



Online Courses for High School Students
1-888-972-6237

U.S. Government and Politics (Participation in Government)

This course uses the perspective of political institutions to explore government history, organization, and functions. Students encounter the political culture of our country from the Declaration of Independence to the present day, gaining insight into the challenges faced by presidents, Congress members, and other political participants. The course also covers the roles of political parties, interest groups, the media, and the Supreme Court. Students learn to use primary historical documents as evidence in evaluating past events and government functions.

Prerequisite: U.S. History (or equivalent)

Course Length: One Semester

Required Text: None

Materials List: None

Course Outline

Unit 1: Principles of Government

Students identify the purposes of government, and evaluate theories about its origins. They compare and contrast power and authority, describe types of government, and learn the basic ideas of American democracy.

- The Purposes and Origins of Government
- Power and Government
- Types of Government

Unit 2: Constitutional Underpinnings

Students learn about the Enlightenment, the ideas of John Locke and Thomas Jefferson, the American Revolution, and the Constitutional Convention. They compare and contrast the views of the Federalists and Anti-Federalists, discuss the five major principles of the Constitution, and learn about the Bill of Rights and other important amendments.

- Origins of American Government
- Creating and Ratifying the Constitution
- The Constitution
- Federalism

Unit 3: Institutions of Government

Students learn about the basic structure of the U.S. government, and the purpose and functions of Congress, the presidency, bureaucracy, and the federal court system. They study the significance of *Marbury v. Madison* and learn the steps the Supreme Court follows in selecting, hearing, and deciding cases.

- The National Government
- Congress
- The Presidency
- The Executive Branch and the Bureaucracy
- The Judicial Branch

Unit 4: Political Beliefs and Behaviors

Students learn about the expansion of suffrage in the United States, opportunities for citizen participation in the political process, and demographic factors that influence political participation and political attitudes. They are introduced to the two-axis model of the political spectrum, and study the development of liberal and conservative positions in the United States. They learn about the history of opinion polling and the methods used to measure public opinion.

- Political Participation
- Political Opinions
- America's Political Landscape

Unit 5: Linkage Institutions

Students learn about the two-party system, the history of political parties in America, and the role of the media in American elections. They study the process by which presidents are elected, how interest groups and lobbyists work, how the media can affect political agenda, and the evolution of the press in the United States.

- Political Parties
- Elections and Campaigns
- Interest Groups
- The Media

Unit 6: The Art of Policymaking

Students learn about policymaking and economic, social, and foreign policies of the United States. They learn about the typical issues addressed, and the powers of state and local government.

- Understanding Policymaking
- Policy Realms
- Policymaking at the State and Local Levels

Unit 7: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

Students learn about individual rights and liberties found in the Bill of Rights. They look at how the establishment clause and the free exercise clause have been interpreted to protect freedom of religion, trace the ever-evolving interpretation of freedom of speech, and learn about freedom of the press, assembly, petition, and the right to privacy. They study major steps in the fight for equality for African Americans, women, and other minority groups.

- American Rights
- First Amendment Liberties
- Privacy Rights and Rights of Due Process
- Rights for Minorities and Women

Unit 8: U.S. Government and Politics Review and Exam

Students review what they have learned and take the final exam.

- Review
- Exam