

AP Gov and Politics Summer/Fall Current Events Assignment

To help you start thinking politically, I am giving you an assignment this summer. Starting with the week we get out of school and continuing through the week of our return (May 23rd-August 3rd), your assignment is to keep up with current events, particularly as it may relate to our government and how it operates by **citing and summarizing 10 news articles in Google Docs or Word.**

I do not care what source you use, however, it must be a **legitimate** news source (no blogs, no opinion pieces, no satirical sites like *The Onion* -- as much as I like all of these myself). Over the course of the summer, you should pull articles from at least three different sources in order to review a variety of reporting styles.

Then, record some basic information about the stories you choose to follow. At a minimum, you must include the following:

- Source and date (MLA NOT required, but a way to find it again is helpful)
- A brief summary of the story
- A connection statement

Sources:

I find that mainstream sites are usually the easiest to use. You may read your news, watch your news or listen to your news. I like the iOS app "AP News" since it is pretty much the raw feed of the Associated Press (AP). Reuters news media (international) also has a news app, as do most mainstream media sites. If you aren't sure which sites are slanted or moderate, a great site to use is www.allsides.com. This site aggregates news and categorizes it as left, center and right for you. If you are struggling at all with identifying bias in the media, this could be a very good source for you. It's good to read from a variety of sources. This might provide a good opportunity for doing so....and as a matter of fact, I want you to read from at least three different sources particularly for this reason.



The screenshot shows a news article layout. On the left is a photograph of a large missile mounted on a mobile launcher vehicle, with two soldiers in uniform standing in front of it. To the right of the photo is the article title "North Korea Launches Missile" and a sub-header "see more on NORTH KOREA". Below the title are three columns of text, each representing a different perspective: "From the Center", "From the Left", and "From the Right". Each column includes a brief summary of the news and a list of source logos (CNN, New York Times, Fox News). At the bottom of the page is a navigation bar with links: "North Korea Launches Missile", "Trump and Comey", "Sessions Calls For Harsher Drug Sentences", "Trump Threatens Comey", and "More Stories »".

Example from 05/15/2017 - Allsides.com

Summary:

When I instruct you to be brief, I mean it. I want no more than 3-5 sentences summarizing what the news event is about. You need enough information to be able to explain it later and to connect it to curriculum. We will use your information in an activity the first week.

Connection statement:

While I understand that at this point, you have not had any of the content from a political science standpoint, I want you to try to at least categorize news into where you think it might fit in the curriculum. In the next section, I am providing a content outline for the course. I would like for you to think about where each of your news stories will intersect with our curriculum and make a statement that makes a connection and explains briefly (in a sentence or two) why you placed it there. Many news stories will have more than one possible connection. Make as many as you reasonably can explain. This is a good warm up for the class itself.

AP U.S. Government & Politics Topic Outline:

- I. Constitutional Underpinnings
 - A. Considerations that influenced the formation and adoption of the Constitution
 - B. Separation of Powers
 - C. Checks and Balances
 - D. Federalism
 - E. Theories of democratic government
- II. Political Beliefs and Behaviors
 - A. Beliefs that citizens hold about their government and its leaders (ideology)
 - B. Processes by which citizens learn about politics
 - C. The nature, sources and consequences of public opinion.
 - D. The ways in which citizens vote and other participate in political life.
 - E. Factors that influence citizens to differ from one another in terms of political beliefs and behaviors.
- III. Political Parties, Interest Groups and Mass Media
 - A. Political Parties and Elections
 1. Functions
 2. Organization
 3. Development
 4. Effects on the Political Process
 5. Electoral laws and systems
 - B. Interest groups, including political action committees (PAC's)
 1. The range of interests represented
 2. The activities of interest groups
 3. The effects of interest groups on the political process
 4. The unique characteristics and roles of PAC's in the political process
 - C. The Mass Media
 1. The functions and structures of the news media

2. The impacts of the news media on politics
3. The news media industry and its consequences
- IV. Institutions of National Government: The Congress, the Presidency, the Bureaucracy and the Federal Courts
 - A. The major formal and informal institutional arrangements of power
 - B. Relationships among these four institutions and varying balances of power
 - C. Linkages between institutions and the following:
 1. Public opinion and voters
 2. Interest groups
 3. Political parties
 4. The media
 5. State and local governments
- V. Public Policy
 - A. Policymaking in a federal system
 - B. The formation of policy agendas
 - C. The role of institutions in the enactment of policy
 - D. The role of the bureaucracy and the courts in policy implementation and interpretation
 - E. Linkages between policy processes and the following:
 1. Political institutions and federalism
 2. Political parties
 3. Interest groups
 4. Public opinion
 5. Elections
 6. Policy networks
- VI. Civil Rights and Civil Liberties
 - A. The development of civil liberties and civil rights by judicial interpretation
 - B. Knowledge of substantive rights and liberties
 - C. The impact of the Fourteenth Amendment on the constitutional development of rights and liberties

Sample from Week of 7-15, 2017

“North Korea: New long-range missile can carry heavy nuke”

Date 05/15/2017

Source: [Associated Press](#)

Summary: Over the weekend, North Korea appears to have successfully tested a new rocket launching system that flew higher and farther than any others in their quest to create an ICBM that could reach U.S. targets. While the U.S. itself is out of range, our holdings and those of allies of the United States are definitely within range of North Korea. This makes this an important foreign policy problem for the current administration.

Connections: This connects to the powers of Congress and the President (Institutions of National Government) and how they might respond to this threat in defense of the U.S. and our allies. It could also tie to Political Beliefs and Behaviors in how citizens respond and believe the role of our government should be to handle this potential threat. It could also tie to the unit on Public Policy as it deals with agenda setting and the potential foreign policy and military policy that we will enact in response to these threatening actions by North Korea. This could also tie to the unit on the mass media as how they choose to report this type of information has an impact on our policymaking institutions and the public and their opinion on what type of action (if any) is best.

NOTE: I would not expect you to be able to make this many connections - I'm an expert on the content and you are not. Please just give it your best attempt at categorizing into at least one unit.

Assessment:

Finally, how will you be assessed on this assignment? I know that is important to you. This is worth 5% of your total grade. You will receive up to 5 points for each complete entry, up to a total of 50 points. You will need to complete 10 entries overall.

Submission:

You will submit your completed work to an entry in Canvas at the start of the semester or email it to me at the start of the school year (Daniel.owen@knoxschools.org). In the meantime, you may start a Google doc and record your entries in that. I do expect these to be somewhat progressive.....in other words, don't do all of them in the last 2 weeks of the summer!

Have a great summer!

Mr. Owen

Summer Assignment Rubric

5 categories, 10 pts. each

- 1) 10 articles
- 2) Summary (3 to 5 sentences)
- 3) Connection to course outline (2 to 3 sentences)
- 4) Source citation, date, articles from different weeks that show progress of news stories
- 5) Writing quantity and quality