Congratulations! You’ve made it through your AP U.S. Government course and are now ready to prepare for the AP Exam. These tips and strategies should help you in the final days or weeks before taking the exam. Remember that preparing for the Exam is a bit like training for a marathon—you won’t do as well if you wait and cram a lot of training into the day before the Exam. Working at a reasonable pace from now until test day will pay off in the end.

The Format of the Exam: Let’s begin by looking at a breakdown of how the AP US Government Exam is structured:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Questions</th>
<th>Time allowed</th>
<th>Percentage of grade</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>55 multiple choice</td>
<td>1 hour &amp; 20 minutes</td>
<td>50%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>4 free response</td>
<td>1 hour &amp; 40 minutes</td>
<td>50%</td>
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The questions on the test will cover topics from the whole course. However, in the multiple-choice section, you’ll find that certain subjects come up more often:

**Subject**                                                                                                           **Percentage of the Test**

**Government Institutions**                                                                                       
(Congress, presidency, courts, bureaucracy)

**Political Behavior of Individuals**                                                                         
(political culture, public opinion, voting)

**Political Behavior of Groups**                                                                                 
(political parties, elections, interest groups, PACs, and mass media)

**Constitutional Foundations**                                                                                   
(federalism, checks & balances, separation of powers, theories of democracy)

**Civil Liberties and Civil Rights**                                                                             

**There are 15 Required Supreme Court Cases:**                                                                  
Marbury v. Madison                                                                                               
McCulloch v. Maryland                                                                                           
Schenck v. US                                                                                                    
Brown v. Board of Ed (1954)                                                                                     
Baker v. Carr                                                                                                    
Engel v. Vitale                                                                                                  
Gideon v. Wainright                                                                                             
Tinker v. Des Moines                                                                                             
NY Times Co. v. US                                                                                               
Wisconsin v. Yoder                                                                                               
Roe v. Wade                                                                                                      
Shaw v. Reno                                                                                                     
US. v. Lopez                                                                                                     
McDonald v. Chicago                                                                                              
Citizens United v. FEC                                                                                           

**Required Documents:**                                                                                           
The Declaration of Independence                                                                                 
The Articles of Confederation                                                                                   
The Constitution of the United States                                                                             
Federalist #10                                                                                                   
Brutus #1                                                                                                         
Federalist #51                                                                                                   
Federalist #70                                                                                                   
Federalist # 78                                                                                                  
Letter from a Birmingham Jail                                                                                     

The U.S. Constitution arose out of important historical and philosophical ideas and preferences regarding popular sovereignty and limited government. To address competing states’ visions for the allocation of governmental authority, compromises were made during the Constitutional Convention and ratification debates, and these compromises have frequently been the source of debate and negotiation in U.S. politics over the proper balance between federal and state power and between liberty and social order.

A balance between governmental power and individual rights has been a hallmark of American political development.

**Explain** how democratic ideals are reflected in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution.

The U.S. government is based on ideas of limited government, including natural rights, popular sovereignty, republicanism, and social contract.

The Declaration of Independence, drafted by Jefferson with help from Adams and Franklin, provides a foundation for popular sovereignty, while the U.S. Constitution drafted at the Philadelphia Convention and led by George Washington, with important contributions from Madison, Hamilton, and members of the “Grand Committee,” provides the blueprint for a unique form of political democracy in the U.S.

<table>
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<tr>
<th>Define:</th>
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<tr>
<td>natural rights</td>
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<tr>
<td>popular sovereignty</td>
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<tr>
<td>republicanism</td>
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<tr>
<td>social contract</td>
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</table>
Explain how models of representative democracy are visible in major institutions, policies, or debates in the U.S.

Representative democracies can take several forms along this scale:

**Define:**

Participatory democracy

Pluralist democracy

Elite democracy

Discuss the five Madisonian Principles of a representative democracy that continue to be reflected in contemporary institutions and political behavior.

Define and provide an example:

Federalism

Popular Sovereignty

Checks and Balances

Separation of Powers

Limited Government

The Constitution emerged from the debate about weaknesses in the Articles of Confederation as a blueprint for limited government.

Explain how Federalist and Anti-Federalist views on central government and democracy are reflected in U.S. foundational documents.
Madison’s arguments in **Federalist No. 10** focused on the superiority of a large republic in controlling the “mischiefs of faction,” delegating authority to elected representatives and dispersing power between the states and national government.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>What is a faction?</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>What is the source of factions?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>How are factions controlled?</td>
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Anti-Federalist writings, including **Brutus No. 1**, adhered to popular democratic theory that emphasized the benefits of a small decentralized republic while warning of the dangers to personal liberty from a large, centralized government.

| Why were the Anti-Federalists reluctant to sign the new Constitution? |

**Explain** the relationship between key provisions of the Articles of Confederation and the debate over granting the federal government greater power formerly reserved to the states.

In other words, **identify the problems in the Articles of Confederation and how they were corrected in the Constitution.**

Compromises deemed necessary for adoption and ratification of the Constitution are represented by the: **Great (Connecticut) Compromise**

**Electoral College**
Three-Fifths Compromise

Compromise on the importation of slaves

The Constitutional Basis of Federalism: Although the term federalism is not found in the Constitution, it is clearly defined in the enumerated, concurrent and reserved powers of the national and state governments.

Interstate relations: Describe the general obligations that each state has to every other state under the Constitution.

Enumerated powers

Implied powers

Inherent powers

Reserved powers

Full Faith and Credit Clause

Privileges and Immunities Clause

Extradition
The Constitution creates a complex competitive policy-making process to ensure the people’s will is represented and that freedom is preserved.

**Explain** the ideas represented in Federalist No. 51

**Explain** the implications of separation of powers and “checks and balances” for the U.S. political system.

**Federalism reflects the dynamic distribution of power between the national and state governments.**

**Explain** how societal needs affect the constitutional allocation of power between the national and state governments.

10th Amendment v. 14th Amendment

The distribution of power between federal and state governments to meet the needs of society changes, as reflected by grants, incentives, and aid programs, including federal revenue sharing, mandates, categorical grants, and block grants.

**Fiscal Federalism: Define and provide an example for each.**

- Grants-in-aid
- Categorical Grants
- Block Grants
- Mandates

Remember categorical grants have increased federal power because the states must comply with the regulations.

**Explain** how the appropriate balance of power between national and state governments has been interpreted differently over time.

- Dual Federalism
- Cooperative Federalism
The interpretation of the 10th and 14th Amendments, the commerce clause, the necessary and proper clause, and other enumerated and implied powers is at the heart of the debate over the balance of power between the national and state governments.

**Commerce clause**

**The necessary and proper clause**

The balance of power between the national and state governments has changed over time based on U.S. Supreme Court interpretation of such cases as:

**McCulloch v. Maryland**

**United States v. Lopez**
Key Federalism Legislation:

- Unfunded Mandates Reform Act
- Supplemental Nutrition Assistance Program
- Temporary Assistance for Needy Families (TANF)
- National Voter Registration Act (Motor Voter Act)
- Clean Air Act
- Americans with Disabilities Act
- Brady Bill
- No Child Left Behind Act