

# Summer Reading Assignment

## The United States Constitution Scavenger Hunt

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

**Directions:** AP United States Government students should read the Constitution and complete the following questions directly on this handout. This assignment is **due September 8<sup>th</sup> (A-Day) or September 9<sup>th</sup> (B-Day)**. We will discuss this during the first week of school and there will be a test on the material during the following week.

### PART I: THE OVERALL STRUCTURE OF THE CONSTITUTION

1. Read each article of the Constitution. Summarize the general purpose or subject of each article in sentence format in the chart below.

Article I	
Article II	
Article III	
Article IV	
Article V	
Article VI	
Article VII	

2. Compare Article I with Article II. Which Article is longer and more detailed? Why do you think that this is the case?
3. Identify two powers denied from Congress in the Constitution.
4. How does the House of Representatives determine the rules of proceedings (the ability to have filibusters, riders, etc.)?
5. Identify two powers the Constitution prohibits from the states.
6. What eligibility requirements does the Constitution establish for members of the House?
7. What eligibility standards does the Constitution establish for members of the Senate?
8. What eligibility requirements does the Constitution establish for the President?
9. The powers of the Constitution that are specifically granted to the branches of government or to office holders are called *expressed powers*.
  - a. Identify two expressed powers of the President:
  - b. Identify the expressed powers of the Vice-President:
  - c. Identify five expressed powers of Congress:
10. According to the principle of checks and balances, each branch of the government must have the ability to limit the power of the other branches. Look at the first three articles of the Constitution and identify one of each type of checks and balances. Indicate where each power is listed in the Constitution.
  - a. A power that the executive branch has over the legislative branch:
    - a. This can be found in what article/section of the Constitution?

- b. A power that the executive branch holds over the judicial branch:
  - a. This can be found in what article/section of the Constitution?
- c. A power that the legislative branch holds over the executive branch:
  - a. This power can be found in what article/section of the Constitution?
- d. A power that the legislative branch holds over the judicial branch:
  - a. This power can be found in what article/section of the Constitution?
- e. A power that the judicial branch holds over the executive branch:
  - a. This power can be found in what article/section of the Constitution?
- f. A power that the judicial branch holds over the legislative branch:
  - a. This power can be found in what article/section of the Constitution?

11. The *court of original jurisdiction* is the first court that hears a case. *Appellate courts* hear cases on appeal from lower courts. Although the Supreme Court functions primarily as an appellate court, it is the court of original jurisdiction in certain kinds of cases. What are these?

12. According to Article I of the Constitution, who has the power to declare war?

13. What power does the Constitution give the President in the area of war?

## **Part II: MAJORITY AND SUPERMAJORITY**

The Constitution requires a simple majority for some actions and a supermajority for others. A simple majority means more than half, while supermajority requirements can involve 2/3 majority or 3/4 majority. Most elections in the United States require a plurality, or the most votes, but not necessarily a majority.

1. Veto:
  - a. What bodies have the power to override a presidential veto?
  - b. What margin is required to override a presidential veto?
  - c. Where in the Constitution is the veto power described?
2. Treaties:
  - a. What body has the power to ratify treaties?
  - b. What margin is required to ratify treaties?
  - c. Where in the Constitution is the ratification power described?
3. Impeachment: To *impeach* means to bring charges against or indict an elected official.
  - a. What body has the power to impeach the President?
  - b. What margin is required to impeach the President?
  - c. Where in the Constitution is the impeachment power described?
  - d. What body has the power to convict the President of charges brought against him in the impeachment process and thereby remove him from the presidency?
  - e. What margin is required to convict and remove a president?
  - f. Where in the Constitution is the impeachment power described?
4. Federal Court Appointments:
  - a. What body has the power to accept or reject a president's nominations to the Supreme Court?
  - b. What margin is required to elevate a president's nominee to a seat on the Court?

- c. Where in the Constitution are judicial nominations described?
5. The Election of the President:
    - a. If no candidate for the presidency wins a simple majority of the total number of electoral votes, what body has the power to elect the president?
    - b. What margin is required to choose the president?
    - c. Where in the Constitution is the Electoral College described? (hint: there are 2 parts)
  6. The Constitution specifies a  $\frac{3}{4}$  majority for just one process. What?
  7. The Constitution has comparatively little to say about the structure and composition of the Supreme Court. Identify two aspects of the Court's structure and composition that the Constitution does not specify. (The Constitution does specify these two basic aspects of structure and composition for the other two branches)
  8. List all parts of the Constitution that require a supermajority. For each, explain why you believe there is a supermajority requirement.
  9. See Article VI. Explain the supremacy clause in your own words.
  10. What are two ways that amendments to the constitution can be proposed?
  11. What are two ways that amendments to the Constitution can be ratified?

### **Part III: The Amendments to the Constitution**

The first ten amendments to the Constitution also known as the Bill of Rights, protects citizens from an abuse of power by the majority. In other words, no majority could vote to take these rights away. They are inalienable. Read each amendment to the Constitution and answer the questions below.

1. Outline the general purpose of the first ten amendments.

<b>1<sup>st</sup> Amendment</b>	
<b>2<sup>nd</sup> Amendment</b>	
<b>3<sup>rd</sup> Amendment</b>	
<b>4<sup>th</sup> Amendment</b>	
<b>5<sup>th</sup> Amendment</b>	
<b>6<sup>th</sup> Amendment</b>	
<b>7<sup>th</sup> Amendment</b>	
<b>8<sup>th</sup> Amendment</b>	
<b>9<sup>th</sup> Amendment</b>	
<b>10<sup>th</sup> Amendment</b>	

2. What is the total number of Amendments to the Constitution?
3. Summarize the last amendment to the Constitution.
4. When were the first ten amendments to the Constitution ratified?
5. Which amendment(s) address and protect the rights of women?
6. Summarize what this/these amendment(s) say.
7. Which amendment(s) protect the rights of African Americans?
8. Summarize what this/these amendment(s) say.
9. Summarize the sixteenth amendment.
10. Summarize the seventeenth amendment.
11. How were U.S. Senators chosen before the seventeenth amendment?
12. Identify by number, amendments that
  - a. Extend individual rights
  - b. Extend civil rights (including voting rights)
  - c. Prohibited certain practices by states
  - d. Changed specific language in the Constitution

13. Summarize the twenty-second amendment.
  
14. Outline the sequence of events that occurs in presidential succession according to the twenty-fifth amendment.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
15. Summarize the twenty-sixth amendment.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
16. How many times does the word “privacy” exist in the Constitution Articles/amendments)?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
17. In the first amendment, what are the two separate clauses that detail religion?
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
18. What do each of these clauses mean?

## **PART IV: AN INDEPTH LOOK AT LANDMARK SUPREME COURT CASES**

Listed below are five landmark cases decided upon by the U.S. Supreme Court. Your assignment is to choose two of the cases and complete the following questions about each of your cases.

1. Go to [www.landmarkcases.org](http://www.landmarkcases.org)
2. Click on the link at the top of the page that says “cases.”
3. Click on the case you have chosen. This will take you to a page concerning background information about the case.

\*All work here must be in complete sentences\*

- A. Marbury v. Madison (1803)
- B. McCulloch v. Maryland (1819)
- C. Plessy v. Fergusson (1896)
- D. Gideon v. Wainwright (19 )
- E. Miranda v. Arizona (1966)

1. Give a summary of the background information about your cases.
2. What is the “so what effect” of the case? (By this, I mean what is the most important thing about this case that you should remember.)
3. Who was the Chief justice of the Supreme Court when this case was decided?

4. What was the Court's decision in the case?
5. What does this case mean for people today?
6. Which amendment(s) are involved in each of these cases?
7. Do you agree or disagree with the Court's decision? Why or why not?