

A.P. American Government & Politics

Summer Assignment, 2024

Make news a daily habit: next fall we will read and discuss many different theoretical ideas about why our government was set up the way it was and how it was intended to operate. We will compare those ideas to how it does, in fact, operate. To do that effectively, you will need to have a reservoir of knowledge of events that show our government in action. You are just now completing a study of U.S. History that will give you a good baseline from which to work. What will make this class come alive; is your ability to connect with events that are unfolding right in front of us. To do that, you need to be aware of major events and trends in our society. You need to be aware, curious, and interested in what is going on around you, which means you need to follow the news. Consider the following suggestions especially if you typically don't follow the news already; make it routine by finding a consistent time, like during breakfast, dinner, or a radio report during a commute, etc. Also, do your best to seek out different points of view on the various issues to develop a complete understanding of the topic.

Try different news sources, both different mediums, and different companies/outlets.

- **Newspapers:** the *Los Angeles Times* is a good place to be, but also sample other major papers with a national focus (*New York Times*, *Washington Post*, etc.) especially if you're out of town on vacation.
- **Magazines:** *Time*, *Newsweek*, & *U.S. News & World Report* are the three top mainstream, but other opinion magazines abound (*National Review*, *New Republic*, *the Weekly Standard*, *Nation*, *American Spectator*, *Atlantic Monthly*, *Commentary*, *Mother Jones*, *Harpers* to name just a few)
- **Television:** watch network news that concentrates on national and world events & issues (not local), CBS, NBC & ABC are the standards, but also sample NewsNation, CNN, MSNBC, Fox, etc. Also, be sure to give PBS a try for more in-depth coverage and analysis (M-F at 6:00 pm "News Hour"). Finally, initiate yourself to what is available on C-SPAN.
- **Radio:** when you're driving, especially from 6-9 am or 3-6 pm, try one of the National Public Radio stations in our area (KCRW, 89.9fm or KPPC, 89.3fm or KCLU, 88.3fm)
- **Internet websites:** they keep multiplying . . . hard to keep up with! Most of the above-mentioned sources have websites, but look for others, and come ready to share what you've found useful over the summer.

Current Event Written Assignments: MUST BE TYPED, MLA FORMAT

As you follow the news, select any two events/stories that meet the following criteria:

1. The first event should deal with a conflict or power struggle between different branches of the government (i.e. Congress & President, President & The Courts, The Courts, and Congress).
2. The second event should reflect a conflict or power struggle between the national government and a state or local government (it can be an issue that affects multiple states).

A.P. American Government & Politics

Summer Assignment, 2024

This assignment is intended to give you a baseline understanding of national and international current events, therefore students **MUST** write about events that occurred during the summer of 2024 (May-August). Failure to choose events during the summer will result in a loss of points of 50%.

For each event, follow the conflict in several sources. Compose a summary that describes the conflict with enough detail that anyone who hadn't followed the event could understand what happened and its significance (about 1 page double-spaced). Then, compose a personal response in which you take a position on the question of which party/side ought to prevail. Be sure to explain your position and support your arguments with evidence (about 1 page double-spaced). In evaluating this work, we will be looking for a clear and concise summary that shows you understand the basic conflict or struggle each group has with the other group. In addition, there is any relevant history that is created by this conflict. Do you have reasonable arguments and evidence to support whatever position you take? **Make sure in your write up to identify which conflict you are addressing in each current event.**

What this assignment includes and point value associated to each part:

1. **Event #1 (Conflict Between Branches):** Summary of event/conflict (8 points) + Your position and explanation (8 points) + bibliography (4 sources, MLA Format; 4 points)
2. **Event #2 (Conflict Between Levels of Govt):** summary of event/conflict (8 points) + Your position and explanation (8 points) + bibliography (4 sources, MLA Format; 4 points)
3. **Please make sure you identify which current event you are discussing in the title of the assignment.**
4. **This is due on the date it is assigned no exceptions. If you will be absent on this day you must email it to your teacher on time.**

Our suggestion is while you are following the news; you may want to keep a journal of the news and your sources to help you with your responses. As part of the journal, we suggest you track the major Supreme Court decisions or rulings. Having knowledge of these cases will help you with the first assignment when school starts.

Please relax and have some fun with this. We look forward to working and learning together with you next school year.

Mr. Novak
lnovak@lvusd.org

Mr. Moore
cmoore@lvusd.org

Mr. Boelman
bboelman@lvusd.org