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## Social Studies: Grade 12 American Government

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### American Government

The United States government course is a required one semester course designed to provide students with essential knowledge and skills related to the nation's government and its historical development. Students in this course pursue a deep understanding of the institutions of American government. They analyze the history and interpretations of the Constitution, the Bill of Rights, and the current state of the legislative, executive, and judiciary branches of government. An emphasis is placed on analyzing the relationship between federal, state, and local governments, with particular attention paid to important historical documents. Students compare systems of government in the world (comparison with host nation's government is encouraged as part of the program). These standards represent the culmination of civic efficacy as students prepare to vote, participate in community activities, and assume the responsibilities of citizenship.

#### **Social Studies Content Standards (SS):**

Statements of what students should know and be able to do in a specific social studies grade level course. The standards provide a clear outline of content so that teachers can develop and align curriculum, instruction, and assessment. Components under each standard describe knowledge or skills and serve as progress indicators for gauging student's achievement of each standard.

**Standard: 12SSAG1: 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.**

- Components: 12SSAG1.a:** Analyze the influence of ancient Greek, Roman, English and leading European political thinkers such as John Locke, Charles-Louis Montesquieu, Niccolo Machiavelli, and William Blackstone on the development of American government.
- 12SSAG1.b:** Demonstrate knowledge of the political philosophies that shaped the development of the U.S. constitutional government by explaining the influence of the Magna Carta, the English petition of Rights, and the English Bill of Rights.
- 12SSAG1.c:** Discuss the charter of American democracy and its promise and perils as articulated by Alexis de Tocqueville.
- 12SSAG1.d:** Identify and explain elements of the social contract and natural rights theories in United States founding-era documents.
- 12SSAG1.e:** Summarize the principles and purposes of government in the Preamble to the Constitution.
- 12SSAG1.f:** 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."
- 12SSAG1.g:** 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*.

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**12SSAG1.h:** 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.

**12SSAG1.i:** Understand that the Bill of Rights limits the powers of the federal government and state governments.

**Standard:**     **12SSAG2:     Students formulate and defend positions on the scope and limits of rights and obligations as democratic citizens, the relationships among them, and how they are secured.**

**Components:**   **12SSAG2.a:**   Examine the meaning and importance of each of the rights guaranteed under the Bill of Rights and how each is secured  
*Examples: freedom of religion, speech, press, assembly, petition, and privacy*

**12SSAG2.b:**   Explain how economic rights are secured and their importance to the individual and to society .  
*Examples: the right to acquire, use, transfer, and dispose of property; the right to choose one's work; the right to join or not join labor unions; and copyright and patent*

**12SSAG2.c:**   Discuss the individual's legal obligations to obey the law, serve as a juror, and pay taxes.

**12SSAG2.d:**   Analyze the obligation of civic-mindedness, including voting, being informed on civic issues, serving in the military, and volunteering and performing public service.

**12SSAG2.e:**   Analyze trends in voter turnout; the causes and effects of reapportionment and redistricting, with special attention to spatial districting and the right of minorities; and the function of the Electoral College.

**12SSAG2.f:**   Describe the reciprocity between rights and obligations and explain why enjoyment of one's rights entails respect for the rights of others and maintaining a balance between individual rights and the common good.

**12SSAG2.g:**   Explain how one becomes a citizen of the United States including the process of naturalization, literacy, language, and other requirements.

**Standard:**     **12SSAG3:     Students formulate and defend positions on what the fundamental values and principles of civil society are including 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.**

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- Components:**   **12SSAG3.a:**   Explain how civil society provides opportunities for individuals associate for social, cultural, religious, economic, and political purposes.
- 12SSAG3.b:**   Examine 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.
- 12SSAG3.c:**   Evaluate the historical role of religion and religious and cultural diversity.
- 12SSAG3.d:**   Compare the relationship of government and civil society in constitutional democracies to the relationship of government and civil society in authoritarian and totalitarian regimes.
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- Standard:**       **12SSAG4:   Students compare and contrast the unique roles and responsibilities of the three branches of government established by the U.S. Constitution.**
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- Components:**   **12SSAG4.a:**   Analyze Article I of the Constitution and relate it to the structure of the legislative branch including eligibility for office, 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.
- 12SSAG4.b:**   Examine Article 1, Section 8 of the Constitution (Elastic Clause), implied powers impact on legislation and public policy.
- 12SSAG4.c:**   Illustrate the process through which the Constitution can be amended.
- 12SSAG4.d:**   Identify student’s current representatives in the legislative branch of the national government.
- 12SSAG4.e:**   Discuss Article II of the Constitution as it relates to the executive Branch.
- 12SSAG4.f:**   Analyze Article II of the Constitution and relate it to the executive branch including eligibility for office and length of term, election to and removed from office, the oath of office, veto power, Executive Privilege and enumerated executive powers.
- 12SSAG4g:**   Appraise the processes of selection and confirmation of Supreme Court justices.
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- Standard:**       **12SSAG5:   Students examine landmark U.S. Supreme Court interpretations of the Constitution and its amendments.**
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- Components:**   **12SSAG5.a:**   Evaluate 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 process

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and equal-protection-of-law clauses of the Fourteenth Amendment.

**12SSAG5.b:** Analyze judicial activism and judicial restraint and the effects of each policy over time.

*Examples: Warren and Rehnquist courts*

**12SSAG5.c:** 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.

**12SSAG5.d:** 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*, *Adarnd Constructors, Inc. v. Pena*, and *United States v. Virginia* (VMI).

**12SSAG5.e:** Explain how the Constitution protects individual liberties from government intrusion under the *exclusionary rule* in *Mapp v. Ohio*, the Sixth Amendment right to remain silent in *Miranda v. Arizona* and the right to an adequate defense in *Gideon v. Wainwright*

**Standard:** **12SSAG6: Students evaluate issues regarding campaigns for national state, and local elective offices.**

**Components:** **12SSAG6.a:** 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.

**12SSAG6.b:** Describe the importance of political ideology and socialization, political efficacy and the changing American Political Culture impacting elections.

**12SSAG6.c:** Examine the role of third parties in elections in the past 15 years.

**12SSAG6.d:** Discuss the history of the nomination process for presidential candidates and the increasing importance of primaries in general elections.

**12SSAG6.e:** Evaluate the impact of public opinion polls, campaign advertising, media and the controversies over campaign funding on elections.

**12SSAG6.f:** Describe the means that citizens use to participate in the political Process.

*Examples: voting, campaigning, lobbying, filing a legal challenge, demonstrating, petitioning, picketing, running for political office, the process of referendums, and recall elections*

**12SSAG6.g:** Explain and analyze the features of direct democracy in numerous states including trends in voter turnout; the causes and effects of reapportionment and redistricting, with special attention to spatial districting and the rights of minorities; and function of the Electoral College.

**Standard:** **12SSAG7: Students analyze and compare the powers and procedures of**

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### **national, state, tribal, and local governments.**

- Components:** **12SSAG7.a:** Explain how conflicts between levels of government and branches of government are resolved.
- 12SSAG7.b:** Identify the major responsibilities and sources of revenues for state and local governments including grants (block, grants in aid, categorical) and mandates.
- 12SSAG7.c:** Define reserved powers and concurrent powers of state governments.
- 12SSAG7.d:** Discuss the Ninth and Tenth Amendments and interpretations of the extent of the federal government's power.
- 12SSAG7.e:** Explain how public policy is formed including the setting of the public agenda and the implementation of it through regulations and executive orders.
- 12SSAG7.f:** Compare the processes of lawmaking at each of the three levels of government including the role of lobbying and the media.
- 12SSAG7.g:** Identify the organization and jurisdiction of federal, state, and local.  
*Examples: state courts and the interrelationships among them*
- 12SSAG7.h:** Evaluate the scope of presidential power and the 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.

**Standard:** **12SSAG8: Students formulate and defend positions on the influence of the media on American political life.**

- Components:** **12SSAG8.a:** Evaluate the rights and responsibility of a free press.
- 12SSAG8.b:** Analyze the roles of broadcast, print, and electronic media, including the Internet, as means of communication in American politics.  
*Examples: blogging, Face Book, My Space, U-Tube, and social networking*
- 12SSAG8.c:** Examine the impact of media over time in shaping public policy, political elections, and public opinion.
- 12SSAG8.d:** Explain how public officials use the media to communicate with the citizenry and to shape public opinion.

**Standard:** **12SSAG9: 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.**

- Components:** **12SSAG9.a:** Compare how the different philosophies and structures of feudalism, mercantilism, socialism, fascism, communism, monarchies,

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parliamentary systems, and constitutional liberal democracies influence economic policies, social welfare policies, and human rights practices.

- 12SSAG9.b:** Compare the various ways in which power is distributed, shared, and limited in system of shared powers and in parliamentary systems, including the influence and role of parliamentary leaders.  
*Examples: William Gladstone and Margaret Thatcher*
- 12SSAG9.c:** Discuss the advantages and disadvantages of federal, non-federal, and unitary system of government.
- 12SSAG9.d:** Differentiate among various governmental and nongovernmental international organizations and describe their purposes and functions.
- 12SSAG9.e:** Describe for at least two countries the consequences of conditions that gave rise to tyrannies during certain periods.  
*Examples: Italy, Japan, Haiti, Nigeria, and Cambodia*
- 12SSAG9.f:** Compare 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.
- 12SSAG9.g:** Identify the ideologies, causes, stages, and outcomes of major Mexican, Central American, and South American revolutions in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.
- 12SSAG9.h:** 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.  
*Examples: Alexander Solzhenitsyn, Pope John Paul II, Lech Walesa, and Vaclav Havel*
- 12SSAG9.i:** Identify the successes of relatively new democracies in Africa, Asia, and Latin American and the ideals, leaders, and general societal conditions that have launched and sustained, or failed to sustain, them.
- 12SSAG9.j:** Describe the ways in which groups and nations interact with one another to try to resolve problems in such areas as trade, cultural contact, treaties, diplomacy, and military force.
- 12SSAG9.k:** Identify the host's government institutions and functions and comparing similarities and differences to the U.S. Government.
- Standard:** **12SSAG10: Students analyze the influence of the federal government on the American economy.**
- Components:** **12SSAG10.a:** Evaluate how the role of government in a market economy often includes providing for national defense, addressing environmental concerns defining enforcing property rights, attempting to made markets more competitive, and protecting consumers' rights.
- 12SSAG10.b:** Identify the factors that may cause the cost of government actions to

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outweigh the benefits.

**12SSAG10.c:** Compare the aims of government fiscal policies (taxation, borrowing, spending) and their influence on production, employment, and price levels.

**12SSAG10.d:** Analyze the aims and tools of monetary policy and their influence on economic activity.

*Example: The Federal Reserve*

**Standard:**     **12SSAG11:** **Students analyze current events, formulate questions and discuss the impact and implications on their daily lives and future.**  
*Examples: 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*

### Social Studies Skills (SSK):

The intellectual skills noted below are to be learned through, and applied to, the content standards for American Government. They are to be assessed *only in conjunction with* these content standards. Students demonstrate the following intellectual, reasoning, reflection, and research skills.

### Chronological and Spatial Thinking

- Skills:**       **12SSKAG1:** Students compare the present with the past, evaluating the consequences of past events and decisions and determining the lessons that were learned.
- 12SSKAG2:** Students analyze how change happens at different rates at different times; understand that some aspects can change while others remain the same; and understand that change is complicated and affects not only technology and political but also values and beliefs.
- 12SSKAG3:** Students use a variety of maps and documents to interpret human movement, including major patterns of domestic and international migration, changing environmental preferences and settlement patterns, the frictions that develop between population groups, and the diffusion of ideas, technological innovations, and goods.
- 12SSKAG4:** Students relate current events to the physical and human characteristics of places and regions.

### Historical Research, Evidence, and Point of View

- Skills:**       **12SSKAG5:** Students distinguish valid arguments from fallacious arguments in historical interpretations.
- 12SSKAG6:** Students identify bias and prejudice in historical interpretations.
- 12SSKAG7:** Students evaluate major debates among historians concerning alternative interpretations of the past, including an analysis of authors' use of evidence and the distinctions between sound generalizations and misleading oversimplifications.

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**12SSKAG8:** Students construct and test hypotheses; collect, evaluate, and employ information from multiple primary and secondary sources; and apply it in oral and written presentations.

### Historical Interpretation

- Skills:**
- 12SSKAG9:** Students show the connections, causal and otherwise, between particular historical events and larger social, economic, and political trends and developments.
  - 12SSKAG10:** Students recognize the complexity of historical causes and effects, including the limitations on determining cause and effect.
  - 12SSKAG11:** Students interpret past events and issues within the context in which an event unfolded rather than solely in terms of present-day norms and values.
  - 12SSKAG12:** Students understand the meaning, implication, and impact of historical events and recognize that events could have taken other directions.
  - 12SSKAG13:** Students analyze human modifications of landscapes and examine the resulting environmental policy issues.
  - 12SSKAG14:** Students conduct cost-benefit analyses and apply basic economic indicator to analyze the aggregate economic behavior of the U.S. economy.

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