

Name: _____

SUMMER ASSIGNMENT IN AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

**For
A.P. U.S. History Students
Central Bucks School District
Revised May 2007**

Instructions: All students enrolled in Advanced Placement U.S. History in Grade 10 are required to complete this packet to fulfill state standards in Civics. Please use online and print resources to complete this work over the summer. All work should be completed individually in a neat and thorough manner. This packet will be collected by the end of the first week of school in September. (Items noted with an asterix (*) must be answered in complete sentences.)

Part 1 – The U.S. Constitution

1. Use a copy of the U.S. Constitution to answer the following questions.
(See the website www.constitutioncenter.org/explore/TheU.S.Constitution/index.shtml .)
- a. List six purposes of the Constitution as identified in the Preamble (“We the people...”)
- b. Consider one of the six purposes in the Preamble. To what extent do you think the federal government currently operates to achieve that purpose? Explain in a paragraph. *
- c. Briefly list the focus of each article of the Constitution.
Article 1 –
Article 2 –
Article 3 –
Article 4 –
Article 5 –
Article 6 –
Article 7 –

- d. Review Article 5 and explain, in several complete sentences or a diagram, how Constitutional amendments are proposed and ratified. *

- e. List the five guarantees of rights established in the First Amendment.

- f. List five guarantees of rights that the Bill of Rights provides to all persons accused of a crime? (See Amendments 4,5,6,7, and 9).

- g. Explain one contemporary example (from the first ten amendments) that illustrates how individual rights may conflict with or support the common good. *

- h. How many amendments have been added to the original, 1787 Constitution?
When was the last amendment ratified?

- i. Why do you think the Constitution has survived, with relatively few changes, as the framework of American government for so long? Explain two reasons, each in a separate sentence. *

Part 2 – Legislative Branch

- Go to http://www.vote-smart.org/resource_govt101_01.php (Political Resources) and read about “Congress”. Use the information presented there and in the U.S. Constitution to complete the chart and answer the question that follows:

a.

	How many members does each chamber have?	What is the length of each member’s term?	What is the minimum age to be elected?	How many years must a member be a citizen to be elected?
Senate				
House of Representatives				

- Identify the five powers of the U.S. Congress that you think are the most important, and briefly, in complete sentences, explain your choices. It may be useful to consult Article 1, Section 8 of the U.S. Constitution.
- For what reasons does the House of Representatives more closely reflect the immediate feelings of the people than does the Senate? *
 - Use the U.S. House of Representatives’ website (<http://www.house.gov/>) to answer the following questions (See “Leadership Offices”.)
 - Who is the current Speaker of the House?
 - Who is the current Majority Leader?
 - Who is the current Minority Leader? (Democratic leader 2005)
 - Who is your current Representative? (Use the “Find Your Representative” tool and zipcode)
 - Which political party does your Representative belong to?
 - What is the number of your congressional district?
 - What is your Representative’s Doylestown office address?

- h. Go to your representative's homepage and identify, in three sentences, his position on three issues emphasized in the homepage. *

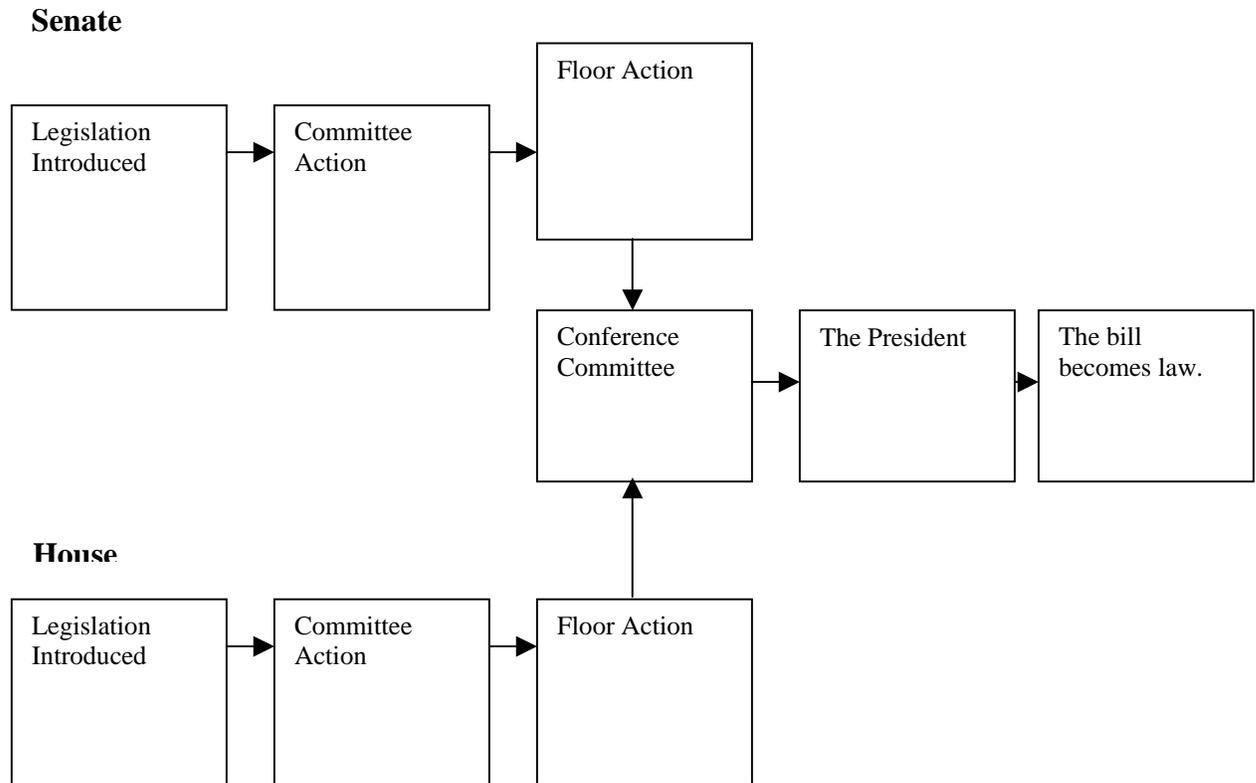
4. Use the U.S. Senate's website (<http://www.senate.gov>) to answer the following questions: (see "Reference" and "Senate Organization.")

- a. Who is the current President of the Senate?
- b. Who is the current President Pro Tempore?
- c. Who is the current Majority Leader of the Senate?
- d. Who is the current Minority Leader of the Senate?
- e. Who are the two current Senators from Pennsylvania?
- f. To which political party does each PA Senator belong?

5. . Go to the website http://www.vote-smart.org/resource_govt101_01.php and read "How a Bill Becomes a Law". Use that information to complete the questions below and the following flowchart of the process by filling in the appropriate step in each box. Include a brief description in each box.

- a. What does it mean for a committee to "mark up" a bill?
- b. Define the term "filibuster" and indicate in which house it could take place.
- c. What is "cloture" and how many Senators does it take to invoke cloture?
- d. Define the President's power of the "pocket veto".
- e. What portion of the membership of both chambers does it take to override a presidential veto?

Write a brief description of what happens at each step in the process:



Part 3—Executive Branch

1. Use the website www.votesmart.org/resource_govt101_01.php and the section “The President” to answer the following questions:
 - a. What are the requirements to be President of the United States (Article 2, Section 1)?
 - 1) Minimum Age -
 - 2) Citizenship -
 - 3) U.S. Residency -
 - b. How long is the President’s term of office?
 - c. Identify five major powers of the President (Article 2, Section 2), using sections on “The U.S. Constitution” on the website:
www.constitutioncenter.org/explore/theU.S.Constitution/index.shtml.
 - d. Explain, in sentences, what you think are the four most important leadership qualities that influence whether a modern President is successful in office? *

- e. What are the three reasons listed in the Constitution that a President may be impeached (Article 2, Section 4)?
- f. Explain how a President can be removed from office (See Article 2, Section 4).
- g. What does the 25th Amendment say about (a) the order of presidential succession after the death of a president or incapacitation and (b) presidential disability? * (“The Constitution”)

2. Go to the website <http://www.howstuffworks.com/electoral-college.htm> and read “How the Electoral College Works” to answer the following questions:

- a. How is the number of electors for each state determined?
- b. All states except Maine and Nebraska have a “winner-take-all” system when it comes to their state’s electors. Explain, in sentences, what that means. *
- c. What number of the electors must a presidential candidate win in order to be elected President? Explain, in sentences, what happens if no one receives this amount? *
- d. Which four presidents, and in what years, won the electoral vote but did not win the popular vote?

3. Use the website www.nytimes.com/packages/html/politics/2004_ELECTIONRESULTS_GRAPHIC to complete the chart below and answer the following questions about the 2004 Presidential Election.

Candidate	Electoral Votes	Total Popular Votes	% of Popular Vote
George W. Bush (R)			
John Kerry (D)			
Ralph Nader (Green)			
Total			

- d. Which department of the Executive Branch is the most frequent litigator in the federal court system?
- e. Under the Supreme Court are the appellate courts and the trial courts.
 - 1) How many federal judicial districts are there?
 - 2) How many federal courts of appeal are there?
- f. In general, what types of cases may federal courts decide?
- g. Who appoints federal judges? Who confirms them?
- h. What are some of the qualifications that judges typically have?
- i. What is a “civil case”?
- j. Define “jurisdiction”.
- k. See the website <http://www.supremecourtus.gov>. How many Supreme Court justices are there currently?
- l. Who is the current Chief Justice of the Supreme Court?

Part 5—Checks and Balances

- 1. Please use the U.S. Constitution and/or the website http://www.vote-smart.org/resource_govt101_05.php (see “The Constitution” section) to answer the following questions:
 - a. Define the term “Checks and Balances”.
 - b. Explain two ways that the Legislative Branch can check the other branches.
 - c. Explain two ways that the Executive Branch can check the other branches.
 - d. Explain two ways that the Judicial Branch can check the other branches.

- e. Which branch:
- 1) Interprets the laws?
 - 2) Enforces the laws?
- f. In a paragraph, using your own words, explain the following quote from James Madison:
- “In framing a government, which is to be administered by men over men, the great difficulty lies in this: you must first enable the government to control the governed, and in the next place, oblige it to control itself.” *
- g. In several sentences, explain which branch of the federal government you think has the most power in practice today. *

Part 6—Influencing Government

1. Brainstorm and list three ways other than voting that citizens could let the government know how they felt about an issue.

2. Use the Republican and Democratic Party websites (<http://www.rnc.org> and <http://www.democrats.org>) to explain how each party identifies itself as different from the other on two issues.
 - a. Issue:
 - 1) Democratic view -
 - 2) Republican view-

 - b. Issue:
 - 1) Democratic view-
 - 2) Republican view-

3. Choose one of the special interest groups listed below, read through their website (locate via a search engine), and answer the following questions.

- American Association for Retired Persons
- American Civil Liberties Union
- American Farm Bureau
- American Medical Association
- American Public Health Association
- Common Cause
- Concord Coalition
- Family Research Council
- Federation of American Scientists
- Greenpeace International
- Handgun Control, Inc.
- League of Conservation Voters
- National Association for the Advancement of Colored People
- National Education Association
- National Organization for Women
- National Priorities Project
- National Rifle Association
- Sierra Club

Group chosen: _____

a. State the purpose or mission of the group that you chose, as it relates to federal government policies.

b. Describe one way that this group currently uses to influence the government. *

c. Explain whether you agree or disagree with both the purpose and methods of this group*.

4. Use the website <http://www.opensecrets.org> to answer the following questions:

a. See “PACs/What Is a PAC”, and explain what a Political Action Committee (PAC) is.

b. What is “Soft Money”?

c. What is “lobbying”?

- d. See “New Contribution Limits”. In 2002, the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act (BCRA) went into effect. Under this new law, what are the limits on how much an individual can give to:
- 1) An individual candidate?
 - 2) A national party?
 - 3) Any PAC?
- c. Identify some reasons that people are concerned about the influence of money on politics, and then explain, in 2 or 3 sentences, whether or not the campaign finance system should be changed. *

TURN THIS PACKET IN TO YOUR 10TH GRADE AP U.S. HISTORY TEACHER AT THE START OF THE SCHOOL YEAR.

**Any Questions?
Contact Mr. Kearney at
jkearney@cbsd.org**

Evaluation

Student demonstrated accurate understanding of the content and provided thoughtful and complete responses to the questions.	90-100 Advanced (4)
Student completed all parts of the packet thoroughly and neatly.	
Student demonstrated understanding of the content with few errors and provided developed answers to all questions.	70-89 Proficient (3)
Responses are clear and easy to understand.	
Student demonstrated understanding of the content but had several errors and/or omissions.	60-69 Basic (2)
Responses may be unclear or hard to understand.	
Answers do not demonstrate appropriate understanding and/or student did not complete the packet.	0-59 Below Basic (1)

NUMERICAL GRADE RECEIVED: _____ (0-100)