

California State Content Standards — Social Sciences, Grade 12

Principles of American Democracy – Course on High School U.S. Government

Fall: first two weeks of September/ Spring: first two weeks of February

12.1 Students explain the fundamental principles and moral values of American democracy as expressed in the U.S. Constitution and other essential documents of American democracy.

1. Analyze the influence of ancient Greek, Roman, English, and leading European political thinkers such as John Locke, Charles-Louis Montesquieu, Niccolò Machiavelli, and William Blackstone on the development of American government.
2. Discuss the character of American democracy and its promise and perils as articulated by Alexis de Tocqueville.
3. Explain how the U.S. Constitution reflects a balance between the classical republican concern with promotion of the public good and the classical liberal concern with protecting individual rights; and discuss how the basic premises of liberal constitutionalism and democracy are joined in the Declaration of Independence as "self-evident truths."
4. Explain how the Founding Fathers' realistic view of human nature led directly to the establishment of a constitutional system that limited the power of the governors and the governed as articulated in the *Federalist Papers*.
5. Describe the systems of separated and shared powers, the role of organized interests (*Federalist Paper Number 10*), checks and balances (*Federalist Paper Number 51*), the importance of an independent judiciary (*Federalist Paper Number 78*), enumerated powers, rule of law, federalism, and civilian control of the military.
6. Understand that the Bill of Rights limits the powers of the federal government and state governments.

Fall: third week of September/ Spring: third week of February

12.3 Students evaluate and take and defend positions on what the fundamental values and principles of civil society are (i.e., the autonomous sphere of voluntary personal, social, and economic relations that are not part of government), their interdependence, and the meaning and importance of those values and principles for a free society.

1. Explain how civil society provides opportunities for individuals to associate for social, cultural, religious, economic, and political purposes.
2. Explain how civil society makes it possible for people, individually or in association with others, to bring their influence to bear on government in ways other than voting and elections.
3. Discuss the historical role of religion and religious diversity.
4. Compare the relationship of government and civil society in constitutional democracies to the relationship of government and civil society in authoritarian and totalitarian regimes.

Fall: last week of September/ Spring: last week of February

12.9 Students analyze the origins, characteristics, and development of different political systems across time, with emphasis on the quest for political democracy, its advances, and its obstacles.

1. Explain how the different philosophies and structures of feudalism, mercantilism, socialism, fascism, communism, monarchies, parliamentary systems, and constitutional liberal democracies influence economic policies, social welfare policies, and human rights practices.
2. Compare the various ways in which power is distributed, shared, and limited in systems of shared powers and in parliamentary systems, including the influence and role of parliamentary leaders (e.g., William Gladstone, Margaret Thatcher).

3. Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of federal, confederal, and unitary systems of government.

Fall: first two weeks of October/ Spring: first two weeks of March

12.6 Students evaluate issues regarding campaigns for national, state, and local elective offices.

1. Analyze the origin, development, and role of political parties, noting those occasional periods in which there was only one major party or were more than two major parties.
2. Discuss the history of the nomination process for presidential candidates and the increasing importance of primaries in general elections.
3. Evaluate the roles of polls, campaign advertising, and the controversies over campaign funding.
4. Describe the means that citizens use to participate in the political process (e.g., voting, campaigning, lobbying, filing a legal challenge, demonstrating, petitioning, picketing, running for political office).
5. Discuss the features of direct democracy in numerous states (e.g., the process of referendums, recall elections).
6. Analyze trends in voter turnout; the causes and effects of reapportionment and redistricting, with special attention to spatial districting and the rights of minorities; and the function of the Electoral College.

Fall: third week of October/ Spring: third week of March

12.8 Students evaluate and take and defend positions on the influence of the media on American political life.

1. Discuss the meaning and importance of a free and responsible press.
2. Describe the roles of broadcast, print, and electronic media, including the Internet, as means of communication in American politics.
3. Explain how public officials use the media to communicate with the citizenry and to shape public opinion.

Fall: last week of October, all of November & December/ Spring: last week of March, all of April & May

12.4 Students analyze the unique roles and responsibilities of the three branches of government as established by the U.S. Constitution.

1. Discuss Article I of the Constitution as it relates to the legislative branch, including eligibility for office and lengths of terms of representatives and senators; election to office; the roles of the House and Senate in impeachment proceedings; the role of the vice president; the enumerated legislative powers; and the process by which a bill becomes a law.
2. Explain the process through which the Constitution can be amended.
3. Identify their current representatives in the legislative branch of the national government.
4. Discuss Article II of the Constitution as it relates to the executive branch, including eligibility for office and length of term, election to and removal from office, the oath of office, and the enumerated executive powers.
5. Discuss Article III of the Constitution as it relates to judicial power, including the length of terms of judges and the jurisdiction of the Supreme Court.
6. Explain the processes of selection and confirmation of Supreme Court justices.

Fall: first week of January/ Spring: first week of June

12.2 Students evaluate and take and defend positions on the scope and limits of rights and obligations as democratic citizens, the relationships among them, and how they are secured.

1. Discuss the meaning and importance of each of the rights guaranteed under the Bill of Rights and how each is secured (e.g., freedom of religion, speech, press, assembly, petition, privacy).
2. Explain how economic rights are secured and their importance to the individual and to society (e.g., the right to acquire, use, transfer, and dispose of property; right to choose one's work; right to join or not join labor unions; copyright and patent).
3. Discuss the individual's legal obligations to obey the law, serve as a juror, and pay taxes.
4. Understand the obligations of civic-mindedness, including voting, being informed on civic issues, volunteering and performing public service, and serving in the military or alternative service.
5. Describe the reciprocity between rights and obligations; that is, why enjoyment of one's rights entails respect for the rights of others.
6. Explain how one becomes a citizen of the United States, including the process of naturalization (e.g., literacy, language, and other requirements).

Fall: second week of January/ Spring: second week of June

12.5 Students summarize landmark U.S. Supreme Court interpretations of the Constitution and its amendments.

1. Understand the changing interpretations of the Bill of Rights over time, including interpretations of the basic freedoms (religion, speech, press, petition, and assembly) articulated in the First Amendment and the due process and equal-protection-of-the-law clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment.
2. Analyze judicial activism and judicial restraint and the effects of each policy over the decades (e.g., the Warren and Rehnquist courts).
3. Evaluate the effects of the Court's interpretations of the Constitution in *Marbury v. Madison*, *McCulloch v. Maryland*, and *United States v. Nixon*, with emphasis on the arguments espoused by each side in these cases.
4. Explain the controversies that have resulted over changing interpretations of civil rights, including those in *Plessy v. Ferguson*, *Brown v. Board of Education*, *Miranda v. Arizona*, *Regents of the University of California v. Bakke*, *Adarand Constructors, Inc. v. Pena*, and *United States v. Virginia* (VMI).

Fall: third week of January/ Spring: third week of June

12.7 Students analyze and compare the powers and procedures of the national, state, tribal, and local governments.

1. Explain how conflicts between levels of government and branches of government are resolved.
2. Identify the major responsibilities and sources of revenue for state and local governments.
3. Discuss reserved powers and concurrent powers of state governments.
4. Discuss the Ninth and Tenth Amendments and interpretations of the extent of the federal government's power.
5. Explain how public policy is formed, including the setting of the public agenda and implementation of it through regulations and executive orders.
6. Compare the processes of lawmaking at each of the three levels of government, including the role of lobbying and the media.
7. Identify the organization and jurisdiction of federal, state, and local (e.g., California) courts and the interrelationships among them.

8. Understand the scope of presidential power and decision making through examination of case studies such as the Cuban Missile Crisis, passage of Great Society legislation, War Powers Act, Gulf War, and Bosnia.

Fall: last week of January/ Spring: last week of June

12.9 Students analyze the origins, characteristics, and development of different political systems across time, with emphasis on the quest for political democracy, its advances, and its obstacles.

4. Describe for at least two countries the consequences of conditions that gave rise to tyrannies during certain periods (e.g., Italy, Japan, Haiti, Nigeria, Cambodia).
5. Identify the forms of illegitimate power that twentieth-century African, Asian, and Latin American dictators used to gain and hold office and the conditions and interests that supported them.
6. Identify the ideologies, causes, stages, and outcomes of major Mexican, Central American, and South American revolutions in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.
7. Describe the ideologies that give rise to Communism, methods of maintaining control, and the movements to overthrow such governments in Czechoslovakia, Hungary, and Poland, including the roles of individuals (e.g., Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Pope John Paul II, Lech Walesa, Vaclav Havel).
8. Identify the successes of relatively new democracies in Africa, Asia, and Latin America and the ideas, leaders, and general societal conditions that have launched and sustained, or failed to sustain, them.

Continuous throughout course

12.10 Students formulate questions about and defend their analyses of tensions within our constitutional democracy and the importance of maintaining a balance between the following concepts: majority rule and individual rights; liberty and equality; state and national authority in a federal system; civil disobedience and the rule of law; freedom of the press and the right to a fair trial; the relationship of religion and government.