

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Class Period \_\_\_\_\_

**AP Government : THE US CONSTITUTION STUDY GUIDE**

A copy of the US Constitution is available at: [www.constitutioncenter.org](http://www.constitutioncenter.org) or in the textbook

**Directions:** Read the US Constitution and complete the following questions directly on this handout. ALL ANSWERS MUST BE IN YOUR OWN WORDS AND FROM YOUR OWN READING. Bring this with you to the first day of class and you may use a printed out, handwritten version on your assessment that day (handwritten only – you may NOT use your computer or a computer copy).

**PART I: THE OVERALL STRUCTURE OF THE CONSTITUTION**

1. Read each article of the Constitution. Summarize the general purpose or subject of each article in one sentence in the chart below.

Article I	
Article II	
Article III	
Article IV	
Article V	
Article VI	
Article VII	

2. Compare Article I with Article II. Which article is longer and more detailed? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Identify two powers denied from Congress in the Constitution.

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4. How does the House of Representatives determine the rules of proceedings (the ability to have debates, riders, etc.)

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5. Identify two powers the Constitution prohibits from the States. \_\_\_\_\_

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6. What eligibility requirements does the Constitution establish for members of the House?

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7. What eligibility requirements does the Constitution establish for members of the Senate?

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8. What eligibility requirements does the Constitution establish for the President?

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9. The powers of the Constitution that are specifically granted to the branches of government or to office holders are called *express* powers.

a. Identify two express powers of the president. \_\_\_\_\_

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b. What are the express powers of the vice president? \_\_\_\_\_

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c. Identify two express powers of Congress. \_\_\_\_\_

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10. According to the principle of checks and balances, each branch of the government must have control over the other branches. Look at the first three articles of the Constitution and identify one of each type of checks and balances. Indicate where each power is listed in the Constitution.

a. A power that the executive branch has over the Legislative branch: \_\_\_\_\_

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This can be found in what article/section of the Constitution: \_\_\_\_\_

b. A power that the executive branch holds over the judicial branch: \_\_\_\_\_

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This can be found in what article/section of the Constitution: \_\_\_\_\_

c. A power that the legislative branch holds over the executive branch:

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This can be found in what article/section of the Constitution: \_\_\_\_\_

d. A power that the legislative branch holds over the judicial branch:

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This can be found in what article/section of the Constitution: \_\_\_\_\_

e. A power that the judicial branch holds over the executive branch:

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This can be found in what article/section of the Constitution: \_\_\_\_\_

f. A power that the judicial branch holds over the executive branch:

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This can be found in what article/section of the Constitution: \_\_\_\_\_

11. The *court of original jurisdiction* is the first court that hears a case. *Appellate courts* hear cases on appeal from lower courts. Although the Supreme Court functions primarily as an appellate court, it is the courts of original jurisdiction in certain kinds of cases. What cases have original jurisdiction in the Supreme Court?

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12. According to Article I of the Constitution, who has the power to declare war?

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13. What power does the Constitution give the President in the area of war?

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## **PART II: IMPORTANT CLAUSES**

1. Where is the "Commerce Clause" and what does it say? \_\_\_\_\_

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2. Where is the “Necessary and Proper Clause” and what does it say? \_\_\_\_\_

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3. Where is the “Supremacy Clause” and what does it say? \_\_\_\_\_

4. How might these clauses above have impacted the power of the federal government?

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5. Where is the full faith and credit clause and what does it say? \_\_\_\_\_

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6. There are two “due process” clauses. Where are they? What does “due process” of law imply?

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7. Where is the “equal protection clause”? What does this imply? \_\_\_\_\_

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### **PART III: MAJORITY AND SUPERMAJORITY**

The Constitution requires a simple majority for some actions and a supermajority for others. A simple majority means more than half, while supermajority requirements can involve a 2/3 majority or a 3/4 majority. Most elections in the United States require a plurality, or the most votes, but not necessarily a majority.

1. a. What bodies have the power to override a presidential veto? \_\_\_\_\_

b. What margin is required to override a presidential veto? \_\_\_\_\_

c. Where in the Constitution is the veto power described? \_\_\_\_\_

2. a. What body has the power to ratify treaties? \_\_\_\_\_

b. What margin is required to ratify treaties? \_\_\_\_\_

c. Where in the Constitution is the ratification power described? \_\_\_\_\_

3. *To impeach* means “to bring charges against” or “indict”.

a. What body has the power to impeach the president? \_\_\_\_\_

b. What vote is required to impeach? \_\_\_\_\_

- c. What is the standard for impeachment? \_\_\_\_\_
4. a. What body has the power to convict the president of charges brought against him in the impeachment process and thereby remove him from the presidency? \_\_\_\_\_
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- b. What vote is required to convict and remove the president? \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Where in the Constitution is the impeachment power described? \_\_\_\_\_
5. a. What body has the power to accept or reject a president's nominations to the Supreme Court?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- b. What margin is required to elevate a president's nominee to a seat on the Court?  
\_\_\_\_\_
- c. Where in the Constitution are judicial nominations described? \_\_\_\_\_
- d. What language is used to describe the roll of the Senate in Supreme Court nominations?  
\_\_\_\_\_
6. a. If no candidate for the presidency wins a simple majority of the total number of electoral votes, what body has the power to choose the president? \_\_\_\_\_
- b. What margin is required to choose the president? \_\_\_\_\_
- c. Where in the Constitution is the Electoral College described? (Hint: There are two parts.)
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7. The Constitution specifies a three-fourths majority for just one process. What? \_\_\_\_\_
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8. The Constitution has comparatively little to say about the structure and composition of the Supreme Court. Identify two aspects of the Court's structure and composition that the Constitution does not specify. (The Constitution does specify these two basic aspects of structure and composition for the other two branches). \_\_\_\_\_
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9. List all parts of the Constitution that require a supermajority(more than 50%). For each, explain why you believe there is a supermajority requirement.

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10. What are two ways that amendments to the Constitution can be proposed? \_\_\_\_\_

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11. What are two ways that amendments to the Constitution can be ratified? \_\_\_\_\_

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#### **PART IV: THE AMENDMENTS TO THE CONSTITUTION**

Some parts of the Constitution require a simple majority, others a supermajority, while still others protect citizens from the will of the majority. The first ten amendments to the Constitution, the Bill of Rights protect citizens from the will of the majority. In other words, no majority could vote to take these rights away. Reach each amendment to the Constitution and answer the questions below.

1. Outline the general purpose of all 27 Amendments.

Amendment 1	
Amendment 2	
Amendment 3	
Amendment 4	
Amendment 5	

Amendment 6	
Amendment 7	
Amendment 8	
Amendment 9	
Amendment 10	
Amendment 11	
Amendment 12	
Amendment 13	
Amendment 14	
Amendment 15	
Amendment 16	
Amendment 17	
Amendment 18	
Amendment 19	
Amendment 20	

Amendment 21	
Amendment 22	
Amendment 23	
Amendment 24	
Amendment 25	
Amendment 26	
Amendment 27	

2. Which amendment(s) of the Constitution protect the rights of women? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

3. Summarize what this amendment(s) of the Constitution says. \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

4. Which amendment(s) of the Constitution protect the rights of African Americans? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

5. How were US Senators chosen before the Seventeenth Amendment? \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

6. The Twenty-Fifth Amendment describes the sequence of events that would install the vice president as acting president against the will of the presidents. Outline that sequence of events.  
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 \_\_\_\_\_  
 \_\_\_\_\_

7. How many times is the word *privacy* mentioned in the Constitution (articles and amendments)?  
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**Honor Code**

I have not and will not give or receive any help, other than that allowed by the instructor, on this assignment. I understand that I may use the internet, family, or friends to help me understand the United States Constitution and to analyze how I may word my answer; however, I may not copy any words from any source (other than the United States Constitution itself). My signature below testifies that I have performed this assignment independently, and have read the sections of the Constitution as indicated. I promise this before my classmates, my teacher, and Jesus Christ.

Signed: \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

Dear AP GoPo student.

I am excited that you have chosen to take APGoPo next year. I believe it is a fun course and vital for every student to be a better informed citizen. With the next general election heating up, we will have a lot to talk about during our discussion times.

I know this assignment is long; however, it will help you to understand the Constitution better so that once we begin talking about the concepts, you will already have a basic knowledge and we can build on that. Bring this with you to class on the first day. Just for turning it in on time you will get five points extra credit to be added to a test grade that first quarter. If you do not have it by the first day of class, you must at least have it by that first Friday. It will count for a quiz grade that first quarter.

Don't forget to go ahead and order your textbook. You can purchase ones from a student that has just take AP GoPo and that would probably be your cheapest option. Otherwise, please order the textbook and the Crash Course book before coming to class. If you have any questions about that, please do not hesitate to contact me.

I am already praying for you that the Lord will bless you in this AP class and we will learn a lot together while hopefully having fun as well.

Miss Setzer