

# Curriculum Guide ~ U.S. Government

**UNIT GOAL:** *After completing the U.S. Government unit, students will have a better understanding of the foundational principles and documents of the U.S. government, and of the organization and function of the government today.*

## CONTENT OBJECTIVES

**Students will be able to...**

- ❑ identify key documents of the government (Declaration of Independence, the Constitution, the Bill of Rights).
- ❑ identify purposes of the U.S. government, as stated in the Preamble to the Constitution.
- ❑ explain the fundamental principles of the Constitution (rule of law, consent of the governed, federalism).
- ❑ describe rights guaranteed in the Bill of Rights.
- ❑ explain the relationship of state governments and the federal government (federal system, balance of powers).
- ❑ describe the organization and powers of the federal government (branches and their duties, balance of powers, checks and balances).
- ❑ explain how laws are made.
- ❑ explain how the American political process (political parties, nomination and election process, voting rights) works.
- ❑ compare the organization and function of the US government to government of students' home countries.

## LANGUAGE OBJECTIVES

**Level 500 students will be able to...**

- ❑ outline and write an essay to describe one aspect of government from a student's country. (adjective clauses / descriptive phrases)
- ❑ research topic and give an oral presentation about a famous or controversial person in U.S. government past or present. (noun clauses in reported speech)
- ❑ listen to an oral presentation and take notes.
- ❑ use techniques to check for understanding as both a speaker and listener.

**Level 550 students will be able to...**

- ❑ outline and write a comparison essay on one aspect of U.S. government and students' government. (causative verbs)
- ❑ research, prepare and give a presentation about a current political crisis (adverbial clauses: reason and purpose / contrast)
- ❑ give an oral summary of a news article from print and/or electronic media.
- ❑ use techniques to check for understanding as both a speaker and listener.

## ACADEMIC OBJECTIVES

**Level 500 students will be able to...**

- ❑ read and summarize sections of key government documents such as the Preamble to the Constitution.
- ❑ read and paraphrase one of the amendments in the Bill of Rights.
- ❑ read an article about gun control and identify specific information for or against.

**Level 550 students will be able to...**

- ❑ use a graphic organizer and/or flow chart to explain how laws are made.
- ❑ listen to a radio broadcast or read an article about the political process and take notes.
- ❑ interpret written and oral test instructions.

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## TECHNOLOGY OBJECTIVES

Level 500 and 550 students will be able to...

- ❑ use online sources to research home country government.
- ❑ use online sources to research oral presentation topics.
- ❑ use online sources to research political candidates and elected officials.
- ❑ use the Arlington County website to identify county services.

## LEARNING COMPONENTS

*\*Click on each Learning Component to connect to cited and additional resources.*

<a href="#"><u>Building Background Activities</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❑ Question and answer activity: Civics Flash Cards for the New Naturalization Test – U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services. Students practice in pairs or set up teams to compete for points.</li><li>❑ Conversation and writing activity: Give students a blank chart or outline of the branches of government. Students work alone or in pairs to fill in position, qualifications, terms, and duties of federal officials. This could also be an assessment activity.</li><li>❑ PowerPoint presentation: <a href="#"><u>“Authoritarianism vs. Democracy “</u></a></li></ul>
<a href="#"><u>Reading Activities</u></a>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❑ “The Constitution and the Federal System,” <i>The USA: Customs and Institutions 4<sup>th</sup> ed.</i>, Unit Five, Chapter 13. Provides an outline of the structure and function of the federal government and lists basic vocabulary. Use as an introductory reading for preparation for more advanced content such as checks and balances.</li><li>❑ “Choosing the Nation’s President,” <i>The USA: Customs and Institutions</i>, Unit Five, Chapter 14. Describes the process of nominating and electing a president. Includes basic vocabulary. Read this overview to initiate a discussion of voting regulations and procedures of students’ countries</li><li>❑ “Citizenship: Its Obligations and Privileges,” <i>The USA: Customs and Institutions</i>, Unit Five, Chapter 15.</li><li>❑ “A Nation Begins,” <i>Content Area ESL: Social Studies</i>, pg. 32- 41</li><li>❑ “Founding Principles of the US Constitution – Jigsaw Reading” in Sample Lesson Plan</li><li>❑ <b><i>Citizenship Made Simple: An Easy To Read Guide To The U.S Citizenship Process</i></b></li></ul>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ This book contains great selections on the US government. Good for reading and discussion. Available at Arlington Central Library</li><li>□ <b>The Washington Post</b> and/or other print media. Select articles about on-going constitutional issues (example: the 14<sup>th</sup> amendment and immigration). Read for the main idea and supporting details.</li><li>□ <b>The Citizen's Almanac</b>: This book contains selections of readings on the founding documents and Supreme Court cases. Students read and paraphrase the decisions of selected court cases.</li><li>□ <b>Rethinking America 1: An Intermediate Cultural Reader</b>. Chapter I includes discussions of the American dream and the pursuit of happiness within the context of the Constitution. Students read and summarize the preamble in order to discuss the purpose of government.</li></ul>
<p><u><a href="#">Writing Activities</a></u></p>	<p><b>Level 500</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>□ Descriptive paragraphs<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Paragraph topics (can be expanded to essay writing):<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>□ Describe one of the founding principles of the US Constitution to someone who is new to the US (see sample lesson plan)</li><li>□ Describe the US government (see assessment activity)</li></ul></li><li>○ <b>Great Paragraphs 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.</b>, Unit 8, pp. 122-143</li></ul></li></ul> <p><b>Level 550</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>□ Comparison essay<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Topics:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>□ Compare one aspect of U.S. government (e.g. how laws are made) with government of home country.</li></ul></li><li>○ <b>Great Essays 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.</b>, Unit 3, pp. 63-85</li></ul></li><li>□ Argumentative essay<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>○ Topics:<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>□ How would you change the government?</li><li>□ Should gun ownership be protected under the Second Amendment?</li></ul></li><li>○ <b>Great Essays 2<sup>nd</sup> ed.</b>, Unit 5, pp. 109-185</li></ul></li></ul>



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<b>Assessment Activities</b>	<p><b>Level 500</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❑ Complete a blank chart of the 3 branches of the federal government structure. Enter information about the position/titles, qualifications, terms, and duties of federal officials</li><li>❑ Write a descriptive essay about the U.S. government for newcomers to the US.</li><li>❑ Give an oral presentation about a famous or controversial person in the U.S. government, past or present</li></ul> <p><b>Level 550</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>❑ Complete a blank chart of the 3 branches of the federal government structure. Enter information about the position/titles, qualifications, terms, and duties of federal officials</li><li>❑ Write a essay comparing one aspect of the U.S. government with students' government</li><li>❑ Give an oral presentation about a current political crisis.</li></ul>
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