

AP US GOVERNMENT STUDY GUIDE

175 High-Yield Concepts

Advanced Placement Course | College Board CED-aligned

- All 5 CED units: foundations, branches, liberties, ideology, participation
 - Every required document & all 15 required Supreme Court cases
- Exam weights on every unit; real exam format on the how-to page
 - Perfect for the AP US Government & Politics exam in May

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How to Use This Guide

This guide condenses the AP U.S. Government and Politics course and exam description into high-yield concepts. It is not a textbook replacement -- it is the fastest way to review everything the exam covers and to target your weak units.

The AP Gov exam is 3 hours: 55 multiple-choice questions (80 min, 50% of the score) and 4 free-response questions (100 min, 50% of the score). The 5 units below map to the College Board Course and Exam Description, with unit weights on each section title.

How to use the concepts

- Each concept = term + concise explanation + high-yield exam tip (+ example where useful).
- First pass: read every concept in order. Underline anything unfamiliar.
- Second pass: focus only on the concepts you underlined.
- Two weeks before the exam: rapid-review every tip line (they are the highest-yield).
- Use the Table of Contents to jump straight to your weakest units.

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Total: 175 high-yield concepts

How to use the TOC: work through the units in order on your first pass, then jump back to your weakest units for review. Each concept includes an Explanation, a high-yield exam tip, and where useful an Example. Mark the concepts you miss with a small dot in the margin and revisit them 48 hours later.

Unit 1: Unit 1: Foundations of American Democracy

15-22% of the AP Gov exam. The ideals of the Declaration, the Constitution, federalism, and the debates over ratification.

1 Democratic Ideals in the Declaration of Independence

Explanation: The Declaration (1776) states that people have natural rights, governments derive their just powers from the consent of the governed, and the people may alter or abolish an unjust government. It justifies revolution and defines American political values.

AP Gov Tip: *Know the Declaration as the source of the core ideals: natural rights, consent, popular sovereignty. The exam asks how later movements (abolition, women's suffrage) invoked these ideals.*

Example: The 'all men are created equal' line was used by the Declaration's own drafters while slavery existed -- a contradiction later movements exploited.

2 Natural Rights & the Social Contract

Explanation: Natural rights (life, liberty, property -- Locke) belong to individuals before government. The social contract: people give up some freedom in exchange for protection; if government violates it, people may resist.

AP Gov Tip: *Connect natural rights to Locke and to the Declaration; the social contract appears in every 'why government?' FRQ.*

Example: Locke's Second Treatise argued a ruler who breaks the contract forfeits legitimacy -- Jefferson borrowed this directly.

3 Popular Sovereignty

Explanation: The principle that government's authority comes from the people, who are the ultimate source of power. Reflected in 'We the People' and in voting, elections, and representative institutions.

AP Gov Tip: *Popular sovereignty = rule by the people's consent; contrast it with a monarchy or a dictatorship when analyzing legitimacy.*

Example: The Preamble's 'We the People' signals that the Constitution's authority flows from citizens, not from a king.

4 Republicanism

Explanation: A system in which the people elect representatives to make policy on their behalf, rather than deciding everything directly. The Constitution creates a republic, not a direct democracy.

AP Gov Tip: *Republicanism = representative government. The Framers feared direct democracy (majority tyranny) and chose representation.*

Example: Federalist No. 10 argues a republic over a pure democracy because representatives can refine and enlarge the public's views.

5 Participatory Democracy

Explanation: A model emphasizing broad citizen participation in politics -- voting, initiative, referendum, recall, town meetings -- so that citizens directly shape policy.

AP Gov Tip: *Participatory democracy = citizens directly involved. The exam contrasts it with pluralist and elite models; cite ballot measures and town meetings as examples.*

Example: New England town meetings and California's ballot initiatives are classic examples of participatory democracy.

6 Pluralist Democracy

Explanation: A model in which organized groups (interest groups, parties, associations) compete for influence, and policy emerges from that competition. No single group dominates.

AP Gov Tip: *Pluralism = group competition producing policy. Identify examples: interest-group lobbying, coalition politics, the National Rifle Association vs gun-control groups.*

Example: When the Chamber of Commerce and labor unions both lobby Congress on trade, policy reflects their competing pressures -- pluralism in action.

7 Elite Democracy

Explanation: A model in which a small number of powerful, wealthy, or well-educated people exercise disproportionate influence over policy, often through money, connections, or expertise.

AP Gov Tip: *Elite theory = power concentrated in a few. The exam wants you to evaluate which model (pluralist, elite, participatory) best describes American politics.*

Example: Critics point to campaign finance and the revolving door between government and lobbying as evidence of elite influence.

8 Federalist No. 10: Factions

Explanation: Madison argues factions (interest groups) are inevitable but can be controlled in a large republic: a big, diverse nation makes it harder for any one faction to become a tyrannical majority.

AP Gov Tip: *Federalist No. 10 (required document) = the cure for factions is a large republic with representation. This is a guaranteed FRQ reference.*

Example: Madison preferred a large republic over a small one because more interests means no single faction can dominate.

9 Brutus No. 1: The Anti-Federalist Critique

Explanation: Brutus (an Anti-Federalist) warns that a large republic cannot work: representatives will be distant and unresponsive, and the necessary and proper clause plus supremacy clause give Congress unlimited power.

AP Gov Tip: *Brutus No. 1 (required document) = the case AGAINST the Constitution: too much power centralized, too far from the people, no bill of rights.*

Example: Brutus feared a standing army and consolidated government would swallow the states -- the Anti-Federalist nightmare.

10 The Articles of Confederation

Explanation: The first national government (1781-89): a loose league of states with a weak Congress that could not tax, regulate commerce, or enforce its laws. It required 9/13 votes for most laws and unanimity for amendments.

AP Gov Tip: *The Articles = weak central government. Every failure (no tax power, no enforcement) explains why the Constitution was written.*

Example: Congress could ask states for money but had no power to compel them -- the national government was effectively broke.

11 Shays' Rebellion (1786-87)

Explanation: Massachusetts farmers, facing debt and foreclosure, shut down courts under Daniel Shays. The national government could not respond, alarming elites and triggering calls for a stronger central government.

AP Gov Tip: *Shays' Rebellion = the catalyst for the Constitutional Convention; it proved the Articles government could not keep order.*

Example: The rebellion was crushed by a state militia, but the panic it caused pushed leaders like Washington and Madison to act.

12 The Constitutional Convention & the Great Compromise

Explanation: Delegates met in Philadelphia (1787) to revise the Articles but wrote a new Constitution. The Great Compromise created a bicameral Congress: House by population, Senate with equal state representation.

AP Gov Tip: *The Great Compromise = House by population + Senate equal. Know it with the Three-Fifths Compromise and the 1808 slave-trade clause.*

Example: Virginia's large-state plan (population) clashed with New Jersey's small-state plan (equal); the compromise split the difference.

13 The Three-Fifths & Slave Trade Compromises

Explanation: The Three-Fifths Compromise counted enslaved people as 3/5 for representation and taxation. The Slave Trade Clause allowed the importation of enslaved people until 1808. Both balanced North-South power.

AP Gov Tip: *These compromises preserved union by accommodating slavery -- a required point for essays on the Constitution's contradictions.*

Example: The 3/5 count boosted Southern representation in the House and the Electoral College.

14 Separation of Powers

Explanation: The Constitution distributes power among three branches: legislative (makes law), executive (enforces law), judicial (interprets law). Each branch has distinct functions and membership.

AP Gov Tip: *Separation of powers = distinct functions per branch; checks and balances = each branch can limit the others. Do not conflate them.*

Example: Congress writes laws, the president executes them, and the courts interpret them -- a design borrowed from Montesquieu.

15 Checks and Balances

Explanation: Each branch can restrain the others: the president vetoes legislation, Congress overrides vetoes and confirms appointments, the courts declare laws unconstitutional, and Congress can impeach.

AP Gov Tip: *The exam loves specific check examples: veto/override, advice and consent, judicial review, impeachment, power of the purse.*

Example: The president nominates judges, but the Senate confirms them -- a check within a check.

16 Federalist No. 51: Checks & Balances

Explanation: Madison argues that ambition must be made to counteract ambition: the separation of powers plus checks and balances prevents any one branch from dominating, even in a government of men, not angels.

AP Gov Tip: *Federalist No. 51 (required document) = the theoretical defense of checks and balances and federalism as double security.*

Example: 'If men were angels, no government would be necessary' -- institutional design compensates for human imperfection.

17 Enumerated, Implied & Reserved Powers

Explanation: Enumerated powers are listed in the Constitution (Article I, Section 8). Implied powers derive from the necessary and proper clause. Reserved powers belong to the states (10th Amendment).

AP Gov Tip: *Categorize powers fast: coin money = enumerated; create a national bank = implied; run schools = reserved.*

Example: The power to regulate interstate commerce is enumerated; the EPA's regulations flow from implied powers to carry it out.

18 Concurrent Powers & the Supremacy Clause

Explanation: Concurrent powers (taxing, building roads, courts) are shared by national and state governments. The supremacy clause makes the Constitution and federal laws the supreme law of the land, overriding state law.

AP Gov Tip: *Supremacy clause = federal law wins in a direct conflict. It is the constitutional foundation for national authority.*

Example: When California's emissions rules conflict with federal standards, the supremacy question becomes a federalism fight.

19 Federalism: Dual vs Cooperative

Explanation: Dual federalism (layer cake) = distinct, separate spheres for national and state governments. Cooperative federalism (marble cake) = shared, overlapping responsibilities, especially since the New Deal.

AP Gov Tip: *Dual federalism describes the 19th century; cooperative federalism describes the 20th-21st century. Connect to grants and mandates.*

Example: Under cooperative federalism, states administer programs (Medicaid) funded partly by the national government.

20 Fiscal Federalism & Grants

Explanation: Fiscal federalism = the national government influencing state policy through money: grants-in-aid, categorical grants, block grants, and mandates.

AP Gov Tip: *Grants = the main tool of fiscal federalism. Categorical grants are specific; block grants are broad; mandates are requirements.*

Example: Federal highway funds conditioned on state speed-limit laws illustrate the power of the purse.

21 Categorical vs Block Grants

Explanation: Categorical grants fund specific programs with strict conditions (Medicaid, Title I). Block grants give states broad discretion over a policy area (Community Development Block Grants).

AP Gov Tip: *Categorical = strings attached; block = flexibility. States prefer block grants; the national government often prefers categorical.*

Example: The 1996 welfare reform converted AFDC (categorical) into TANF (block grant), giving states discretion.

22 Unfunded Mandates

Explanation: Requirements the national government imposes on states without providing funding (e.g., ADA accessibility standards, No Child Left Behind testing). States often resent them.

AP Gov Tip: *Unfunded mandates = requirements without money. The Unfunded Mandates Reform Act (1995) tried to limit them.*

Example: When Congress raised the drinking age by threatening highway funds, states complained it was effectively a mandate.

23 Devolution & the 10th Amendment

Explanation: Devolution = returning power and responsibility to the states. The 10th Amendment reserves undelegated powers to the states -- the textual basis for state authority.

AP Gov Tip: *Devolution = power to the states. Cite the 10th Amendment, block grants, and welfare reform as evidence.*

Example: The 1990s 'New Federalism' (Rehnquist Court, welfare reform) returned authority over welfare and some other areas to states.

24 Full Faith and Credit Clause

Explanation: Article IV requires states to honor the public acts, records, and judicial proceedings of other states -- e.g., recognizing marriages, divorces, and court judgments across state lines.

AP Gov Tip: *Full faith and credit = states recognize each other's legal acts. It is a required Article IV concept.*

Example: A marriage license issued in Nevada is recognized in every other state because of full faith and credit.

25 Privileges and Immunities Clause

Explanation: Article IV bars states from discriminating against citizens of other states -- a citizen of one state is entitled to the privileges and immunities of citizens in any other state.

AP Gov Tip: *Privileges and immunities = no state can treat out-of-staters worse than its own citizens on fundamental rights.*

Example: A state cannot charge out-of-state residents higher fees for basic rights like accessing courts.

26 The Amendment Process

Explanation: Amendments require a 2/3 supermajority in both houses (or a convention called by 2/3 of states) and ratification by 3/4 of state legislatures (or conventions). Only 27 have passed.

AP Gov Tip: *The amendment process is deliberately difficult: proposal (2/3 Congress) + ratification (3/4 states). The exam contrasts it with ordinary lawmaking.*

Example: The Equal Rights Amendment passed Congress (1972) but fell three states short of ratification -- the difficulty in action.

27 The Bill of Rights & Ratification

Explanation: Anti-Federalists demanded protections for individual liberties. The Bill of Rights (first ten amendments, 1791) protects speech, religion, press, assembly, petition, rights of the accused, and reserved powers.

AP Gov Tip: *The Bill of Rights was the price of ratification. Know that it originally applied only to the national government (until incorporation).*

Example: Massachusetts and Virginia ratified only after promises that a bill of rights would follow.

28 Federalist No. 70: The Energetic Executive

Explanation: Hamilton defends a single, strong executive: energy in the executive (unity, duration, adequate power) is essential to good government -- one person can act with decision, activity, and dispatch.

AP Gov Tip: *Federalist No. 70 (required document) = the case for a single president, used to justify executive power and the veto.*

Example: Hamilton argues a plural executive would produce conflict, delay, and the 'blame game.'

29 Federalist No. 78: The Judiciary

Explanation: Hamilton defends judicial review and life tenure for judges: the judiciary is the least dangerous branch, with neither purse nor sword, and lifetime appointments protect independence.

AP Gov Tip: *Federalist No. 78 (required document) = the judiciary's independence and its power to judge laws against the Constitution.*

Example: Hamilton calls the judiciary the 'least dangerous' branch because it can only judge, not enforce or fund.

30 Marbury v. Madison (1803)

Explanation: Chief Justice Marshall established judicial review -- the Court's power to strike down laws as unconstitutional -- by refusing to order delivery of Marbury's commission on the grounds that part of the Judiciary Act violated the Constitution.

AP Gov Tip: *Marbury (required case) = judicial review. It made the Court a co-equal branch and is the foundation of its power.*

Example: Marshall gave the Democratic-Republicans the ruling they wanted on the commissions but won the Court the power of review.

31 McCulloch v. Maryland (1819)

Explanation: The Court upheld the national bank as constitutional (implied powers via the necessary and proper clause) and ruled states cannot tax federal institutions ('the power to tax involves the power to destroy').

AP Gov Tip: *McCulloch (required case) = implied powers + federal supremacy. It is the classic federalism case on national power.*

Example: Maryland's tax on the Baltimore branch of the Bank of the United States was struck down unanimously.

32 US v. Lopez (1995)

Explanation: The Court ruled the Gun-Free School Zones Act exceeded Congress's commerce power -- the first time in nearly 60 years the Court limited the commerce clause. It signaled a shift toward 'New Federalism.'

AP Gov Tip: *US v. Lopez (required case) = limits on the commerce clause; guns near schools are not interstate commerce. Contrast with Wickard and McCulloch.*

Example: Lopez carried a gun into a Texas high school; the Court said education is a state, not federal, concern.

33 Strict vs Loose Construction

Explanation: Strict construction reads the Constitution narrowly (only enumerated powers). Loose construction reads it broadly (implied powers, necessary and proper). Federalists favored loose; Jeffersonians favored strict.

AP Gov Tip: *Connect construction to the bank debate, McCulloch, and modern disputes over federal power like health care.*

Example: Hamilton's bank (loose) vs Jefferson's objection (strict) -- the same debate recurs in every commerce-clause case.

34 The Ratification Debates

Explanation: Federalists supported the Constitution (strong national government, representation, checks). Anti-Federalists opposed it (too much power, missing bill of rights, elite bias). The Federalists won, promising amendments.

AP Gov Tip: *The ratification debate = Federalists vs Anti-Federalists. Map each side to its documents: Federalist No. 10/51/70/78 vs Brutus No. 1.*

Example: Ratification succeeded after nine states approved; the Bill of Rights was added to satisfy Anti-Federalist concerns.

35 The Commerce Clause & Its Limits

Explanation: Article I, Section 8 gives Congress power to regulate interstate commerce. The Court expanded it through the New Deal (Wickard v. Filburn) and limited it in US v. Lopez and US v. Morrison.

AP Gov Tip: *The commerce clause = the main source of national regulatory power, with a swing between broad and narrow readings.*

Example: Wickard (1942) let Congress regulate a farmer's homegrown wheat; Lopez (1995) said a school-zone gun ban was not commerce.

Unit 2: Unit 2: Interactions Among Branches of Government

25-36% of the AP Gov exam. Congress, the presidency, the bureaucracy, the courts, and the checks among them.

36 The Structure of Congress

Explanation: Congress is bicameral: the House (435 members, 2-year terms, apportioned by population) and the Senate (100 members, 6-year terms, two per state). The House originates revenue bills and impeaches; the Senate confirms and tries impeachments.

AP Gov Tip: *House = population + short terms; Senate = states + long terms. Match each chamber to its unique powers.*

Example: The House can impeach a president by majority vote; the Senate convicts by 2/3 -- a two-chamber check.

37 House vs Senate Differences

Explanation: The House: more rules, centralized leadership, committees powerful, 2-year terms (always campaigning). The Senate: fewer rules, unlimited debate (filibuster), individual senators influential, 6-year terms.

AP Gov Tip: *The exam asks how chamber differences affect behavior: House = efficiency and majority rule; Senate = deliberation and minority rights.*

Example: The Senate's filibuster (60 votes to end debate) has no House equivalent.

38 The Committee System

Explanation: Congress organizes around committees (standing, select, joint, conference) that draft, amend, and kill legislation, oversee agencies, and conduct investigations. Committee chairs wield agenda power.

AP Gov Tip: *Committees are where bills actually live and die; the exam asks about the role of chairs and the seniority system.*

Example: The House Rules Committee sets debate rules for every major bill -- 'the traffic cop of the House.'

39 Leadership in Congress

Explanation: The Speaker of the House (elected by the majority party) controls the agenda. The Senate is led by the majority leader; parties also use whips to count votes and enforce discipline.

AP Gov Tip: *Know the Speaker's powers (agenda, committee assignments, referral) and the majority/minority leader roles.*

Example: The Speaker decides which bills reach the floor and can bury a bill in committee.

40 How a Bill Becomes a Law

Explanation: A bill is introduced, referred to committee, marked up, reported, debated and voted on in each chamber, reconciled in conference, and sent to the president, who may sign, veto, or pocket-veto it. A veto can be overridden by 2/3 of both chambers.

AP Gov Tip: *Trace the path: committee -> floor -> conference -> president. Most bills die in committee; gridlock is the norm.*

Example: Only a small fraction of introduced bills become law; most never leave committee.

41 Gerrymandering

Explanation: Drawing district boundaries to benefit a party or group. Techniques include packing (concentrating opponents) and cracking (spreading them thin). Incumbents and state legislatures use it to lock in advantages.

AP Gov Tip: *Gerrymandering = manipulating district lines for partisan advantage. Connect it to reapportionment after each census.*

Example: A party controlling a state legislature can draw districts to guarantee it wins 7 of 10 seats despite losing the popular vote.

42 Baker v. Carr (1962)

Explanation: The Court ruled that legislative apportionment (one person, one vote) is a justiciable question -- federal courts may hear challenges to district population inequalities. 'One person, one vote' was extended by Reynolds v. Sims (1964).

AP Gov Tip: *Baker v. Carr (required case) = courts can review redistricting; it opened the door to equal-population districts.*

Example: Tennessee's rural-dominated legislature had not been reapportioned in 60 years; the Court said that violated equal protection.

43 Shaw v. Reno (1993)

Explanation: The Court struck down a North Carolina district drawn predominantly on the basis of race (a bizarrely shaped majority-minority district), holding that racial gerrymandering violates the equal protection clause.

AP Gov Tip: *Shaw v. Reno (required case) = race cannot be the predominant factor in drawing districts, even to help minorities.*

Example: District 12 in North Carolina was 160 miles long and, at points, no wider than an interstate highway.

44 Incumbency Advantage

Explanation: Incumbents win reelection at very high rates thanks to name recognition, franking (free mail), casework, fundraising, and the power to bring home pork. The advantage is strongest in the House.

AP Gov Tip: *Incumbency = the biggest factor in congressional elections. The exam contrasts House (huge advantage) vs Senate (slightly less).*

Example: House incumbents routinely win with 90%+ reelection rates; challengers struggle to raise money.

45 Congressional Oversight

Explanation: Congress monitors the executive branch through hearings, investigations, the Government Accountability Office (GAO), and the power of the purse. Oversight checks bureaucratic and presidential power.

AP Gov Tip: *Oversight = Congress supervising the executive. Expect a question pairing it with the 'power of the purse' and hearings.*

Example: The House's 2019-20 impeachment inquiry of President Trump was an exercise of oversight and investigation.

46 The Power of the Purse

Explanation: Congress controls spending: it passes appropriations bills and can fund, defund, or condition programs. This is Congress's strongest check on the president and the bureaucracy.

AP Gov Tip: *The purse = Congress's budget power. It funds agencies, sets conditions, and can shut down government.*

Example: Congress refused to fund border-wall construction fully in 2019, forcing a 35-day government shutdown.

47 Senate Confirmation & Advice and Consent

Explanation: The Senate confirms presidential appointments (cabinet, federal judges, ambassadors) by majority vote and ratifies treaties by 2/3. 'Advice and consent' is a key check on the executive.

AP Gov Tip: *Advice and consent = Senate approves nominees and treaties. Judicial confirmations are the most contentious example.*

Example: The Senate rejected Robert Bork's Supreme Court nomination in 1987 and refused to hold hearings on Merrick Garland in 2016.

48 Treaty Power & Executive Agreements

Explanation: Treaties require Senate ratification by 2/3. Presidents increasingly use executive agreements with foreign nations, which need no Senate approval but are not binding on future presidents.

AP Gov Tip: *Treaty = 2/3 Senate; executive agreement = president alone. The exam contrasts their durability and process.*

Example: The Iran nuclear deal (2015) was structured as an executive agreement precisely to avoid Senate ratification.

49 Impeachment

Explanation: The House impeaches (charges) by majority vote; the Senate tries the case, needing 2/3 to convict and remove. Presidents Johnson, Clinton, and Trump were impeached; none were convicted by the Senate.

AP Gov Tip: *Impeachment = House charges + Senate conviction. It is a political, not criminal, process for 'high crimes and misdemeanors.'*

Example: Andrew Johnson (1868) was acquitted by a single Senate vote; Richard Nixon resigned before the House could impeach him.

50 The Roles of the President

Explanation: The president wears many hats: chief executive, commander in chief, chief diplomat, chief legislator, head of state, party leader, and manager of the economy. Each role carries specific powers.

AP Gov Tip: *The exam asks you to identify which role is being exercised in a scenario (e.g., sending troops = commander in chief).*

Example: Delivering the State of the Union is the president acting as chief legislator.

51 The Cabinet & the Bureaucracy

Explanation: The cabinet comprises the heads of the 15 executive departments, plus other advisors. Departments, agencies, and commissions implement policy, write rules, and provide services.

AP Gov Tip: *Cabinet = department secretaries; bureaucracy = the implementing agencies beneath them. Confirmations apply to cabinet posts.*

Example: The Secretary of State handles diplomacy; the EPA (an independent agency) writes environmental rules.

52 The Executive Office of the President (EOP)

Explanation: The EOP houses the president's closest advisors: the White House staff, the National Security Council (NSC), the Council of Economic Advisers, and the Office of Management and Budget (OMB).

AP Gov Tip: *The EOP = the president's personal bureaucracy; the OMB reviews agency budgets and rules -- a key control lever.*

Example: The chief of staff manages access to the president; the NSC coordinates national security advice.

53 Executive Orders

Explanation: Presidents issue executive orders to direct the bureaucracy and implement policy without Congress. They carry the force of law but can be overturned by Congress (funding), the courts, or the next president.

AP Gov Tip: *Executive orders = unilateral presidential action. Their limits: they cannot appropriate money or contradict statutes.*

Example: Truman's order desegregating the military (1948) and Biden's student-loan actions show the order's power and limits.

54 The Veto Power

Explanation: The president may veto bills (returned to Congress, which can override by 2/3) or pocket-veto (ignore until Congress adjourns). The veto threat shapes legislation even before it reaches the president.

AP Gov Tip: *Veto = rejection; override = 2/3 both chambers (rare). The threat of veto is a bargaining tool, not just a final act.*

Example: Presidents threaten vetoes publicly to force Congress to negotiate; actual vetoes are relatively rare.

55 The Bully Pulpit & Going Public

Explanation: Presidents use the State of the Union, press conferences, and social media to shape public opinion and pressure Congress -- 'going public.' The bully pulpit is the president's megaphone.

AP Gov Tip: *The bully pulpit = using public opinion as leverage over Congress; effectiveness depends on approval and media attention.*

Example: FDR's fireside chats rallied public support for New Deal legislation.

56 Executive Privilege & US v. Nixon (1974)

Explanation: Executive privilege lets presidents keep internal communications confidential. In US v. Nixon, the Court ruled the privilege exists but is not absolute -- Nixon had to surrender the Watergate tapes.

AP Gov Tip: *US v. Nixon (required context) = executive privilege is qualified, not absolute; national security is not a blanket shield.*

Example: The unanimous Court rejected Nixon's claim, and the tapes forced his resignation weeks later.

57 The Federal Bureaucracy: Structure & Functions

Explanation: The bureaucracy includes cabinet departments (15), independent agencies (CIA, EPA), regulatory commissions (FCC, SEC), and government corporations (USPS, Amtrak). It implements law, writes rules, and adjudicates disputes.

AP Gov Tip: *Bureaucracy functions: implementation, rulemaking, adjudication. Regulatory commissions are designed to be independent of politics.*

Example: The SEC writes and enforces securities rules; the FCC licenses broadcasters.

58 Iron Triangles

Explanation: The stable, mutually beneficial relationship among a congressional committee, a bureaucratic agency, and an interest group -- e.g., agriculture, defense, or transportation policy.

AP Gov Tip: *Iron triangle = committee + agency + interest group, resistant to outside influence. Contrast with more fluid issue networks.*

Example: The military-industrial triangle: Armed Services committees + the Pentagon + defense contractors.

59 Issue Networks

Explanation: The looser, more fluid coalition of groups, experts, media, and officials who influence a policy area -- broader and more open than an iron triangle.

AP Gov Tip: *Issue networks = many players, changing alliances; iron triangles = three stable players. The exam contrasts the two.*

Example: Climate policy draws in agencies, scientists, environmental groups, industry, and state governments -- an issue network.

60 Bureaucratic Discretion & Rulemaking

Explanation: Congress delegates rulemaking authority to agencies, which write detailed regulations to implement vague statutes. Bureaucrats exercise discretion in enforcement and interpretation.

AP Gov Tip: *Discretion = agencies fill in the details Congress leaves open. The OMB reviews rules; Congress can defund or override.*

Example: The EPA's Clean Air Act rules specify emission limits Congress never wrote into law.

61 The Structure of the Federal Courts

Explanation: The federal judiciary: 94 district courts (trial), 13 circuit courts of appeals, and the Supreme Court (9 justices). Federal judges serve life terms 'during good behavior.'

AP Gov Tip: *District courts try cases; circuit courts hear appeals; the Supreme Court is the court of last resort. Jurisdiction can be original or appellate.*

Example: Most federal cases end at the district or circuit level; the Court hears about 60-80 cases a year.

62 Judicial Review & Judicial Independence

Explanation: Judicial review (from Marbury) lets courts strike down laws and executive actions. Life tenure and salary protection insulate judges from political pressure.

AP Gov Tip: *Judicial review + life tenure = the judiciary's power and independence. Federalist No. 78 is the theoretical basis.*

Example: The Court has struck down over 150 federal laws and thousands of state laws since Marbury.

63 Judicial Appointments & Life Tenure

Explanation: The president nominates federal judges; the Senate confirms by majority. Life tenure means vacancies open only by death, retirement, or resignation -- making appointments high-stakes.

AP Gov Tip: *Appointments = presidential nominations checked by Senate confirmation. Judges serve decades, so nominations shape policy long after a presidency.*

Example: A single president can appoint judges who serve 30+ years, extending influence far beyond their term.

64 Judicial Ideology & Decision-Making

Explanation: Judges decide cases influenced by their judicial philosophy: judicial activism (courts should correct injustices) vs judicial restraint (defer to elected branches), and originalism vs living constitutionalism.

AP Gov Tip: *The exam contrasts activism vs restraint and originalism vs living constitution. Connect each to actual rulings.*

Example: Originalists cite the text's original meaning (Scalia); living-constitutionalists emphasize evolving standards (Breyer).

65 Stare Decisis & Precedent

Explanation: Stare decisis = 'let the decision stand': courts follow precedent to ensure consistency. Precedent can be overturned (Brown overruled Plessy; Dobbs overruled Roe) but rarely is.

AP Gov Tip: *Stare decisis = precedent governs. The exam asks why the Court usually follows precedent and when it overturns it.*

Example: Brown v. Board (1954) explicitly overruled Plessy's 'separate but equal' precedent.

66 Amicus Curiae & Interest Groups in Court

Explanation: Amicus curiae ('friend of the court') briefs let interest groups and others argue before the Court. Groups also sponsor litigation and use test cases to shape law.

AP Gov Tip: *Interest groups influence courts through amicus briefs, test cases, and funding litigation -- a less visible political channel.*

Example: The NAACP's strategic litigation campaign produced Brown v. Board -- the model test-case strategy.

67 Checks on the Courts

Explanation: The courts are checked by: appointments and confirmations, Congress's power to alter jurisdiction, propose constitutional amendments, and control budgets, and the executive's power to enforce (or ignore) rulings.

AP Gov Tip: *The judiciary is the least dangerous branch in part because it depends on the others to enforce its decisions.*

Example: After the Court struck down New Deal programs, FDR's 'court-packing' threat prompted the 'switch in time that saved nine.'

68 Divided Government & Gridlock

Explanation: When different parties control the presidency and Congress, gridlock often results: vetoes, filibusters, and stalemate. Unified government still faces internal party divisions.

AP Gov Tip: *Divided government = gridlock; the exam asks how separation of powers produces policy delay and compromise.*

Example: From 2019-2021, a Democratic House and Republican Senate produced few major laws -- classic gridlock.

69 The Appropriations Process & Shutdowns

Explanation: Congress funds the government through annual appropriations bills. If they are not enacted, agencies shut down; continuing resolutions (CRs) temporarily fund operations while negotiations continue.

AP Gov Tip: *Appropriations = the annual funding cycle; CRs keep government open; failure to pass them causes shutdowns.*

Example: The 2018-19 shutdown, the longest in history, lasted 35 days over border-wall funding.

70 Signing Statements & Unilateral Tools

Explanation: Presidents issue signing statements explaining how they will interpret a law, sometimes refusing to enforce parts they deem unconstitutional. They are a contested expansion of presidential power.

AP Gov Tip: *Signing statements = the president's interpretive commentary on legislation -- a modern power tool.*

Example: George W. Bush issued over 150 signing statements objecting to provisions across many bills.

Unit 3: Unit 3: Civil Liberties & Civil Rights

13-18% of the AP Gov exam. The Bill of Rights, incorporation, due process, equal protection, and landmark cases.

71 Civil Liberties vs Civil Rights

Explanation: Civil liberties are protections against government action (speech, religion, fair trial). Civil rights are positive guarantees of equal treatment and protection from discrimination (voting, equal access).

AP Gov Tip: *Liberties = freedom FROM government; rights = equality and protection FROM discrimination. The exam defines both.*

Example: The First Amendment's free-speech clause protects a liberty; the 14th Amendment's equal protection clause secures a right.

72 Selective Incorporation

Explanation: The process by which the Supreme Court applies most Bill of Rights protections to the states through the 14th Amendment's due process clause -- case by case, right by right (via Gitlow, then the Warren Court).

AP Gov Tip: *Incorporation = applying the Bill of Rights to the states via the 14th Amendment. Note it is 'selective,' not total.*

Example: In Gitlow v. New York (1925), the Court incorporated free speech -- the first of many rights applied to the states.

73 The 14th Amendment: Due Process & Equal Protection

Explanation: The 14th Amendment (1868) defines citizenship, guarantees due process and equal protection, and gives Congress enforcement power. It is the constitutional vehicle for incorporation and civil rights.

AP Gov Tip: *The 14th Amendment = the amendment of civil rights: due process (incorporation) + equal protection (anti-discrimination).*

Example: Brown, Roe, and Obergefell all rest on 14th Amendment reasoning.

74 The Establishment Clause

Explanation: The First Amendment forbids government establishment of religion: no official church, no excessive entanglement. The Lemon test (secular purpose, no endorsement, no entanglement) and 'neutrality' frame the analysis.

AP Gov Tip: *Establishment = government cannot favor or endorse religion. Engel v. Vitale is the required case.*

Example: The Court struck down school-sponsored prayer in Engel and displays of the Ten Commandments in some contexts.

75 Engel v. Vitale (1962)

Explanation: The Court ruled that a state-composed, voluntary school prayer violated the establishment clause -- government may not compose or sponsor prayer in public schools.

AP Gov Tip: *Engel (required case) = no official school prayer, even voluntary, even nondenominational. It is an establishment-clause case.*

Example: The regents' prayer in New York schools was struck down 6-1 despite being voluntary and nonsectarian.

76 The Free Exercise Clause

Explanation: The First Amendment protects the right to practice one's religion. The government cannot target religious belief, but can regulate conduct if a neutral law of general applicability conflicts.

AP Gov Tip: *Free exercise = believe and practice; limits exist when conduct violates neutral laws (Employment Division v. Smith).*

Example: Wisconsin v. Yoder allowed Amish parents to withdraw children from school after 8th grade for religious reasons.

77 Wisconsin v. Yoder (1972)

Explanation: The Court held that Amish families' free exercise rights outweighed Wisconsin's compulsory school-attendance law beyond 8th grade -- a required case on religious accommodation.

AP Gov Tip: *Yoder (required case) = free exercise can exempt groups from neutral laws when religious practice is sincere and burden is heavy.*

Example: The Amish argued high school threatened their community's salvation; the Court agreed their interest outweighed the state's.

78 Free Speech & Prior Restraint

Explanation: The First Amendment protects speech, including unpopular ideas. Prior restraint (censoring before publication) is almost always unconstitutional; the government may regulate time, place, and manner and punish some speech after the fact.

AP Gov Tip: *Prior restraint = government stopping publication in advance -- nearly always struck down. The Pentagon Papers case is the example.*

Example: In *Near v. Minnesota* (1931), the Court barred prior restraint except in narrow cases (troop movements, obscenity).

79 Schenck v. US (1919) & the Clear and Present Danger Test

Explanation: The Court upheld the conviction of a socialist who urged resistance to the draft, ruling speech can be limited when it creates a 'clear and present danger' of evils Congress may prevent.

AP Gov Tip: *Schenck (required case) = speech can be restricted when it poses a clear and present danger; the test was later replaced by the Brandenburg standard.*

Example: 'The most stringent protection of free speech would not protect a man in falsely shouting fire in a theater and causing a panic.'

80 Tinker v. Des Moines (1969)

Explanation: The Court protected students' symbolic speech (black armbands protesting the Vietnam War), ruling schools cannot restrict speech unless it substantially disrupts the educational environment.

AP Gov Tip: *Tinker (required case) = students have free speech rights in school, limited by substantial disruption. 'Students do not shed their constitutional rights at the schoolhouse gate.'*

Example: The armband protest caused no disruption, so the school's ban violated the First Amendment.

81 NY Times v. US (1971) & the Pentagon Papers

Explanation: The Court blocked the government's attempt to stop the Times from publishing the Pentagon Papers, rejecting prior restraint on national-security grounds without a specific showing of harm.

AP Gov Tip: *NY Times v. US (required case) = the government bears a heavy burden to justify prior restraint, even for classified material.*

Example: The Court ordered publication to resume; the 'Pentagon Papers' revealed decades of misleading statements about Vietnam.

82 Symbolic Speech

Explanation: Nonverbal expression protected by the First Amendment: burning the flag, wearing armbands, kneeling during the anthem. The government can regulate conduct but not the message.

AP Gov Tip: *Symbolic speech = conduct expressing an idea. Tinker (armbands) and Texas v. Johnson (flag burning) are the required examples.*

Example: In *Texas v. Johnson* (1989), the Court protected flag burning as political expression.

83 The Second Amendment & McDonald v. Chicago (2010)

Explanation: The Second Amendment protects an individual right to keep and bear arms. *McDonald v. Chicago* incorporated that right against the states and struck down Chicago's handgun ban.

AP Gov Tip: *McDonald (required case) = the individual right to self-defense with a firearm applies to state and local governments via the 14th Amendment.*

Example: After *Heller* (2008) recognized the right federally, *McDonald* applied it to the states in 2010.

84 The Fourth Amendment & Unreasonable Searches

Explanation: The Fourth Amendment bars unreasonable searches and seizures; warrants require probable cause and particularity. Exceptions include stop-and-frisk, plain view, search incident to arrest, and consent.

AP Gov Tip: *Fourth Amendment = warrants + probable cause, with exceptions. The exam tests which exception applies in a scenario.*

Example: A police search of a car without a warrant is allowed if there is probable cause that it contains evidence (automobile exception).

85 The Exclusionary Rule

Explanation: Evidence obtained in violation of the Fourth Amendment is generally inadmissible in court (Mapp v. Ohio, 1961). Exceptions: good faith, inevitable discovery, and the public-safety exception.

AP Gov Tip: *Exclusionary rule = illegally obtained evidence is excluded. Mapp incorporated it against the states.*

Example: In Mapp, obscene materials were excluded because the search warrant was defective -- 'the criminal goes free if the constable blunders.'

86 The Fifth Amendment: Self-Incrimination & Due Process

Explanation: The Fifth Amendment protects against self-incrimination, double jeopardy, and deprivation of life, liberty, or property without due process. It requires grand juries for federal felonies.

AP Gov Tip: *Fifth Amendment = 'plead the fifth,' due process, no double jeopardy. Miranda warnings flow from it.*

Example: A suspect who remains silent in an interrogation without counsel has invoked the right against self-incrimination.

87 Miranda v. Arizona (1966)

Explanation: The Court required police to inform suspects of their rights (right to remain silent, right to counsel) before custodial interrogation; statements obtained without warnings are presumed coerced.

AP Gov Tip: *Miranda (required context) = warnings before custodial interrogation. The public-safety exception (New York v. Quarles) narrows it.*

Example: Ernesto Miranda's confession was excluded because he was never told he could remain silent.

88 The Sixth Amendment: Right to Counsel

Explanation: The Sixth Amendment guarantees the right to a speedy, public trial, an impartial jury, notice of charges, confrontation, and counsel. Gideon incorporated the right to counsel for felony defendants.

AP Gov Tip: *Sixth Amendment = fair trial rights, including counsel. Gideon (required case) extended counsel to state felony trials.*

Example: A poor defendant charged with a felony is entitled to a free lawyer at state expense.

89 Gideon v. Wainwright (1963)

Explanation: The Court ruled the Sixth Amendment's right to counsel applies to the states via the 14th Amendment, requiring lawyers for felony defendants who cannot afford one.

AP Gov Tip: *Gideon (required case) = right to counsel for all felony defendants, incorporated against the states.*

Example: Clarence Earl Gideon, an indigent defendant, won the right that transformed public defense.

90 The Eighth Amendment & Cruel and Unusual Punishment

Explanation: The Eighth Amendment bars excessive bail, excessive fines, and cruel and unusual punishment. The Court has applied it to prison conditions, the death penalty, and excessive sentences.

AP Gov Tip: *Eighth Amendment = proportionality in punishment. Furman (1972) briefly invalidated the death penalty as applied; Gregg (1976) restored it.*

Example: The Court has banned the death penalty for juveniles (Roper, 2005) and the intellectually disabled (Atkins, 2002).

91 The Right to Privacy & Griswold v. Connecticut (1965)

Explanation: The Court recognized a constitutional right to privacy, rooted in the 'penumbras' of the Bill of Rights, striking down a law banning contraceptives for married couples.

AP Gov Tip: *Privacy = the penumbral right behind Griswold, Roe, and Lawrence. It is not explicitly in the text -- a key originalism debate.*

Example: Griswold's privacy reasoning was extended to unmarried couples in Eisenstadt and to abortion in Roe.

92 Roe v. Wade (1973) & Dobbs v. Jackson (2022)

Explanation: Roe recognized a constitutional right to abortion under privacy, with a trimester framework. Dobbs (2022) overturned Roe, returning abortion regulation to the states.

AP Gov Tip: *Roe (required case) = privacy-based abortion right; Dobbs ended it. Know both and the debate over the 'right to privacy.'*

Example: After Dobbs, states enacted a patchwork of abortion bans and protections -- the federal right no longer exists.

93 The Equal Protection Clause

Explanation: The 14th Amendment forbids states from denying equal protection of the laws. It is the basis for challenges to discrimination based on race, sex, and other classifications.

AP Gov Tip: *Equal protection = the anti-discrimination engine. The Court applies different scrutiny levels to different classifications.*

Example: Laws that discriminate on race get strict scrutiny; on sex, intermediate; on economic matters, rational basis.

94 Brown v. Board of Education (1954)

Explanation: The Court unanimously ruled racial segregation in public schools unconstitutional, overturning Plessy's 'separate but equal.' Brown II ordered desegregation 'with all deliberate speed.'

AP Gov Tip: *Brown (required case) = segregation violates equal protection; it launched the civil rights era and the end of legal Jim Crow.*

Example: Linda Brown's Topeka school was blocks from her home, but she was bused to a Black school across town.

95 Strict, Intermediate & Rational Basis Scrutiny

Explanation: Strict scrutiny (race, fundamental rights): law must serve a compelling interest, narrowly tailored. Intermediate (sex): important interest, substantially related. Rational basis (economics): legitimate interest, rationally related.

AP Gov Tip: *Levels of scrutiny = the test applied to classifications. Race -> strict; sex -> intermediate; everything else -> rational basis.*

Example: Affirmative action programs face strict scrutiny; gender-based policies face intermediate scrutiny.

96 Affirmative Action

Explanation: Policies that consider race or sex to remedy past discrimination. The Court has upheld some (diversity in education) but increasingly restricted them; Students for Fair Admissions (2023) banned race-based college admissions.

AP Gov Tip: *Affirmative action = race-conscious remedies. The 2023 ruling ended race-based admissions but left other diversity tools.*

Example: The Court held Harvard and UNC's race-based admissions violated equal protection -- a major shift in the law.

97 The Civil Rights Act of 1964

Explanation: The landmark law banning discrimination in public accommodations, employment (Title VII), and federally funded programs, and creating the EEOC. It is the cornerstone of modern civil rights law.

AP Gov Tip: *CRA 1964 = public accommodations + employment + federal funding. Title VII covers employment discrimination.*

Example: Title VII's protections were later extended to LGBTQ+ workers in Bostock v. Clayton County (2020).

98 The Voting Rights Act of 1965

Explanation: The VRA banned discriminatory voting practices, required federal preclearance for covered jurisdictions (Section 5), and eliminated literacy tests. Shelby County v. Holder (2013) gutted preclearance.

AP Gov Tip: *VRA 1965 = the enforcement of the 15th Amendment; its preclearance formula was struck down in Shelby County (2013).*

Example: In the decade after 1965, Black voter registration in the South surged -- the VRA was transformative.

99 Title IX (1972)

Explanation: Title IX bans sex discrimination in federally funded education programs. It transformed women's sports and is applied to sexual harassment and assault on campus.

AP Gov Tip: *Title IX = sex equality in education; the exam connects it to athletics and campus sexual misconduct.*

Example: Before Title IX, few girls played school sports; today, millions do -- a direct policy consequence.

100 The Americans with Disabilities Act (1990)

Explanation: The ADA bans discrimination against people with disabilities in employment, public accommodations, transportation, and government services, requiring reasonable accommodations.

AP Gov Tip: *ADA = disability rights across employment and public life; it is a civil rights law, not a benefits program.*

Example: A store must provide wheelchair ramps and accessible entrances under the ADA.

101 The 15th, 19th, 24th & 26th Amendments

Explanation: The 15th (1870): no voting discrimination by race. The 19th (1920): women's suffrage. The 24th (1964): no poll taxes. The 26th (1971): voting at 18. Together they expanded the franchise.

AP Gov Tip: *The voting amendments: 15 (race), 19 (sex), 24 (poll tax), 26 (age 18). Match each to what it removed or granted.*

Example: The 24th Amendment targeted the poll tax that had disenfranchised Black voters in the South.

102 The Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) Campaign

Explanation: The ERA (proposed 1972) would ban sex discrimination constitutionally. It passed Congress but fell three states short of ratification by the 1982 deadline; its status remains contested.

AP Gov Tip: *The ERA = the failed constitutional guarantee of sex equality -- a required example of the amendment process's difficulty.*

Example: Phyllis Schlafly's campaign helped stop the ERA; the deadline passed with 35 of 38 states ratified.

103 The Civil Rights Movement & the Courts

Explanation: The movement combined litigation (Brown), direct action (Montgomery bus boycott, sit-ins, Birmingham), and legislation (CRA 1964, VRA 1965). The courts both led and responded to social pressure.

AP Gov Tip: *The exam wants the interaction: courts, Congress, presidents, and protest together produced civil rights change.*

Example: The March on Washington (1963) and Selma (1965) created the political pressure that passed the CRA and VRA.

104 Modern Civil Rights Debates

Explanation: Contemporary issues: voting access and ID laws, criminal justice reform, LGBTQ+ rights (Obergefell 2015), immigration status, and disability and housing equality. Debates center on discrimination, equality of opportunity, and federalism.

AP Gov Tip: *Modern rights = new categories and new disputes; connect each to equal protection, due process, and the scrutiny framework.*

Example: Obergefell v. Hodges (2015) recognized same-sex marriage nationwide under due process and equal protection.

105 Hate Speech & Unprotected Categories

Explanation: The First Amendment protects most hateful speech; the Court has allowed narrow categories of unprotected speech: incitement (Brandenburg), fighting words, true threats, defamation, and obscenity.

AP Gov Tip: *Know the unprotected categories: incitement, fighting words, threats, defamation, obscenity. Everything else is protected, even if offensive.*

Example: Brandenburg v. Ohio (1969) protected KKK advocacy unless it incited imminent lawless action.

Unit 4: Unit 4: American Political Ideologies & Beliefs

10-15% of the AP Gov exam. Political socialization, public opinion, and the ideological spectrum.

106 Political Socialization

Explanation: The process by which people acquire their political beliefs and values. Key agents: family, schools, peers, media, religion, and life events. Family is the most influential early agent.

AP Gov Tip: *Socialization = where beliefs come from. The exam asks which agent matters most (family) and how events (9/11, recession) shape generations.*

Example: A child raised in a politically engaged home is far more likely to vote and to share their parents' party identification.

107 Public Opinion & Polling

Explanation: Public opinion = the collective attitudes of citizens on issues. Polls measure it through carefully drawn samples; results depend on question wording, sampling method, and margin of error.

AP Gov Tip: *Public opinion drives elections and policy. Know the polling essentials: random sample, sample size, margin of error, and wording effects.*

Example: A poll of 1,000 randomly selected registered voters can estimate national opinion within about +/- 3 percentage points.

108 Sampling & Margin of Error

Explanation: A random sample represents the population if every member has an equal chance of selection. The margin of error (usually +/- 3-4% for n=1,000) describes sampling variability; smaller samples mean larger errors.

AP Gov Tip: *Margin of error = the uncertainty band around a poll result. If the gap is smaller than the margin of error, the race is a statistical tie.*

Example: A 52%-48% poll with a +/- 4% margin of error is essentially even.

109 The Political Spectrum: Liberal vs Conservative

Explanation: Liberals generally favor government action for equality, social programs, environmental regulation, and abortion rights. Conservatives favor limited government, free markets, traditional values, and strong national defense.

AP Gov Tip: *Map issues to ideology: economics (govt vs market), social issues (change vs tradition), and the role of government overall.*

Example: On health care: liberals support expanded public coverage; conservatives prefer market-based private insurance.

110 American Liberalism

Explanation: Modern liberalism supports an active federal government to promote economic opportunity and social justice: progressive taxation, welfare programs, civil rights, environmental protection, and consumer regulation.

AP Gov Tip: *Liberalism = government as a tool for equality and reform. Connect it to the New Deal, Great Society, and the modern Democratic coalition.*

Example: The Affordable Care Act (2010) is a liberal policy: expanded coverage through government rules and subsidies.

111 American Conservatism

Explanation: Modern conservatism favors limited government, free markets, low taxes, traditional social values, states' rights, and a strong military. It emphasizes individual responsibility over government guarantees.

AP Gov Tip: *Conservatism = markets + tradition + national strength. Connect it to Reagan, the Tea Party, and the modern Republican coalition.*

Example: Tax cuts, deregulation, and a strong military -- the Reagan-era conservative formula.

112 Libertarianism

Explanation: Libertarians maximize individual liberty and minimize government in BOTH economic and personal matters: free markets, no welfare state, but also legalized drugs and limited surveillance.

AP Gov Tip: *Libertarians = socially liberal AND fiscally conservative -- a distinctive combination the exam uses to test the spectrum.*

Example: A libertarian opposes both the draft (personal freedom) and the minimum wage (economic freedom).

113 Populism

Explanation: Populism claims to represent 'the people' against a corrupt elite -- often combining economic nationalism, anti-establishment rhetoric, and skepticism of institutions and experts.

AP Gov Tip: *Populism = anti-elite, anti-establishment politics; it can appear on the left (economic) or right (cultural).*

Example: Both Bernie Sanders (anti-bank) and Donald Trump (anti-Washington) ran populist campaigns in 2016.

114 Core Values: Individualism & Equality of Opportunity

Explanation: American political culture prizes individualism (self-reliance, limited government) and equality of opportunity (a fair chance, not equal outcomes). These values often conflict in policy debates.

AP Gov Tip: *The exam tests how core values (individualism, equal opportunity, rule of law, liberty) justify both liberal and conservative positions.*

Example: Debates over welfare ask: does government help (equality of opportunity) or hinder (individualism) the poor?

115 The Media & Political Socialization

Explanation: Media -- news, social platforms, and entertainment -- shape political knowledge, issue salience, and attitudes, especially for younger generations. Media effects are strongest on issues people know least about.

AP Gov Tip: *Media = an agent of socialization with growing influence. The exam connects media consumption to polarization and information bubbles.*

Example: A teenager's political views often track the news sources and social feeds they consume daily.

116 Generational & Lifecycle Effects

Explanation: Generational effects: a cohort shares formative experiences (Depression, Vietnam, 9/11). Lifecycle effects: attitudes change as people age (older people tend to be more conservative on some issues).

AP Gov Tip: *Distinguish generational (cohort) from lifecycle (aging) effects -- a classic AP question.*

Example: Millennials' support for same-sex marriage is a generational effect; rising economic caution with age is a lifecycle effect.

117 The Gender Gap

Explanation: Women are more likely than men to vote Democratic and to support social spending, gun control, and abortion rights. The gender gap is a stable feature of modern elections.

AP Gov Tip: *Gender gap = women lean Democratic; the gap grows with education and varies by race and age.*

Example: In 2020, women backed Biden by about 15 points while men split more evenly -- a wide gender gap.

118 The Partisan Sorting of Groups

Explanation: Demographic groups have sorted into parties: Black Americans and Jewish voters strongly Democratic; white evangelicals and rural voters strongly Republican; college graduates increasingly Democratic.

AP Gov Tip: *Group voting patterns are fair game: match groups (race, religion, education, urban/rural) to their partisan tendencies.*

Example: White evangelical Protestants voted Republican by roughly 3 to 1 in recent presidential elections.

119 The New Deal & the Rise of the Welfare State

Explanation: FDR's New Deal (1930s) created Social Security, unemployment insurance, and federal relief -- establishing the modern expectation that government manages economic security.

AP Gov Tip: *The New Deal = the pivot from limited to active federal government; it created the modern Democratic coalition.*

Example: Social Security (1935) is the New Deal's largest surviving program.

120 The Welfare State & Entitlements

Explanation: Entitlement programs (Social Security, Medicare, Medicaid) provide benefits to eligible citizens regardless of the budget. They dominate federal spending and drive long-term deficit debates.

AP Gov Tip: *Entitlements = automatic spending on eligible recipients; they are the bulk of the federal budget and politically hard to cut.*

Example: Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid together account for about half of all federal spending.

121 Social Security

Explanation: The federal retirement and disability insurance program, funded by payroll taxes (FICA). It faces long-term insolvency as the population ages and the worker-to-beneficiary ratio falls.

AP Gov Tip: *Social Security = pay-as-you-go insurance. The exam asks about its funding mechanism and the coming shortfall.*

Example: The Social Security trust fund is projected to be unable to pay full benefits in the 2030s without changes.

122 Medicare & Medicaid

Explanation: Medicare insures Americans 65+ and some younger disabled people; Medicaid insures low-income people, funded jointly by states and the federal government. Both are major entitlements.

AP Gov Tip: *Medicare = elderly; Medicaid = poor. Both are entitlements; Medicaid is the larger joint state-federal program.*

Example: Medicare covers hospital care (Part A) and doctor visits (Part B); Medicaid covers long-term care for the poor.

123 The Affordable Care Act (2010)

Explanation: Obama's health law expanded coverage through Medicaid expansion, insurance subsidies, and mandates, and barred denial for preexisting conditions. It remains a partisan fault line.

AP Gov Tip: *The ACA = the modern health-care debate: coverage expansion vs cost and government role. Know its main mechanisms.*

Example: The individual mandate's penalty was zeroed out in 2017, yet the ACA's marketplaces and protections remain.

124 Monetary vs Fiscal Policy

Explanation: Fiscal policy (Congress and the president): taxing and spending. Monetary policy (the Federal Reserve): interest rates and money supply. Both stabilize the economy but through different tools.

AP Gov Tip: *Fiscal = Congress + president; monetary = the Fed. Match each tool to its institution.*

Example: A stimulus check is fiscal policy; the Fed lowering interest rates is monetary policy.

125 Supply-Side Economics

Explanation: The theory that lower taxes and deregulation increase investment, production, and growth -- 'a rising tide lifts all boats.' Critics note it can balloon deficits.

AP Gov Tip: *Supply-side = tax cuts to grow the economy (Laffer curve). Connect to Reagan and modern Republican tax policy.*

Example: The 2017 Tax Cuts and Jobs Act cut corporate rates from 35% to 21% -- a supply-side measure.

126 Regulation & Deregulation

Explanation: Regulation uses rules to protect consumers, workers, and the environment (EPA, FDA, SEC). Deregulation removes rules to spur competition and growth; both have winners and losers.

AP Gov Tip: *The exam asks you to evaluate trade-offs: regulation protects but can raise costs; deregulation frees markets but can invite abuse.*

Example: The 2008 financial crisis followed years of financial deregulation -- the central counterexample.

127 Environmental Policy Debates

Explanation: Environmental policy pits economic growth against sustainability: climate change (carbon pricing, clean energy), the EPA's authority, and state-federal conflicts over emissions standards.

AP Gov Tip: *Environmental debates = the classic market-failure vs government-overreach argument; know both sides.*

Example: The Clean Air Act and the Paris Agreement illustrate federal and international climate responses.

128 Immigration Policy

Explanation: Immigration policy spans legal entry, border enforcement, undocumented immigrants, and paths to citizenship. Debates center on the DREAM Act, DACA, family separation, and border security.

AP Gov Tip: *Immigration = a wedge issue; the exam wants the policy options (enforcement, guest workers, amnesty) and their trade-offs.*

Example: DACA (2012) protected ~800,000 undocumented young people from deportation -- and has been litigated ever since.

129 Criminal Justice & Public Opinion

Explanation: Public opinion on crime and justice shifts with events: support for policing, sentencing reform, and rehabilitation varies by race, party, and exposure to crime.

AP Gov Tip: *Criminal justice = a values conflict: public safety vs civil liberties and racial equity.*

Example: The 2020 protests after George Floyd's murder shifted public opinion toward police reform -- then back toward 'law and order.'

130 Isolationism vs Interventionism

Explanation: Isolationism avoids foreign entanglements; interventionism uses military and diplomatic power abroad. US history cycles between the two (interwar isolationism, Cold War interventionism, post-Iraq skepticism).

AP Gov Tip: *Foreign policy ideology = the spectrum from engagement to withdrawal; connect it to real presidencies and crises.*

Example: The Iraq War (2003) and the 2021 Afghanistan withdrawal both reshaped the intervention debate.

131 The Laffer Curve & Taxation Debates

Explanation: The Laffer curve shows tax revenue rising with rates to a point, then falling as rates discourage work and investment. It underlies supply-side claims that tax cuts can pay for themselves.

AP Gov Tip: *Laffer = the theoretical case for cutting high tax rates; the empirical evidence is mixed -- a required concept.*

Example: In the 1980s, Reagan's tax cuts did not produce the revenue Laffer predicted; deficits grew.

132 The National Debt & Deficits

Explanation: A deficit is annual spending exceeding revenue; the debt is the accumulated total. The national debt has grown sharply since 2000, driven by entitlements, wars, tax cuts, and crises.

AP Gov Tip: *Deficit = yearly gap; debt = the total owed. The exam asks about the trade-offs of debt (interest, crowding out, future taxes).*

Example: The federal debt exceeded \$30 trillion in 2022 -- roughly 120% of GDP.

133 Education Policy & Federalism

Explanation: Education is primarily a state and local responsibility, but the national government adds funding and mandates (Title I, No Child Left Behind/ESSA). Debates center on school choice, vouchers, and standards.

AP Gov Tip: *Education = federalism in action: local control vs national standards and equity goals.*

Example: No Child Left Behind (2001) required testing but let states set their own standards -- a compromise with federalism.

134 The Culture Wars

Explanation: The culture wars pit traditionalist and progressive values over abortion, LGBTQ+ rights, race, gender, and religious liberty -- mobilizing voters and shaping party coalitions.

AP Gov Tip: *Culture wars = values-based political conflict; the exam connects them to polarization and realignment.*

Example: The confirmation battles over abortion and the debate over transgender rights are current culture-war flashpoints.

135 Political Efficacy & Trust in Government

Explanation: Political efficacy = the belief that one's participation matters. Trust in government has fallen since the 1960s; low efficacy and trust reduce turnout and fuel anti-establishment politics.

AP Gov Tip: *Efficacy = 'my voice counts.' Low trust/efficacy = disengagement and populism; the exam links them.*

Example: Only about 2 in 10 Americans say they trust the government in Washington to do what is right most of the time.

136 Ideological Sorting & Polarization

Explanation: Parties have become more ideologically homogeneous: liberals in the Democratic Party, conservatives in the Republican Party. Polarization grows as the 'middle' shrinks and animosity rises.

AP Gov Tip: *Sorting = ideological consistency within parties; polarization = the widening gap between them. Both are required concepts.*

Example: In the 1970s, many conservative Democrats and liberal Republicans existed; today they are nearly extinct.

137 The Median Voter Theorem

Explanation: In a two-party system, parties converge toward the median voter's preferences to win elections. Polarization complicates the theory by activating bases in primaries.

AP Gov Tip: *The median voter = the center of the electorate; parties court the median in general elections, the base in primaries.*

Example: Candidates run moderate in the general election after appealing to their party's wings in the primary.

138 Polling Errors & Nonresponse Bias

Explanation: Polls fail when samples are unrepresentative: nonresponse (some groups refuse), undercoverage (cell phones, no internet), and social-desirability bias (people misreport). 2016 polls underestimated Trump's support.

AP Gov Tip: *Know the poll failure modes: nonresponse, undercoverage, wording, and the shy-voter effect.*

Example: In 2016, polls missed Midwest states where non-college white voters were underrepresented.

139 Public Opinion & Policy Linkage

Explanation: Elected officials respond to public opinion through elections, polling, and constituency pressure -- but responsiveness is uneven, strongest on salient issues and weakest on technical or low-salience ones.

AP Gov Tip: *Linkage = opinion -> elections -> policy. The exam asks whether government actually follows public opinion.*

Example: When a policy is highly salient (abortion, guns), officials track opinion closely; on obscure rules, interest groups dominate.

140 Taxation & Public Opinion

Explanation: Americans want low taxes but high services -- a paradox that shapes every budget debate. Public opinion supports progressive taxation but distrusts government efficiency.

AP Gov Tip: *The tax paradox (low taxes + high services) is a favorite AP prompt; connect it to deficits and the welfare state.*

Example: Polls consistently show majority support for raising taxes on the wealthy but not on the middle class.

Unit 5: Unit 5: Political Participation

20-27% of the AP Gov exam. Parties, elections, campaigns, interest groups, and the media.

141 The Functions of Political Parties

Explanation: Parties recruit candidates, organize elections, mobilize voters, propose platforms, run government, and connect citizens to government. They are the essential linkage institutions.

AP Gov Tip: *Parties = the connective tissue of elections and government. List their functions to answer any party question.*

Example: The Democratic and Republican national committees raise money and coordinate campaigns nationwide.

142 The Two-Party System

Explanation: The US has a durable two-party system sustained by single-member districts, winner-take-all elections, and the Electoral College. Third parties rarely win but can shift outcomes.

AP Gov Tip: *Two-party system = structural (electoral rules) + cultural (tradition). The exam asks why third parties struggle.*

Example: Duverger's law: plurality elections with single-member districts produce two-party systems.

143 Third Parties & Their Impact

Explanation: Third parties (Libertarian, Green, Reform) rarely win but influence politics: they raise issues, pull votes from major parties (spoiler effect), and force platforms to shift.

AP Gov Tip: *Third parties = agenda-setters and spoilers. 1912 (Roosevelt's Bull Moose), 1992 (Perot), and 2000 (Nader) are the examples.*

Example: Ralph Nader's 2000 Green campaign likely cost Gore Florida, and with it the presidency.

144 Party Realignment & Dealignment

Explanation: Realignment = a durable shift in party coalitions (1932 New Deal, 1968-80 Southern realignment). Dealignment = voters abandoning parties to become independents.

AP Gov Tip: *Realignment = coalition shift; dealignment = decline in party attachment. Match each to its era.*

Example: The South moved from solidly Democratic to solidly Republican between the 1960s and 1990s -- a realignment.

145 Party Organization: National, State & Local

Explanation: Parties operate at three levels: national committees (DNC/RNC), state parties, and local organizations. They coordinate fundraising, voter lists, and get-out-the-vote (GOTV) drives.

AP Gov Tip: *Party structure = national, state, local layers; the national party sets strategy, locals do the ground game.*

Example: The RNC's permanent data operation (data centers, voter files) is a modern party resource.

146 Nominating Conventions & the Primary System

Explanation: Presidential nominees are chosen through primaries and caucuses, then formally nominated at national conventions. Conventions now ratify the primary result and write the platform.

AP Gov Tip: *Primaries pick delegates; the convention crowns the nominee. Know the primary-to-convention sequence.*

Example: In 2016, the Republican convention formally nominated Trump after he won a majority of delegates in primaries.

147 Caucuses vs Primaries

Explanation: A primary is a state-run election; a caucus is a party-run meeting where voters deliberate and choose delegates. Caucuses favor highly motivated activists; primaries draw broader participation.

AP Gov Tip: *Primary = ballot box; caucus = community meeting. The exam compares turnout and participation costs.*

Example: Iowa's caucuses and New Hampshire's primary traditionally open the nominating season.

148 Open vs Closed Primaries

Explanation: Closed primaries: only registered party members vote. Open primaries: any voter may participate in either party's primary. Rules vary by state and affect who nominates.

AP Gov Tip: *Closed = party members only (more ideological); open = anyone (more moderate). Match to state examples.*

Example: New York has closed primaries; Wisconsin allows same-day party choice in open primaries.

149 The Electoral College

Explanation: Voters cast ballots for electors; each state gets electors equal to its congressional delegation (538 total). A candidate needs 270 to win. Most states use winner-take-all.

AP Gov Tip: *The Electoral College = the real presidential election. Know the 270 threshold, winner-take-all, and how it can diverge from the popular vote.*

Example: In 2000 and 2016, the Electoral College winner (Bush, Trump) lost the national popular vote.

150 Redistricting & Reapportionment

Explanation: After each census, House seats are reapportioned among states and districts are redrawn. Redistricting is done by state legislatures -- the arena for partisan gerrymandering.

AP Gov Tip: *Reapportionment = seats shift between states; redistricting = lines within states. Both follow the census.*

Example: After the 2020 census, Texas gained two seats while New York lost one -- reapportionment in action.

151 Campaign Finance: FECA & Buckley v. Valeo

Explanation: The Federal Election Campaign Act (1971) created disclosure and contribution limits. Buckley v. Valeo (1976) upheld limits on contributions but struck down limits on independent spending as protected speech.

AP Gov Tip: *Buckley = money as speech for independent spending, but contributions can be limited. It frames every later campaign-finance case.*

Example: Buckley's spending-is-speech logic led directly to Citizens United.

152 Citizens United v. FEC (2010)

Explanation: The Court ruled corporations and unions may spend unlimited amounts independently to support or oppose candidates, opening the door to super PACs and dark money.

AP Gov Tip: *Citizens United (required case) = independent expenditures are protected speech, even for corporations. Know its effects: super PACs, disclosure debates.*

Example: Super PACs can raise and spend unlimited sums, as long as they do not coordinate with the candidate.

153 The Federal Election Commission (FEC)

Explanation: The FEC enforces campaign finance law: it administers disclosure, contribution limits, and public funding. It is often gridlocked by its even partisan split (3-3).

AP Gov Tip: *The FEC = the campaign-finance regulator; its deadlock is a recurring accountability issue.*

Example: The FEC's 3-3 party split means major enforcement actions often stall.

154 The Media's Role in Elections

Explanation: The media set the agenda, frame issues, investigate candidates, and run the 'horse race.' Social media now rivals traditional news as a campaign arena.

AP Gov Tip: *Media functions in elections: agenda-setting, framing, gatekeeping, and horse-race coverage.*

Example: A scandal uncovered by journalists (Watergate, 2016 emails) can redefine a campaign overnight.

155 Candidate-Centered Campaigns

Explanation: Modern campaigns are candidate-centered: candidates build personal organizations, raise money directly, and use consultants, polling, and targeted ads -- party labels matter less.

AP Gov Tip: *Candidate-centered = the personal campaign machine (fundraising + consultants + media). Contrast with the old party-dominated model.*

Example: A Senate candidate builds a personal donor list and media team rather than relying on the state party.

156 Voter Turnout & Its Determinants

Explanation: US turnout is lower than most democracies'. Determinants: education, income, age, race, civic engagement, registration rules, and election competitiveness.

AP Gov Tip: *Turnout rises with age, education, and income; registration barriers and weak party mobilization depress it.*

Example: Turnout in presidential years (~60%) far exceeds midterms (~40-50%) and primaries (much lower).

157 Voter Registration & the Motor Voter Act

Explanation: The National Voter Registration Act (1993) allowed registration at DMVs and agencies, boosting registration. Same-day registration and automatic registration further lower barriers.

AP Gov Tip: *Motor Voter = registration at the DMV. Registration rules are a key state-level turnout lever.*

Example: States with same-day registration (like Minnesota) consistently post the highest turnout.

158 Voter ID Laws & Voting Access

Explanation: Voter ID laws require identification to vote; supporters cite fraud prevention, critics cite suppression of minority and poor voters. The debate is a current civil rights flashpoint.

AP Gov Tip: *Voter ID = the modern voting-access debate: integrity vs access. Cite Shelby County and state ID laws.*

Example: After Shelby County (2013) ended preclearance, several states enacted stricter voter ID and registration laws.

159 The 26th Amendment & the Youth Vote

Explanation: The 26th Amendment (1971) lowered the voting age to 18. Youth turnout is historically low but spiked in 2018 and 2020, and young voters lean Democratic.

AP Gov Tip: *The 26th = voting at 18. Youth turnout = the youngest cohort votes least, but 2020 saw record youth participation.*

Example: In 2020, about half of 18-29 year-olds voted -- up sharply from 2014's 20%.

160 The Expansion of Suffrage

Explanation: The franchise expanded over time: white men without property (1820s-30s), Black men (15th, 1870), women (19th, 1920), 18-year-olds (26th, 1971). Each expansion followed sustained movements.

AP Gov Tip: *Suffrage history = the amendments (15, 19, 24, 26) plus state reforms. The exam wants the sequence and the movements.*

Example: The women's suffrage movement took from Seneca Falls (1848) to the 19th Amendment (1920) -- 72 years.

161 Interest Groups: Functions & Types

Explanation: Interest groups are organizations that influence policy: economic (business, labor), public-interest (environment, consumer), ideological, and single-issue groups. They provide info, money, and mobilization.

AP Gov Tip: *Interest groups = organized influence. Classify them (economic vs public interest) and list their strategies: lobbying, elections, litigation, grassroots.*

Example: The AARP (retirees) and the Sierra Club (environment) use very different member bases to lobby.

162 The Free Rider Problem

Explanation: Public goods (clean air, lower taxes for all) benefit everyone, so individuals can enjoy them without joining the group -- the free rider problem. Groups solve it with selective benefits.

AP Gov Tip: *Free riders = benefit without contributing. Groups offer selective (members-only) benefits to overcome it.*

Example: AARP offers insurance discounts to members -- a selective benefit that funds its lobbying.

163 Lobbying & the Lobbying Disclosure Act

Explanation: Lobbyists meet with officials, provide expertise, and draft legislation. The Lobbying Disclosure Act (1995) requires registration and reporting. Lobbying is protected by the First Amendment (petition clause).

AP Gov Tip: *Lobbying = direct influence through information and access. Know the disclosure rules and the 'revolving door.'*

Example: Ex-congressmembers become lobbyists, using insider knowledge and relationships -- the revolving door.

164 PACs, Super PACs & 527s

Explanation: PACs raise limited funds from members and give directly to candidates. Super PACs raise unlimited funds for independent spending only. 527s are tax-exempt political groups with looser rules.

AP Gov Tip: *PAC = limited, direct; super PAC = unlimited, independent; 527 = tax-exempt advocacy. Match each to its rules.*

Example: A super PAC can spend \$50 million on ads supporting a candidate but cannot give that candidate a dollar directly.

165 Electioneering & Issue Advocacy

Explanation: Electioneering = explicitly supporting or opposing candidates. Issue advocacy = promoting a position without endorsing a candidate (less regulated). Groups blur the line constantly.

AP Gov Tip: *Electioneering vs issue advocacy = the legal boundary in campaign speech; 'vote for' vs 'call your senator about.'*

Example: 'Contact your senator about the tax bill' is issue advocacy; 'defeat Senator Smith' is electioneering.

166 The Pluralist Debate on Interest Groups

Explanation: Pluralists see group competition as healthy democracy; critics (elite theorists, public-choice scholars) see bias toward the wealthy and organized, and gridlock from competing demands.

AP Gov Tip: *Evaluate pluralism: more groups = more voices (pro) vs moneyed interests dominate (con).*

Example: The influence of business lobbies and super PACs is the leading evidence against pure pluralism.

167 The Media as Watchdog

Explanation: The press investigates government, exposes corruption, and informs the public -- the 'fourth estate.' Investigative journalism (Watergate) is the watchdog ideal.

AP Gov Tip: *Watchdog = the press policing power. The exam pairs it with press freedom and the tension with national security.*

Example: The Pentagon Papers and Watergate are the canonical watchdog moments.

168 Media Bias & Framing

Explanation: Framing = how the media present an issue (which facts, language, and angle) shapes perception. Bias can be partisan, structural (conflict sells), or unconscious. Objectivity is an ideal, not a given.

AP Gov Tip: *Framing = the angle of the story; bias = systematic slant. The exam wants you to identify framing choices.*

Example: Calling a tax 'a burden' vs 'an investment' frames the same policy differently.

169 Horse-Race Journalism

Explanation: Media focus on who is winning rather than the issues -- polls, strategy, and gaffes. Horse-race coverage can distort campaigns and depress substantive debate.

AP Gov Tip: *Horse race = polls and strategy over policy. The exam critiques its effects on democratic deliberation.*

Example: A campaign's poll movement gets more airtime than its actual proposals.

170 Social Media & Political Participation

Explanation: Social media lowers participation costs: sharing, organizing, fundraising, and protesting. It also enables misinformation, echo chambers, and foreign influence.

AP Gov Tip: *Social media = both a participation accelerator and a polarization engine. Know both sides.*

Example: The 2011 Arab Spring and the #MeToo movement were organized substantially on social platforms.

171 Protest & Civic Participation

Explanation: Protest, boycotts, and civil disobedience are forms of participation protected by the First Amendment. They can change agendas even when they do not change policy directly.

AP Gov Tip: *Protest = the high-cost, high-visibility participation channel; the exam connects it to social movements.*

Example: The 1963 Birmingham campaign and the 2020 racial-justice protests both reshaped national debate.

172 The Digital Divide & Participation

Explanation: The digital divide -- unequal access to the internet and devices -- shapes who can participate online, get information, and register to vote. It tracks income, age, and geography.

AP Gov Tip: *The digital divide = unequal internet access = unequal political participation. A required equity concept.*

Example: Rural and low-income communities often lack broadband, limiting their access to online registration and news.

173 Parties vs Interest Groups

Explanation: Parties run candidates and seek to win elections; interest groups influence policy without running candidates. Parties aggregate broad coalitions; groups pursue narrow goals.

AP Gov Tip: *The exam contrasts the two: parties = win elections, broad platform; groups = influence policy, narrow focus.*

Example: The Democratic Party runs candidates on a broad platform; the NRA lobbies on guns alone.

174 Linkage Institutions

Explanation: Linkage institutions connect citizens to government: political parties, interest groups, the media, and elections. They transmit public preferences into the political system.

AP Gov Tip: *Linkage institutions = the four connectors (parties, groups, media, elections). Identify which one is at work in a scenario.*

Example: A party's get-out-the-vote drive and a group's ad campaign are both linkage institutions at work.

175 Get-Out-the-Vote (GOTV) & Mobilization

Explanation: Parties and groups target likely supporters with reminders, rides, and registration help. GOTV efforts boost turnout most among low-propensity voters and in close races.

AP Gov Tip: *GOTV = mobilization of supporters; its effectiveness varies by contact method (door-knocking beats mail).*

Example: The Obama 2008 and 2012 campaigns built huge field operations that turned out new and young voters.

What's Next?

You have now reviewed every unit of the AP US Government and Politics course, including all required foundational documents and Supreme Court cases. Go back to the Table of Contents, find the units you marked, and reread just those tip lines. Two weeks out, do a rapid pass over the entire guide; the day before, review only the tip lines. On the FRQs, define your terms, cite specific cases and clauses, and connect every fact to a concept -- application points are where most students lose them.

Pair it with the Study Mastery Cheat Sheet (\$19) -- how to actually retain all of it

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