United States Government Constitution Project

OVERVIEW

The *Constitution Project* is a culminating United States Government class group project and will take the place of a final exam. Each group will work collaboratively during class and outside of class. Each individual student will produce a five paragraph essay, and each group will produce an original Constitution as well as deliver a twelve to fifteen minute presentation.

ESSAY

Each student will choose one subject from the following list to research and write about. That student is to be the "expert" on that aspect of governmental structure. As your group debates the features of your Constitution, that student will bring the benefit of their research to the discussion. These are the subjects available for each student research, become an expert on, and write about:

1. Presidential vs. Parliamentary government. Which one will you choose and why?
2. Single member or Proportional Representation. Which one is preferred and why?
3. Federal, Unitary or Confederation. Which one is better for the United States, and why?
4. Judicial Review. Will your Judicial Branch have this power? Why?
5. Bill of Rights. What rights will your Constitution guarantee? For the essay, choose three and discuss why they are important.
6. Checks and Balances. What protections against the abuse of power will you build into the structure of your government? For the essay, choose three and discuss why they are important.

Each five paragraph essay must have a thesis with three reasons that address the prompt. You must have **at least** three sources, and each body paragraph must have **at least** one unique source. You must use MLA formatting, in-text citations, and include a works cited section at the end of the paper.

CONSTITUTION

Each group will compose an original Constitution which addresses **(AT MINIMUM)** the following subjects:

1. Separation of powers. How will you arrange the three powers of government?
2. Structure and powers of each branch of your government. Will your legislature be unicameral or bicameral?

3. If your government has a Federal or Confederate structure, how will you divide power between the national and state governments?
4. What rights will be included in your Bill of Rights?
5. Amendment process. How will your Constitution change with the times?

PRESENTATION

Each group will make a twelve to fifteen minute presentation of the features of their Constitution.

- Speaking & Notes
  - Every member must formally present at least one feature of their group's Constitution. You are encouraged to use a few note cards while you give your speech. However, the key element about note cards is that **you must NOT read your speech**! If you look at your note cards too often or read your speech, you will drastically lose points for not maintaining eye contact, not being prepared, and not connecting with the audience.
- Visual Aid
  - You group must have a visual aid in the form of a PowerPoint, Prezi, or Google Slides. Bring a flash drive with your visual aid saved on it AND have it stored in the cloud via Google Drive to ensure it is accessible and viewable. Your visual aid must have 10-20 total slides with 5-10 words per slide and no complete sentences. Whenever possible use images instead of words in your visual aid. Please no videos in your visual aid. Finally, speakers should not be looking at, or reading from, the visual aid while speaking to the audience.
- Attire
  - For your presentation, you must dress semi-formally. This means that women should adhere to the following dress code: dress slacks or dress skirt, dress blouse, and dress shoes. Men should adhere to the following dress code: dress pants, dress shirt, dress shoes, dress belt.
- Attendance
  - Attendance on the day of your group presentation is mandatory. If you have an emergency and cannot attend, you will be required to record a ten minute speech about your group's constitution.

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SOURCE MATERIAL

Sources must be academic in nature, and you should only use sites that end in .gov, .org, or .edu. Here are some sites to get you started:

- U.S. Government's Official Web Portal: https://www.usa.gov
- Founders Online (The National Archives): http://founders.archives.gov
- Government Information Online (Government Information Librarians): http://govtinfo.org
- Performance.Gov (Cabinet Departments and Major Agencies): http://www.performance.gov/about
- The White House: https://www.whitehouse.gov

GRADING
Each student will be graded on the following grading scale:

- Essay: 30 percent
- Presentation: 30 percent
- Constitution: 40 percent

*PLEASE NOTE: Students will submit essays via Turnitin.com as well as in hard copy form.

PARTICIPATION
You will be asked to list your contributions to the group effort, and those of your group members. If there is agreement that one or more members did not pull their weight, adjustments to grades will be made. Furthermore, some teachers will increase or decrease your participation grade based off your efforts.