AP US Government Exam Preparation and Test Day Strategies

Pre-Test Preparation

1. Prepare your go-to notes for the exam well ahead of time. Whether it is your class notes, your review books, or something else, make sure it is tabbed, bookmarked, and annotated. Make sure that you select sources that you are very familiar with. You will not have time to search for information in multiple sources (books, the internet, etc.) during the exam. You should start working on this now.

2. You will need to create two files. Label the first file ap gov question 1 and the second file ap gov question 2, preferably in google docs. At the top of each document you need to type your testing id and initials. This should be done the day prior to the exam so you don’t waste time on test day.

3. You will be taking your exam at home, using any device that can connect to the internet (laptop, computer, tablet, smart phone). You must use a single device for the duration of the exam.

4. Make sure you don’t have the grammarly plug-in installed, it will interfere with the testing software and you will be unable to take the exam. If you have it installed you must remove it.

5. Internet explorer will not work with the testing program. Make sure you have a browser that will work.

6. Clean your desk space and have everything prepared and organized ahead of time. You do not want to rush in the minutes leading up to the exam.

7. Make sure your household knows you are taking a highly secured exam and that you cannot be interrupted until the exam is over.

8. Ensure that you have a quiet place to take your exam, preferably a place where you can close the door to avoid disruptions and interruptions.

Open Notes?

1. Any shared study notes and review material developed with other students must be downloaded prior to the exam.

2. You MAY NOT copy information from any source whatsoever. The entirety of your answer must be in your own words.

3. You MAY NOT consult with anyone (parent, friend, teacher, etc.) during the exam.

4. You MAY use your notes, review books, and online sources. While you may use as many sources as you like, you are under a very strict time constraint and will not have time, knowing content and being able to apply it is essential. Prepare a few key resources in advance (summaries of required foundational documents, court cases, and important
vocabulary from units 1 – 3). Ensure that it is well organized, and that it is either bookmarked and/or tabbed, and annotated for efficiency and ease of use.

5. I have posted several resources (text document reviews, worksheets, PowerPoints, videos, etc.) for you as you prepare for the AP Exam. These are under AP Gov Review Material on the main page to the AP Government wordpress. Many of the resources are annotated with a description of the content. And most the resources are also categorized into several subtopics. You should print out some of these resources to use when you take the exam. Especially important are the document that says print for May 11, required cases cheat sheet, and foundational documents cheat sheet. You should do this in advance so you can organize it for the exam. Remember you may not copy this material when writing your exam responses, that is plagiarism, you must write it in your own words. Please make sure you take advantage of the materials posted.

The Modified 2020 AP Government Exam

1. The exam covers:
   - Unit 1: Foundations of American Democracy
   - Unit 2: Interactions Among Branches of Government
   - Unit 3: Civil Liberties and Civil Rights

2. You must know all 9 required foundational documents:
   - The Declaration of Independence
   - The Articles of Confederation
   - Federalist No. 10
   - Brutus No. 1
   - Federalist No. 51
   - The Constitution of the United States
   - Federalist No. 70
   - Federalist No. 78
   - “Letter from Birmingham Jail”

3. You must know the facts, rulings, and reasonings of the 15 required Supreme Court cases:
   - Marbury v. Madison (1803)
   - McCulloch v. Maryland (1819)
   - Schenck v. United States (1919)
   - Brown v. Board of Education (1954)
   - Baker v. Carr (1961)
   - Engel v. Vitale (1962)
   - Gideon v. Wainwright (1963)
   - Wisconsin v. Yoder (1972)
Roe v. Wade (1973)
Shaw v. Reno (1993)
McDonald v. Chicago (2010)

4. Review the Amsco.
5. Review the crash course.
6. Stop reviewing by 10PM Sunday. Do not try to cram and stay up all night. Relax, get a good night sleep. This is especially important since several of you are taking two AP exams Monday.
7. Monday between 1 and 3 PM we will have class if you have any questions on content come prepared to ask, I will also go over some important reminders.

Test Day Monday May 11th (Arrive at 3:30 PM to complete security questions) testing begins @ 4:00 PM

1. Make sure you have talked with the members of your household and that they know that you cannot be disturbed or interrupted during your exams. Place a sign on your door as a gentle reminder, just in case!
2. Have a light snack before you sit down to start the exam.
3. Use the restroom prior to the exam, you won’t have time to go during it.
4. You will have to answer several security questions, so have your student IDs, AP exam information, and any other documents/ information which you are told you will need with you and readily available.
5. Turn off your phone ringers and under no circumstances should you return a text or take a call during the exam.
6. Do not lay down or take the exam in bed. You will get tired, possibly fall asleep and not perform as well as you would if you are attentive and sitting at a table or desk. I know you are home, but you want to replicate as close as possible the in-school testing environment.
7. Have your computer or other device fully charged and plugged in.
8. Have a pen and paper at your desk so that you can take notes and plan your responses before you write.
9. Have a copy of the new rubrics at your desk for reference.
10. Have your pre sourced notes and reference material at your desk, tabbed and annotated for ease of use.
11. Make sure to keep the timer in your sights throughout the exam, as the time will go by very quickly.
12. You will need your eticket and identification information. **Do not share your eticket with anyone!**

13. Log into the exam system 30 minutes before the start time of your test. You should be logging in at 3:30 pm.

14. Do not hit the back button in your browser, use the refresh button, or close the testing window. You need to keep it open and pay attention to the clock.

15. You should type your responses in google docs (it auto saves your work if you have issues).

16. Very important read this! When the clock turns red you need to cut and paste your response in the testing window, verify it is all there, and submit! I know the clock shows you have 5 minutes remaining, but if you keep working to get one more point and then have difficulty or do not upload before the time expires you get no credit for the work you have done. This will severely affect your chances of passing the exam. It is better to upload and get points rather then get a dash which means you receive no credit. Not uploading on time is not an excuse you can use to request a makeup either.

**FRQ Strategies**

1. The argumentative essay question is the only question that requires a thesis.

2. **Argument Essay:** Develop an argument in the form of an essay, using evidence from one or more required foundational documents.

   **Tasks**
   - Choose ONE "side" to argue, take a stand do not choose both
   - Justify with a line of reasoning that will be used throughout the essay (thesis)
   - Pick and explain at least ONE evidence from the list provided and connect to thesis
   - Pick and explain another evidence (from list or your own) and connect to thesis

   **Steps**
   - **Thesis (1pt)**
     - Choose ONE argument and follow throughout
     - Be CLEAR (no shoulds, I believes etc.)
     - DO NOT repeat the prompt (no points if you do this)
     - Have line of reasoning that you will use throughout your entire essay (Argument + because)
     - Have a road map for both evidences (do not have to name but briefly mention)
Best you can do without a thesis is 2 points!!

- Evidence (1-2pts)
  - Choose at least ONE from the list and choose another from list or knowledge
  - SUGGESTION: choose both from list- it says you can pick one from list and one other, but it is SAFEST to just pick two from what they give you!
  - Mention them by name; can quote (no points for quote)

- Evidence Summary (1-2pts)
  - Summarize in your own words (be very careful- anything that sounds/looks like plagiarism will be flagged)
  - Make clear you understand what the document is
  - Connect specifically to topic in prompt (you cannot use just anything in the Constitution, it must make sense to topic)

- Evidence Reasoning (1-2pts)
  - Different than summary
  - CONNECT to thesis (WHY does it support your answer- be specific and clear)
  - End each evidence by restating thesis to help prove point

- Conclusion
  - Does NOT give you an extra point, however, if you MISS the thesis, you can get credit for a thesis from this!!

3. Concept Application: Respond to a political scenario, explaining how it relates to a political principle, institution, process, policy, or behavior

4. In both the argumentative essay and concept application make sure to use specific examples do not be vague. To distinguish yourself and earn a higher score, use specific terminology from the course. Don’t just say gridlock if asked about obstacles to legislation. Mention gridlock, define it. Then explain what causes it or how it relates to your argument and leads to difficulties in passing laws.

All frqs are graded using a grading rubric. For each piece of correct information supplied, you earn points. Keep writing till you get the points. Be specific Congress confirms judges is not acceptable. This is vague. The senate confirms presidential appointments to the federal judiciary who serves for life. The more you say that is relevant to the question the more likely you will get the point.

5. Make sure you answer the question that is being asked and all parts of it, not the one you want to answer.

6. Pay particular attention to the words in the question explain etc. To this end make sure you understand exactly what tasks a question is asking and then perform them. I have posted Free Response Question Guide to the wordpress.

7. Use complete sentences, no bullets are allowed

8. The AP Government 2020 Exam PowerPoint on the wordpress covers several topics:

- Units covered on the exam
• Exam date and time
• Exam timing
• Testing preparation (notes, devices, testing space, etc.)
• Guides to answering both the argumentative essay and concept application essay with several questions for practice and revised 2020 rubrics
• And reminders

Make sure you read this before the exam!

Summarize everything you write in your own words (be very careful- anything that sounds/looks like plagiarism will be flagged) and colleges will be notified and most likely your scores will be cancelled. Do not take the risk.

You are an incredible group of students and will do well. Believe in yourself and do the best you can. Remember from time to time to take a deep breath, do not stress or panic, you can do this. Despite the current global pandemic and changes in everyone’s lives you have continued to attend class and keep learning. I am incredibly proud of you.

Good Luck!
Mr. Yamron