

U.S. Government

UNIT 1: Constitutional Underpinnings

ESSENTIAL QUESTION

How should political power be distributed in society?

BIG IDEAS

Students will

- explore the principles and purpose of government.
- explore and analyze the development and structure of the U.S. Constitution.
- analyze how political power should be distributed in society.
- analyze how the interpretation of the U.S. Constitution impacts laws and policies affecting the balance between order and liberty.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

Content:

- What is the purpose of government? (e.g., establish order, protect life and property, provide public goods (roads, public safety, street lights), ideas from The Preamble of the Constitution: establish justice, ensure domestic tranquility, provide for the common defense, promote general welfare, secure liberty)
- What are the different types of government and government power structures? (e.g., democracy, republic, monarchy, theocracy, dictatorship, totalitarianism, etc.)
- What essential ideas of American constitutional government are expressed in the Declaration of Independence and U.S. Constitution? (e.g., natural rights, limited government, the social contract, the rule of law, due process, equal protection, popular sovereignty, separation of powers, federalism)
- How are Federalist and Anti-Federalist views on central government and democracy reflected in US foundational documents? (e.g., the Federalist Papers, Bill of Rights)
- What was the impact of political negotiation and compromise on the development of the constitutional system at the Constitutional Convention? (e.g., The Great Compromise, The Commerce Compromise, the Three-fifths Compromise)
- Why was the Bill of Rights added to the Constitution/How does the Bill of Rights protect individual liberty? (e.g., freedom of expression, rights of the accused, power reserved for state government)
- How does the system of federalism divide power between the central government and state governments? (e.g., enumerated powers - regulate immigration, make treaties, declare war; reserved powers - issue driver's licenses, establish public schools; concurrent powers - taxation, law enforcement)
- How do Constitutional clauses clarify the balance of power between the national government and the states? (e.g., the necessary and proper clause, the commerce clause, full faith and credit, extradition, and privileges and immunities clauses)

Process:

- How do I compare and contrast different government systems? (e.g., (e.g., democracy, republic, monarchy, theocracy, dictatorship, totalitarianism, etc.)
- How do I analyze how the appropriate balance of power between national and state governments has been interpreted differently over time?
- How do I analyze how the U.S. Constitution establishes a system of government that has powers,

responsibilities, and limits that have changed over time and that are still contested.

- How do I describe an author's claim(s), perspective, evidence and reasoning?
- How do I articulate a defensible claim/thesis?
- How do I support an argument using relevant evidence?

Reflective:

- Why do people form a government?
- How do we balance individual natural rights and the rights of the common good?
- Are we living up to the democratic ideals we established as a nation? How do we continue to strive for all people to be treated equally and protected by their government?
- How does the Constitution allow for change?

FOCUS STANDARDS

Kansas History, Government, and Social Studies Standards & Benchmarks

- The student will recognize and evaluate significant choices and consequences that have impacted our lives and futures. (1.1)
- The student will analyze the context and draw conclusions about choices and consequences. (1.2)
- The student will recognize and evaluate the rights and responsibilities of people living in societies. (2.1)
- The student will analyze the context and draw conclusions about rights and responsibilities. (2.2)
- The student will investigate and connect the rights and responsibilities of individuals with contemporary issues. (2.3)
- The student will recognize and evaluate how societies are shaped by the identities, beliefs, and practices of individuals and groups. (3.1)
- The student will recognize and evaluate continuity and change over time. (4.1)
- The student will recognize and evaluate dynamic relationships that impact lives in communities, states, and nations. (5.1)

U.S. Government

UNIT 2: Institutions of National Government



ESSENTIAL QUESTION

BIG IDEAS

How do the branches of government compete and cooperate in order to govern?

Students will:

- examine the role and function of the major institutions of our government, and understand how each branch checks the other.
- analyze how the Constitutional roles of each branch have changed and expanded over time.
- explore the role of the U.S. Government in monetary, fiscal and regulatory policy.
- evaluate the role of the U.S. Government in providing social welfare programs.
- examine the role of the United States in the international community

GUIDING QUESTIONS

Content:

Legislative Branch:

- What are the powers of the Legislative Branch? (e.g., levy and collect taxes, borrow money, regulate interstate and foreign commerce, coin money, declare war, make laws)
- What constitutional powers, structures, and rules are unique to each house of Congress? (e.g., House - brings charges of impeachment, originate tax bills, Senate - holds trials of impeachment, approves Presidential appointments)
- How does a bill become a law? (e.g., committee action, floor action, conference committee action, presidential action, veto override)
- How does congressional redistricting and gerrymandering work and impact lawmaking? (e.g., political polarization, gridlock)
- How does Congress use their “power of the purse” to create a budget that addresses both discretionary and mandatory spending? (e.g., taxes, borrowing power, deficit financing - debt ceiling)
- What are the checks and balances on Legislative Power? (e.g., Presidential veto, judicial review)
- How does the Legislative Branch check other branches? (e.g., oversight, confirmation, impeachment, ratification, veto override, amendment)
- What are ways the federal government can attempt to impact the marketplace/economy? (e.g., fiscal (tax) policy, regulatory policy, federal budget, government spending)
- How do political ideologies (e.g., conservative, liberal, libertarian) differ in their view of regulating the economy?
- What effect do different fiscal policy theories have on the economy? (e.g., Keynesian Economic Theory, Supply-Side Economics Theory)

Executive Branch

- What are the basic powers of the Executive Branch? (e.g., Chief executive, Chief of state, Commander in chief, Chief diplomat, Chief policy maker, Chief economist, Chief of party, Chief citizen, clemency, veto, appointment, nomination of judges)

- How has the power of the Executive Branch changed over time? (e.g., influences of Washington, Jackson, Lincoln, T. Roosevelt, F. D. Roosevelt, L. B. Johnson, Executive Orders)
- What are the checks placed on Presidential power? (e.g., Congressional veto override, Congressional power of the purse, Senate confirmation of appointees and treaties, impeachment by the House, judicial review)
- What challenges do Presidents face when advancing their agendas in Congress? (e.g., federal budget process, public opinion)
- How has communication technology changed the president's relationship with the national constituency and the other branches? (e.g., social media, national broadcast of the State of the Union and the president's bully pulpit)
- How do Congress and the President share military powers? (e.g., power to declare war, War Powers Resolution of 1973, role of Commander in Chief)
- How do Presidents impact foreign policy? (e.g., preemptive actions, coalition-building, drone usage vs "troops on the ground", response to human rights abuses, Bush Doctrine, Obama Doctrine)
- How does the federal government carry out its responsibilities? (e.g. The Federal Bureaucracy: Office of the President - NSC, OMB - Executive Departments - Departments of Justice, Education, Treasury, Labor, Independent Agencies - FDA, EPA, USPS, SEC)

Judicial Branch

- How does the Constitutional design of the judicial branch protect the Supreme Court's independence as a branch of government? (e.g., the framers' purpose to place Judiciary on an equal plane with Legislative & Executive Branches - last resort for questions of federal law.)
- What is the power of judicial review and how does it check the power of other institutions? (Marbury v. Madison - interpretation of federal and Constitutional law and Executive actions)
- What are different ways of interpreting the Constitution? (e.g., strict construction, loose construction, originalism, interpretivism, precedent)
- How do citizens participate in the judicial branch? (e.g. bringing a case, serving on a jury, being called as a witness)
- What is the difference between civil and criminal law? (e.g., private parties vs. public as a whole)
- How does a case get to the Supreme Court?
- What is the relationship between the Executive Branch, Legislative Branch, and the Judicial Branch in the judicial nomination process?

Process:

- How do I explain the processes of our governing institutions and how they work together to create policy?
- How do I analyze how Congress uses its oversight power to check the Executive Branch's rule-making and implementation authority?
- How do I analyze or explain how "American values" (e.g., individualism, rule of law, popular sovereignty, limited government) influence foreign and domestic policy? (e.g., drug policy, tax policy, environmental policy)
- How do I analyze and explain how current circumstances affect foreign and domestic policy?
- How do I analyze how presidents have interpreted and justified their use of formal and informal powers (e.g., executive orders, the bully pulpit, executive privilege, recess appointments)
- How do I develop and defend a position on the role the United States should play in the global community?
- How do I analyze how the United States' ideas on Human Rights influence foreign policy?
- How do I compare and contrast different ways of interpreting the Constitution? (e.g., strict construction, loose construction, originalism, interpretivism, precedent)
- How do I describe the facts, reasoning, decision, and majority opinion of landmark Supreme Court

cases?

- How do I analyze how the exercise of judicial review, in conjunction with life tenure of justices, impacts the Supreme Court's power?

Reflective:

- Who are my congressional representatives, and how can I contact them?
- How has U.S. Foreign Policy changed from 1783 to September 11, 2001 to the present?
- Which branch of government is most powerful? Why?
- How are the people involved in the policy-making process?
- Does the United States' reputation in the world matter?
- Is social reform politically possible? (e.g. Immigration, Crime/Drugs, Education, Welfare/Poverty Reduction? If so, which proposal(s) should be pursued?

FOCUS STANDARDS

Kansas History, Government, and Social Studies Standards & Benchmarks

- The student will analyze the context and draw conclusions about choices and consequences. (1.2)
- The student will recognize and evaluate the rights and responsibilities of people living in societies. (2.1)
- The student will analyze the context and draw conclusions about rights and responsibilities. (2.2)
- The student will investigate and connect the rights and responsibilities of individuals with contemporary issues. (2.3)
- The student will analyze context and draw conclusions of how societies are shaped by the identities, beliefs, and practices of individuals and groups. (3.2)
- The student will analyze the context and draw conclusions about continuity and change. (4.2)
- The student will analyze the context and draw conclusions about dynamic relationships. (5.2)

U.S. Government

UNIT 3: Civil Rights and Civil Liberties



ESSENTIAL QUESTION

BIG IDEAS

How are your rights defined and protected under the Constitution?

How do we balance civil liberties and the need to provide for the common good?

Students will

- understand the civil liberties and civil rights of individuals and citizens.
- analyze how the Bill of Rights and the Fourteenth Amendment are used to assert the rights of citizens and protect groups from discrimination.
- evaluate how U.S. Supreme Court rulings have defined civil liberties and civil rights.
- analyze the struggle to balance individual liberty with public order and safety.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

Content:

- What are the rights of the Bill of Rights?
- What is the difference between Civil Liberties and Civil Rights? (e.g., Civil Liberties - basic freedoms considered to be the birthright of all individuals, protections against government, freedoms of speech, press, right to a fair trial; Civil Rights - guarantees by the government, equal treatment under the law, right to trial by jury, right to vote, laws against discrimination)
- How have the courts interpreted the First Amendment's establishment and free exercise clause? (e.g., represented by such cases as: Engel v. Vitale (1962) and Wisconsin v. Yoder (1972))
- How have the courts interpreted the First Amendment's Freedom of Speech? (e.g., represented by such cases as: Tinker v. Des Moines (1969) and Schenck v. US (1919))
- What are your Constitutional Rights if accused of a crime? (e.g., writ of habeas corpus, guarantee against double jeopardy, trial by jury, right to an adequate defense)
- How do certain amendments in the Bill of Rights protect a citizen's due process? (e.g., represented by such cases as: Miranda v. Arizona (1966) and Gideon v. Wainwright (1963))
- What are your rights to privacy? (e.g., Mapp v. Ohio (1961) and New Jersey v. TLO (1984))
- How has the Fourteenth Amendment's Equal Protection Clause been interpreted over time? (e.g., Plessy v. Ferguson (1896), Baker v. Carr (1961), Hernandez v. Texas (1953))
- How have Civil Rights been interpreted over time? (e.g., Selective Incorporation, Reed v. Reed (1971), Title IX, The Equal Rights Amendment, Brown v. Board of Education (1954), Hatch Amendment, Civil Rights Act (1964), Voting Rights Act (1965))
- What are the groups and who are the leaders associated with different civil rights movements in the US? (e.g., Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. and the Civil Rights Movement of the 1960s, the National Organization for Women and women's rights movement: The ERA, Title IX, Reed v. Reed (1971), the fight for the Americans with Disabilities Act, the Hatch Amendment (1981))
- What philosophies and strategies have been central to major civil rights movements in the U.S.? (e.g. non-violent civil disobedience, and ideas in Dr. Martin Luther Kings "Letter from a Birmingham Jail")

Process:

- How do I analyze how the U.S. Bill of Rights protects individual liberties and rights?
- How do I apply the amendments in the Bill of Rights as well as the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment to different scenarios?
- How do I describe the facts, reasoning, decision, and opinion(s) of a variety of landmark Supreme Court cases relating to civil rights and civil liberties?
- How do I analyze how the government responded to social movements?
- How do I articulate an argument and support the argument using relevant evidence?
- How do I explain how interpretation of the Constitution has changed over time?

Reflective:

- How can individuals and groups help protect civil liberties and civil rights?
- To what extent do the U.S. Constitution and its amendments protect against undue government infringement on essential liberties and from discrimination?
- Is any right absolute?
- How do we balance individual liberty with public order and safety? (e.g., The Patriot Act)
- What are the major government policies put in place to protect against discrimination?

FOCUS STANDARDS

Kansas History, Government, and Social Studies Standards & Benchmarks

- The student will investigate and connect examples of choices and consequences with contemporary issues. (1.3)
- The student will recognize and evaluate the rights and responsibilities of people living in societies. (2.1)
- The student will analyze the context and draw conclusions about rights and responsibilities. (2.2)
- The student will investigate and connect the rights and responsibilities of individuals with contemporary issues. (2.3)
- The student will investigate and connect how societies are shaped by the identities, beliefs, and practices of individuals and groups with contemporary issues. (3.3)
- The student will investigate and connect continuity and change to a contemporary issue. (4.3)
- The student will analyze the context and draw conclusions about dynamic relationships. (5.2)

U.S. Government

UNIT 4: Government by the People



ESSENTIAL QUESTION

BIG IDEAS

How do policy-makers know what citizens desire?

What are the roles of the citizens in American democracy?

Students will

- explore where the political ideas of Americans come from
- examine how political participation in America is determined
- explore and analyze the functions and effects of linkage institutions on America.
- understand the effect of political parties and predict their future impact.
- explore the effects of interest groups on America.
- predict the impact and effect of media on policy and society.

GUIDING QUESTIONS

Content:

- How has the definition of citizenship changed throughout American history? (e.g., Constitution origins, 14th Amendment, 19th Amendment, 24th Amendment, Civil Rights Act 1964, Voting Rights Act 1965)
- How have voting rights changed? (e.g., Constitutional origins, 14th Amendment, 19th Amendment, 24th Amendment, Civil Rights Act 1964, Voting Rights Act 1965, 26th Amendment, Shelby v. Holder)
- What are voting qualifications for federal elections? Kansas elections?
- In what ways can individuals engage in political participation and/or civic action? (e.g., voting, protests, writing letters, money, political action committees, lobbyists, public opinion polls).
- What are the three types of national elections in the U.S.? (e.g., presidential, midterm, and off-year)
- How are campaigns funded? (e.g., citizens, private sources, public funds, candidate, political party, PACs, FECA, PACs, etc.)
- How does the electoral process work in federal elections? (e.g., direct primary, indirect primary, closed primary, open primary, blanket primary, nonpartisan primary, caucus, etc.)
- What is the Electoral College and how does it work? (e.g., electors from each state - determined by state's number of representatives and senators, cast vote for President, impact on campaigning, impact on election)
- What impact does the "winner take all" nature of the Electoral College have on a two-party system?
- What barriers exist to third party electoral success in the US? (e.g., ballot access)
- How do individuals form their political opinions? (e.g., Agents of Political Socialization - Family, School, Religion, Peer Groups, Gender & Ethnicity, Media)
- What are the basic political ideologies? (e.g., conservatism, liberalism, libertarianism, and moderate)
- What are the basic beliefs of Political Parties? (e.g., Democratic, Republican, Libertarian, Green Party, etc.)
- What is the role of political parties in a democracy? (e.g., recruit candidates, support campaigns, inform voters, mobilize voters on election day, develop policy)
- What are the goals and techniques of Interest Groups? (e.g., educate voters, influence public opinion, promote ideas, lobbying)
- How do Political Action Committees impact the political process? (e.g., fundraising, spending, advertisements, etc.)

- What are regional, cultural and demographic characteristics that may influence political beliefs and behavior? (E.g. education, occupation and income, age, gender, religion, geographic location, ethnicity, and race).
- How do we measure public opinion? (e.g., tracking polls, exit polls, push polls)
- What factors affect polling accuracy? (e.g., scientific sampling, weighting, framing of questions, frequency, margin of error, sample size, timing, etc.)
- How does media impact the outcome of elections? (e.g., print media, broadcast media, social media, misinformation, Free Press, debates, campaign coverage, campaign advertisements)

Process:

- How do I analyze how political participation and civic action affect the political system?
- How do I analyze the role of the Free Press in a democracy?
- How do I evaluate the influence social media and the internet have on political socialization?
- How do I analyze the impact of the media in shaping public opinion?
- How do I compare and contrast basic political ideologies? (e.g., conservatism, liberalism, libertarianism, and moderate ideologies).
- How do I compare and contrast the beliefs of Political Parties? (e.g., Democratic, Republican, Libertarian, Green Party, etc.)
- How do I explain the impact of political parties on the government and society as a whole?
- How do I describe the changes in political parties throughout American history?
- How do I analyze the techniques that political parties use currently to reach the American electorate?
- How do I explain the impact third parties have on American Society and Politics?
- How do I evaluate the benefits and problems of interest group influence on our elections and policy-making?
- How do I analyze how changes in political participation affect the political system?

Reflective:

- How can I make a difference in our democracy?
- Where did my political beliefs form? What influences my political beliefs?
- Do political parties represent my ideas and desires for my community/state/country? If not, what can I do?
- How effective is the two-party system at representing all people?
- Is non-voting a problem? Does voting make a difference?
- Are there reliable media sources? How do I know what is actually happening?
- How does the consumer-driven media model impact our society? (trust in public institutions, engagement in local civic organizations, public discourse)

FOCUS STANDARDS

Kansas History, Government, and Social Studies Standards & Benchmarks

- The student will use their understanding of choices and consequences to make a claim or advance a thesis using evidence and argument. (1.4)
- The student will investigate and connect the rights and responsibilities of individuals with contemporary issues. (2.3)
- The student will use their understanding of rights and responsibilities to make a claim or advance a thesis using evidence and argument. (2.4)
- The student will investigate and connect how societies are shaped by the identities, beliefs, and practices of individuals and groups with contemporary issues. (3.3)
- The student will investigate and connect continuity and change to a contemporary issue. (4.3)
- The student will investigate and connect dynamic relationships to contemporary issues. (5.3)