

Webster / Study Guide

# American Government

*Gitelson \*\*\* Dudley \*\*\* Dubnick*



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**STUDY GUIDE**

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**AMERICAN GOVERNMENT**

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**Houghton Mifflin Company      Boston**  
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# PART I



# American Government

**F**irst on the evening newscast from Washington was a report on the congressional hearings into Latin American policy. In an interview, two members of Congress disagreed completely about what they were discovering, and even about what American policy was. Then there was a story about lobbyists and politicians fighting over whether the Senate had any right to disapprove the president's new nominee to the Supreme Court. The last straw was the latest news from the campaign trail. The primary candidates (all from the same party) were reportedly attacking each other with charges and counter-charges about raising taxes and cutting Social Security benefits. The young viewer had seen enough. Rising from his chair, he threw a mystified expression at his father, rolled his eyes skyward as he left the room, and said, "I'll *never* understand politics!"

How often have you felt that way? When the air is filled with contradictory campaign talk, when government actions stir public confusion and strife, and political interests compete for the attention of politicians and public alike, we are all aware that politics can be very bewildering.

Sometimes it seems worse than bewildering. Political incompetence, intrigue, and scandal can make government seem very uninviting—a bad business that good people should ignore. These impressions of a hopelessly confusing political system or of an unattractive subject do not reveal the whole picture. They are only partial truths—myths—that mask the reality of an understandable, fascinating, and very important subject. It is a subject that everyone should know. Your enrollment in this course shows that you want to get past the myths of politics to understand American government.

Such myths and the realities that lie behind them are a very important part of your textbook, *American Government* by Gitelson, Dudley, and Dubnick. You will find that it describes unfamiliar terrain in a straightforward and helpful way, does not overwhelm

you with directions and observations, and, best of all, can be trusted to get you to the right destination—a basic understanding of American politics and government.

*American Government* will introduce you to the three basic areas of its subject. Look at the Table of Contents and scan through the book now to see what they are. Initially, people often think that political science is only the study of government institutions, like the presidency or Congress, and how they work. It is that, and this text will describe the institutions of our national government in chapters 10 through 13. But no one can fully understand our political system by looking only at the anatomy of government. Your authors will lead you through two other areas, for a more complete knowledge of American government. First is the study of the origins and structure of political power in chapters 2 through 9. Where does political power come from in our system? Who has power and why? How do the people exercise political power? Finally, in chapters 14 and 15 the text will deal with the product of this system: political policies. Those policies are the actions taken by government in both domestic and foreign areas of concern in response to political requests.

It would be a good idea to complete your preview of the text now before going on. Read the Preface to better understand the author's purposes. Notice the Appendix and the Glossary at the back of the book. The Glossary will be very useful to you as a reference "dictionary" of the new terms that you will be encountering. Learning the vocabulary of a subject is very important to understanding that subject. Do not try to learn the terms now, since they will have more meaning and can be more easily recognized when you encounter them in the context of the chapters, but you will want to refer often to the Glossary as a study aid.




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## MYTHS AND THE STUDY OF AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

One of the unique features of your textbook is its discussion of political myths. Professors Gitelson, Dudley, and Dubnick have seen that an understanding of American government is often clouded by the acceptance of myths, half-truths that prevent people from seeing the reality of politics. Therefore, *American Government* is different from other texts in its clear discussion of myths as they relate to each topic in the book. Your success in using the book and in mastering the subject will depend upon your understanding of these important myths.

Be sure to read Chapter 1 carefully (with the help of the Chapter 1 guide in this book). It will explain what myths are, and how they not only affect our knowledge of government, but also influence the workings of politics and government themselves. The discussion of myths is an important part of every chapter of the text. Learn these basic concepts and you will be rewarded with a richer understanding of American government.

There are myths about being a college student. Just like myths in the field of government, these are misconceptions that confuse and mislead people. These half-truths about college study lead students to underestimate their potential, become discouraged about their prospects, and continue with poor study habits that will, in fact, then result in



poor grades. First is the myth that you are either good at a subject or you are not. This myth, widely held among college students, says that there are some subjects you will “get” easily, and others that you will not, and there is not much you can do about it. There is some truth to this, but not much. Certainly we all have different aptitudes and interests, and students will have some subjects that are easier for them than others, but it is unrealistic to believe that there is little to be done about it. The truth is that students can overcome difficulties and improve their performance significantly by learning better ways to study and increase understanding.

A second widely held myth is that learning depends on teachers, books, study guides, and all the other “suppliers” of information. Again, as with all myths (as you will be learning in the textbook), there is some truth in this belief. But in the end, the reality is still that, as the old saying goes, “no one may teach you, but you may learn.” Even when you have the best professor, the best text, or the best study guide available, it still depends on you to receive the knowledge. That requires time, effort, and the will to learn.



## STUDYING AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

Your success in this course or in any course will also depend upon your study skills. Those are the skills that lead to better concentration, comprehension, and memory. Among the most important study skills are those that might be described as part of a “textbook strategy,” which will help a student get the most from a textbook by organizing the information, taking useful notes, summarizing, and reviewing effectively. The result will be reading with much higher comprehension and retention, which will result in better test grades.

The purpose of this book is to help you in your study of *American Government*. First, it will provide you with some helpful information and useful exercises to sharpen your study skills as they relate to the textbook. Secondly, this guide will help you use these skills to preview, read, take notes, review, and prepare for exams on each of the fifteen chapters in *American Government*.

The *Study Guide* cannot be read as a substitute for the text. There is no substitute for careful, thoughtful, thorough reading. This book will not give you an easy summary to use as a short cut to careful reading of your textbook. What it can do is focus your attention on what is important in *American Government*, and increase your understanding and appreciation of the book.

At the conclusion of Part I you will find a discussion of three study skills, with exercises, that are particularly relevant to your study of American government and your use of this guide.<sup>1</sup> Those skills are outlining, underlining or marking the chapter, and

1. If you want more help in developing your study skills, there are a number of study skills texts and workbooks available. Highly recommended are Walter Pauk, *How to Study in College*, 3rd edition (Houghton Mifflin, 1984), and James F. Shepherd, *College Study Skills*, 3rd edition (Houghton Mifflin, 1987), both of which have been useful in the development of the exercises in this book. Most colleges and community colleges now have student learning skills counselors and study centers where you can get expert assistance.

note-taking and summarizing. You may wish to complete this part of the *Study Guide* before reading the text, and then refer back during the term to the exercises that you find to be particularly helpful.

Part II provides you with a chapter-by-chapter guide to *American Government*. Each chapter is divided into four major sections: Previewing, Reading and Recording, Reviewing, and Preparing for an Exam. The *Study Guide* will be most useful to you if you make full use of each of those sections in conjunction with your reading.

### Previewing the Chapter

Every chapter of *American Government* begins with a brief outline to show you what is ahead. Begin your preview by looking over that outline, then skim through the chapter before beginning your careful reading. This will help you warm up for the important task of understanding and remembering. Quickly read through the introductory paragraphs to see where the authors are headed. Locate the myth and underline it. Leaf through the text, spotting the headings and subheadings, and noticing the emphasized words. Read the first sentence or two of each section to get the main idea. Do not skip the charts and boxes; they will give you more ideas about what is in the chapter and will increase your anticipation. Finish your preview by skimming through the conclusion and reading the summary. That will give you a good overview of the chapter. Of course you will not be able to understand the authors' conclusions at this point, but you will be familiar with the big ideas and concepts, at least by name, so that when you meet them again in your reading you will be ready to learn more about them.

Now read the Previewing the Chapter section in the *Study Guide*. The first part, Preparing to Read the Chapter, will give you a quick overview of the chapter contents. Did you see the same things in your preview? If not, go back to survey the text again before going on.

The second part of the preview section focuses on a valuable step to good reading comprehension: approach the reading with questions in mind. "The people who have answers to give when they are finished are usually those who had questions to ask before and during their reading" (Pauk, *How to Study in College*, p. 152).

Asking the right questions as you read will have three rewards (1) it will increase your concentration and make you a more active reader, which will lead to better comprehension; (2) it will help you organize the information into subjects and topics that will be more easily remembered; and (3) it will help you anticipate the questions that will be asked of you later to test your understanding, which will lead to better exam results.

In the preview for each chapter, the Asking the Right Questions section will cover all the learning objectives and the key terms of the chapter in a question form. The questions are generally listed in the order the topics will be dealt with in the chapter. As you read the chapter for the first time, check these questions off if you think you know the answer. For the later chapters, you should develop the ability to form such questions yourself after your preview of the text.

### Reading and Recording the Chapter

When you have finished your preview, you are ready to read the chapter. The chapter-by-chapter Reading and Recording sections in the *Study Guide* will help you get the most from your reading by (1) recommending how the chapter can be divided into manageable reading segments, and (2) providing a framework for your own outline of the chapter. As you read, use this section of the guide hand-in-hand with the text.

After finishing your chapter preview, the best approach will be to look first at this section of the guide. Decide from the recommendations there how much of the chapter you want to read, and glance over that portion of the outline in the guide before reading. Complete the outline in the guide either as you read the text, or immediately after reading the recommended segment of the chapter (see Study Skills Exercise 1). Underlining and marking as you read (Study Skills Exercise 2) will help focus your ideas for the outline.

The final step after outlining should be a written summarization of the contents. Do this either immediately after you finish reading and outlining the chapter, or later as a pre-exam review of the material. Complete Study Skills Exercise 3 on summarizing and taking notes before writing your summaries of the text chapters.

### Reviewing the Chapter

This section will give you review exercises to focus your attention and test your understanding of what you have read. It is organized into three sections: Identifying Key Terms and Ideas, Understanding Facts and Concepts, and Recognizing Myths and Misconceptions. In each of those areas, exercises will require you to give written responses. You will need to do more than just recognize the right answer, you will have to be able to express it in different contexts. Complete this section of the guide right after you finish reading and taking notes. Or, if you wish, complete it later when you want to review for an exam. An answer key is provided at the end of each chapter.

### Preparing for an Exam

Turn to this section as the last step in your study and review of the chapter. Here you can test your knowledge in a simulated multiple-choice, essay exam. Check your answers to the multiple-choice questions in the answer key.

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### STUDY SKILLS FOR AMERICAN GOVERNMENT

The following three study skills should be a valuable part of your technique for getting the most from your textbook. They will help you accomplish the Reading and Recording steps identified for studying each chapter of the text in this guide. You may not find it necessary to fully employ all of these—outlining, marking, taking notes, and summarizing—for every chapter in the text. But by perfecting your ability to use all of these skills, you will be prepared to use that combination which works best for your

mastery of the information in *American Government*. Begin by fully marking and outlining, taking notes from and summarizing each of the first few chapters following the directions of this guide, and then modify your procedure as desired to get the best personal results.

### STUDY SKILLS No. 1 — Making an Outline

Outlining is an invaluable study skill because it helps you organize information. This is important in order to see how ideas and concepts relate to each other. With an organized understanding of a topic, just as in a good filing system, you can more easily refer back to (and remember for tests) just what you want to know, so outlining will help you make the most of your reading. It should be done as part of your reading, as the completion of a reading and re-reading of each section of a chapter before you go on to the next. In Part II of the *Study Guide* you will be assisted in the development of a good outline for each chapter of the text.

Another important purpose of the outline is to help you summarize information (see Study Skills No. 3 on note-taking and summarizing). With an outline, you can reduce the prose of the text to a framework that will let you remember the important points and emphasize them, rather than being distracted by less important information. Therefore, an outline will not be of much value if it includes everything the author has written. You must be selective; you must condense information. Most people find it best to write an outline in fairly complete phrases, if not sentences, since that will be easiest to read and understand. Single words and broken phrases may be difficult to interpret later, but do not let concerns about grammar get in the way of creating an outline that is useful for you.

The objective in creating an outline is to identify main ideas and to subordinate details to those ideas. If all the points made by the author are simply listed one after the other for each topic, you would not have a very useful tool for seeing the relationship of thoughts and the development of ideas. First identify the major points or concepts in the material you are reading. Make sure they are equally important and separate thoughts. In a discussion of college athletics, for instance, football, basketball, and baseball would be equal and separate topics. Then details, descriptions, or categories of each can be listed as subordinate thoughts. For example, the following list of subjects on the left would be outlined as follows on the right (of course, a proper outline would not just list words, but would include the substance of what is said about the subject).

- |                 |                    |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| Football        | I. Football        |
| Intercollegiate | A. Intercollegiate |
| Intramural      | B. Intramural      |
| Basketball      | II. Basketball     |
| Men's           | A. Men's           |
| Intercollegiate | 1. Intercollegiate |
| Intramural      | 2. Intramural      |

- |                 |                    |
|-----------------|--------------------|
| Women's         | B. Women's         |
| Baseball        | III. Baseball      |
| Intercollegiate | A. Intercollegiate |
| Spring          | 1. Spring          |
| Fall            | 2. Fall            |
| Intramural      | B. Intramural      |
| Men's           | 1. Men's           |
| Women's         | 2. Women's         |
| Coed            | 3. Coed            |

Roman numerals, capital letters, numbers, and lower-case letters and then numbers and lower-case letters in parentheses are used, in that order, to identify items in declining order from main topics to supporting points of decreasing importance. No numeral or letter should be used unless there are to be at least two items of that rank. For instance, in the above example, if women's basketball had not been described, then men's should not be a separate outline item. It would be assumed under heading II. with basketball, and intercollegiate and intramural would then become A and B as they were under football. If coed intramural baseball had not been discussed, however, men's and women's intramural baseball would still retain their positions as 1. and 2.

In *American Government*, take advantage of the outline at the beginning of each chapter, and the topic headings and subheadings that the authors have used in the text. These will give you the framework for a complete study outline from your reading (see the Reading and Recording section for each chapter in Part II).

Although it may be valuable to have the whole chapter contents in mind before completing a final outline, you are encouraged to read and outline within the chapters, topic by topic. Reading the whole chapter in one sitting is not usually best for comprehension. Nor will outlining the whole chapter at once be as helpful as a careful reading, then re-reading and outlining of one major topic (as identified by topic headings in the text) at a time.

Study the following excerpt from Chapter 2 of the text and the model outline that follows it.

### Intellectual Roots

The intellectual atmosphere of the time also influenced the framers of the Constitution. Raised in a society that took its religion seriously, they grew up with such concepts as equality before God and the integrity of each human life—concepts rooted in their Judeo-Christian religion. The idea of a covenant, or contract, between members of society developed from this tradition, as did the distrust of the monarchy and the need for a system of laws to protect individual rights.

The framers were also children of the Enlightenment. Usually dated from the 1600s to the 1800s, this period in European intellectual history was dominated by the idea that human reason, not religious tradition, was the primary source of knowledge and wisdom. One of the most influential authors of the period, Thomas Hobbes, argued

that governments depend on the consent of the governed. His views helped to justify revolution in the North American colonies more than a century later.

Another British political philosopher, John Locke, offered an explanation of political life and government that was quite popular among colonists. Locke asserted that people possess an inherent right to revolution. Therefore any government can continue to exist as long as it proves convenient to its citizens and does not interfere with their pursuit of the good life. But if the government violates this arrangement, then the citizens have a right to replace their government with another.

The work of a French aristocrat, Charles de Montesquieu, also found favor with those who wrote the Constitution. James Madison and others often cited his ideas and words. What struck them especially was Montesquieu's argument about the structure of government: it must be so designed that no person or group could oppress others. This end is best achieved, he wrote, by separating the legislative, executive, and judicial functions into three distinct branches of government.

Finally, just as the seeds of the American Revolution were being planted, a Swiss-born theorist named Jean-Jacques Rousseau published several works that argued for popular sovereignty. According to the concept of *popular sovereignty*, the best form of government is one that reflects the general will of the people, which is the sum total of those interests that all citizens have in common. Although Rousseau's major writings influenced the French Revolution much more than the American Revolution, he had his followers in the American colonies. Among them was Thomas Paine, a British-born American revolutionary whose pamphlets had a great influence during the American Revolution. His best-known work, *Common Sense*, is among the most often cited writings to come out of the American Revolution.

## Outline for Intellectual Roots

### I. Intellectual atmosphere

#### A. Influence of Judeo-Christian religion

1. idea of covenant between members of society
2. distrust of monarchy
3. need for system of laws

#### B. Influence of the Enlightenment (1600-1800s): human reason is more important than religious tradition

### II. Authors and philosophers

#### A. Thomas Hobbes (British) - consent of the governed principle justifies revolution

#### B. John Locke (British)

1. writings were popular among colonists
2. ideas - government must promote convenience of citizens or people have a right to revolt

#### C. Charles de Montesquieu (French aristocrat)

1. works cited by Madison and others
2. ideas:
  - a. structure government so no group can oppress others

- b. this is best accomplished with separation of powers  
(legislative, executive, judicial)
- D. Jean-Jacques Rousseau (Swiss-born French)
  - 1. popular sovereignty – the best government reflects the general will of the people, which equals the total of the interests all have in common
  - 2. more influential in French than American revolution
- E. Thomas Paine (British-born American)
  - 1. follower of Rousseau
  - 2. his pamphlets had great influence
  - 3. *Common Sense* best known

There is not a single correct way to outline material. In this case, another possibility would be to outline in a more direct sequence without using the titles I. Intellectual Atmosphere and II. Authors and Philosophers, by listing the authors directly under the Enlightenment with I. Influence of the Judeo-Christian Religion and II. Influence of the Enlightenment. (See the outline in Part II, Chapter 2 of this guide.) The numerals and letters used might be different depending upon the context of the information. In the full chapter outline on the Constitution, the topic of the Intellectual Roots would probably be D. under IV. Roots of the Constitution.

Now read the excerpt from Chapter 2 on the following page and outline the information there in the space provided. Compare your response to the model at the end of Part I.

## Republicanism

As we mentioned in Chapter 1, the framers of the Constitution had questions about the ability of the American people to rule themselves directly. By advocating *republicanism*, the framers were calling for a government in which decisions are made by elected or appointed officials who are ultimately answerable to the people. In this way, they hoped to avoid what they perceived as real dangers of a purely democratic government.

The framers opposed a direct democracy because they distrusted human nature and the capacity of ordinary citizens to govern themselves. We know something about their views thanks to documents like *The Federalist Papers*, a series of editorials that James Madison, Alexander Hamilton, and John Jay wrote in 1788 to support the ratification of the Constitution. In *The Federalist*, No. 10, Madison offers a clear summary of the basic ideas about political life and human nature underlying the republican principle.

Madison argued that the problems of government can be traced to the “mischiefs of faction.” He defined a faction as a group that puts its shared interests ahead of the rights of others or the interests of the community as a whole. These self-serving factions can be small or large; they can even include a majority of the people.

According to Madison, all factions, great or small, pose a threat to the general well-being of society. Since the causes of faction are basic to human nature, eliminating them is impossible. Thus, if any government is to serve the general interest of the

people, it must be designed so that the potentially destructive power of factions can be eliminated or controlled.

Madison and the framers favored a republican form of government in which the people had some voice—but a voice that was filtered through their representatives. The community was to be governed “by persons holding their offices . . . for a limited time or during good behavior.” And although all officials would be answerable to the people, some would be more insulated from public pressures than others. Members of the House of Representatives were to have the most exposure: they alone would be elected directly by the American voters and have comparatively brief terms, two years.

Senators and the president were assigned longer terms, and under the original provisions of the Constitution, the people did not elect them directly. Instead, state legislators selected senators and an Electoral College, with members selected by the states, chose the president. These methods were later changed by amendment and by the action of state legislatures. Supreme Court judges received additional protection from the whims of constantly changing public opinion. They have lifetime appointments and can be removed only through the lengthy and difficult process called impeachment. But even though the framers felt impelled to take these precautions, they never lost sight of the basic principle of republicanism: that the ultimate responsibility of U.S. government officials is to the American public.



## STUDY SKILLS No. 2 — Underlining and Marking a Text

Most of us come from secondary school experiences where we did not own our own school books. They were made available to us by the school, and we were instructed on the first day not to mark our books in any way. Perhaps this was good for preserving public textbooks, but it was not helpful to learning. Now that you have the opportunity to own your own texts for a course, you can aid your learning greatly by developing and using good skills for marking your texts. Hopefully you were able to obtain a new textbook for this purpose; used texts can have very poor markings that may mislead or confuse your studies.

Marking the textbook can take many forms. Students most commonly underline important points, although many prefer to highlight, using felt-tipped markers in yellow or other transparent watercolors to cover over the type. Either technique is good. Marking should also include circling, numbering, drawing boxes and arrows within the text, using the margins for brackets, asterisks, arrows, brief notes, or any other personal system to call attention to important points.

Techniques and tools of marking can be very personal because the purpose is to help you, and only you, learn more from the book. Marking is a very important element of any good student's "textbook strategy" for two reasons. In the first place, marking, with outlining, helps you better organize the information in the text. Educators tell us that the better the organization of the material in your mind, the more you will remember. Marking the book will help you study the information by giving you a framework and a summary of the important points when you review. Secondly, marking the text is important because the process makes you a more active, participating reader. Here educators tell us that learning and memory are improved when we go beyond passive reading to involve a second activity in the learning process—taking a pen in hand to mark, draw, underline, and write as we read.<sup>2</sup> The result is higher concentration, better memory, and higher grades.

Although the techniques of marking may be highly personalized, one way is not as good as another. There are a few rules that will make for much more helpful study and review. Read the chapter section by section (there is help on how to divide the chapters in Part II of this guide), reading once before doing any extensive marking. This will give you a better idea of the content and will focus your marking. Reading once through the section before marking will also help you follow a second rule: don't over-mark. Underlining or highlighting every other sentence will be useless to you for review. Marking, circling, and filling the margins with brackets, slashes, arrows, and asterisks may look like a thorough reading, but it will not help you discern the most important points. Remember that in marking, just as in outlining, as we saw in Exercise 1, the watchword is to be selective. Mark in a way that will let you quickly see the most important points and the relationship of ideas. Then follow up your marking immediately by writing out your subject outline.

Look over the following passages taken from Chapter 4 on civil rights and liberties. The first provides you with a sample of effective marking. Then try your hand at the

2. Pauk, *How to Study in College*, chapters 4 and 10.