



AP[®] United States Government and Politics

Course and Exam Description Clarifications and Corrections

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To be Implemented for Fall 2026

General Clarifications

Available Resources listed in the topic pages were updated to indicate whether they can now be found in AP Classroom or in the Online Teacher Community.

Required Foundational Documents and Course Framework

The list of Required Foundational Documents (p.25) and the corresponding table linking Required Documents to the Course Framework (pp. 26-27) were updated to include the following documents:

- **Emancipation Proclamation**
- **Federalist No. 39**
- **The Gettysburg Address**
- **Core Principles from Adam Smith's *The Wealth of Nations***

As a result of the addition of the 4 new required documents listed above, the following Learning Objectives and Essential Knowledge Statements were updated:

LO 1.1.A Explain how democratic ideals are reflected in the Declaration of Independence, the U.S. Constitution, and the Gettysburg Address.

EK 1.1.A.3 The Declaration of Independence, drafted by Thomas Jefferson (with help from Adams and Franklin), restates the philosophy of natural rights and provides a foundation for popular sovereignty. The U.S. Constitution, drafted by James Madison at the Constitutional Convention in Philadelphia that was led by George Washington (with important contributions from Hamilton and members of the "Grand Committee"), is an example of a social contract and establishes a system of limited government. The Constitution provides the blueprint for a unique form of democratic government in the United States. The Gettysburg Address, written by Abraham Lincoln and delivered during the U.S. Civil War, reaffirmed equality and popular sovereignty as defining foundations of democracy.

EK 1.7.A.1 Federalism is the system of government in the United States in which power is shared between the national and state governments. The exclusive and concurrent powers of the national and state governments help explain the ongoing debate over the balance of power between the two levels. Federalist No. 39 explains that this division of authority combines national and state features to limit the concentration of power in any one part of the government while also allowing multiple access points for political participation.

EK 3.12.A.1 Decisions demonstrating that minority rights have been restricted at times and protected at other times include:

- i. The Emancipation Proclamation freed enslaved people from the states in rebellion against the United States, and the subsequent ratification of the Thirteenth Amendment permanently abolished slavery and marked a shift toward the establishment of civil rights for the formerly enslaved
- ii. State laws and Supreme Court holdings based on the "separate but equal" doctrine restricting African American access to the same restaurants, hotels, schools, etc., as the majority white population
- iii. Court decisions declaring that race-based school segregation violates the Fourteenth Amendment's Equal Protection Clause
- iv. The Supreme Court upholding the rights of the majority in cases that limit and prohibit majority-minority districting

LO 4.1.A Explain the relationship between core values of U.S. citizens and attitudes about the role of government.

EK 4.1.A.1 Different interpretations of core values affect the relationship between citizens, as well as between citizens and the federal government. Some of these core values include:

- i. Individualism (each person has the ability to shape their life and destiny through the choices they make)
- ii. Equality of opportunity (all people are given an equal chance to compete)
- iii. Free enterprise (pursuit of self-interest, competition, efficient allocation of resources, and limited government regulation of the market, as espoused by Adam Smith in writings such as *The Wealth of Nations*)
- iv. Rule of law (every person, even those in power, must follow and is accountable to the same laws that govern all)