

# Grade 11

## CIVICS

### OVERVIEW

This semester course provides a framework for understanding the purposes, principles, and practices of American government as established by the United States Constitution. Students are expected to understand their rights and responsibilities as citizens and how to exercise these rights and responsibilities in local, state, and national government. This course fulfills the state requirement.

#### Course Content

1. Students will identify, define, compare, and contrast ideas regarding the nature of government, politics, and civic life and explain how these ideas have influenced contemporary political and legal systems. They will also explain the importance of government, politics, and civic engagement in a democratic republic and demonstrate how citizens participate in civic and political life in their own communities. The students will:
  - Distinguish between civic life, political life, and private life.
  - Define the terms *politics* and *government* and give examples of how political solutions to public policy problems are generated through interactions of citizens with their governments.
  - Describe the purposes and functions of government.
  - Define and provide examples of different forms of government, including direct democracy, representative democracy, republic, monarchy, oligarchy, and autocracy.
  - Define the terms representative democracy and democratic republic.
  - Distinguish limited from unlimited government and provide examples of each type of government.
  - Define and provide examples of the rule of law and constitutionalism, which demonstrate how these two ideas in concert are essential characteristics of limited government.
  - Explain how the rule of law, embodied in a constitution, limits government to protect the rights of individuals.
  - Explain how a constitutional democracy provides majority rule with equal protection for the rights of individuals, including those in the minority, through limited government and the rule of law.

- Examine fundamental documents in the American political tradition to identify key ideas regarding limited government and individual rights, including, but not limited to, the Magna Carta (1215), Mayflower Compact(1620), English Bill of Rights (1689), Locke’s Treatises of Civil Government (1690), Rousseau’s The Social Contract (1762), Virginia Declaration of Rights (1776), Declaration of Independence (1776), United States Constitution (1787), and the Bill of Rights (1791).
2. Students will identify and define ideas at the core of government and explain how these foundational ideas created an American civic identity. The students will:
- Trace the colonial, revolutionary, and founding-era experiences and events that led to the writing, ratification, and implementation of the United States Constitution (1787) and Bill of Rights (1791).
  - Analyze and interpret central ideas on government, individual rights, and the common good in founding documents of the United States, including but not limited, to the Declaration of Independence (1776), the United States Constitution (1787), and the Bill of Rights (1791).
  - Explain the elements of the social contract and natural rights theories and identify their application in United States founding-era documents.
  - Define and provide examples of foundational ideas of American government, including popular sovereignty, constitutionalism, republic or representative government, federalism, and individual rights, and show how these are embedded in founding-era documents.
  - Define and provide examples of fundamental principles and values of American political and civic life, including liberty, the common good, justice, equality, tolerance, law and order, rights of individuals, social diversity, civic unity, constitutionalism, popular sovereignty, and representative democracy. Discuss examples of contemporary issues that reflect tensions between these principles and values.
  - Explain the importance for diverse individuals, groups, and communities to make a common commitment to foundational ideas and values of American democracy, which constitutes a unifying civic identity in a pluralistic society.
  - Analyze and defend positions on issues concerning foundational ideas or values in tension or conflict. For example: Analyze issues involving liberty in conflict with equality, liberty in conflict with authority, individual rights in conflict with the common good, or majority rule in conflict with minority rights.
  - Compare and contrast ideas on good government of the Federalists and the Anti-Federalists during their debates on ratification of the U. S. Constitution (1787 – 1788).
  - Analyze and explain ideas about liberty, equality, and justice in American society using the following documents: the Declaration of Independence (1776), and *The Federalist* (1788).

3. Students will explain how the purposes, principles, and institutions of government for the American people are established in the United States Constitution and reflected in the Connecticut Constitution. They will also describe the structures and functions of American constitutional government at national, state, and local levels and practice skills of citizenship in relationship to their constitutional government. The students will:
  - Compare and contrast unitary, confederate, and federal governments.
  - Compare and contrast types of government, such as parliamentary and presidential, democratic and non-democratic, constitutional and non-constitutional, and republican or aristocratic.
  - Explain the characteristics of government in the United States which make it a federal, presidential, constitutional, democratic republic.
  - Explain the constitutional principles of federalism, separation of powers among three branches of government, the system of checks and balances, republican government (republicanism) or representative democracy, and popular sovereignty; provide examples of these principles in the governments of the United States and the state of Connecticut.
  - Explain the functions of the courts of law in the governments of the United States and the state of Connecticut with emphasis on the principles of judicial review and an independent judiciary.
  - Distinguish between the enumerated, implied, and denied powers in the United States Constitution and the Connecticut Constitution.
  - Explain the functions of departments or agencies of the executive branch in the formation and implementation of public policy in the governments of the United States and the state of Connecticut.
  - Define the relationship between the public agenda, special interest agendas, and the political agenda acted on by the national, state, and local government.
  - Explain the legislative process of the United States.
  - Compare core documents associated with the protection of individual rights, including the Bill of Rights, and the Fourteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution.
  
4. Students will analyze the interactions between the United States and other nations and evaluate the role of the United States in world affairs. The students will:
  - Describe how the world is divided politically and give examples of the ways nation states interact, including trade, diplomacy, treaties and agreements, and military action.

- Identify and explain powers that the United States Constitution gives to the executive, legislative, and judicial branches of government in the area of foreign affairs, such as the making of treaties.
- Describe the approaches used to carry out United States foreign policy. For example: Diplomacy, economic aid, military aid, humanitarian aid, treaties, sanctions, and military intervention.
- Examine the influence of individuals, businesses, labor, and other segments of the economy on United States foreign policy.

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- Differentiate among various governmental and non-governmental international organizations and describe their purposes and functions.
  - Explain and evaluate participation by the United States in international organizations, such as The United Nations, NATO, World Health Organization, G7, or the World Trade Organization.
  - Examine the influence of our allies and adversaries and how this impacts our domestic and foreign policy.
5. Students will explain the idea of citizenship in the United States, describe the roles of United States citizens, and identify and explain the rights and responsibilities of United States citizens. They will also describe and demonstrate how citizens can participate responsibly and effectively in the civic and political life of the United States. The students will:
- Explain the meaning of citizenship in the United States and Connecticut.
  - Describe the roles of citizens in Connecticut and the United States, including voting in public elections, participating in voluntary associations of civil society to promote the common good, and participating in political activities to influence public policy decisions of government.
  - Describe the political, personal, and economic rights of citizens embedded in the United States Constitution and in constitutional law developed through decisions of the United States Supreme Court.
  - Describe how citizens can monitor and influence local, state, and national government as individuals and members of interest groups.
  - Describe the formation of the major political parties and identify their platforms.
  - Describe the ways that individuals can serve their communities and participate responsibly in civil society and the political process at local, state, and national levels of government.
  - Encourage responsible citizenship by participating in activities such as student government or other school and community organizations that contribute to the common good.
6. Students will demonstrate an understanding of the rights and responsibilities of citizens in America. The students will:
- Describe ways individuals participate in the political process, such as registering and voting.

- Communicate with public officials
- Participate in political parties and political campaigns
- Serve on juries and in voluntary appointed positions
- Describe the role of political activism

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### Skills

1. The student will develop skills for critical analysis, including the ability to:
  - Analyze documents, records, and data. (such as artifacts, diaries, letters, photographs, journals, and newspapers) (2,3,5,6,9)
  - Evaluate the authenticity, authority, and credibility of sources. (1-9)
  - Formulate political questions and defend findings based on inquiry and interpretation. (1-9)
  - Develop perspectives of time and place, including the construction of various timelines of events, periods, and the development of American society. (1,2,3,4,5,6,7,9,)
  - Communicate findings orally or in brief analytical essays. (5,9)
2. The student will develop skills in discussion, debate, and persuasive writing with respect to enduring issues and determine how divergent viewpoints have been addressed and reconciled. Such issues include:
  - Civil disobedience vs. the rule of law. (1-9)
  - The relationship of government to the individual in economic planning and social programs. (2,3,4,5,9)
  - The right of government to regulate individual behavior. (2,3,4,5,9)
  - Freedom of the press vs. the right to a fair trial. (1,2,3,4,5,9)
  - The evolution of rights, freedoms, and protections through political and social movement. (1-9)
3. The student will develop the skills need for informal participation in public affairs by:
  - Analyzing public issues. (3-9)
  - Evaluating candidates for public office. (3-9)
  - Evaluating the performance of public officials. (3-9)

### Sample Activities

#### I. MAPS

For example: Elections, congressional apportionment, electoral votes, federal courts and circuits, party control of governorships

II. **GRAPHS AND CHARTS**

For example: Checks and balances, amendment process, tax spending, how a bill becomes a law, presidential succession

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III. **POLITICAL CARTOONS (CREATIONS AND/OR ANALYSIS)**

For example: Elections, opinion polls, bureaucracy, foreign policy, and free speech

IV. **NEWSPAPERS**

For example: Voting age, separation of church and state, rights and responsibilities, elections, military intervention

V. **POSTERS**

For example: Federal system, campaigns, gender equity, gun control, and victims' rights

VI. **DEBATES**

For example: Censorship, mock elections, military service, flat tax, death penalty

VII. **ANALYSES OF DOCUMENTS**

For example: John Locke, Magna Carta, Federalist Papers, amendments, letters from Jefferson and Madison

**Assessment**

- **Assessment for activities based on appropriate rubrics**
- **Role Play/Simulations**  
For example: Mock Congress, Political convention, election polls, and mock trials
- **PowerPoint Presentations**  
For example: Ratification of constitution, treaty obligations, dress codes, landmark Supreme Court decisions
- **Newspaper/Magazine Creation**  
For example: Majority rule vs. minority rights, Freedom of Press, Miranda, and Griswold vs. Connecticut
- **Persuasive Writing**

- For example: Campaign platforms, community service, school funding, driving age, and voting age
- **Expository Writing**  
For example: Research paper, analytic essay, political speech, narrative essays, document analysis
  - **Website Creation**  
For example: Reference sites, on-line exhibits, party platforms
  - **Research Activities**  
For example: Opinion polls, interviews, book reviews, documentaries, election results, treaties, and popular vs. electoral vote

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### **Materials**

Magruder's American Government  
Civics – (Participating in Government)  
Test Book  
Annotated Instructors Manual

### **Audio Visual**

Various films such as “Wag the Dog”  
Media news shows/documentaries