

Government & Politics

Civics for the American Experiment

Scope and Sequence

This resource provides teachers with curriculum support to implement the Government and Politics curriculum. It offers a brief overview of the scope and sequence of content, along with a pacing guide for a semester-long course. This resource helps high school educators seamlessly integrate the materials into their classrooms, whether they have 45 minutes a day or 90 minutes a day of dedicated.

UNIT 1

Number of Days	Unit 1:	Unit 1: Overview	Unit 1: Guiding Questions
10 Days + 1 Assessment	Foundations of Our Government	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Principles and Virtues• The Federalist Papers• Founding Documents <p>Understand the framers' intentions.</p> <p>Explore concepts like limited government, separation of powers, checks and balances, and popular sovereignty.</p>	How and why was the United States Government formed?

AP Required Foundation Documents and SCOTUS Cases

- Federalist 10, 51, 70, 78
- Brutus 1
- Declaration of Independence
- Articles of Confederation
- Constitution
- McCulloch v. Maryland (1819)

UNIT 2




Number of Days	Unit 2:	Unit 2: Overview	Unit 2: Guiding Questions
5 Days + 1 Assessment	Federalism	Examine the relationship between the federal and state governments.	How does the division of power and shared responsibilities between federal and state governments affect the authority and purpose of government at each level?

AP Required Foundation Documents and SCOTUS Cases

- Constitution
- U.S. v. Lopez
- McCulloch v. Maryland (1819)
- Roe v. Wade (1973)



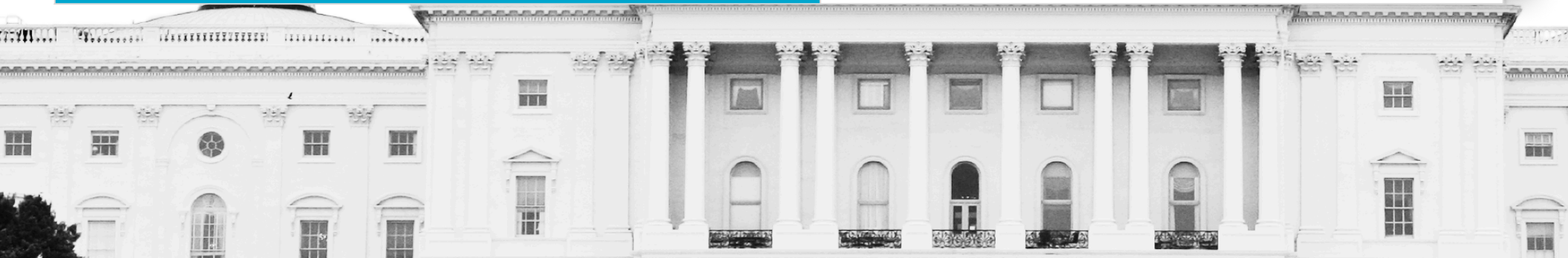
UNIT 3



Number of Days	Unit 3:	Unit 3: Overview	Unit 3: Guiding Questions
5 Days + 1 Assessment	Legislative Branch	Examine the structure, powers, and functions of Congress.	How does the structure of government influence the process of lawmaking and reflect the will of the people?

AP Required Foundation Documents and SCOTUS Cases

- Constitution



UNIT 4




Number of Days	Unit 4:	Unit 4: Overview	Unit 4: Guiding Questions
5 Days + 1 Assessment	President and Bureaucracy	Analyze the powers and roles of the executive branch, including the bureaucracy.	What is the legitimate exercise of executive powers?

AP Required Foundation Documents and SCOTUS Cases

- Constitution
- Fed 70



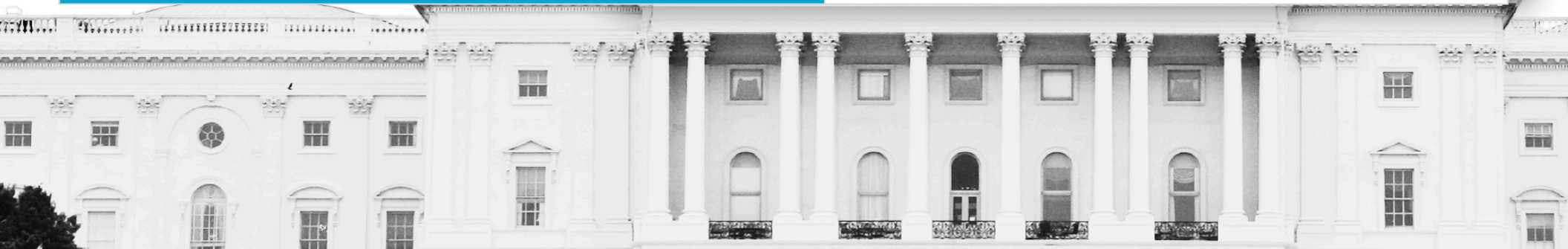
UNIT 5



Number of Days	Unit 5:	Unit 5: Overview	Unit 5: Guiding Questions
5 Days + 1 Assessment	Judicial Branch	Explore the role of the Supreme Court and the judicial review process. Analyze the structure of the court system	What is the role of courts in the American constitutional order?

AP Required Foundation Documents and SCOTUS Cases

- Constitution
- Fed 78
- Marbury v. Madison (1803)



UNIT 6



Number of Days	Unit 6:	Unit 6: Overview	Unit 6: Guiding Questions
13 Days + 1 Assessment	Political Participations and Elections	<p>Political Parties: Study the role and impact of political parties in the US.</p> <p>Interest Groups: Analyze the influence of interest groups on policymaking.</p> <p>Public Opinion: Explore how public opinion is formed and measured.</p> <p>Political Ideologies: Examine different political ideologies like liberalism, conservatism, and socialism.</p> <p>Media and Politics: Explore the role of the media in shaping public opinion and influencing politics.</p>	How do we work through existing institutions (civic and political institutions) to achieve a healthy civic society?
AP Required Foundation Documents and SCOTUS Cases		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Fed 10• Brutus 1• Baker v. Carr (1962)• Shaw v. Reno (1993)• Citizens United v. FEC (2010)	

UNIT 7



Number of Days	Unit 7:	Unit 7: Overview	Unit 7: Guiding Questions
15 Days + 1 Assessment	Civil Rights and Civil Liberties	<p>The Bill of Rights and selective incorporation</p> <p>Freedom of speech, religion, the press, and assembly</p> <p>Due process and the rights of the accused</p> <p>Equal protection and civil rights movements</p>	How do individuals, groups, and the government interact to protect and promote civil rights and civil liberties in the United States?

AP Required Foundation Documents and SCOTUS Cases

- Letter from Birmingham Jail
- Wisconsin v. Yoder (1972)
- Tinker v. Des Moines (1969)
- Schenck v. United States (1919)
- New York Times v. United States (1971)
- Brown v. Board of Education (1954)
- Engel v. Vitale (1962)
- McDonald v. Chicago (2010)
- Gideon v. Wainwright (1963)



Total

Units	Instruction Days	Assessment Days	Instruction + Assessment Days
7 units	58 days	7 days	65 days

The table is organized by unit and day. Topics are listed along with links to the website for choosing resources to teach the topic. Choose the resources that will work best for your students.

CALENDAR

Unit 1: Foundations of Our Government

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
Principles and Virtues	What was the challenge facing the United States in 1787?	What was debated at the Constitutional Convention?	What informed these debates?	What informed these debates?
Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	Day 9	Day 10
What was the understanding of republican government held by the Founders and Framers? [Consent and Republican Government]	What was the understanding of republican government held by the Founders and Framers? [Consent and Republican Government]	What was decided at the Convention? [Constitutional and Auxiliary Powers]	What was decided at the Convention? [Constitutional and Auxiliary Powers]	Was the new Constitution enough to protect Natural Rights and produce justice? [Bill of Rights]

Unit 2: Federalism

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
General Introduction	Why does each level of government have different responsibilities?	Why does each level of government have different responsibilities?	What happens when powers are shared among levels of government?	What happens when powers are shared among levels of government?

Unit 3: Legislative Branch

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
The Nature of Representation	Article I Enumerated and Implied Powers	The House	The Senate	Consensus Building and Check and Balances

Unit 4: President and the Bureaucracy

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
General Introduction	What is the Executive Branch?	The Presidency and the Constitution	The Changing Nature of the Presidency	The Bureaucracy

Unit 5: Judicial Branch

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
General Introduction	The Court and the Constitution	Landmark Cases	Landmark Cases	Jurisprudence and Precedent

Unit 6: Political Participation and Elections

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
General Introduction	General Introduction	Politics and Parties	Politics and Parties	Politics and Parties
Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	Day 9	Day 10
Voting and Elections	Voting and Elections	Voting and Elections	Civil Societies and Local Parties	Civil Societies and Local Parties
Day 11	Day 12	Day 13		
Interests, Interest Groups, and the Media	Interests, Interest Groups, and the Media	Interests, Interest Groups, and the Media		



Unit 7: Civil Rights and Civil Liberties

Day 1	Day 2	Day 3	Day 4	Day 5
General Introduction	First Amendment: Freedom of Religion	First Amendment: Freedom of Religion	First Amendment: Freedom of Religion	First Amendment: Freedom of Religion
Day 6	Day 7	Day 8	Day 9	Day 10
Second Amendment	Second Amendment	Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Amendments	Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Amendments	Eighth Amendment
Day 11	Day 12	Day 13	Day 14	Day 15
Ninth and Tenth Amendment	Substantive Due Process and the Fourteenth Amendment	Substantive Due Process and the Fourteenth Amendment	Social Movements: Justice, Equal Rights, and Equal Protection under the Law	Social Movements: Justice, Equal Rights, and Equal Protection under the Law



The following daily breakdowns include suggested resources from the Bill of Rights Institute's free online resource: [Government and Politics: Civics for the American Experiment](#). These examples are designed to help educators select high-quality lessons, primary sources, and activities that support the content and skills required by the AP Government and Politics curriculum.

These are not exhaustive or prescriptive. BRI offers additional resources for each unit, including videos, essays, and extended activities. Educators are encouraged to explore the full unit pages and select the resources that best suit their students' needs, interests, and time constraints.

<u>Unit 1: Foundation of Our Government</u> How and why was the United States Government formed?	Day 1: Principles and Virtues What are principles and virtues?	Day 2: The Constitutional Convention What was the challenge facing the United States in 1787?
	Video: Introduction to Founding Principles Video: Introduction to Civic Virtues Lesson Plan: What are Civic Virtues? Or Activity: Creating a Classroom Constitution	Lesson Plan: The Articles of Confederation Graphic Organizer: Articles of Confederation vs. U.S. Constitution Video: The Articles of Confederation Explained
	Day 3: The Constitutional Convention What was debated at the Constitutional Convention?	Day 4: Influences on the Founders What informed these debates?

Essay: An Energetic, yet Limited Government

Primary Source: Madison's Notes on the Constitutional Convention

Activity: Timeline Examination of the Constitutional Convention

Essay: The Ancient and Modern Influences that Shaped the American Founding

Day 5: Influences on the Founders

What informed these debates?

Day 6: Influences on the Founders

What was the understanding of republican government held by the Founders and Framers?

Lesson Plan: Locke and the Declaration of Independence

Discussion: Explore how Enlightenment thinkers like John Locke and Montesquieu influenced the Founders.

Essay: Representation and Self-Governance

Activity: Opinion Sorting Federalist #10 and Brutus 1

Discussion: Analyze the principles of consent and republicanism in the context of the Founding era.

Day 7: Influences on the Founders

What was the understanding of republican government held by the Founders and Framers? (Continued)

Day 8: The Constitutional Convention

What was decided at the Convention?

Activity: Debate on the merits of a republic versus a pure democracy, using historical examples.

Essay: [The Separation of Powers](#)

Primary Sources:

- [Federalist #51](#)
- [Federalist #70](#)
- [Federalist #78](#)

Activity: Battle of the Branches

Day 9: The Constitution

What was decided at the Convention?

Day 10: The Bill of Rights

Was the new Constitution enough to protect Natural Rights and produce justice?

Resource: [The U.S. Constitution](#)

Suggested Use:

Use a Constitution Scavenger Hunt to guide students in locating and summarizing key features (e.g., powers of each branch, separation of powers, checks and balances). Break into small groups to explore one article or section and report findings to the class.

Discussion Prompt: How did the Constitution aim to fix the problems of the Articles of Confederation?

Essay: [The Bill of Rights](#)

Activity: [Understanding Positions of Federalists and Anti-Federalists](#)

Or

Point-Counterpoint: Were the Federalists or Anti-Federalists more convincing?

- [What the Federalists Were For](#)
- [What the Anti-Federalists Were For](#)

Unit 2: Federalism

How does the division of power and shared responsibilities between federal and state governments affect the authority and purpose of government at each level?

Day 1 General Introduction

Lesson Plan: [Which Level of Government can Solve this Problem?](#)

Activity: [Federalism Infographic](#)

Video: [Federalism](#)

Day 2: The Founding and Federalism

Why does each level of government have different responsibilities?

Essay: [The Founders, The Principle of Federalism, and the Constitution](#)

Primary Sources:

- [Federalist #39](#)
- [Article I, Section 10 Tenth Amendment](#)

Graphic Organizer: [Evidence of Federalism in the Constitution](#)

Day 3: The Founding and Federalism

Why does each level of government have different responsibilities?

Lesson Plan: [Angusville Wins a Grant Simulation](#)

Or

Day 4: Federalism Cases Studies

What happens when powers are shared among levels of government?

Select one or more of the following case studies:

Case Study: [Drinking Age and Federal Highways](#)

- [Background Essay](#)
- [Primary Sources](#)

Point-Counterpoint: Is American federalism an outdated principle that is ineffective in solving twenty-first century problems?

- [Federalism: The Good, the Bad, and the Ugly](#)
- [Federalism: A Prop, Not a Principle?](#)

- [Teacher Supports](#)

[Case Study: Education](#)

- [Background Essay](#)
- [Primary Sources](#)
- [Teacher Supports](#)

[Case Study: Abortion Rights](#)

- [Background Essay](#)
- [Primary Sources](#)
- [Teacher Supports](#)

Day 5: Federalism Cases Studies

What happens when powers are shared among levels of government?

Class discussion

- [Discussion Protocols](#)

Unit 3: The Legislative Branch

How does the structure of government influence the process of lawmaking and reflect the will of the people?

Day 1 The Nature of Representation

What does it mean to be represented in government?

Day 2: Article I Enumerated and Implied Powers

How do the enumerated and implied powers of Congress allow Congress to represent the will of the people in the lawmaking process?

Video: [The Nature of Representation](#)

Lesson Plan: [Gerrymandering, Representation, and Consent of the Governed](#)

Or

Lesson Plan: [The Challenges of Representation](#)

Essay: [Congress: Enumerated & Implied Powers](#)

Primary Source: [Article I, U.S. Constitution, 1787](#)

Activity: [Article I and Enumerated and Implied Powers](#)

Day 3: The House

How do the responsibilities of the House and Senate affect the overall legislative process?

Video: [How does the House of Representatives Work?](#)

Primary Source: [Federalist #55](#)

Lesson Plan: [Who is Your Representative?](#)

Day 4: The Senate

How do the responsibilities of the House and Senate affect the overall legislative process?

Video: [How does the Senate Work?](#)

Primary Source: [Federalist #62](#)

Lesson Plan: [Who is Your Representative?](#)

Day 5: Consensus Building and Check and Balances

How does Congress build consensus in making laws?

Activity: [Congressional Consensus Building](#)

Graphic Organizer: [Consensus Building Case Studies](#)

Or

Point-Counterpoint: Is Congress Broken?

- Yes, Congress is Broken
- No, Congress is Not Broken

Unit 4: The President and the Bureaucracy

What is the legitimate exercise of executive powers?

Day 1: General Introduction

Activity: [The Presidential Oath of Office](#)

Primary Source: [The Presidential Oath of Office](#)

Day 2: The Executive Branch

What is the Executive Branch?

Essay: [What is the Executive Branch?](#)

Primary Source: [Federalist #70](#)

Primary Source: [Constitution Article II](#)

Day 3: The Presidency and the Constitution

What is the role of the executive branch?

Day 4: The Changing Nature of the Presidency

How does the modern presidency differ from the role envisioned by the Founders in a constitutional republic?

Activity: [The Roles of the President](#)

Activity: [The Role of the Executive Branch](#)

Choose one or more of the following case studies:

- Case Study: [War Powers](#)
- Case Study: [Federal Regulation of the Economy and Society](#)
- Case Study: [Executive Orders](#)

Day 5: The Bureaucracy

How does the executive branch influence the execution of laws, and to what extent does this impact daily life?

Lesson Plan: [Structured Academic Controversy: Does the federal bureaucracy wield too much power in the U.S. constitutional republic?](#)

Unit 5: The Judicial Branch

Day 1: General Introduction

Day 2: The Court and the Constitution

What is the role of courts in the American constitutional order?

What Are the Roles and Responsibilities of the Different Court Levels, and How Do These Courts Interact?

Lesson Plan: [The Rule of Law](#)

Lesson Plan: [Judicial Review](#)

Day 3: Landmark Cases

Day 4: Landmark Cases

How do Landmark Cases Impact the Way Government Works and the Daily Lives of Citizens?

How do Landmark Cases Impact the Way Government Works and the Daily Lives of Citizens?

Background Essay: [Timeline of Periods of the Court](#)

Discussion Guide: [Landmark Cases](#)

Activity: [Supreme Court Cases Scenarios: How Would You Decide?](#)

Day 5: Jurisprudence and Precedent

Why Do We Defer to the Supreme Court for the Final Say over the Constitution?

Point – Counterpoint:

- [The Supreme Court is not the Final Authority on the Meaning of the Constitution](#)

- The Supreme Court is the Final Authority on the Meaning of the Constitution

Unit 6: Political Participation and Elections

How do we work through existing civic and political institutions to achieve a healthy civic society?

Day 1: General Introduction

Lesson Plan: Founding Principles and Civic Virtues in the American Political System

Day 2: General Introduction

Lesson Plan: Simulating Popular Sovereignty: The “We the People” Town Hall

Or

Lesson Plan: Perception Gap, from More Like Us

Day 3: Politics and Parties

How do political parties influence and facilitate political participation in the United States?

Day 4: Politics and Parties

How do political parties influence and facilitate political participation in the United States?

Activity: Timeline of Political Party Changes and Adaptations in U.S. History

Lesson Plan: Modern Campaigns

Or

Lesson Plan: Campaign Finance: PACs and SuperPACs

Day 5: Politics and Parties

How do political parties influence and facilitate political participation in the United States?

Research Activity: [Political Parties](#)

Day 6: Voting and Elections

How do voting laws and electoral systems impact democratic participation in the United States?

Lesson Plan: [Expansion of Franchise](#)

Primary Source: [Voting Amendments to the Constitution](#)

Primary Source: [Elections and the Constitution](#)

Day 7: Voting and Elections

How do voting laws and electoral systems impact democratic participation in the United States?

Lesson Plan: [Methods of Election: The Popular Vote and the Electoral College](#)

Or

Lesson Plan: [Electing a President](#)

Day 8: Voting and Elections

How do voting laws and electoral systems impact democratic participation in the United States?

Case Study: [The Electoral College](#)

Day 9: Civil Societies and Local Parties

How does engagement with civil society and local political institutions empower citizens to address community challenges and shape their local environments?

Primary Source: [Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America, Book One, Part Two, Chapter Two](#)

Day 10: Civil Societies and Local Parties

How does engagement with civil society and local political institutions empower citizens to address community challenges and shape their local environments?

Lesson Plan: [Engaging with Local Associations and Groups](#)

Educator Resource: [Student Involvement in Civil Society Groups](#)

Day 11: Interests, Interest Groups, and the Media

How do interest groups, campaign finance, and evolving media landscapes influence public opinion, policy-making, and political polarization in modern governance?

Primary Sources: [Federalist #10](#) and [Federalist #51](#)

Activity: [The Sphere of Federalist #10](#)

Day 12: Interests, Interest Groups, and the Media

How do interest groups, campaign finance, and evolving media landscapes influence public opinion, policy-making, and political polarization in modern governance?

Lesson: [Interest Groups at Work](#)

Day 13: Interests, Interest Groups, and the Media

How do interest groups, campaign finance, and evolving media landscapes influence public opinion, policy-making, and political polarization in modern governance?

Case Study: [Campaign Finance](#)

Or

Case Study: [Media Technology and Candidate Centered Campaigns](#)

Unit 7: Civil Rights and Civil Liberties

How do individuals, groups, and the government interact to protect and promote civil rights and civil liberties in the United States?

Day 1: General Introduction

What are principles and virtues?

Lesson Plan: [Launching Civil Rights and Civil Liberties](#)

Day 2: First Amendment

Lesson Plan: [Introducing the First Amendment](#)

Day 3: First Amendment: Freedom of Religion

How does the First Amendment protect religious freedom?

Day 4: First Amendment: Freedom of Speech

Why is freedom of speech essential in a free society?

Unit 7: Civil Rights and Civil Liberties

How do individuals, groups, and the government interact to protect and promote civil rights and civil liberties in the United States?

Essay: [Origins of Religious Liberty](#)

Case Study: [Religious Freedom](#)

Day 5: First Amendment: Freedom of Press

How does freedom of the press contribute to a democratic society?

Lesson Plan: [Why Does a Free Press Matter?](#)

Case Study: [Freedom of the Press](#)

Day 7: Second Amendment

How does the Second Amendment protect the individual right to bear arms?

Case Study: [Second Amendment](#)

Primary Sources: [Second Amendment](#)

Educator Resource: [Freedom of Speech](#)

Case Study: [Freedom of Speech](#)

Day 6: Second Amendment

How does the Second Amendment protect the individual right to bear arms?

Lesson Plan: [Understanding the Second Amendment: A QFT Lesson](#)

Day 8: Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Amendments

How does the Bill of Rights protect the rights of the accused?

Activity: [Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Amendments](#)

Graphic Organizer: [Supreme Court Cases](#)

Educator Resource: [Second Amendment Discussion Guide](#)

Or

Lesson Plan: [The Second Amendment Legislation Action Debate](#)

Case Study: [Rights of the Accused Court Cases](#)

Day 9: Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Amendments

How does the Bill of Rights protect the rights of the accused?

Day 10: Eighth Amendment

How does the Bill of Rights protect the rights of the accused?

Activity: [Rights of the Accused Scenario Cards](#)

Educator Resource: [Fourth, Fifth, and Sixth Amendments Discussion Guide](#)

Lesson Plan: [Understanding Cruel and Unusual Punishment](#)

Day 11: Ninth and Tenth Amendment

How do the Ninth and Tenth Amendments protect inalienable rights and address the balance of power between federal and state governments?

Day 12: Substantive Due Process and the Fourteenth Amendment

How has the Bill of Rights been applied to the states through the Fourteenth Amendment's Due Process Clause?

Lesson Plan: [Supreme Court DBQ South Dakota v. Dole \(1987\)](#)

Essay: [Substantive Due Process and Incorporation](#)

Infographic: [Substantive Due Process and the Fourteenth Amendment Key Terms](#)

Day 13: Substantive Due Process and the Fourteenth Amendment

How has the Bill of Rights been applied to the states through the Fourteenth Amendment's Due Process Clause?

Day 14: Social Movements: Justice, Equal Rights, and Equal Protection under the Law

What does it mean for all individuals to be treated equally under the law, and how has this principle been interpreted throughout American history?

Activity: [Fourteenth Amendment Graphic Organizer](#)

Primary Source: [Fourteenth Amendment](#)

Essay: [The Women's Movement and the Seneca Falls Convention](#)

Essay: [Plessy v. Ferguson \(1896\)](#)

Day 15: Social Movements: Justice, Equal Rights, and Equal Protection under the Law

What does it mean for all individuals to be treated equally under the law, and how has this principle been interpreted throughout American history?

Primary Source: [Frederick Douglass, “What to the Slave is the Fourth of July?”](#)

Primary Source: [Letter from Birmingham Jail](#)

