUPREME LAW OF THE UNITED STATES THAT ESTABLISHES THE STRUCTURE AND POWERS OF THE GOVERNMENT AND PROTECTS THE RIGHTS OF CITIZENS.

WHAT ROLE DOES THE SUPREME COURT PLAY IN THE U.S. GOVERNMENT?

THE SUPREME COURT SERVES AS THE HIGHEST COURT IN THE UNITED STATES, INTERPRETING LAWS AND DETERMINING THEIR CONSTITUTIONALITY THROUGH JUDICIAL REVIEW.

WHAT IS FEDERALISM IN THE CONTEXT OF THE UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT?

FEDERALISM IS THE DIVISION OF POWER BETWEEN THE NATIONAL GOVERNMENT AND THE STATE GOVERNMENTS, ALLOWING BOTH TO HAVE AUTHORITY IN CERTAIN AREAS.

How are members of the House of Representatives elected?

Members of the House of Representatives are elected directly by the people in their congressional districts for two-year terms.

What is the Electoral College and how does it function in presidential elections?

The Electoral College is a body of electors who formally elect the President and Vice President of the United States based on the popular vote in each state.

What are the Bill of Rights and why are they important?

The Bill of Rights is the first ten amendments to the U.S. Constitution, guaranteeing fundamental rights and freedoms to individuals.

How can Congress override a presidential veto?

Congress can override a presidential veto by a two-thirds majority vote in both the House of Representatives and the Senate.

Additional Resources

1. *American Government: Institutions and Policies*

This comprehensive textbook offers an in-depth exploration of the structure and functions of the U.S. government. It covers foundational concepts such as federalism, civil liberties, political ideologies, and the roles of Congress, the presidency, and the judiciary. The text is widely used in AP United States Government courses to provide students with a clear understanding of American political systems.

2. *We the People: An Introduction to American Politics*

Designed specifically for AP Government students, this book emphasizes critical thinking about American political principles and processes. It includes current examples, Supreme Court cases, and key terms to help students grasp complex topics like elections, public policy, and civil rights. Its engaging narrative helps connect theoretical concepts to real-world applications.

3. *American Government: Roots and Reform*

This book traces the historical foundations and ongoing reforms of the U.S. government. It explores the Constitution, political parties, interest groups, and the impact of public opinion on policymaking. The text is praised for its clear explanations and balanced coverage, making it a valuable resource for AP Government learners.

4. *AP U.S. Government & Politics Crash Course*

A concise and focused review guide, this book is designed to prepare students for the AP exam efficiently. It summarizes key concepts, important court cases, and essential vocabulary, offering strategies for answering multiple-choice and free-response questions. Ideal for last-minute review, it complements more detailed textbooks.

5. *Supreme Court Cases: Landmark Decisions and Their Impact*

This book compiles and analyzes significant Supreme Court rulings that have shaped American government and society. Each case summary includes background, constitutional questions, decisions, and lasting implications. It helps students understand judicial interpretation and its role in the U.S. political system.

6. *Politics in America*

Offering a comprehensive overview of American political behavior and institutions, this text covers elections, political parties, media, and public opinion. It integrates contemporary political developments and demographic data to illuminate ongoing trends. The book is a useful resource for students aiming to connect theory with

CURRENT POLITICAL REALITIES.

7. *FOUNDATIONS OF AMERICAN GOVERNMENT*

THIS BOOK FOCUSES ON THE PHILOSOPHICAL AND HISTORICAL ROOTS OF THE U.S. POLITICAL SYSTEM, INCLUDING THE ENLIGHTENMENT IDEAS INFLUENCING THE FOUNDERS. IT EXAMINES THE CONSTITUTION'S FRAMING, FEDERALISM, AND THE BALANCE OF POWERS. ITS DETAILED APPROACH AIDS STUDENTS IN UNDERSTANDING THE ORIGINS AND PRINCIPLES UNDERLYING AMERICAN GOVERNANCE.

8. *AP UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT & POLITICS PREP PLUS*

THIS STUDY GUIDE OFFERS COMPREHENSIVE CONTENT REVIEW, PRACTICE QUESTIONS, AND FULL-LENGTH PRACTICE EXAMS TAILORED FOR THE AP GOVERNMENT COURSE. IT EMPHASIZES CRITICAL THINKING AND ANALYSIS SKILLS NECESSARY FOR SUCCESS ON THE EXAM. THE GUIDE ALSO INCLUDES STRATEGIES TO TACKLE DIFFERENT QUESTION FORMATS EFFECTIVELY.

9. *UNDERSTANDING AMERICAN POLITICS*

WITH A FOCUS ON CLARITY AND ACCESSIBILITY, THIS BOOK BREAKS DOWN COMPLEX POLITICAL CONCEPTS INTO UNDERSTANDABLE SEGMENTS. IT COVERS GOVERNMENTAL INSTITUTIONS, PUBLIC POLICY, CIVIL RIGHTS, AND POLITICAL PARTICIPATION. ITS ENGAGING STYLE AND REAL-WORLD EXAMPLES MAKE IT A HELPFUL TOOL FOR STUDENTS PREPARING FOR AP U.S. GOVERNMENT EXAMS.

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ap united states government: Barron's AP U.S. Government and Politics Curt Lader, 2016-02-01 In-depth preparation for the AP U.S. Government and Politics exam features: Two full-length model AP exams with answer keys and explanations An extensive subject review covering constitutional development, the branches of federal government, political parties, social welfare, foreign policy, and more Updated content includes recent Supreme Court decisions Newly revised free-response questions with rubrics The manual can be purchased alone or with an optional CD-ROM that presents two additional full-length practice tests with automatic scoring and fully explained answers.

ap united states government: AP Government and Politics Research and Education Association, Research & Education Association, Jack Hamilton, Robert F Gorman, Robert F. Gorman, Scott J Hammond, Scott J. Hammond, P Babbitt, Elliot Kalner, Wesley Phelan, J Hamilton, Gerald G. Watson, Keith Mitchell, 1992-12-09 A NEWER EDITION OF THIS TITLE IS AVAILABLE. SEE ISBN: 978-0-7386-0267-7 Get the AP college credits you've worked so hard for... Our savvy test experts show you the way to master the test and score higher. This new and fully expanded edition examines all AP US & Comparative Government & Politics areas including in-depth coverage of branches of the US government and US voting behaviors. The comprehensive review covers every possible exam topic: the entire US Federal government; a comparative review of the governments of England, France, the former Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China; US political institutions, public opinion, voting behavior and more. Features 3 full-length practice exams with all answers thoroughly explained. Follow up your study with REA's test-taking strategies, powerhouse drills and study schedule that get you ready for test day. DETAILS - Comprehensive, up-to-date subject review of every US & Comparative Government & Politics area used in the AP exam - 3 Full-Length Practice Exams: All exam answers are fully detailed with easy-to-follow, easy-to-grasp explanations - Study

schedule tailored to your needs - Packed with proven exam tips, insights and advice

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Answer Key

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Answer Key

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Answer Key

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Chapter 1 - Succeeding on the AP Government & Politics Exams

This book will prepare you for the Advanced Placement Examinations in Government and Politics by giving you, first and foremost, an accurate and complete representation of the actual exams for both United States Government and Politics and Comparative Government and Politics. But REA doesn't stop there: we give you thorough yet concise topical reviews, a series of targeted drills, and an up-to-date glossary that comprises the full range of terminology with which you should be familiar. If you are taking the United States Government and Politics exam, you'll want to concentrate on the first part of this book. The second part of the book is devoted to the Comparative Government and Politics exam. In both cases, you'll find a lively course review keyed to exactly the material you'll need to know to score well on the test, complemented by our handy glossary to help you get the most out of your study time. Two complete practice exams are provided for U.S. Government and Politics, while one full-length practice exam is provided for Comparative Government and Politics. Each REA practice exam features an answer key and detailed explanations for every question. The explanations not only provide the correct response but also tell you why the remaining answers shouldn't be chosen. By going over the appropriate review section(s), taking the corresponding exam(s), and studying our detailed explanations, you will discover your strengths and weaknesses and prepare yourself to score well on the AP Government and Politics exams.

About the Advanced Placement Program

The Advanced Placement Program is designed to provide high school students with the opportunity to pursue college-level studies while still attending high school. The program consists of two components: an AP course and an AP exam. In addition, the AP in Government and Politics curriculum is divided into two courses: United States Government & Politics and Comparative Government & Politics. If you wish to pursue an Advanced Placement in Government and Politics course you may enroll in the United States course, the Comparative course, or both. You will be expected to leave the course(s) with college-level writing skills and knowledge of government and politics. Upon completion of the course(s), you may then take the corresponding AP exam(s). Test results are then used to grant course credit and/or determine placement level in the subject when you enter college. AP exams are administered every May. The exam schedule has been designed to allow you the opportunity to take both exams, if you are enrolled in both courses. If the United States exam is given during the morning administration, the Comparative exam will be given during the afternoon administration.

The AP United States Government & Politics Exam

The United States exam is 145 minutes in length and is divided into two sections: I. Multiple-Choice (50% of your grade): This 45-minute section is composed of 60 questions designed to measure your understanding of facts, concepts, and theories pertinent to United States government and politics. Your ability to analyze and understand data, and the patterns and consequences involved with political processes

and behaviors will also be tested. In addition you must have knowledge of the various institutions, groups, beliefs, and ideas relevant to United States government and politics.

II. Free-Response (50% of your grade): This 100-minute section consists of four mandatory questions, each of which accounts for one-fourth of your total free-response score. You should allot roughly 25 minutes - or one-quarter of the total time in the free-response segment - for each essay. Each question normally asks you to interrelate ideas from different content areas from among the topics listed below. In addition, you may also be asked to evaluate and define fundamental concepts in the study of United States politics, and possibly to analyze case studies that bear on political relationships and events in the United States. You will be required to demonstrate mastery of political interpretation, and analytic and organizational skills through writing. In addition, you may be presented with graphs, charts and tables from whose data you would be asked to draw logical conclusions. Here's a breakdown of coverage on the United States exam:

Topics / % of Exam

- I. Constitutional Underpinnings of United States Government / 5-15%
- II. Political Beliefs and Behaviors / 10-20%
- III. Political Parties, Interest Groups, and Mass Media / 10-20%
- IV. Institutions of National Government: The Congress, the Presidency, the Bureaucracy, and the Federal Courts / 35-45%
- V. Public Policy / 5-15%
- VI. Civil Rights and Civil Liberties / 5-15%

The AP Comparative Government & Politics Exam

The Comparative exam is 145 minutes long and is divided into two sections:

I. Multiple-Choice (50% of your grade): This 45-minute section is composed of 60 questions designed to measure your understanding of facts, concepts, and theories pertinent to Comparative government and politics. Your ability to analyze and understand data, and the patterns and consequences involved with political processes and behaviors will also be tested. The countries normally tested in the multiple-choice questions include Great Britain, France, the former Soviet Union (Commonwealth of Independent States), and China; these are referred to as the core countries tested on the exam. For certain questions, basic knowledge of the United States will be assumed.

II. Free-Response (50% of your grade): This 100-minute section consists of four mandatory questions, each of which accounts for one-fourth of your total free-response score. You should allot roughly 25 minutes - or one-quarter of the total time in the free-response segment - for each essay. Comparative Free-Response questions may require you to compare one or two of the core countries (Great Britain, France, China, and the former Soviet Union) with the developing nations of either India, Mexico, or Nigeria. To do this, you must be able to demonstrate knowledge of the politics of one of these developing nations. Here's a breakdown of coverage on the Comparative exam:

Topics / % of Exam

- I. The Sources of Public Authority and Political Power / 5-15%
- II. Society and Politics / 5-15%
- III. The Relationship Between Citizen and State / 5-15%
- IV. Political and Institutional Frameworks / 35-45%
- V. Political Change / 15-25%
- VI. The Comparative Method / 5-10%

About the Review Sections

As mentioned earlier, this book includes two reviews: one for United States Government and Politics, the other for Comparative Government and Politics. The United States Government and Politics Review covers all of the key information you'll need to score well on the United States exam. These topics include:

- Constitutional Framework
- The Federal Government
- Political Institutions and Special Interests
- Public Opinion and Voter Behavior
- Civil Rights and the Supreme Court

We also provide a glossary for the United States Government and Politics exam. Included are the key historical figures, court cases, programs, laws, etc., that often appear on this AP exam. The Comparative Review provides a thorough discussion of the material most often tested on the Comparative exam. Special emphasis is placed on the governments and politics of:

- Britain
- France
- The former Soviet Union
- The People's Republic of China

A glossary for the Comparative Government and Politics exam enables you to brush up on terms that you are likely to encounter on this test.

Scoring the Exam

After the AP administrations, more than 1,700 college professors and secondary school teachers are brought together to grade the exams during the first two weeks of June. These readers are chosen from around the United States for their familiarity with the AP program. The Multiple-Choice sections of the Comparative Government & Politics and U.S. Government & Politics exams are scored by granting one point for each correct answer and deducting one-fourth of a point for each incorrect answer. Unanswered questions receive neither

credit nor deduction. The Free-Response answers are read and scored using a specific set of objective criteria, but the actual points available for each question may vary from administration to administration. For purposes of this discussion - and REA's practice tests - the Comparative exam questions will yield a score between 0 and 9 (with 0 being the lowest and 9 the highest) on Free-Response Part I, and a score of between 0 and 5 (with 0 being the lowest and 5 the highest) on Free-Response Part II. All four Free-Response items on our U.S. Government practice exam are scored on the 0-to-9 scale. Once the responses are graded, the scores can be converted. The AP Government and Politics exam is based on a 120-point scale. The breakdown of the percentages and points is as follows (note that the available free-response points will vary): Once raw scores have been obtained for each section, they are weighted to produce a composite score. Then the composite scores for each section are added together to form a total composite score for the exam. The range for the composite score is from 0 to 120. Finally, the composite score is translated into a range of from 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 the highest.

Scoring the Multiple-Choice Section Use this formula to calculate your raw score for the multiple-choice section: $(\# \text{ right answers}) - (\# \text{ wrong} \times 1/4) = \text{raw score}$ round off to nearest whole number; if the number is less than zero, enter zero

Scoring the Free-Response Section The following guide explains typical free-response scoring criteria:

Score Explanation of Score 8-9 The thesis is extremely well developed and is supported with concrete evidence; all aspects of the question have been addressed thoroughly; discussions presented are balanced.

6-7 The thesis is defined and supported; the evidence provided is very organized; the essay may be slightly imbalanced with one strong argument and one weak argument and/or discuss one topic more thoroughly than the next; sporadic factual errors may appear.

5 A basic argument or thesis is provided; evidence given supports the argument or thesis, but does not clearly connect with the argument or thesis; only the formal facets of the question are dealt with, and informal facets are not adequately covered; not all aspects of the question are discussed.

4 The thesis is not organized and is not referred to in the essay; the essay is little more than a recounting of facts and events; the essay may be overloaded with data; only one facet of the questions may be discussed; numerous factual errors may appear.

3 The thesis is weak; evidence provided in support does not apply to the thesis; factual errors are apparent.

2 The thesis is very weak; little or no factual evidence is provided to support the thesis; irrelevant and inaccurate information appears.

1 An attempt is made to answer the question, but the support given is insignificant and the coverage of topics is incomplete.

0 The question is not answered with any significance.

Free-Response Part II (Comparative only)

Score Explanation of Score 5 The thesis is extremely well developed and is supported with concrete evidence; all aspects of the question have been addressed thoroughly; discussions are presented in a balanced way.

4 The thesis is defined and supported; the evidence provided is very organized; the essay may be slightly imbalanced, with one strong argument and one weak argument; likewise, one topic may be more thoroughly explored than another; may be marred by sporadic factual errors.

3 A basic argument or thesis is presented; evidence given supports the argument or thesis, but does not clearly connect with the argument or thesis; only the formal facets of the question are dealt with, and informal facets are not adequately covered; not all aspects of the question are discussed.

2 The thesis is weak; evidence provided in support does not apply to the thesis; factual errors are apparent.

1 An attempt is made to answer the question, but the support given is insignificant and the coverage of topics is incomplete.

0 The question is not answered with any significance.

It would be extremely helpful to find someone who is willing to score your essay - your teachers or anyone who is familiar with the test material. If you do, ask the person to assign each of your U.S. and Comparative (Part I) essays a score of 0 to 9. For your Comparative (Part II) essays, use the 0-to-5 scale. If you must grade your own essays, try to be objective! In addition, you may want to give your essays three different grades. For instance, if you feel you did well, try giving the essay a score of 5, 6, or 7 to represent the various scores you may receive. By underestimating what your score may be, you are more likely to receive a better score on the actual exam. Use the following formulae to determine your raw score for the Free-Response section:

United States Exam (Free-Response) Response (1) score $\times 1.66 = \text{raw score}$ Response (2) score $\times 1.66 = \text{raw score}$

Response (3) score $\times 1.66$ = raw score Response (4) score $\times 1.66$ = raw score Comparative Exam
 Response (1) score $\times 1.66$ = raw score Response (2) score $\times 1.66$ = raw score Response (3) score $\times 3$
 = raw score Response (4) score $\times 3$ = raw score The Composite Score Once you have obtained your
 raw scores for both the Multiple-Choice and the Free-Response sections, add the scores together to
 get your composite score: United States Exam Multiple-Choice raw score + Free-Response raw
 score = composite score (round to nearest whole number) Score Essay 1 + Score Essay 2 + Score
 Essay 3 + Score Essay 4 = raw score Comparative Exam Multiple-Choice raw score +
 Free-Response raw score = composite score (round to nearest whole number) Now compare your
 composite score with the scale below: Composite Score / AP Grade 88 - 120 / 5 74 - 87 / 4 54 - 73 / 3
 35 - 53 / 2 0 - 34 / 1 AP grades are interpreted as follows: 5-extremely well qualified, 4-well qualified,
 3-qualified, 2-possibly qualified, and 1-no recommendation. Scores that Earn College Credit and/or
 Advanced Placement Most colleges grant students who earn a 3 or above college credit and/or
 advanced placement. You should check with your school guidance office about specific college
 requirements. Studying for Your AP Examination It is never too early to start studying. The earlier
 you begin, the more time you will have to sharpen your skills. Do not procrastinate! Cramming is not
 an effective way to study, since it does not allow you the time needed to learn the test material. It is
 very important for you to choose the time and place for studying that works best for you. Some
 students may set aside a certain number of hours every morning to study, while others may choose
 to study at night before going to sleep. Other students may study during the day, while waiting on a
 line, or even while eating lunch. Only you can determine when and where your study time will be
 most effective. But, be consistent and use your time wisely. Work out a study routine and stick to it!
 When you take the practice exam(s), try to make your testing conditions as much like the actual test
 as possible. Turn your television and radio off, and sit down at a quiet table free from distraction.
 Make sure to time yourself. As you complete the practice test(s), score your test(s) and thoroughly
 review the explanations to the questions you answered incorrectly, but do not review too much
 during any one sitting. Concentrate on one problem area at a time by reviewing the question and
 explanation, and by studying our review(s) until you are confident that you completely understand
 the material. Since you will be allowed to write in your test booklet during the actual exam, you may
 want to write in the margins and spaces of this book when practicing. However, do not make
 miscellaneous notes on your answer sheet. Mark your answers clearly and make sure the answer you
 have chosen corresponds to the question you are answering. Keep track of your scores! By doing so,
 you will be able to gauge your progress and discover general weaknesses in particular sections. You
 should carefully study the reviews that cover the topics causing you difficulty, as this will build your
 skills in those areas. To get the most out of your studying time, we recommend that you follow the
 Study Schedule which corresponds to the exam you are taking. It details how you can best budget
 your time. If you are taking both exams, do not try to study for each at the same time. Try
 alternating days by studying for the United States exam one day and the Comparative exam the next.
 Test-Taking Tips Although you may be unfamiliar with tests such as the Advanced Placement exams,
 there are many ways to acquaint yourself with this type of examination and help alleviate your
 test-taking anxieties. Listed below are ways to help yourself become accustomed to the AP exam,
 some of which may also be applied to other standardized tests. Become comfortable with the format
 of the AP Examination in Government and Politics that you are taking. When you are practicing to
 take the exam(s), simulate the conditions under which you will be taking the actual test(s). You
 should practice under the same time constraints as well. Stay calm and pace yourself. After
 simulating the test only a couple of times, you will boost your chances of doing well, and you will be
 able to sit down for the actual test much more confidently. Know the directions and format for each
 section of the exam. Familiarizing yourself with the directions and format of the different test
 sections will not only save you time, but will also ensure that you are familiar enough with the AP
 exam to avoid nervousness (and the mistakes caused by being nervous). Work on the easier
 questions first. If you find yourself working too long on one question, make a mark next to it in your
 test booklet and continue. After you have answered all of the questions that you can, go back to the

ones you have skipped. Use the process of elimination when you are unsure of an answer. If you can eliminate three of the answer choices, you have given yourself a fifty-fifty chance of getting the item correct since there will only be two choices left from which to make a guess. If you cannot eliminate at least three of the answer choices, you may choose not to guess, as you will be penalized one-quarter of a point for every incorrect answer. Questions not answered will not be counted. Be sure that you are marking your answer in the circle that corresponds to the number of the question in the test booklet. Since the multiple-choice section is graded by machine, marking the wrong answer will throw off your score.

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