Alabama Social Studies

Grade 12: United States Government

Foundations of American Government SS24.USG.AG

1 **Explain how Enlightenment principles informed the structure and principles of the United States government, its founding documents, its institutions, and the division of powers, as set forth in Leviathan (Thomas Hobbes, 1651), Two Treatises of Government (John Locke, 1689), The Spirit of the Laws (Montesquieu, 1748), The Social Contract (Jean-Jacques Rousseau, 1762), and Treatise on Tolerance (Voltaire, 1763).** SS24.USG.1

2 **Describe how the Declaration of Independence, the Articles of Confederation, and events of the American Revolution influenced the drafting and ratification of the United States Constitution and the Bill of Rights.** SS24.USG.2

3 **Analyze the major features and structural organization of the Constitution of the United States and the Bill of Rights.** SS24.USG.3

- a Summarize and explain the underlying principles of the Constitution, including checks and balances, federalism, limited government, popular sovereignty, republicanism, and separation of powers. SS24.USG.3A
- b Summarize the formal process of amending the Constitution of the United States. SS24.USG.3B
- c Explain how the Fourteenth Amendment extended rights to minority groups through the Due Process and Equal Protection Clauses. SS24.USG.3C

Branches of Government SS24.USG.BG

4 **Describe the role and responsibilities of the legislative branch, including the process of lawmaking, the power of the purse, and the system of checks and balances within Congress.** SS24.USG.4

- a Compare and contrast the leadership roles within Congress, including the Speaker of the House, the Senate President Pro Tempore, majority and minority leaders, and party whips. SS24.USG.4A
- b Identify the types of congressional committees and explain their roles in policy-making. SS24.USG.4B
- c Outline the process by which a bill becomes a law, including introduction, committee review, floor debate, lobbyist actions, voting in both chambers, and presidential action. SS24.USG.4C

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5 **nalyze how the functions and authority of the executive branch evolve through hanges in the scope of presidential powers, executive orders, executive**

agreements, and the role of the president in foreign and domestic policy. SS24.USG.5

a Describe how the president of the United States utilizes formal powers to achieve policy goals, including veto power, addressing the nation in the State of the Union Address, and the authority to pardon. SS24.USG.5A

b Describe how the president of the United States uses informal powers to shape public opinion, including interaction with media and the public, head of party, and symbolic powers of the Oval Office. SS24.USG.5B

c Explain the role of the Cabinet and White House staff in the process of presidential decision-making. SS24.USG.5C

d Compare and contrast the structures of the federal bureaucracy, including cabinet departments, independent regulatory commissions, government corporations, and independent executive agencies. SS24.USG.5D

6 **Summarize the functions and duties of the judicial branch, including the power of judicial review and interpretation of laws.** SS24.USG.6

a Explain the structure, jurisdiction, and processes of civil and criminal courts in the United States, including courts with original and appellate jurisdiction. SS24.USG.6A

b Outline and explain the process of appointing Supreme Court Justices and other federal judges. SS24.USG.6B

c Contrast strict and loose constructionist views of the Constitution of the United States. SS24.USG.6C

d Explain how landmark United States Supreme Court cases have shaped the constitutional interpretation and expansion of civil liberties and civil rights. SS24.USG.6D

e Describe the significance of Alabama landmark cases that impacted American society and governance. SS24.USG.6E

Key Institutions and Political Participation SS24.USG.IPP

7 **Analyze how the expansion of suffrage affected the political system of the United States, including the enfranchisement of non-property owners, women, Black Americans, and persons 18 to 20 years of age.** SS24.USG.7

a Explain how increases and shifts in political participation by minorities and other voting blocs shape political party coalitions, campaigns, and voter turnout. SS24.USG.7A

b Describe how Black Codes, Jim Crow laws, and the Selma-to-Montgomery March influenced the passage of the Voting Rights Act of 1965. SS24.USG.7B

c Analyze historic and current barriers to voting access and voter turnout, and weigh the benefits and consequences of possible solutions. SS24.USG.7C

8 **Describe how special interest groups and political action committees develop, how they function, and how their campaign contributions affect state and national elections.** SS24.USG.8

Skip to main content

a Summarize the effects of campaign finance rulings by the United States Supreme Court on the election process. SS24.USG.8A

b Analyze examples of legislation or policy decisions that reflect the influence of special interest groups, and describe methods by which these groups seek to sway the policy-making process. SS24.USG.8B

9 Explain the role of the media in the political process, including how they shape public opinion. SS24.USG.9

a Analyze how public opinion is measured through polling. SS24.USG.9A

b Analyze the influence of television and digital media on elections and campaign spending. SS24.USG.9B

10 Outline major characteristics and functions of contemporary political parties in the United States, including the role of state and national conventions as well as party leadership. SS24.USG.10

a Describe how third-party candidates have historically affected elections in the United States, and evaluate the arguments for and against their inclusion in contemporary elections. SS24.USG.10A

b Assess the impact of political parties on citizens and elected officials, including the increase of political polarization, rise of independent voters, and disillusionment with party systems. SS24.USG.10B

Citizenship and Civic Responsibilities SS24.USG.CCR

11 Analyze the electoral process, focusing on election laws and systems at the national, state, and local levels, and explain their constitutional underpinnings, practical implementation, and effects on voter participation and representation in democratic governance. SS24.USG.11

a Outline how the Electoral College functions and explain how candidates must appeal to a wide variety of states and develop coalitions in order to secure the electoral votes required to win the presidency. SS24.USG.11A

b Evaluate the effects of reapportionment, redistricting, and gerrymandering on congressional elections. SS24.USG.11B

12 Describe the rights and duties of citizens, including participation in the election process. SS24.USG.12

a Explain why maintaining a balance between individual rights and majority rule and between state and national power is important for the functioning of the United States government. SS24.USG.12A

Local and State Government SS24.USG.LSG

13 Outline how the federal system of the United States divides powers between national and state governments. SS24.USG.13

a Compare specific functions, organizations, and purposes of local and state governments. SS24.USG.13A

Skip to main content

b Describe the role of the national government in regulating and facilitating relations among states in the United States. SS24.USG.13B

c Analyze how Dillon's Rule and Home Rule provisions in Alabama's 1901 Constitution affect local funding procedures and regulations. SS24.USG.13C

d Analyze and interpret the concept of tribal sovereignty, its historical background, and its significance for Native American tribes in the United States, with a particular focus on tribes from Alabama. SS24.USG.13D