

## AP Government

Congratulations on choosing to take AP Government next year! It is an awesome opportunity to learn about *real-life, right-now, affecting-us-today* topics, concepts and challenges in the United States. The two tasks in this summer work packet will empower you to start the course with important knowledge, give you a glimpse of the type of work you will do in the course, and engage you with some of the current political battles in our nation. I am excited to see you in August and wish you a wonderful summer ☺

### Task #1: A Brief Overview of Political Ideology and Party

**Purpose:** Since the United States is impacted heavily by the 2-party political system, students who understand how ideology is linked with the two major political parties in this country and how parties affect decision-making will be better prepared for the course and the AP exam.

**Assignment:** Complete each task below to help gain a greater understanding of the history and scope of political parties in the United States and to begin to explore your own party identification. There will be a quiz on the material covered here the first week of class.

1. **Read the article entitled "A Brief History of the Conservative Tradition" and on separate paper, answer the following questions.** (Answers will be found in the order of the reading, so if you miss one, go back to look further for it!)
  - a. Define conservatism in your own words.
  - b. What people, parties, and ideas are linked to the earlier conservative movement? Explain why.
  - c. Explain how the rapidly industrializing post-Civil War America led to a resurgence of the conservative ideals. How was this conservatism different from modern conservatism?
  - d. Why did laissez-faire conservatism reach its peak in the 1920's? What events shattered this brand of conservatism?
  - e. What was post World War II conservatism based on?
  - f. What was "The New Right"?
  
2. **Read the article entitled "A Brief History of the Liberal Tradition" and on separate paper, answer the following questions.** (Answers will be found in the order of the reading, so if you miss one, go back to look further for it!)
  - a. Define liberalism in your own words.
  - b. What parties and leaders and groups of people supported the early liberal movement? Explain why.
  - c. Explain Jacksonian Democracy's relation to early liberalism.
  - d. Explain the connection between the Progressive Movement and liberalism.
  - e. How did the Great Depression present an opportunity for liberal ideals? (Don't forget to talk about FDR and the New Deal.)
  - f. What is "the other America?"
  - g. What events and people contributed to the splintering of the Democratic Party in the 60's?

3. Read the article entitled "What are Conservatives and Liberals?" and complete the steps listed here.

- a. Using one color, highlight the article for details you generally agree with.
- b. Using a second color, highlight the article for details you generally disagree with.
- c. Identify 5 issues/ topics/ ideas from the reading to complete the chart below. A sample topic is provided to help guide you. Use the reading, but feel free to add details from outside (credible) sources or your own knowledge. Avoid opinion!

Issue/ Topic	A liberal believes...	A conservative believes...
Environment	<i>The environment is need of serious support. The free market will not regulate itself with respect to the environment; government must grow and restrict the free market.</i>	<i>The environment can be managed without infringing on the free market. Businesses must be responsible for environmental impacts themselves, not the government.</i>

**4. Take the quiz at <http://www.isidewith.com>, and on separate paper, answer the following questions.**

- a. Print your results for future reference.
- b. What party do you most align with? Which of the 2 major parties do you most align with – Democrats or Republicans? What issues are you most aligned with for each party?
- c. Out of the list of issues that appears in the next section, which 3 issues are most important to you? Why? Which party are you most aligned with on these 3 issues?
- d. Scrolling further down through your results, which ideology are you identified with?
- e. In which region/state are most voters similar to you found in (use the map!)
- f. Reflection: Are you surprised by any of the results on this quiz? Which ones? Why? Which issues would you be interested in learning more about?
- g. Broader Reflection: Finally, what do you see as the role or job of the government with respect to the issues you care about?

## A BRIEF HISTORY OF THE CONSERVATIVE TRADITION

"...people could not govern themselves: government had to rise above men to curb their selfish passions for order and stability to exist..." (Alexander Hamilton, 1796)

### • Who and what is the American Conservative tradition?

On March 4, 1789, the American Constitutional system was born. "Man, the conservative asserts, is stamped with sin—but he is also blessed with higher aspirations. Only thus, through the moral striving of many men, can free government be secured and society be made stable." (C. Rossiter, 1962) A uniquely American form of conservatism arose in opposition to the nation's sense of boundless optimism about human nature under democracy. And for roughly two hundred years conservatism has been defined politically and culturally by its fears of the political excesses, economic egalitarianism, and cultural vulgarity generated by a society devoid of any aristocratic restraints.

The success of the American Revolution drove the nation in a dramatically democratic direction and also released a flood of participatory political energy. This produced an outpouring of legislation—much of it threatening to both property ownership and economic stability. Frightened nationalists like James Madison spoke of the danger of the tyranny of the majority and "elective domination." Madison and his fellow Federalists were aware of the fact that all earlier democracies had been destroyed by class struggle, proposed a new constitution to seize political control from the legislative majorities at the state level. Madison hoped that it would filter out local passions and allow men of standing to rise to political control.

Fellow Federalist John Adams, commenting on the nature of human sinfulness, stated, "there is no special providence for Americans... to expect self denial from men, when they have the majority in their favor and power to gratify themselves, is to disbelieve history and... the Word of God, which informs us that the heart is deceitful above all things and desperately wicked." Fears of mass tyranny deepened as the generation of the Founding Fathers was displaced by party politicians who represented the self-interest of a population undeterred by deference to their social betters and driven by ambition. Andrew Jackson became the leader and spokesperson of these men—he insisted, contrary to Madison, that the first principle of our system is that the majority is to govern. The voice of the people was to be equality with the voice of God. The social basis for conservatism was destroyed by the Civil War, but a desire for hierarchical harmony continued to accompany conservatives well into the twentieth century.

But in the rapidly industrializing post-Civil War America, the politics of property, organized to protect wealth from the democratic "mob," underwent an extraordinary transformation. From roughly the end of the Civil War to the onset of the New Deal (1865-1932), there was a right wing in American politics but nothing that could be described as "conservative" as the term is commonly understood today—Republican thought dominated the political scene for these 75 years, but the thinking would not be described as modern conservatism. The right wing turned against government in the name of laissez-faire conservatism and feared the state as an instrument of majority reformers. Social Darwinists believed that an intrusive government threatened the natural social processes that produced prosperity through inequality. As John D. Rockefeller, Jr., explained it, the rise of big business was merely the working out of a law of nature and law of God. In the Gilded Age, "...the inequalities of nature would be allowed to run their full course." State action to regulate business or protect workers from injury was said to be the equivalent of European socialism—this threatened, in conservatives minds, the American individualist psyche that found all institutions a suffocating danger. Fittingly, the courts became the guardian of laissez-faire conservatism in its conflict with the populous legislatures. The "professional" guardians of the Constitution became the counterweight to the "amateur" democrats of the legislature.

The laissez-faire conservatism of the Republican party reached its zenith in the 1920s. The largely Protestant Republican party, also known as the Grand Old Party (GOP), looked upon itself as the manifestation of the divine creative Americanism revealed through the Constitution. To be a conservative was to share in a religiously ordained vision of a largely stateless society of self-regulating individuals. This brand of conservatism was shattered by the onset of the Great Depression and the seizing of governmental power by Franklin Roosevelt and the Democratic Party. Conservatives were traumatized by their fall from grace and their 75-year reign. Then, in 1940, just when it seemed the Democrats and FDR were to pass from power, World War II revived and extended his presidency.

At war's end, conservatives unleashed their frustrations. On the one hand, post-war popular conservatism was based on an anti-communist hysteria (McCarthyism) and a fear of destruction of American culture. On the other hand, it represented a

passionate desire for normalcy that characterized the Eisenhower years (1950s). After two decades of war and depression, the American people, observed an astute politician, "... have been through a lot of experiments and they want a rest." Significant to the conservative future, the post-war years saw the first conservative intellectual flowering of the *laissez-faire* doctrine that appealed to America's anti-bureaucratic instincts.

The New Right emerged in 1964 with Barry Goldwater's landslide defeat for the presidency. Goldwater, a fervent believer in American uniqueness, captured the imagination of the young Republicans who wanted to return to pre-New Deal America. Like their left-wing counterparts, these young militants inspired by the *National Review* and its editor, William F. Buckley, despised New Deal welfarism and big government. But, this new conservatism did not so much win the country over to its perspective as much as the 1960s liberalism had self-destructed. Conservatism triumphed because New Deal liberalism was unable to accommodate the new cultural and political demands unleashed by the civil rights revolution, feminism, and the counterculture, all of which was made worse by the social unrest surrounding the Vietnam War.

The New Right represented the traditionalists who mistrusted both the masses as well as democracy and saw preserving "civilization" and its absolutes as the priority of politics. *"The key error of the traditionalists (Old Right), in the eyes of the New Right, was the traditionalists legitimate authority of tradition with the illegitimate power of the state. Virtue is the ultimate goal, but virtue is meaningful only if individuals seek it and arrive at it voluntarily. When it is only a surface acceptance imposed by external power it is without meaning or content."* The New Right believed the only solution was for individuals to behave responsibly and virtuously. Conservatism maintains that individuals who have rights also have duties. Rights are, in the final analysis, claims upon other individuals. The law of equilibrium commands those who insist upon their freedoms must also earn them. In return for the chance to enjoy their rights in a community, individuals have the obligation to use these rights responsibly. The right to life carries with it the duty to live morally. Freedom of conscience is matched by the duty to think wisely and worship justly. Freedom of association necessitates that all persons give back in full measure what they receive from others.

No right carries with it greater obligations than possession of property, which is a legacy from the past, power in the present, and trust for the future. *"Freedom is not the absence of discipline, but it calls for discipline from within... when you throw a man in the water, his freedom does not express itself by merely splashing around. He can be free in the water only because he has learned to swim: that is to say, only because he subjects himself to a blend of discipline and self-control... the ideas of freedom, virtue, and balance are absolutely interwoven."* This is a profoundly conservative view of the ethics of liberty. The fact is that the conservative has never wandered far from the definition of liberty as "service" to God's word.

The New Right emerged out of the chaos of the 1960s and early 1970s. They forged a coalition in opposition to a liberalism increasingly defined in terms of cultural permissiveness and government-sponsored affirmative action opportunities. These young Republicans were committed to the conservative creed which states: *"He (the conservative) is pessimistic, though not always, about the possibilities of reform, and his natural preferences are for stability over change, continuity over experiment, the past over the future."* Ronald Reagan's presidency, from 1980-1988, seized upon issues that mainstream America cared about, namely: gun control, abortion, taxes, welfare reform, crime, and family values.

After LBJ's annihilation of Goldwater in 1964, there seemed little hope for the conservative movement in terms of its ability to ultimately affect policy decisions in this country. During those bleak years it was stalwarts such as William F. Buckley, Jr., and Ronald Reagan who refused to allow conservatism to be relegated to political obscurity. For they knew that to do so would be the same as abandoning the principles upon which this country was founded. Buckley and Reagan continued to carry the torch of conservatism during its dark years, providing guidance and confidence for many who may have otherwise given up the fight. They continued to oppose the ever-expanding governmental bureaucracy, the crippling of our system of law and order, the assault on our nation's value base, the undermining of our spirit of patriotism, and the systematic effort to weaken our nation's economic and military superiority.

The twelve years of Ronald Reagan and George Bush (1980-1992) illustrated the strength of the Republican party and its ability to reach out to a broader constituency. These years marked significant accomplishments for the Religious Right, the New Right, traditionalists, as well as those seeking a return to core values. The greatest indicator of the successes of the Conservative party was the seizure of control of the House of Representatives which continues into the Clinton years.

## BRIEF HISTORY OF THE LIBERAL TRADITION

"We seek the establishment of a democracy of individual participation governed by two central aims—that the individual share in those social decisions determining the quality and direction of his life and that society be organized to encourage independence in men and provide the media for their common participation." Tom Hayden, Port Huron Statement, 1962

### • Who and what is the "American liberal tradition?"

Following the ratification of the Constitution in 1787 and with the rapid growth of population, influx of Western European immigrants, and western expansion that was taking place, an ensuing political conflict was emerging between the Federalists (Hamilton) and the Anti-Federalists/Republicans (Jefferson). The debate between the two centered around the power of the central government versus that of the states. Jefferson advocated a decentralized, agrarian republic. "I am not a friend to a very energetic government"—Jefferson feared tyranny and thought in terms of freedom. These foundations of the value of common man, advocacy of individual rights, and an enlightened citizenry formed the basis for the American liberal tradition. Despite Jefferson's fear of a strong centralized government, the Federalists did institute a highly centralized federal government which included the creation of The Bank of the United States, the encouragement of commercial and industrial growth, and the solidification of the power of congress and the federal courts to establish a national agenda.

The Jeffersonian Republicans, whose roots lay in the West as well as the South, saw their role as one of maintaining the power of the Constitution and at the same time protecting individual citizens from that very same government. The Republicans elected three successive presidents (thereby electing into a national office those who advocated states' rights!!!!), and yet, despite these successes, a small number of wealthy citizens were able to maintain a disproportionate level of influence. To protect the interests of the common people, enter: President Andrew Jackson. By 1828, "Jacksonian Democracy" became the rallying cry of what had been Jeffersonianism. Politically, Jackson symbolized the extension of popular participation in government; economically, he symbolized greater equality of opportunity; socially, Jackson supporters envisioned the reduction of class distinctions. Despite the anti-federal tradition, Jacksonian Democracy sought to achieve these goals through a stronger federal government that would continue to protect the interests of the common people.

By the turn of the century, the nation's rapid urban growth, the continued concentration of economic power, and other problems related to industrialization (sanitation, crime, substandard housing, labor exploitation... remember The Jungle!) produced the Progressive Movement. Progressivism never encompassed a precise doctrine or a single class membership. Its only common denominator was a dissatisfaction with American society and an optimism that America's faults could be corrected. Progressives continued to demand that American voters have a greater voice in the political decision-making process; they wanted a greater equality of economic opportunity for Americans; they called for protections for small, independent businessmen who appeared helpless against the ever-increasing corporate America; and, finally a stress to reform American cities. "... crucify mankind upon a cross of gold" William Jennings Bryan would proclaim in 1896. To achieve their goals, the Progressives proposed to use the national and state governments to balance the needs of the various economic and social groups that made up American society. The eventual successes of the Progressive Movement were connected to a growing rejection by Americans of Social Darwinism and laissez faire. American social, political, and economic institutions were simply not meeting the needs of the vast majority of the people. In order to maintain the American liberal tradition, Progressives believed the extension of the power of the federal government to protect the plight of Jefferson's, then Jackson's, and then Progressivism's "common person." Toward this end, Progressives passed legislation to control the big-moneyed interests and restore fair competition to the marketplace. Additionally, Progressives passed legislation outlawing child labor and other acts to protect the blue-collar worker; likewise, environmental laws, food inspection regulations, and other measures to protect consumer rights were among the "foods" on the Progressive plate.

The 1920s symbolized prosperity run amuck. The post-Great War victory ushered in a return to laissez faire principles and the facade of economic boom. America had become a truly urbanized nation with help from the Ford "Model T" and America was becoming more economically integrated into the world economy—however, with "The Crash of 1929" unparalleled hardship and deprivation struck America. The "Depressing" Depression of the 1930s brought a need for change once again. "Fear and worry based on unknown danger contribute to social unrest and economic demoralization."

*If, as our Constitution tells us, federal government was established among other things 'to promote the general welfare,' it is our plain duty to provide for that security upon which welfare depends... —the security of the home, the security of livelihood, and the security of social insurance it seems to me, a minimum of that promise that we can offer to the American people. They constitute a right which belongs to every individual and every family willing to work." (FDR, 1934)*

President Franklin Roosevelt and his New Deal—resting upon the ideal of work for assistance—would champion a resurgence of faith and abilities of the common person once again. The “Alphabet Soup” programs of the New Deal stood in stark contrast to the “hands off” policies of traditional conservatism. “Relief, Recovery, and Reform” took the shape of federal assistance for: business, agriculture, family, banking, the millions of unemployed, children, labor, the elderly—the New Deal was a comprehensive program to stimulate the economy and help the American people at a time when “Brother, can you spare a dime?” became a popular song. The Jeffersonian tradition—that saw its way into Jacksonian Democracy as well as the Progressive Movement—would continue to evolve and grow as the problems and issues in America became more complex due to increased immigration, urbanization, and industrialization. Just around the historical corner, World War II was on the verge of eruption and would bring with it an end to American isolationism.

World War II brought the end to the Great Depression through the mobilization of American industrial might by harnessing the efforts of its citizenry. America, fresh from its victorious efforts in Europe and Asia, had neglected to tend to its unfinished domestic agenda—America had helped storm the beaches of Normandy and Iwo Jima, yet it remained to be seen if they would storm the streets of Birmingham, Watts, Appalachia, or Harlem to demand the same freedoms for its own people that it had fought to ensure on the international battlefields of World War II. With the triumphs over fascism comes the new “ism” to be reckoned with: communism and The Cold War. The soldiers returning to a new America would start families (the “baby boomers”), move to the suburbs (buy homes), join corporate America, improve our transportation systems, and otherwise try to stabilize life in a middle-class fashion. However, the end of the 1950s brought about the realization that there existed amid this land of abundance, “the other America”—in the other America the prosperity did not reach all segments of society—economically, socially, educationally, and politically. Many people were falling through the economic cracks and were leading lives of quiet desperation.

The 1960 election of John F. Kennedy, with his youth and energy that captivated American hearts and minds, symbolized a seemingly united Democratic party. Kennedy “liberalism” promised to eradicate the scourge of discrimination which had prevented many Americans from full participation in American life by using the power of the federal government and the prestige of the presidency. But the Democratic Party, which drew so much of its strength from the traditional Democratic South, almost immediately began to feel the pressure and division. In the area of civil rights, Southern politicians blocked legislation which would have increased federal government power to legislate against discrimination. JFK’s assassination in 1963 shocked America and provided an opportunity for President Lyndon Johnson to push through the Civil Rights Act of 1964 and the Voting Rights Act of 1965 as a tribute to the martyred young president and temporarily unified a fraying Democratic Party. But these gains felt short-lived as the political acts of Congress did not translate into economic opportunities in urban areas—frustration flowed into the streets of cities producing riots and civil unrest. President Johnson’s policies in Southeast Asia were coming under more and more criticism as the conflict in Vietnam escalated.

Further splintering the Democratic Party were black civil rights groups arguing that white students were insincere in their advocacy for equality when the anti-war movement became the focus. By 1965-66 the anti-war movement was gaining strength at the expense of the civil rights movement. The split in the Democratic Party was further widened by the founding of The New Left by young, middle-class college students—these students challenged and then outright opposed the Democratic Party’s anti-communist policies. The New Left with discipline and hard work organized poor communities whereas an emerging counterculture abhorred anything to do with government (i.e. Vietnam, traditional values related to work, school, sex, family, etc.) and adopted the slogan “if it feels good just do it.” Sex, drug, and rock n’ roll became the norm—to hell with the establishment! The New Left (students), dismayed by the slow pace of change in the area of civil rights, began to turn on the “New Deal Liberals” with regards to the perils of communism—slowly at first, but by the election of 1968 young people were taking to the streets in huge numbers (“Hey, hey LBJ, how many babies did you kill today!”). And finally, by the end of the 1960s affluent, white students (favoring minorities) were seen as spoiled and out-of-touch with working-class white values—with the young writing off the working class, the working class wrote off the young.” The Democratic Party saw multiple divisions between: North/South; pro-war/anti-war; New Left/counterculture; black/white; middle and upper-class/working class. The success of Richard Nixon (Conservative) in the 1968 presidential election would highlight and take advantage of the fractured Democratic Party.

## What Are Conservatives and Liberals?

### Conservatives

The word "conservative" has a simple, direct significance. It means wishing to conserve things the way they are. In politics, conservatives are generally supportive of the status quo. Since politics and society are changing almost daily this means that conservatives are often unhappy with what has happened recently and prefer things to be the way they were in the recent and not-so-recent past. They generally feel that the U.S. political system has changed too much and wish to return to an earlier time when things were better.

Conservatives are likely to be supportive of traditional values and customs. In the United States conservatives usually emphasize the values of individualism and freedom. . . . This means that they admire the free enterprise system with its emphasis on private ownership, individual hard work, and monetary rewards. They are often disdainful of welfare, believing that in the United States everyone has a chance to succeed and, with few exceptions, people should look out for themselves rather than expecting the government to take care of them.

Conservatives believe that individuals are responsible for their behavior. They think that punishment, or the fear of it, is the most successful way to discourage crime. If a person breaks a law they should be punished. If the United States increases penalties for crime we will have a lower crime rate. Murderers deserve capital punishment.

Conservatives are often suspicious of government, particularly the federal government. They speak of "big government" being the problem, rather than the solution. They subscribe to the philosophy of "laissez faire," or that government should keep its hands off the economy and allow the free enterprise system to operate with minimum government interference. Currently, they often support the "devolution revolution." This means the national or federal government should give many of its powers back to the local and state governments. In particular, they think the states and localities better administer social welfare programs.

Conservatives often oppose what they call "environmental extremism." They believe the government, especially at the federal level, has often gone overboard protecting wildlife and ignored the impact of environmental regulations on property owners, businesses, and jobs.

Conservatives also are likely to be very patriotic or nationalistic. They believe the United States is, without question, the best country in the world. They respect the flag and are likely to get very angry with people who defile it. For them the U.S. Constitution is a revered document. They are fully behind the men (and sometimes the women) of the U.S. military. They support military spending and generous veteran benefits. They often see communism as evil. (Ronald Reagan—a hero to most conservatives—spoke of the USSR as the "evil empire.")

Conservative views on U.S. foreign policy are a reflection of their domestic ideology. They are suspicious of foreign aid and international organizations, particularly the United Nations. They believe that the U.S. should participate in international organizations only to further the direct interests of the United States.



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Conservatives believe that the United States should fiercely protect its economic and political interests abroad. Countries who step on the toes of the United States or its allies should know there is a price to pay. The United States military should be used as the major tool to protect Americans and the interests of their government.

Fairly recently a new brand of religious conservatism has entered the political sphere. Often referred to as the "new right" or the "religious right," this group has pushed their religious agenda vigorously. Their defining issue is abortion. They favor a Constitutional Amendment opposing it. This is often their litmus test. Politicians who support their position on this issue will receive their money, time, and energy in political campaigns.

The abortion issue started to organize this group and it has expanded its concern to other issues as well. They view homosexual behavior as sinful. They believe strongly that sex should occur inside the institution of marriage only; their opposition to pornography is vehement. They would like to see Christian prayers and artifacts (crucifix) allowed back in government facilities. They believe in what they call "family values." . . .

The Religious Right, or New Right, has Pat Robertson as its spiritual head. In fact, he received their full support in his bid to become the Republican nominee for President in 1988. However, the real power of this movement lies in the group called the Christian Coalition. This organization was founded by a man named Ralph Reed with the initial goal of helping Pat Robertson in his bid for the Presidency. It has changed over the years to one of the most powerful political organizations in the United States. It has over a million active members, raises hundreds of millions of dollars for political campaigns and provides hard-working and enthusiastic volunteers for many politicians who support their beliefs. It is a political organization; very much like a political party except that it fields no candidates. It endorses candidates though, and distributes lists of worthy candidates to churches around the country. . . .

It should be noted that the Christian Coalition supports Republican candidates for office almost exclusively. . . . Amongst the more interesting information you will find [on the Christian Coalition's Web site] is a scorecard that ranks all members of Congress according to how they voted on measures that the Coalition supports. . . .<sup>1</sup>

### Liberals

Early in the history of the United States liberalism stressed a protection of individual rights from government. Government was seen as dangerous to the rights and privileges of citizens and therefore liberals were generally opposed to a large, active government. In the twentieth century the concern for individual rights has continued, but the view towards the federal government and its role in citizens' lives changed with the advent of the New Deal and Franklin Delano Roosevelt. Since that time liberals have viewed the federal government as a tool to bring about equality of opportunity, ensure basic food, housing, and medical treatment for all citizens. The stress on protection of individual rights especially in regards to freedoms of expression and privacy has remained.

Perhaps the single most important philosophy of contemporary liberalism is its emphasis on equality of opportunity. To further that end liberals constantly look to improve public education. They feel that an educational

<sup>1</sup>Tom Byrnes, "Conservatives," *Valencia Community College: Tom Byrnes' Home Page*, <<http://faculty.valencia.cc.fl.us/tbyrnes/ideology1.htm#Conservatives>> (3 November 2005).

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system that treats everyone alike and provides quality instruction goes a long way to providing equal opportunity for children of poor, disadvantaged parents. To this end, liberals are very supportive of remedial programs for students who have behavior, language, or physical difficulties.

In the same vein, liberals support programs that provide free basic medical services to all, but especially economically disadvantaged children. They are generally in favor of social welfare programs that are designed to help the poor, the elderly, and disadvantaged ethnic minorities.

Liberalism opposes discrimination in almost all forms. . . . Liberals were the champions of the civil rights programs that provided legal protection and access to public and private facilities for black Americans in the 1960s. In the nineties liberals supported laws that punished businesses who discriminated against women, ethnic or religious minorities, and other minority social groups, including homosexuals. Liberals are likely to believe that the rich will take care of themselves. The government needs to concentrate on protecting the poor from the wealthy who will try to exploit them and also from big business which will try to force their workers to work hard for little pay and little protection from injury.

As much as conservatives distrust what they call "big government," liberals distrust big business. Liberals are likely to believe that businesses will pollute the environment, mistreat their workers, and provide poor products if they can get away with it. To that end, liberals are usually very supportive of environmental protection laws, unions, tough worker safety laws, and stringent consumer protection laws.

Liberals stress the establishment clause in the First Amendment that has been used by the Supreme Court to restrict religious practices in public facilities, especially schools. Liberals believe that the government should stay out of religion or remain scrupulously neutral. Government institutions should not favor a particular religion or religion in general over irreligion. Religion should remain a private affair for individuals. Liberals, therefore, are in favor of not allowing prayer or religious artifacts in schools or other public facilities. They have opposed successfully the teaching of creationism in public schools on the grounds that it is primarily a religious belief rather than a scientifically supported theory.

Liberals are concerned about the influence that wealthy individuals and big business have on government. They are very much in favor of campaign reforms that provide for public funding of political campaigns and restrict the use of private monies to politicians and political causes. Liberals often believe that laws and justice in the United States favor wealthy individuals and organizations. To that end, liberals are usually in favor of smoothing out wealth extremes in the United States. They support progressive taxes that force the more wealthy to pay a higher percentage of their income in taxes; and they especially favor taxing the estates of wealthy citizens so that their children don't automatically become billionaires.

Finally, contemporary liberalism sees the law enforcement community as often abusive of the rights of the weak and disadvantaged. Liberals support strict laws governing law enforcement officials in searches and seizures and upholding the Fifth Amendment's protections against self-incrimination. Liberals are especially supportive of the Fifth and Fourteenth Amendments' due process clauses and the equal protection under the law clause of the Fourteenth Amendment. These clauses have been used to protect women, ethnic minorities, homosexuals, and others who are not traditional in their behavior or social characteristics.

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In summary, Liberalism now often sees government in positive light. It believes that government should be used to protect the environment, the weak from the strong, to protect children, workers, women, homosexuals, and people of different religious and political beliefs. Liberals see government as a creative mechanism that should be used to improve society. They believe that an inactive government favors the wealthy and big business.<sup>2</sup>

<sup>2</sup>Tom Byrnes, "Liberals," Valencia Community College: Tom Byrnes' Home Page, <<http://faculty.valencia.cc.fl.us/tbyrnes/ideology1.htm#Liberals>> (3 November 2005)

## **Task #2: Summer Current Events**

**Purpose:** Students need to start the habit of following current events in United States politics. Not only is this a required weekly assignment for the class, but a knowledge of current political events is integral to class participation and success on the AP exam.

**Assignment:** Students will complete six current events over the summer. To complete a current event, students will find, read and print an article on the topics below. In addition, students will complete the current event template for each article. These are **due the first day of class**:

**2** on the Executive Branch (The Presidency and Bureaucratic Agencies)

– if you want to learn more about who is in the executive branch and an overview of what they do, go here:  
<https://www.whitehouse.gov/>

**2** on the Legislative Branch (Congress- Both the Senate and House of Representatives)

– if you want to learn more about who is in Congress and an overview of what it does, go here:  
<http://www.house.gov/> and here: <http://www.senate.gov/>

**2** on the Judicial Branch (The Supreme Court and Lower Federal Courts)

– if you want to learn more about who is on the Supreme Court and an overview of what they do, go here:  
<http://www.supremecourt.gov/>

Current Events should be **typed** and **follow the template on the back of the page**. Articles **must be about United States government, not foreign countries**, and must be **no older than a month** before your date of completion. Topics should relate to the **powers and duties of the branch, checks and balances between the branches (conflicts between branches), or disagreements within the branch** (i.e. recent Court decisions, laws passed by Congress, executive actions, conflicts between the President and Congress).

***Suggested Resources (to find articles):*** All of the following are legitimate American news search sites which will allow you to search for articles on the above topics. Don't forget to **print out and attach the article!**

<https://news.google.com>

<http://www.newsweek.com/>

<http://www.cnn.com/>

<http://www.usnews.com/>

<http://time.com/>

**Format:** As stated previously, each current event should be typed; if you really don't think you can type it, you may photocopy the template on the back of the page 6 times, on your own, and fill out one template for each article. Of course, no lines will be left blank. ☺

Turn the page to see the template!

Each of the six current events should be approximately a page and use the following format (please use headings in **bold** below):

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Date \_\_\_\_\_

AP Government Summer Current Event TEMPLATE

**Topic Covered** (Executive, Legislative, or Judicial Branch?) \_\_\_\_\_

**Title of Article** \_\_\_\_\_

**Author of Article** \_\_\_\_\_

**Date of Article** (When published) \_\_\_\_\_

**Source** (Website, magazine, newspaper- be sure to attach actual article) \_\_\_\_\_

**Summary of article** (approximately one brief paragraph- Who, what, where, when, why, how?)

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**Connection to Politics** (approximately one paragraph- What did you learn about the workings of government or politics? Possible questions to consider: How does this branch impact citizens directly? What is learned about checks and balances in this country? What are the pros and cons of having a divided government? Who has power? What can he/they do with that power?)

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**Opinion** (approximately one paragraph- Please, don't tell me you don't know or don't care; often we realize that we do care very much once we try to understand what is actually going on. How do your own political beliefs and biases affect your reading of this? Do you partially or wholly agree with the author/ people involved in the story? Do you partially or wholly disagree with the author/ people involve in the story? Why? Do you detect some bias, and if so, what is it?)

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