

AP Standards Addressed in Lesson Plan

I. Constitutional Underpinnings of United States Government

The study of modern politics in the United States requires students to examine the kind of government established by the Constitution, paying particular attention to federalism, the separation of powers, and checks and balances.

Understanding these developments involves both knowledge of the historical situation at the time of the Constitutional Convention and an awareness of the ideological and philosophical traditions on which the framers drew. Such understanding addresses specific concerns of the framers: for example, why did Madison fear factions? What were the reasons for the swift adoption of the Bill of Rights? Familiarity with the United States Supreme Court's interpretation of key provisions of the Constitution will aid student understanding of theoretical and practical features of federalism, separation of powers, and checks and balances.

Students should be familiar with a variety of theoretical perspectives relating to the Constitution, such as democratic theory, theories of republican government, pluralism, and elitism.

VI. Civil Rights and Civil Liberties

An understanding of United States politics includes the study of the development of individual rights and liberties and their impact on citizens. Basic to this study is an analysis of the workings of the United States Supreme Court and familiarity with its most significant decisions. Students should examine judicial interpretations of various civil rights and liberties such as freedom of speech, assembly, and expression; the rights of the accused; and the rights of minority groups and women.

For example, students should understand the legal, social, and political evolution following the Supreme Court's decisions regarding racial segregation. Students should also be aware of how the Fourteenth Amendment and the doctrine of selective incorporation have been used to extend protection of rights and liberties. Finally, it is important that students be able to assess the strengths and weaknesses of Supreme Court decisions as tools of social change.