The Simple AP® US Government and Politics Unit 1 Cheat Sheet

1.1 Ideals of Democracy

Core Democratic Ideals

Ideal	Meaning
Natural rights	Rights you're born w/
Social contract	Trade liberty → order
Popular sovereignty	Power from the people
Limited govt	Govt power has limits

Limited govt kept by separation of powers, checks & balances, federalism, republicanism.

Thinkers

Locke: life, liberty, property; right to revolt.
Hobbes: no govt = chaos → accept govt for order.
Montesquieu: split power among branches.
Social contract: people agree to be governed; govt must protect their rights in return.

Required Documents

Declaration (1776, Jefferson): natural rights + popular sovereignty → justifies revolt.
Locke → Jefferson: "life, liberty, property" → "Life, Liberty and the pursuit of Happiness."
Consent of the governed: govt's just powers come from the people (Declaration, 1776).
Constitution: a social contract → limited govt.
Gettysburg Address (1863): "all men are created equal"; govt "of the people, by the people."

⚠ The Declaration isn't law: it explains the break from Britain. The Constitution builds the govt.

✓ "Consent of the governed" = popular sovereignty. "Unalienable rights" = natural rights.

1.2 Types of Democracy

3 Models

Model	Who has power	Example
Participatory	Most people	Initiatives
Pluralist	Groups	Lobbying
Elite	A wealthy few	Elect. College

Participatory: broad citizen involvement. E.g., referendums, protests, town halls.
Pluralist: groups compete for influence. E.g., interest groups, PACs, lobbying firms.
Elite: few educated or wealthy people decide. E.g., Electoral College, appointed judges.
Weak spots: crowds can be uninformed; rich groups can dominate; few speak for many.

In the Founding Debate

Fed 10 (Madison): large republic, elected reps filter public views → leans pluralist & elite.
Brutus 1: small republic, reps close to & like the people they serve → **participatory**.
All 3 today: protests (participatory), lobbying (pluralist), big donors' clout (elite).
Constitution mixes all 3: House elected by voters; right to petition; Electoral College.
Clues: "grassroots" → participatory; "lobby, coalition" → pluralist; "wealthy" → elite.

⚠ The U.S. is a representative democracy (republic), not a direct democracy.

✓ MCQ: ask WHO acts. Many citizens → participatory; groups → pluralist; few → elite.

1.3 Federalists vs. Anti-Federalists

The Ratification Debate

	Federalists	Anti-Feds
Leader	Madison	Brutus
Central govt	Strong	Weak
Republic	Large	Small
Bill of Rights	Unneeded	Demanded
Key doc	Fed 10, 51	Brutus 1

Federalist Papers: 85 essays by Madison, Hamilton & Jay urging ratification.

Federalist No. 10 (Madison)

Faction: group acting for itself, not the public good. Can't remove its causes w/o killing liberty.
Fix: large republic → many factions check each other; elected reps filter public views.
Majority faction = biggest danger; in a large republic, a majority w/ 1 interest is hard to form.

Brutus No. 1

Large republic fails: reps too far from the people to know them → govt serves elites.
Too much national power: N&P + Supremacy Clauses → the states get swallowed.
Too few reps for a huge nation (65 in 1st House) → only rich, well-known elites win seats.

⚠ Fed 10 controls the EFFECTS of faction. It does not ban factions (would kill liberty).

✓ Essay: Fed 10 → large republic, pluralism. Brutus 1 → state power, small units.

1.4 Articles of Confederation

Design (1781–1789)

Confederation: states hold most power; weak 1-house Congress, 1 vote per state.
Laws needed 9 of 13 states; amendments needed all 13 → nearly impossible to fix.
Why weak? Fear of a king → states kept power.
Success: Northwest Ordinance (1787) → path to statehood; no slavery in NW Territory.

Weaknesses → Fix

Weakness	Fix
No national army	Congress raises army
No executive	Art. II president
No power to tax	Art. I taxing power
No national courts	Art. III courts
No commerce power	Commerce Clause
No sole power to coin	Only Congress coins $

Shays' Rebellion (1786–87)

Shays' Rebellion: MA farmers in debt revolt; Congress has no army to stop it.
Effect: leaders call the Constitutional Convention (1787) for a stronger central govt.
Annapolis Convention (1786): only 5 states came → called the Philadelphia meeting.

✓ Link each weakness to its fix: no tax power → Congress can tax (Art. I, Sec. 8).

⚠ The Convention's goal was to REVISE the Articles; it wrote a new Constitution.

1.5 Ratification & Compromises

Convention Compromises

Compromise	Result
Great (Connecticut)	2-house Congress
Electoral College	Electors pick pres.
Three-Fifths	3/5 enslaved counted
Slave trade	No ban until 1808
Bill of Rights	Won Anti-Fed votes

Great Compromise: House by population (big states); Senate 2 per state (small states).
Three-Fifths: 3/5 of enslaved counted for House seats & taxes → ↑ Southern power.
Electoral College: electors, not voters or Congress, pick the president (compromise).

Ratification

9 of 13 states needed (NH 9th, 1788). VA & NY agreed after a Bill of Rights was promised.
Bill of Rights (1791): 1st 10 amendments.

Article V: Amending

Propose: 2/3 of both houses OR a national convention called by 2/3 of state legislatures.
Ratify: 3/4 of states (legislatures or conventions).
Usual path: 2/3 of Congress → 3/4 of state legislatures; used for 26 of the 27.

Debates Today

Post-9/11 surveillance: security vs. privacy.
Education: federal vs. state control.

⚠ Amending = 2 steps: propose, then ratify. The president plays no formal role.

1.6 Separation of Powers & Checks

Separation of Powers

3 branches: Congress makes laws; president enforces them; courts interpret them.

Check	Example
Pres. → Congress	Veto bills
Congress → Pres.	Override veto (2/3)
Senate → Pres.	Confirm appointees
Pres. → courts	Nominate judges
Courts → both	Judicial review

Federalist No. 51 (Madison)

"Ambition must be made to counteract ambition": each branch can resist the others.
"If men were angels...": govt must control the governed AND be obliged to control itself.
Double security: power split by level (federalism) AND by branch (separation of powers).

Effects

Access points: groups can lobby Congress, sue in court, or work w/ federal agencies.
Impeachment: House charges (simple majority) → Senate trial; removal needs a 2/3 vote.
Gridlock: checks + divided govt → slow policy, but it also forces more compromise.

⚠ Impeach ≠ remove. Only a 2/3 Senate conviction removes an official from office.

⚠ Judicial review comes from Marbury v. Madison (1803), not the Constitution's text.

1.7 & 1.9 Federalism: Powers & Money

Dividing Power

Federalism: national & state govts share power.
Fed 39: mix limits power, adds access points.

Power	Example
Exclusive (national)	Coin $, declare war
Implied (N&P)	National bank
Reserved (states)	Schools, licenses
Concurrent (both)	Taxes, roads

Federal Money to States

Funding	Strings
Categorical grant	Many; most common
Block grant	Few; states like
Revenue sharing	Almost none; rare
Mandate	A rule; may lack $

Conditions: 1984 Drinking Age Act → states lose highway $ unless the drinking age is 21.
Devolution (1980s on): power shifted back to the states, often through block grants.

Federalism in Action

Access points: blocked at the federal level → try the states (e.g., marijuana laws).
Concurrent powers limit DC: states run elections, schools & most law enforcement.

✓ Feds prefer categorical grants (control); states prefer block grants (flexibility).

⚠ A mandate is a rule, not money. Unfunded mandates send no $ (e.g., ADA).

1.8 Interpreting Federalism (SCOTUS)

Key Clauses

Clause	Effect
Commerce	Regulate state trade
Necessary & Proper	Implied powers
Supremacy	Fed law wins
10th Amendment	Reserved → states
14th Amendment	Rights apply to states

McCulloch v. Maryland (1819)

Facts: Maryland taxed the 2nd Bank of the U.S.; McCulloch (bank cashier) refused to pay.
Holding: N&P Clause → Congress can create a bank (implied power); Supremacy Clause → states can't tax it. → ↑ national power (a broad reading).
Key line (Marshall): "The power to tax involves the power to destroy." Court ruled 7-0.

U.S. v. Lopez (1995)

Facts: Gun-Free School Zones Act (1990), based on the Commerce Clause; Lopez, a high school senior, brought a gun to a TX school.
Holding: gun possession isn't commerce → law struck down. → ↑ state power.
Impact: 1st limit on the Commerce Clause in ~60 years; Court voted 5-4 (Rehnquist).
Contrast: Gonzales v. Raich (2005) let Congress ban homegrown medical marijuana.

⚠ McCulloch = N&P + Supremacy. Lopez = Commerce Clause. Don't swap.

✓ SCOTUS FRQ: name the shared clause, then compare the facts & the holdings.