Exam Day
Wake up in time to relax and eat a normal breakfast. Bring two #2 pencils for the multiple-choice section, two black or blue ink pens for the free-response section, and a watch. Wear comfortable clothing suitable for a cold or hot testing room. Do not bring any government books, laptops, cell phones, iWatches, or any other connective device. Follow the general advice below to make the most of your testing experience.

Overall Scoring and Credit
The exams are scored in early June and reported back to you and your high school in mid-summer. You can earn between 0 and 5 points.

Many colleges award credit for a score of 3 or better; some require a 5; and occasionally prestigious universities do not recognize the AP Government and Politics exam performance. The College Board equates a score of 5 to an A in a college-level class, a 4 to an A-, B+, or B, and a 3 to roughly a B-, C+, or C.

In 2017, just over 11 percent of those taking the exam earned a score of 5. More than 12 percent received a 4 and 26 percent earned a 3. About 25 percent earned a 2, and roughly another 25 percent earned a 1. So considering a score of 3 as passing (or "qualified"), just over half the students passed the exam. Many colleges consider a passing score on the AP exam to be equivalent to the introduction to American government course often called something like American Politics or Political Science 101. To help you plan for the exam, the College Board provides a site to connect with universities across the nation. Use it to find how your college regards the exam and what score they require (see www.collegeboard.com/ap/creditpolicy).

A Final Note
Large numbers of Americans, especially independents and young adults, mistrust politicians and the partisan talking heads on cable TV and are turned off by the political process. It is normal to feel this way. However, don't let an understandable irritation with polarizing partisans hamper your chances for success as a student or diminish your performance on the exam. You are primarily a student observer. As you begin your in-depth study of the course, though, you may find that as you learn more about the United States government, you can move from observer to participant.

UNIT 1: Foundations of American Democracy

Chapter 1 The Constitution
Chapter 2 Federalism

After suffering a decade of imposed tax laws and rights violations, in 1776 the British colonists presented the Declaration of Independence to the British Crown to break away from British control. The U.S. government at first operated under the Articles of Confederation, a weak form of government, until delegates convened in Philadelphia in 1787 to draft a new constitution. After a public debate between Federalists, who endorsed the plan, and Anti-Federalists, who opposed the plan, the states ultimately ratified the Constitution the following year.

The Constitution defined the three branches of government, relations among the states, national and state powers, and the process to alter, or amend, the document itself. Chief among its provisions are the checks and balances, which keep any one branch from becoming too powerful. Also, the amendment process allowed for a swift addition of the Bill of Rights in 1791 and, eventually, a total of 27 amendments.

The Constitution established federalism, a system of government that divides the power between the national and state governments. As new national concerns have surfaced, Congress has used its power to set policies to address these issues consistently throughout the states. The federal government has sometimes awarded large financial grants to encourage state action but has simply mandated others. Yet states use their power to maintain jurisdiction over schools, marriages and divorces, criminal law enforcement, wills, deeds, motor-vehicle law, and several other aspects of life. Through state referenda, citizens have recently made unique and varied changes on family leave, gambling, and the legalization of marijuana.

Enduring Understandings: Foundations of American Democracy

LOR-1: A balance between governmental power and individual rights has been a hallmark of American political development.

CON-1: The Constitution emerged from the debate about weaknesses in the Articles of Confederation as a blueprint for limited government.

PMI-1: The Constitution created a competitive policymaking process to ensure the people's will is represented and that freedom is preserved.

CON-2: Federalism reflects the dynamic distribution of power between national and state governments.

Source: AP® United States Government and Politics Course and Exam Description
The Constitution

"I doubt... whether any other Convention we can obtain, may be able to make a better Constitution... From such an assembly can a perfect production be expected? It therefore astonishes me, Sir, to find this system approaching so near to perfection as it does..."

—Ben Franklin on the proposed Constitution, 1787

Essential Question: How have theory, debate, and compromise influenced the United States' system of government that balances governmental power and individual rights?

The United States Constitution is the document that provides the guidelines for the national government. Drafted in Philadelphia in 1787 and officially ratified in 1788, the Constitution defines governing principles, national offices, functions, and limitations. It created the legislative, executive, and judicial branches; defined federalism and the relationship among the states; and provided for a method to alter, or amend, the document. In 1791, the states ratified the first ten amendments to the Constitution, known as the Bill of Rights. Seventeen amendments have been added since.

Because the Constitution is the blueprint for our government, knowing and understanding this document is essential to this course and to understanding American government. The full text of the Constitution is printed in the back of this book and available online at http://constitutioncenter.org/interactive-constitution. When reading about particular provisions or clauses, turn to it for reference. Keep good notes on key passages and their importance. These practices will help you master the content and overall structure of the document.

American Independence and Early National Government

The Constitution and the new government it defines did not come into being easily. It took a war with Great Britain, a governing experiment, and a three-year struggle to create a more perfect union.

In the 1770s, after a century of British rule in the American colonies, the colonists and Britain's King George III came to an impasse after Parliament passed a series of tax laws. Leaders from the 13 colonies challenged British authority. They were inspired by philosophers from the Enlightenment who argued for natural, God-given rights and for a social contract between a democratic government and the people. They argued that if a government violated the understood compact between the state and the governed, then the people could take that power back. After a successful military campaign, the leading American revolutionaries became the founding fathers of the new nation. After a failed attempt to govern themselves during the 1780s under the Articles of Confederation, a stronger framework—the Constitution—became necessary for the United States to transition from a loose collection of sovereign states into a united republic.

TIMELINE

1764 - Parliament passes Sugar Act
1765 - Parliament passes Stamp Act
1770 - Boston Massacre
1773 - Boston Tea Party
1774 - First Continental Congress
1775 - Battles of Lexington and Concord
1776 - Declaration of Independence
1781 - Articles of Confederation ratified
1783 - Treaty of Paris
1786 - Shays's Rebellion
1787 - Constitutional Convention
1789 - President Washington, Congress elected
1789 - Congress proposes Bill of Rights
1790 - Rhode Island, the 13th state, ratifies Constitution
1791 - Bill of Rights ratified
The Road to Revolution

Britain’s King George III and Parliament passed laws that restricted the colonists’ freedoms and taxed them to help finance the Crown’s empire. With plentiful land and resources, the North American colonies were among Britain’s most financially successful properties in an otherwise financially challenging time. Decades of wars and imperial endeavors had ravaged the British treasury. The British empire controlled colonies throughout the world, and maintaining such a far-flung empire required revenue. The Sugar Act was Britain’s first attempt at increasing revenue. Soon the Stamp Act, which taxed colonists who transacted legal documents, the Tea Act, and other acts followed.

The colonists organized to oppose the acts. Some colonists opposed the taxes on a practical, economic basis, but most outspoken American leaders took a principled position against the laws because Parliament created these without any colonial representation. No colonist expected the democratic representation Americans value today. At the time only white men with property could cast votes in English and in American elections, but colonists felt the Crown’s complete disregard for any representation at all violated the Enlightenment philosophies they so revered.

“No taxation without representation!” demanded the colonists. The British government responded unapologetically and declared the colonists were “virtually represented.” They reminded colonists that most citizens residing throughout the British Isles, about 90 percent, could not vote. Members of Parliament insisted they still considered the colonists’ best interests.

Tensions increased as protesters refused to abide by the new laws and the British government doubled down to enforce them. Royal courts tried and convicted protesters unfairly. The British government violated the ideas of free speech, free assembly, and free press by exacting punishments when colonists spoke, gathered, or published in opposition. Colonial leaders attempted at first to negotiate a peaceful relationship through the Olive Branch Petition to King George, a symbolic act of peace in which they pledged loyalty but also made clear their grievances. The King rejected that petition, and the colonies mobilized for revolt.

Influence of Enlightenment Thought

The Sons of Liberty and other advocates for freedom drew on Enlightenment political theory. It had been developed when the principles of rationalism that had unlocked doors to the natural world during the Scientific Revolution were applied to the social world as well. Especially influential were the writings of English philosopher John Locke (1632–1704) and Swiss-born philosopher Jean-Jacques Rousseau (1712–1778).

John Locke and Natural Law Locke argued that natural law is the law of God and that this law is acknowledged through human sense and reason. He proposed that under natural law—in a state of nature—people were born free and equal. According to this law, Locke reasoned, “No one can be... subjected to the political power of another, without his own consent.” Locke argued further that natural law not only entitled but obligated people to rebel when the rule of kings did not respect the consent of the governed.

Jean-Jacques Rousseau and the Social Contract Rousseau was much influenced by Locke. He spoke for those “intending their minds” away from an irrational and oppressive political order, away from a governmental theory that rested in divine right of kings and clergy to rule and misuse. The opening sentence of his influential treatise, The Social Contract, dramatically lays out a key human problem: “Man was born free, and he is everywhere in chains.” The social contract Rousseau describes is the agreement of free and equal people to abandon certain natural rights in order to find secure protections for society and to find freedom in a single body politic committed to the general good. He envisioned popular sovereignty—the people as the ultimate ruling authority—and a government of officials to carry out the laws.

French philosopher Montesquieu (1689–1755), like Rousseau, recognized both the sovereign and administrative aspects of governmental power. He argued for the separation of powers in the administrative government, comprised of the executive, legislative, and judicial branches.

Enlightenment thought was well known among English colonists in North America. According to historian Carl Becker, “Most Americans had absorbed Locke’s works as a kind of political gospel.” The American revolutionaries believed that men were entitled to “life, liberty, and property” and that these cannot be taken away except under laws created through the consent of the governed. These beliefs formed the bedrock of the political ideology known as republicanism. The lack of colonial representation in Parliament, taxation without consent, and subsequent infringements of liberty violated fundamental rights and the values of republicanism and would, in time, be remedied by an independent, limited, and representative government based on the ideas of natural rights, popular sovereignty, republicanism, and social contract.

Three Kinds of Representative Democracies

Representative democracies based on the values of republicanism can take at least three forms.

Participatory Democracy This form of democracy depends on direct participation of many, if not most, people in a society, not only in government but in public life as well. In a participatory democracy, people vote directly for laws and other matters that affect them instead of voting for people to represent their interests. The democracy in 5th-century Athens was participatory, though only adult male citizens could vote. More recently, a group of college students in the 1960s started a movement in participatory democracy. Protesting wars abroad and inequality at home, they formed Students for a Democratic Society. In 1962 some of the members met in Port Huron, Michigan. They modeled participatory decision-making as they collaboratively drafted their beliefs in the “Port Huron Statement.” This document calls for the direct involvement of ordinary citizens, especially through civil disobedience. One of the founders