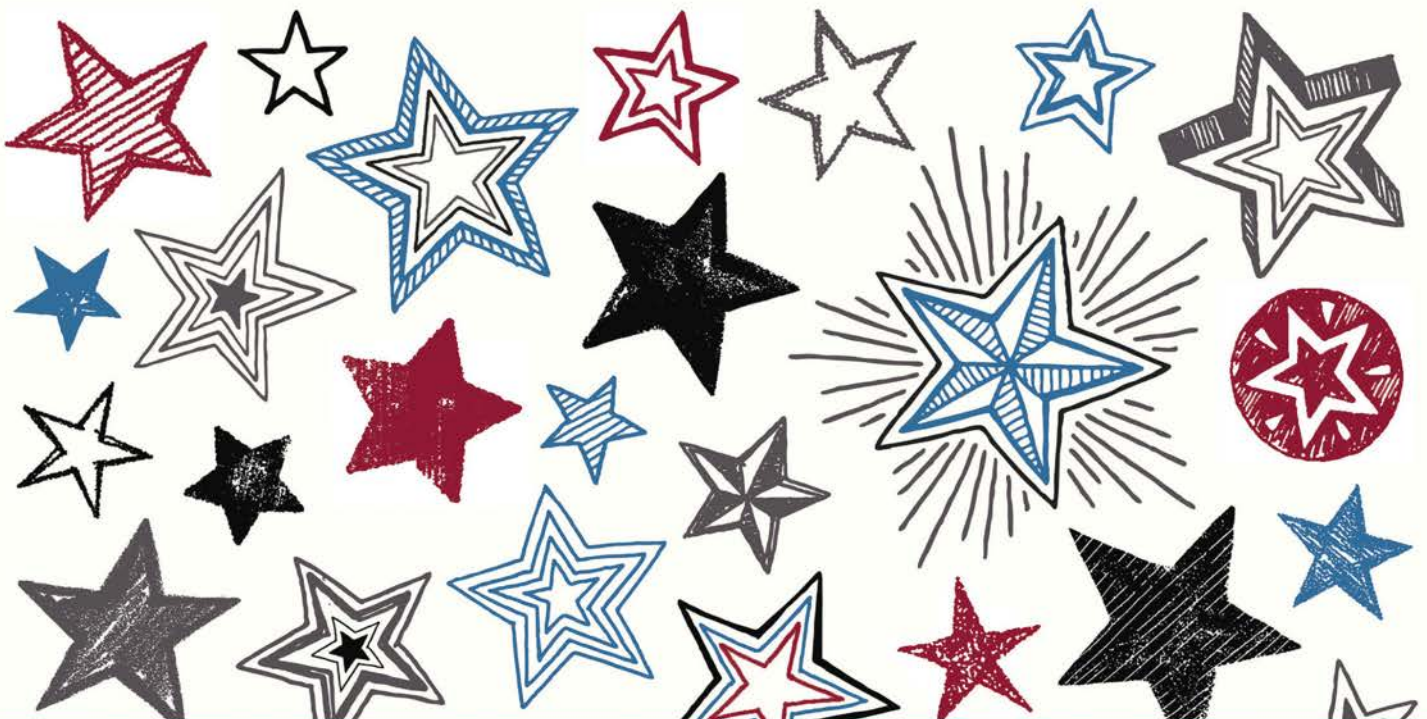




GOVT¹¹

Principles of American Government

Sidlow + Henschen



GOVT¹¹

Principles of American Government

Eleventh Edition

Edward Sidlow
Eastern Michigan University

Beth Henschen
Eastern Michigan University



Australia • Brazil • Mexico • Singapore • United Kingdom • United States

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Cover Image: iStockPhoto.com/
aleksandarvelasevic**Manufacturing Planner:** Ron Montgomery**Intellectual Property Analyst:** Deanna Ettinger**Intellectual Property Project Manager:**

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Production Service/Composer: SPi Global**Design elements:** world flags as keyboard, Scanrail1/Shutterstock.com; video camera viewfinder, lxMaster/Shutterstock.com; microphone and U.S. flag, DenisFilm/Shutterstock.com; vote button against flag background, Tetra Images/Getty Images.

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WCN: 02-300

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Library of Congress Control Number: 2020949660

ISBN: 978-0-357-45979-9

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Boston, MA 02210
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Skill Prep

A Study Skills Module

Welcome!

With this course and this textbook, you've begun what we hope will be a fun, stimulating, and thought-provoking journey into the world of American government and politics.

In this course, you will learn about the foundation of the American system, culture and diversity, interest groups, political parties, campaigns, elections, the media, our governing institutions, public policy, and foreign policy. Knowledge of these basics will help you think critically about political issues and become an active citizen.

We have developed this study skills module to help you gain the most from this course and this textbook. Whether you are a recent high school graduate or an adult returning to the classroom after a few years, you want

results when you study. You want to be able to understand the issues and ideas presented in the textbook, talk about them intelligently during class discussions, and remember them as you prepare for exams and papers.

This module is designed to help you develop the skills and habits you'll need to succeed in this course. With tips on how to be more engaged when you study, how to get the most out of your textbook, how to prepare for exams, and how to write papers, this guide will help you become the best learner you can be!



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Study Prep

What does it take to be a successful student? You may think success depends on how naturally smart you are. However, the truth is that successful students aren't born, they're made. Even if you don't consider yourself "book smart," you can do well in this course by developing study skills that will help you understand, remember, and apply key concepts.

Reading for Learning

Your textbook is the foundation for information in a course. It contains key concepts and terms that are important to your understanding of the subject. For this reason, it is essential that you develop good reading skills. As you read your textbook with the goal of learning as much of the information as possible, work on establishing the following habits:

Focus

Make an effort to focus on the book and tune out other distractions so that you can understand and remember the information it presents.

Take Time

To learn the key concepts presented in each chapter, you need to read slowly, carefully, and with great attention.

Repeat

To read for learning, you have to read your textbook a number of times. Follow a preview-read-review process:

1. Preview: Look over the chapter title, section headings, and highlighted or bold words. This will give you a good preview of important ideas in the chapter.

Notice that each major section heading in this textbook has one or more corresponding **Learning Objectives**. You can increase your understanding of the material by rephrasing the headings and subheadings in your textbook into questions, and then try to answer them. Note graphs, pictures, and other visual illustrations of important concepts.

QUICK TIP! Log in to GOVT10 MindTap with your access code to find interactive figures and tables from the chapters and to quiz yourself on the important material in the book.

2. Read: It is important to read with a few questions in mind: What is the main point of this paragraph or section? What does the author want me to learn from this? How does this relate to what I read before? Keeping these questions in mind will help you be an attentive reader who is actively focusing on the main ideas of the passage.

Also during this phase, it is helpful to take notes while reading in detail. You can mark your text or write an outline, as explained later in this module. Taking notes will help you read actively, identify important concepts, and remember them. When it comes time to review for the exam, the notes you've made should make your studying more efficient.

3. Review: When reviewing each section of the text and the notes you've made, ask yourself this question: **What was this section about?** You'll want to answer the question in some detail, readily identifying the important points. Use the Learning Objectives in the text to help focus your review.

QUICK TIP! Tear out the Chapter Review cards in the back of the textbook for on-the-go review!

A reading group is a great way to review the chapter. After completing the reading individually, group members should meet and take turns sharing what they learned. Explaining the material to others will reinforce and clarify what you already know. Getting a different perspective on a passage will increase your knowledge, because different people will find different things important during a reading.

Take Notes

Being *engaged* means listening to discover (and remember) something. One way to make sure that you are listening attentively is to take notes. Doing so will help you focus on the professor's words and will help you identify the most important parts of the lecture.



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The physical act of writing makes you a more efficient learner. In addition, your notes provide a guide to what your instructor thinks is important. That means you will have a better idea of what to study before the next exam if you have a set of notes that you took during class.

Make an Outline

As you read through each chapter of your textbook, you might want to make an outline—a simple method for organizing information. You can create an outline as part of your reading or at the end of your reading. Or you can make an outline when you reread a section before moving on to the next one. The act of physically writing an outline for a chapter will help you retain the material in this text and master it.

To make an effective outline, you have to be selective. Your objectives in outlining are, first, to identify the main concepts and, second, to add the details that support those main concepts.

Your outline should consist of several levels written in a standard format. The most important concepts are assigned Roman numerals; the second-most important, capital letters; and the third-most important, numbers. Here is a quick example.

- I. What Are Politics and Government?
 - A. Defining Politics and Government
 - 1. Politics and Conflict
 - 2. Government and Authority
 - B. Resolving Conflicts
 - C. Providing Public Services
 - 1. Services for All and Services for Some
 - 2. Managing the Economy
 - D. Defending the Nation and Its Culture
- II. Different Systems of Government
 - A. Undemocratic Systems
 - 1. Monarchy
 - 2. Dictatorship
 - B. Democratic Systems
 - 1. The Athenian Model of Direct Democracy
 - 2. Direct Democracy Today
 - 3. Representative Democracy
 - 4. Types of Representative Democracy
 - C. Other Forms of Government

Mark Your Text

If you own your own textbook for this course and plan to keep it, you can improve your learning by marking your text. By doing so, you will identify the most important concepts of each chapter, and at the same time, you'll be making a handy study guide for reviewing material at a later time. Marking allows you to become an active participant in the mastery of the material. Researchers have shown that the physical act of marking, just like the physical acts of note-taking during class and outlining, increases concentration and helps you better retain the material.

Ways of Marking

The most common form of marking is to underline important points. The second-most commonly used method is to use a felt-tipped highlighter or marker, in yellow or some other transparent color. You can put a check mark next to material that you do not understand. Work on better comprehension of the checkmarked material after you've finished the chapter. Marking also includes circling, numbering, using arrows, jotting brief notes, or any other method that allows you to remember things when you go back to skim the pages in your textbook prior to an exam.

Two Points to Remember When Marking

- ▶ **Read one section at a time before you do any extensive marking.** You can't mark a section until you know what is important, and you can't know what is important until you read the whole section.
- ▶ **Don't overmark.** Don't fool yourself into thinking that you have done a good job just because each page is filled with arrows, circles, and underlines. Be selective in your marking, so that each page allows you to see the most important points at a glance. You can follow up your marking by writing out more in your subject outline.

Researchers have shown that the physical act of marking, just like the physical act of note-taking during class increases concentration and helps you better retain the material.

Try These Tips

Here are a few more hints that will help you develop effective study skills.

- ▶ **Do schoolwork as soon as possible after class.** The longer you wait, the more likely you will be distracted by television, the Internet, video games, or friends.
- ▶ Set aside time and a quiet, comfortable space where you can focus on reading. Your school library is often the best place to work. Set aside several hours a week of "library time" to study in peace and quiet. A neat, organized study space is also important. The only work items that should be on your desk are those that you are working on that day.

- ▶ **Reward yourself for studying!** Rest your eyes and your mind by taking a short break every twenty to thirty minutes. From time to time, allow yourself a break to do something else that you enjoy. These interludes will refresh your mind, give you more energy required for concentration, and enable you to study longer and more efficiently.
- ▶ **To memorize terms or facts, create flash (or note) cards.** On one side of the card, write the question or term. On the other side, write the answer or definition. Then use the cards to test yourself or have a friend quiz you on the material.

QUICK TIP! In GOVT10 MindTap, flash cards are available for all key terms (with definitions).

- ▶ **Mnemonic (pronounced ne-mon-ik) devices are tricks that increase our ability to memorize.** A well-known mnemonic device is the phrase ROY G BIV, which helps people remember the colors of the rainbow—red, orange, yellow, green, blue, indigo, violet. You can create your own mnemonic devices for whatever you need to memorize. The more fun you have coming up with them, the more useful they will be.
- ▶ **Take notes twice.** First, take notes in class. Writing down your instructor's key points will help you be a more active, engaged listener. Taking notes will also give you a record of what your instructor thinks is important. Later, when you have a chance, rewrite your notes. The rewrite will act as a study session for you to think about the material again.



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Test Prep

You have worked hard throughout the term, reading the book, paying close attention in class, and taking good notes. Now it's test time, and you want to show mastery of the material you have studied. To be well prepared, you should know which reading materials and lectures will be covered. You should also know whether the exam will contain essays, objective questions, or both. Finally, you should know how much time you will have to take the exam. The following steps can help to reduce any anxiety you may feel, allowing you to approach the test with confidence.

Follow Directions

Students are often in a hurry to start an exam, so they take little time to read the instructions. The instructions can be critical, however. In a multiple-choice exam, for example, if there is no indication that there is a penalty for guessing, then you should never leave a question unanswered. Even if only a few minutes are left at the end of an exam, you should guess on the questions that you remain uncertain about.

Additionally, you need to know the weight given to each section of an exam. In a typical multiple-choice exam, all questions have equal weight. In other types of exams, particularly those with essay questions, different parts of the exam carry different weights. You should use these weights to apportion your time. If the essay portion of an exam accounts for 20 percent of the total points on the exam, you should not spend 60 percent of your time on the essays.

Finally, you need to make sure you are marking the answers correctly. Some exams require a No. 2 pencil to

fill in the dots on a machine-graded answer sheet. Other exams require underlining or circling. In short, you have to read and follow the instructions carefully.

Objective Exams

An objective exam consists of multiple-choice, true/false, fill-in-the-blank, or matching questions that have only one correct answer. Students usually commit one of two errors when they read objective exam questions: (1) they read things into the questions that do not exist, or (2) they skip over words or phrases. Most test questions include key words such as:

> ALL > NEVER
> ALWAYS > ONLY

If you miss any of these key words, you may answer the question incorrectly even if you know the information being tested.

Whenever the answer to an objective question is not obvious, start with the process of elimination. Throw out the answers that are clearly incorrect. Typically, the easiest way to eliminate incorrect answers is to look for those that are meaningless, illogical, or inconsistent. Often, test authors put in some answers that make perfect sense and are indeed true, but do not answer the question under study. Here are a few more tips that will help you become an efficient, results-oriented student.

► **Review your notes thoroughly** as part of your exam preparation. Instructors usually lecture on subjects they think are important, so those same subjects are also likely to be on the exam.

- ▶ **Create a study schedule** to reduce stress and give yourself the best chance for success. At times, you will find yourself studying for several exams at once. When this happens, make a list of each study topic and the amount of time needed to review that topic.
- ▶ **Form a small group for a study session.** Discussing a topic out loud can improve your understanding of that topic and will help you remember the key points that often come up on exams.
- ▶ **Study from old exams.** Some professors make old exams available, either by posting them online or by putting them on file in the library. Old tests can give you an idea of the kinds of questions the professor likes to ask.
- ▶ **Avoid cramming just before an exam.** Cramming tires the brain unnecessarily and adds to stress, which can severely hamper your testing performance. If you've studied wisely, have confidence that you will be able to recall the information when you need it.
- ▶ **Be sure to eat** before taking a test so you will have the energy you need to concentrate.
- ▶ **Be prepared.** Make sure you have everything you will need for the exam, such as a pen or pencil. Arrive at the exam early to avoid having to rush, which will only add to your stress. Good preparation helps you focus on the task at hand.
- ▶ **When you first receive your exam, make sure that you have all the pages.** If you are uncertain, ask your professor or exam proctor. This initial scan may uncover other problems as well, such as illegible print or unclear instructions.
- ▶ **With essay questions, look for key words** such as “compare,” “contrast,” and “explain.” These will guide your answer. Most important, get to the point without wasting your time (or your professor’s) with statements such as “There are many possible reasons for”
- ▶ **Review your answers** when you finish a test early. You may find a mistake or an area where some extra writing will improve your grade.
- ▶ **Keep exams in perspective.** Worrying too much about a single exam can have a negative effect on your performance. If you do poorly on one test, it’s not the end of the world. Rather, it should motivate you to do better on the next one.



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Write Prep

A key part of succeeding as a student is learning how to write well. Whether writing papers, presentations, essays, or even e-mails to your instructor, you have to be able to put your thoughts into words and do so with force, clarity, and precision. In this section, we outline a three-phase process that you can use to write almost anything.

Phase 1: Getting Ready to Write

First, make a list. Divide the ultimate goal—a finished paper—into smaller steps that you can tackle right away. Estimate how long it will take to complete each step. Start with the date your paper is due and work backward to the present: For example, if the due date is December 1, and you have about three months to write the paper, give yourself a cushion and schedule November 20 as your targeted completion date. Then list what you need to get done by October 1 and November 1.

Pick a Topic

To generate ideas for a topic, any of the following approaches work well:

- ▶ **Brainstorm with a group.** There is no need to create in isolation. You can harness the energy and the natural creative power of a group to assist you.

► **Speak it.** To get ideas flowing, start talking. Admit your confusion or lack of clear ideas. Then just speak. By putting your thoughts into words, you'll start thinking more clearly.

► **Use free writing.** Free writing, a technique championed by writing teacher Peter Elbow, is also very effective when trying to come up with a topic. There's only one rule in free writing: Write without stopping. Set a time limit—say, ten minutes—and keep your fingers dancing across the keyboard the whole time. Ignore the urge to stop and rewrite. There is no need to worry about spelling, punctuation, or grammar during this process.

Refine Your Idea

After you've come up with some initial ideas, it's time to refine them:

► **Select a topic and working title.** Using your instructor's guidelines for the paper, write down a list of topics that interest you. Write down all of the ideas you think of in two minutes. Then choose one topic. The most common pitfall is selecting a topic that is too broad. "Political Campaigns" is probably not a useful topic for your paper. Instead, consider "The Financing of Modern Political Campaigns."

► **Write a thesis statement.** Clarify what you want to say by summarizing it in one concise sentence. This sentence, called a *thesis statement*, refines your working title. A thesis is the main point of the paper—it is a declaration of some sort. You might write a thesis statement such as "Recent decisions by the Supreme Court have dramatically changed the way that political campaigns are funded."

Set Goals

Effective writing flows from a purpose. Think about how you'd like your reader or listener to respond after considering your ideas.

► If you want to persuade someone, make your writing clear and logical. Support your assertions with evidence.

There is no need to create in isolation. Brainstorm ideas for a topic with a group. Ask for feedback from your instructor or a friend as you prepare an outline and revise your first draft.

► If your purpose is to move the reader into action, explain exactly what steps to take, and offer solid benefits for doing so.

To clarify your purpose, state it in one sentence—for example, "The purpose of this paper is to discuss and analyze the role of women and minorities in law enforcement."

Begin Research

At the initial stage, the objective of your research is not to uncover specific facts about your topic. That comes later. First, you want to gain an overview of the subject. Say you want to advocate for indeterminate sentencing. You must first learn enough about determinate and indeterminate sentencing to describe the pros and cons of each one.

Make an Outline

An outline is a kind of map. When you follow a map, you avoid getting lost. Likewise, an outline keeps you from wandering off topic. To create your outline, follow these steps:

1. Review your thesis statement and identify the three to five main points you need to address in your paper to support or prove your thesis.



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2. **Next, focus on the three to five major points** that support your argument and think about what minor points or subtopics you want to cover in your paper. Your major points are your big ideas. Your minor points are the details you need to fill in under each of those ideas.
3. **Ask for feedback.** Have your instructor or a classmate review your outline and offer suggestions for improvement. Did you choose the right points to support your thesis? Do you need more detail anywhere? Does the flow from idea to idea make sense?

Do In-Depth Research

Dig in and start reading. Keep a notebook, tablet, or laptop handy and make notes as you read. It can help to organize your research into three main categories:

1. **Sources** (bibliographical information for a source),
2. **Information** (nuggets of information from a correctly quoted source)
3. **Ideas** (thoughts and observations that occur to you as you research, written in your own words)

You might want to use these categories to create three separate documents as you work. This will make it easy to find what you need when you write your first draft.

When taking research notes, be sure to:

- ▶ Copy all of the information correctly.
- ▶ Include the source and page number while gathering information. With Internet searches, you must also record the date a site was accessed.
- ▶ Stay organized; refer to your outline as you work.



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**If you get stuck, ask for help.
Most schools have writing
resource centers where
you can go for assistance
and guidance.**

Phase 2: Writing a First Draft

To create your draft, gather your notes and your outline (which often undergoes revision during the research process). Then write about the ideas in your notes. It's that simple. Just start writing. Write in paragraphs, with one idea per paragraph. As you complete this task, keep the following suggestions in mind:

- ▶ **Remember that the first draft is not for keeps.** You can worry about quality later. Your goal at this point is simply to generate words and ideas.
- ▶ **Write freely.** Many writers prefer to get their first draft down quickly and would advise you to keep writing, much as in free writing. You may pause to glance at your notes and outline, but avoid stopping to edit your work.
- ▶ **Be yourself.** Let go of the urge to sound “scholarly” and avoid using unnecessary big words or phrases. Instead, write in a natural voice.
- ▶ **Avoid procrastination.** If you are having trouble getting started, skip over your introduction and just begin writing about some of your findings. You can go back later and organize your paragraphs.
- ▶ **Get physical.** While working on the first draft, take breaks. Go for a walk. From time to time, practice relaxation techniques and breathe deeply.
- ▶ **Put the draft away for a day.** Schedule time for rewrites, and schedule at least one day between revisions so that you can let the material sit. After a break, problems with the paper or ideas for improvement will become more evident.

Phase 3: Revising Your Draft

During this phase, keep in mind the saying, “Write in haste; revise at leisure.” When you are working on your first draft, the goal is to produce ideas and write them down. During

the revision phase, however, you need to slow down and take a close look at your work. One guideline is to allow 50 percent of writing time for planning, researching, and writing the first draft. Then use the remaining 50 percent for revising.

Here are some good ways to revise your paper:

1. Read it out loud. The combination of speaking and hearing forces us to pay attention to the details. Is the thesis statement clear and supported by enough evidence? Does the introduction tell your reader what's coming? Do you end with a strong conclusion that expands on your introduction rather than just restating it?

2. Have a friend look over your paper. This is never a substitute for your own review, but a friend can often see mistakes you miss. With a little practice, you will learn to welcome feedback, because it provides one of the fastest ways to approach the revision process.

3. Cut. Look for excess baggage. Also, look for places where two (or more) sentences could be rewritten as one. By cutting text you are actually gaining a clearer, more polished product. For efficiency, make the larger cuts first—sections, chapters, pages. Then go for the smaller cuts—paragraphs, sentences, phrases, words.

4. Paste. The next task is to rearrange what's left of your paper so that it flows logically. Look for consistency within paragraphs and for transitions from paragraph to paragraph and section to section.

5. Fix. Now it's time to look at individual words and phrases. Define any terms that the reader might not know. In general, focus on nouns and verbs. Too many words add unnecessary bulk to your writing. Write about the details, and be specific. Also, check your writing to ensure that you:

- ▶ **Prefer the active voice.** Write “*The research team began the project*” rather than “*A project was initiated,*” which is a passive statement.
- ▶ **Write concisely.** Instead of “*After making a timely arrival and observing the unfolding events, I emerged totally and gloriously victorious,*” be concise with “*I came, I saw, I conquered.*”
- ▶ **Communicate clearly.** Instead of “*The speaker made effective use of the television medium, asking in no uncertain terms that we change our belief systems,*” you can write specifically, “*The senatorial candidate stared straight into the television camera and said, ‘Take a good look at what my opponent is doing! Do you really want six more years of this?’*”



6. Prepare. Format your paper following accepted standards for margin widths, endnotes, title pages, and other details. Ask your instructor for specific instructions on how to cite the sources used in writing your paper. You can find useful guidelines in the *MLA Handbook for Writers of Research Papers*. If you are submitting a hard copy (rather than turning it in online), use quality paper for the final version. For an even more professional appearance, bind your paper with a plastic or paper cover.

7. Proofread. As you ease down the home stretch, read your revised paper one more time, and look for the following:

- ▶ A clear thesis statement.
- ▶ Sentences that introduce your topic, guide the reader through the major sections of your paper, and summarize your conclusions.
- ▶ Details—such as quotations, examples, and statistics—that support your conclusions.
- ▶ Lean sentences that have been purged of needless words.
- ▶ Plenty of action verbs and concrete, specific nouns.
- ▶ Spelling and grammar mistakes. Use contractions sparingly, if at all. Use spell-check by all means, but do not rely on it completely, as it will not catch everything.

Academic Integrity: Avoiding Plagiarism

Using another person's words, images, or other original creations without giving proper credit is called *plagiarism*. Plagiarism amounts to taking someone else's work and presenting it as your own—the equivalent of cheating on a test. The consequences of plagiarism can range from a failing grade to expulsion from school.

To avoid plagiarism, ask an instructor where you can find your school's written policy on this issue. Don't assume that you can resubmit a paper you wrote for another class for a current class. Almost all schools will regard this as plagiarism even though you wrote the paper. The basic guidelines for preventing plagiarism are to cite a source for each phrase, sequence of ideas, or visual image created by another person. While ideas cannot be copyrighted, the specific way that an idea is *expressed* can be. You also need to list a source for any idea that is closely identified with a particular person. The goal is to clearly distinguish your own work from the work of others. There are several ways to ensure that you do this consistently:

- ▶ **Identify direct quotes.** If you use a direct quote from another source, put those words in quotation marks. If you do research online, you might copy text from a website and paste it directly into your notes. This is a direct quote. You must use quotation marks or if the quote is long, an indented paragraph.
- ▶ **Paraphrase carefully.** Paraphrasing means restating the original passage in your own words, usually making it shorter and simpler. Students who copy a passage word for word and then just rearrange or delete a few phrases are running a serious risk of plagiarism. Remember to cite a source for paraphrases, just as you do for direct quotes. When you use the same sequence of ideas as one of your sources—even if you have not paraphrased or directly quoted—cite that source.
- ▶ **Note details about each source.** For books, include the author, title, publisher,

publication date, location of publisher, and page number. For articles from print sources, record the author, date, article title, and the name of the magazine or journal as well. If you found the article in an academic or technical journal, also include the volume and number of the publication. A librarian can help identify these details.

- ▶ **Cite online sources correctly.** If your source is a website, record as many identifying details as you can find—author, title, sponsoring organization, URL, publication date, and revision date. In addition, list the date that you accessed the page. Be careful when using Internet resources, as not all sites are considered legitimate sources. For example, many professors don't regard Wikipedia as an acceptable source.
- ▶ **Include your sources as endnotes or footnotes to your paper.** Ask your instructor for examples of the format to use. You do not need to credit wording that is wholly your own. Nor do you need to credit general ideas, such as the suggestion that people use a to-do list to plan their time. But if you borrow someone else's words or images to explain the idea, do give credit.
- ▶ **When in doubt, don't.** Sometimes you will find yourself working against a deadline for a paper, and in a panic, you might be tempted to take shortcuts. You'll find a source that expressed your idea perfectly, but you must cite it or completely rephrase the idea in your own words. Professors are experts at noticing a change in tone or vocabulary that signals plagiarism. Often, they can simply Google a phrase to find its source online. Do not let a moment's temptation cause you to fail the course or face an academic integrity hearing.





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Take Action

A Guide to Political Participation

Get Informed

Find Out Where You Fit and What You Know

- You already have some opinions about a variety of political issues. Do you have a sense of where your views place you on the political map? Get a feel for your ideological leanings by taking *The World's Smallest Political Quiz*: theadvocates.org/quiz.

It's easy to think of politics as a spectator sport—something that politicians do, pundits analyze, and citizens watch. But there are many ways to get engaged with politics, to interact with the political world and participate in it, and even to effect change.

- Which Founder Are You? The National Constitutional Center can help you with that. Go to constitutioncenter.org/foundersquiz to discover which Founding Father's personality most resembles your own.
- The U.S. Constitution is an important part of the context in which American politics takes place. Do you know what the Constitution says? *Take the Constitution I.Q. Quiz*: constitutionfacts.com. Was your score higher than the national average?
- At the National Constitution Center, you can explore the interactive Constitution and learn more about the provisions in that document: constitutioncenter.org/interactive-constitution.



- Find out what those who want to become U.S. citizens have to do—and what they have to know. Go to the U.S. Citizenship and Immigration Services website at uscis.gov. What is involved in applying for citizenship? Take the *Naturalization Self-Test* at <https://my.uscis.gov/prep/test/civics>. How did you do?

Think about How Your Political Views Have Been Shaped

Consider how agents of political socialization—your family, your schools, and your peers, for example—have contributed to your political beliefs and attitudes. Then have conversations with people in your classes or where you live about the people, institutions, and experiences that influenced the way they view the political world. Try to understand how and why your views might differ.

Explore how your views on political issues compare with those of a majority of Americans. There are a number of good polling sites that report public opinion on a range of topics.

- The Pew Research Center for the People & the Press conducts monthly polls on politics and policy issues: people-press.org.
- Public Agenda reports poll data and material on major issues: publicagenda.org.
- The results of recent polls and an archive of past polls can be found at Gallup: gallup.com.
- The Roper Center for Public Opinion Research is a leading archive of data from surveys of public opinion: ropercenter.cornell.edu.

Get Connected

News

Keep up with news—print, broadcast, and online. Don't avoid certain news sources because you think you might not agree with the way they report the news. It's just as important to know how people are talking about issues as it is to know about the issues themselves.

- One way to follow the news is to get your information from the same place that journalists do. Often they take their cues or are alerted to news events by news agencies such as the nonprofit cooperative Associated Press: ap.org.
- Installing a few key apps on your phone or tablet can help you stay informed. Try downloading the Associated Press (AP) app for timely updates about news around the world. There are tons of other great political apps—some are fairly polarizing, some are neutral, and still others are just plain silly.

Blogs

The blogosphere affords views of politics that tend to be slanted according to the political orientation of the blog sponsor. In the last several decades, blogs have surged in popularity as a source for political news and opinion.

Social Media

Staying connected can be as simple as following local, national, or international politics on social media. Former President Barack Obama, Senator Elizabeth Warren, House Speaker Paul Ryan, and even the White House have Instagram accounts worth following. Most politicians and political outlets are also on Twitter and Facebook.

Check the Data

- It's not always easy to figure out whether a news report or public statement is accurate. PolitiFact, a project of the *Tampa Bay Times*, is a good place to go to get the facts: [politifact.com](https://www.politifact.com). Check out the Truth-O-Meter, and get it on your smartphone or tablet.
- A project of the Annenberg Public Policy Center, [factcheck.org](https://www.factcheck.org) is a nonpartisan, nonprofit “consumer advocate” for voters that monitors the factual accuracy of what political players are saying in TV ads, speeches, and interviews.

Keep Up during Election Season

- Project Vote Smart offers information on elections and candidates: [votesmart.org](https://www.vote-smart.org).
- Nate Silver's FiveThirtyEight features election analysis, in addition to covering sports and economics: [fivethirtyeight.com](https://www.fivethirtyeight.com).
- Stay connected to the horse-race aspect of electoral politics by tracking election polls. There are many good sources:
 - For a comprehensive collection of election polls, go to the RealClearPolitics website: [realclearpolitics.com/polls](https://www.realclearpolitics.com/polls). RealClearPolitics is a good source for other political news and opinions as well.
 - Polls for U.S. federal elections, including state-by-state polls, can be found at [electoral-vote.com](https://www.electoral-vote.com).
 - HuffPost Pollster publishes pre-election poll results combined into interactive charts: [elections.huffingtonpost.com/pollster](https://www.elections.huffingtonpost.com/pollster). During presidential elections, additional maps and electoral vote counts can be found at HuffPost Politics Election dashboard.
- If you have the opportunity, attend a speech by a candidate you're interested in.



Monitor Money and Influence in Politics

The Center for Responsive Politics website is an excellent source for information about who's contributing what amounts to which candidates: [opensecrets.org](https://www.opensecrets.org). You can also use the lobbying database to identify the top lobbying firms, the agencies most frequently lobbied, and the industries that spend the most on lobbying activities.

Connect with Congress

You can, of course, learn a lot about what's going on in Congress from the websites of the House of Representatives and the Senate: [house.gov](https://www.house.gov) and [senate.gov](https://www.senate.gov). Look up the names and contact information for the senators and the representative from your area. If you want your voice to be heard, simply phone or e-mail your senators or your representative. Members of Congress listen to their constituents and often act in response to their constituents' wishes. Indeed, next to voting, contacting those who represent you in Congress is probably the most effective way to influence government decision making.

Check GovTrack to find out where your representative and senators fall on the leadership and ideology charts, and learn about their most recently sponsored bills and votes on legislation: [govtrack.us](https://www.govtrack.us).



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Design Your Own Ways to Take Action

Start a network to match those who need assistance and those who want to help. For example, there may be people on your campus who, because of a disability or recent injury, need someone to help carry belongings, open doors, or push wheelchairs.

Do you want to raise awareness about an issue? Is there a cause that you think needs attention? Talk with friends. Find out if they share your concerns.

Turn your discussions into a blog. Create videos of events you think are newsworthy and share them online. Sign or start a petition.

Get Involved

Take an Interest in Your Community—Offer to Help

Every community—large and small—can use energetic people willing to help where there is a need. Local nonprofit agencies serving the homeless, battered women, or troubled teens often welcome volunteers who are willing to pitch in.

The Internet also has abundant resources about nonprofits and charities and how you can get involved:

- **Idealist.org** is a great place to find organizations and events that are looking for employees, interns, and volunteers. Filter by type and area of focus (women, disaster relief, animals, etc.) to find a cause that fits you.
- **Tinyspark.org** is a watchdog for nonprofits and charity organizations. It highlights individuals and groups that are doing good things around the globe and investigates those who may not be doing as much good as you'd think. Tiny Spark also has a podcast.
- **Charitynavigator.org** is another tool for checking on charities. It evaluates and rates charities on financial health, accountability and transparency, and reporting of results.

Join a Group on Campus

You probably see flyers promoting groups and recruiting members posted all over campus. Chances are, there's a group organized around something you're interested in or care about.

Maybe it's an organization that works to bring clean water to remote parts of the world. The American Red Cross may be looking for help with campus blood drives. You'll find groups organized around race, culture, or political parties; groups that go on spring break trips to serve communities in need; service organizations of all kinds; and groups that focus on the environment. The list goes on and on.

If you have an interest that isn't represented by the groups on your campus, start your own. Your college or university should have an office of campus life (or something similar) that can help you establish a student organization.

Vote (but Don't Forget to Register First)

- You can learn about the laws governing voting in your state by going to the website of the National Conference of State Legislatures and its link to Voter Identification Requirements: [ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/voter-id](https://www.ncsl.org/research/elections-and-campaigns/voter-id).

- **Register:** Enter “register to vote in [your state]” in a search engine. The office in your state that administers voting and elections will have a website that outlines the steps you will need to follow. You can also find out how to obtain an absentee ballot.
- If you want to view a sample ballot to familiarize yourself with what you’ll see at the polls, you will probably be able to view one online. Just enter “sample ballot” in a search engine. Your local election board, the League of Women Voters, or your district library often post a sample ballot online.
- **Vote:** Familiarize yourself with the candidates and issues before you go to the polls. If you’d like to influence the way things are done in your community, state, or Washington, D.C., you can do so by helping to elect local, state, and federal officials whose views you endorse and who you think would do a good job of running the government. Make sure you know the location and hours for your polling place.

Support a Political Party

Getting involved in political parties is as simple as going to the polls and casting your vote for the candidate of one of the major parties—or of a third party. You can also consider becoming a delegate to a party convention. Depending on the state, parties may hold conventions by U.S. House district, by county, or by state legislative district. In many states, the lowest-level conventions (or, in some states, caucuses) are open to anyone who shows up. Voting rights at a convention, however, may be restricted to



those who are elected as precinct delegates in a party primary.

In much of the country, precinct delegate slots go unfilled. If this is true in your area, you can become a precinct delegate with a simple write-in campaign, writing in your own name and persuading a handful of friends or neighbors to write you in as well. Whether you attend a convention as a voting delegate or as a guest, you’ll have a firsthand look at how politics operates. You’ll hear debates on resolutions. You might participate in electing delegates to higher-level conventions—perhaps even the national convention if it is a presidential election year.

Work for a Campaign

Candidates welcome energetic volunteers. So do groups that are supporting (or opposing) ballot measures. While sometimes tiring and frustrating, working in campaign politics can also be exhilarating and very rewarding.

Find the contact information for a campaign you’re interested in on its website, and inquire about volunteer opportunities. Volunteers assemble mailings, answer the telephone, and make calls to encourage voters to support their candidate or cause. Even if you have little free time or are not comfortable talking to strangers, most campaigns can find a way for you to participate.



Be Part of Campus Media

Do you have a nose for news and do you write well? Try reporting for the university newspaper. Work your way up to an editor’s position. If broadcast media are your thing, get involved with your college radio station or go on air on campus TV.



Engage with Political Institutions, Government Agencies, and Public Policymakers— at Home and Abroad

- **Visit the government websites for your state and community and learn about your representatives.** Contact them with your thoughts on matters that are important to you. Attend a city council meeting. You can find the date, location, and agenda on your city's website. And if you're passionate about a local issue, you can even sign up to speak.
- **Check to see if internships or volunteer opportunities are available close to home.** Your U.S. representative has a district office, and your U.S. senators also have offices in various locations around the state. If you plan to be in Washington, D.C., and want to visit Capitol Hill, book a tour in advance through your senators' or representative's offices. That's also where you can obtain gallery passes to the House and Senate chambers.
- **Spend some time in Washington, D.C.** Many colleges and universities have internship programs with government agencies and institutions. Some have semester-long programs that will bring you into contact with policymakers, journalists, and a variety of other prominent newsmakers. Politics and government will come alive, and the contacts you make while participating in such programs can often lead to jobs after graduation.
- **If you're interested in the Supreme Court** and you're planning a trip to Washington D.C., try to watch oral arguments. Go to the Court's website to access the link for oral arguments: supremecourt.gov. You'll find the argument calendar and a visitor's guide. (The secret is to get in line early.)
- **Become a virtual tourist.** If you can't make it to Washington, D.C., for a semester-long program or even a few days, take the U.S. Capitol Virtual Tour: <https://www.capitol.gov>.
- **You can take a virtual tour of the Supreme Court** at the website of the Oyez Project at IIT Chicago-Kent College of Law: www.oyez.org/tour. You can also listen to Supreme Court oral arguments wherever you

are. Go to the Oyez site and check out ISCOTUSnow (blogs.kentlaw.iit.edu/iscotus/).

- **Check with the study-abroad office** at your college or university. Studying abroad is a great way to expand your horizons and get a feel for different cultures and the global nature of politics and the economy. There are programs that will take you almost anywhere in the world.
- **Participate in the Model UN Club** on your campus (or start a Model UN Club if there isn't one). By participating in Model UN, you will become aware of international issues and conflicts and gain hands-on experience in diplomacy.

**Get Informed.
Get Connected.
Get Involved.**



Every day in America, almost 12,000 people turn age 18 and become eligible to vote. Each vote makes a difference!

Rock the Vote! is the largest nonprofit and nonpartisan organization providing the tools college students need to get registered to vote. It also provides resources about becoming a more active citizen.

Go to the website below and get involved. Let your voice be heard!

Go to the Rock the Vote website below and ...

The screenshot shows the Rock the Vote website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with the logo "ROCK THE VOTE" and the tagline "Building political power for young people." To the right of the logo are links for "REGISTER TO VOTE" and "PLEDGE TO ROCK THE VOTE". Below the logo, there is a news article snippet with the headline "Report: Wisconsin voter ID caused some problems, mostly in student areas, on election day" and the date "05/11/16 | Wisconsin State Journal". The main content area features a large image with the text "How to Rock the Vote" and a grid of red buttons for navigation: "Am I Registered?", "Absentee Voting", "Register to Vote", "Get Election Reminders", "Vote as a Student", "Voter ID", "Where to Vote", and "Overseas/Military". At the bottom of the screenshot, there is a red banner with the text "WHAT DOES IT MEAN TO #ROCKTHEVOTE".

Source: Rock the Vote

1

America in the Twenty-First Century



monkeybusinessimages/iStock/Getty Images

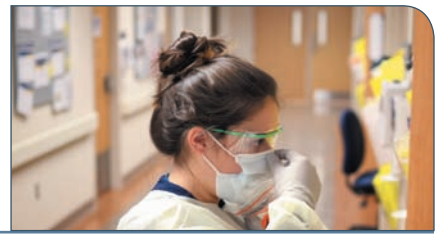
Learning Outcomes

After reading this chapter, you should be able to:

- LO 1-1** Explain what is meant by the terms *politics* and *government*.
- LO 1-2** Identify the various types of government systems.
- LO 1-3** Summarize some of the basic principles of American democracy and basic American political values.
- LO 1-4** Define common American ideological positions, such as “conservatism” and “liberalism.”

America at Odds

How Much Liberty Must We Sacrifice During a Pandemic?



Win McNamee/Getty Images
News/Getty Images

In the fourteenth century, the black death killed perhaps a third of all Europeans and many millions elsewhere. In 1918 and 1919, The Spanish flu may have killed as many as 50 million people around the world. The latest pandemic hit the world hard in 2020. The cause is commonly known as the coronavirus, and the disease that it causes is COVID-19. The virus is extremely contagious. Mortality rates are very high among the elderly and those with pre-existing health conditions, such as diabetes or heart disease.

People around the world responded to COVID-19 by trying to isolate themselves. In March 2020, theaters, sporting events, and restaurants were forced to close due to government-required shutdowns. Millions began working from home if they could. Governments everywhere began issuing lockdown orders. These

orders were unprecedented in their extent. The initial goal was to prevent hospitals from being overwhelmed by the sheer number of sick people. In Wuhan, China—where the virus first surfaced—in Italy, New York City, and elsewhere, hospitals were, in fact, overwhelmed, and many died without medical assistance.

The danger of a medical system collapse in the United States was largely over by May, however. State governors who had imposed lockdowns began scaling them back, despite warnings that the number of cases might spike. A vaccine was unlikely to be available before 2021. The quarantines had devastated the economy, with more than 40 million people out of work. An additional issue was the sheer loss of personal freedom resulting from the lockdowns. Americans were at odds as to how to balance the threat of the disease against economic disaster and the loss of civil liberties.

Do We Really Want More People to Die So We Can Go Pub-Crawling?

To be sure, there is a huge cost associated with lockdowns during a pandemic. Also, under normal conditions, we should all have full liberty of movement. But consider: People who have contracted the disease can be contagious to others for a week before they show symptoms. Most people who pass the disease on do so without knowing what they are doing.

It is unfortunate that some are seeing “social distancing” as a cultural issue and not a matter of public health. It is not helpful to claim that face masks are a sign of fear. The masks are primarily to protect others, not yourself. The economic consequences of the pandemic are vast, but ending lockdown orders cannot automatically restore the economy. You can’t force people to attend events, shop, and dine out when they do not believe such activities are safe. Ultimately, we need a vaccine.

Enough is Enough—You Can’t Keep People Home Forever

We now know that COVID-19 is not easily transmitted when people are outdoors and not close together. There is no reason to prevent people from walking, jogging, or hiking, as long as they stay six feet away from others. Yet some governments (mostly outside the United States) banned such activities.

Closing down whole economies has human costs, not just financial ones. When people are out of work, the results include increases in suicide, domestic and child abuse, alcoholism, and opioid addiction. Some have argued that severe lockdown measures could become a cure worse than the disease.

In the end, it is not possible to maintain strict lockdown policies for more than a few months. People will simply begin to ignore the restrictions. Americans place a very high value on personal freedom.

Where do you stand?

1. How effective were social distancing, face masks, and other measures in controlling COVID-19, in the absence of quarantines?
2. People often have a hard time visualizing the relative danger of various threats. Many people are more afraid of flying than driving, though driving is much riskier. Why might this be so?

Exploring this issue online:

- For a current report on COVID-19 case rates, use a search engine such as Google to look up “new york times covid cases.”
- *The Atlantic* has many in-depth articles on the pandemic. Search for “the atlantic covid-19.”

Introduction

Regardless of how Americans feel about government, one thing is certain: They can't live without it. James Madison (1751–1836) once said, "If men were angels, no government would be necessary." Today, his statement still holds true. People are not perfect. People need an organized form of government and a set of rules by which to live.

Government performs a wide range of extremely important functions. From the time we are born until the day we die, we constantly interact with various levels of government. Most (although not all) students attend government-run schools. All of us travel on government-owned streets and highways. Many of us serve in the military—a completely government-controlled environment. A few of us get into trouble and meet up with the government's law enforcement system. Every citizen reaching the age of sixty-five can expect the government to help with medical and living expenses. To fund all these functions, the government collects taxes.

In a representative democracy, or republic, such as ours, it is politics that controls what the government decides to do. What combination of taxes and government services is best? When should our leaders use military force against foreign nations or rebellions in foreign countries? As discussed in this chapter's opening *America at Odds* feature, how does the government deal with acute crises? How the nation answers these and many other questions will have a major impact on your life—and participation in politics is the only way you can influence what happens.

What Are Politics and Government?

LO 1-1 Explain what is meant by the terms *politics* and *government*.

institution An ongoing organization that performs certain functions for society.

social conflict Disagreements among people in a society over what the society's priorities should be.

Even if—contrary to Madison's observation—people were perfect, they would still need to establish rules to guide their behavior. They would somehow have to agree on how to divide up a society's resources,

such as its land, among themselves and how to balance individual needs and wants against those of society generally.

These perfect people would also have to decide *how* to make these decisions. They would need to create a process for making rules and a form of government to enforce those rules. It is thus not difficult to understand why government is one of humanity's oldest and most universal **institutions**.

As you will read in this chapter, a number of different systems of government exist in the world today. In the United States, we have a democratic republic in which decisions about pressing issues ultimately are made politically by the people's representatives in government.

Because people rarely have identical thoughts and feelings about issues, it is not surprising that

in any democracy citizens are often at odds over many political and social problems. Throughout this book, you will read about contemporary controversies that have brought various groups of Americans into conflict with one another.

Differences in political opinion are essential parts of a representative democratic government. Ultimately, these differences are resolved, one way or another, through the American political process and our government institutions.

Defining Politics and Government

Politics means many things to many people. There are also many different notions about the meaning of government. How should we define these two central concepts?

Politics and Conflict To some, politics is an expensive and extravagant game played in Washington, D.C., in state capitols, and in city halls, particularly during election time. To others, politics involves all of the tactics and maneuvers carried out by the president and Congress. Most formal definitions of politics, however, begin with the assumption that **social conflict**—disagreements among people in a society over what the society's priorities should be—is inevitable. Conflicts will naturally arise over how the society should use its scarce resources and who should receive various benefits, such as health care and higher education. Resolving such conflicts is the

**"The ultimate rulers
of our democracy
are ... the voters of
this country."**

~ Franklin D. Roosevelt, Thirty-
Second President Of The United
States, 1933–45

essence of **politics**. Political scientist Harold Lasswell perhaps said it best in his classic definition of politics as the process of determining “who gets what, when, and how” in a society.¹

Government and Authority Disputes over how to distribute a society’s resources inevitably arise because valued resources, such as property, are limited, while people’s wants are unlimited. To resolve such disputes, people need ways to determine who wins and who loses, and how to get the losers to accept those decisions. Who has the legitimate power—the *authority*—to make such decisions? This is where governments step in.

From the perspective of political science, **government** can best be defined as the individuals and institutions that make society’s rules and also possess the power and authority to enforce those rules. Generally, in any country, government uses its authority to serve at least three essential purposes:

- ▶ resolving conflicts,
- ▶ providing public services, and
- ▶ defending the nation and its culture against attacks.

Resolving Conflicts

Governments decide how conflicts will be resolved so that public order can be maintained. Governments have **power**—the ability to influence the behavior

of others. Power is getting someone to do something that he or she would not otherwise do. Power may involve the use of force (often called coercion), persuasion, or rewards. Governments typically also have **authority**, which they can exercise only if their power is legitimate. As used here, the term *authority* means the ability to use power that is collectively recognized and accepted by society as legally and morally correct. Power and authority are central to a government’s ability to resolve conflicts by making and enforcing laws, placing limits on what people can do, and developing court systems to make final decisions.

For example, the judicial branch of government—specifically, the United States Supreme Court—resolved the highly controversial question of whether the Second Amendment to the Constitution grants individuals the right to bear arms. In 2008 and 2010, the Court affirmed that such a right does exist.² Because of the Court’s stature and authority as a government body, there was little resistance to its decision, even from gun control advocates.

Providing Public Services

Another important purpose of government is to provide **public services**—essential services that many individuals cannot provide for themselves. Governments undertake projects that individuals usually would not



Sean Rayford/Getty Images News/Getty Images

Image 1.1 During the demonstrations after the death of George Floyd at the hands of a police officer in Minneapolis, Minnesota, in 2020, there were numerous confrontations between police personnel and protestors. *Is this the typical way that Americans resolve conflicts?*

politics The process of resolving conflicts over how society should use its scarce resources and who should receive various benefits, such as public health care and public higher education.

government The individuals and institutions that make society’s rules and possess the power and authority to enforce those rules.

power The ability to influence the behavior of others, usually through the use of force, persuasion, or rewards.

authority The ability to legitimately exercise power, such as the power to make and enforce laws.

public services Essential services that individuals cannot provide for themselves, such as building and maintaining roads, establishing welfare programs, operating public schools, plus law enforcement, fire protection, and public health and safety programs.

or could not carry out on their own. These projects include building and maintaining roads, establishing welfare programs, operating public schools, and preserving national parks. Governments also provide such services as law enforcement, fire protection, and public health and safety programs (which were of special importance during the COVID-19 pandemic). As Abraham Lincoln once stated:

The legitimate object of government is to do for a community of people, whatever they need to have done, but cannot do, *at all*, or cannot, *so well* do, for themselves—in their separate, individual capacities. In all that the people can individually do as well for themselves, government ought not to interfere.³

Services for All and Services for Some Some public services are provided equally to all citizens of the United States. For example, government services such as national defense and domestic law enforcement allow all citizens, at least in theory, to feel that their lives and property are safe. Laws governing clean air and safe drinking water benefit all Americans.

Other services are provided only to citizens who are in need at a particular time, even though they are paid for by all citizens through taxes. Such services can include health and welfare benefits. For example, a program such as Social Security Disability Insurance provides a source of income to people whose ability to work is limited by a notable disability. Americans contribute to the program through the Social Security payroll tax, regardless of whether they ever become disabled.

Managing the Economy

One of the most crucial public services that the government is expected to provide is protection from hardship caused by economic recessions or depressions. From 2008 on, this governmental objective became more important than almost any other, in part due to the severity of the Great Recession that began in December 2007.

One of the most damaging consequences of that recession was low rates of employment (or high rates of unemployment). This problem was not resolved for a decade, even though the

recession officially ended in June 2009 when economic growth resumed. Employment rates did not return to 2007 levels until early 2020. Then, beginning in March 2020, much of the nation's economy shut down in an attempt to halt the spread of the coronavirus. The resulting economic crisis sent the nation's unemployment rate back up to a level not seen since the Great Depression of the 1930s. As you will learn later in this chapter, when many Americans face economic hardships, they often have negative views about how well our government is “running the ship.”

Defending the Nation and Its Culture

Historically, matters of national security and defense have been given high priority by governments and have demanded considerable time, effort, and expense. The U.S. government provides for the common defense and national security with its Army, Navy, Marines, Air Force, Coast Guard, and now the new Space Force. The departments of State, Defense, and Homeland Security, plus the Central Intelligence Agency, National Security Agency, and other agencies, also contribute to this defense network.

As part of an ongoing policy of national security, many departments and agencies in the federal government are constantly dealing with other nations. The Constitution gives our national government exclusive power over relations with foreign nations. No individual state can negotiate a treaty with a foreign nation.



Getmilitaryphotos/Shutterstock.com

Image 1.2 A U.S. Navy SEAL with diving gear and weapons. Participation by U.S. troops in Syria was limited to special operations forces such as the SEALs. **Why would the federal government be reluctant to introduce regular infantry soldiers into that conflict?**

Of course, in defending the nation against attacks by other nations, a government helps to preserve the nation's culture, as well as its integrity as an independent unit. Failure to defend successfully against foreign attacks may have significant consequences for a nation's culture. For example, consider what happened in Tibet in the 1950s. When that country was taken over by the People's Republic of China, the conquering Chinese set out on a systematic program, the effective result of which was large-scale cultural destruction. Does China also present a threat to the United States? We examine that question in this chapter's *Join the Debate* feature.

Attacks by foreign governments are not the only threat that nations must address. Since the terrorist attacks on the World Trade Center and the Pentagon in 2001, defending the homeland against future terrorist attacks has become a priority of our government. Terrorists often operate independently of any foreign authority, even if they are inspired from abroad. Examples include the killings in San Bernardino, California, in December 2015 and the massacre at a gay nightclub in Orlando, Florida, in 2016.

Critical Thinking

- What levels of spending on public services are appropriate? Are there services that you believe are underfunded—or a waste of funds?

Different Systems of Government

LO 1–2 Identify the various types of government systems.

Through the centuries, the functions of government just discussed have been performed by many different types of structures. A government's structure is influenced by a number of factors, such as a country's history, customs, values, geography, resources, and human experiences and needs. No two nations have exactly the same form of government. Over time, however, political analysts have developed ways to classify different systems of government. One of the most meaningful ways is according to *who* governs. Who has the power to make the rules and laws that all must obey?

Undemocratic Systems

Before the development of modern democratic systems, the power of the government was typically in the hands of an authoritarian individual or group. When such power is exercised by an individual, the system

is called an **autocracy**. Autocrats can gain power by traditional or nontraditional means.

Monarchy One form of autocracy, known as a **monarchy**, is government by a king or queen, an emperor or empress—or a person with some other aristocratic title, such as emir, grand duke, or prince. In a monarchy, the monarch, who usually acquires power through inheritance, is the highest authority in the government.

Historically, many monarchies were *absolute monarchies*, in which the ruler, at least in principle, held complete and unlimited power. Until the eighteenth century, the theory of “divine right” was widely accepted in Europe. This **divine right theory**, variations of which had existed since ancient times, held that God gave those of royal birth the unlimited right to govern other men and women. In other words, those of royal birth had a “divine right” to rule, and only God could judge them. Thus, all citizens were bound to obey their monarchs, no matter how unfair or unjust they seemed to be. Challenging this power was regarded not only as treason against the government but also as a sin against God.

Most modern monarchies, however, are *constitutional monarchies* in which the monarch shares governmental power with elected lawmakers. Over time, the monarch's power has come to be limited, or checked, by other government leaders and perhaps by a constitution or a bill of rights. Most constitutional monarchs today serve merely as ceremonial leaders of their nations, as in Spain, Sweden, and the United Kingdom (Britain).

Dictatorship Undemocratic systems that are not supported by tradition are called **dictatorships**. Often, a dictator is a single individual, although dictatorial power can be exercised by a group, such as the Communist Party of China. Dictators are not accountable to anyone else.

A dictatorship can be *totalitarian*, which means that a leader or group of leaders seeks to control almost all aspects of social

autocracy A form of government in which the power and authority of the government are in the hands of a single person.

monarchy A form of autocracy in which a king, queen, or other aristocrat is the highest authority in the government. Monarchs usually obtain their power through inheritance.

divine right theory The theory that a monarch's right to rule was derived directly from God rather than from the consent of the people.

dictatorship A form of government in which absolute power is exercised by an individual or group whose power is not supported by tradition.



Join the Debate

Should We Get Tougher on China?

China is on the rise. For more than forty years, its economy has grown explosively. China's military power has grown as well. China is no longer a poor country, as it once was. Soon, China will be the world's largest economy, with the United States second. (By some definitions, the Chinese economy is larger already.)

Many believe that China has cheated its way to the top. Donald Trump certainly believed that long before he became president. In response, the Trump administration put the world on notice that it will not let China continue to take advantage of the United States. A trade war ensued in which the United States placed tariffs—taxes—on many of China's exports to the United States. China responded in kind.

China's communist leaders aggressively pursue territorial claims in the South China Sea. They repeatedly threaten the island of Taiwan. They have cracked down on protestors in Hong Kong, who do not want to be dominated by the Chinese central government. In western China, over a million Uyghurs, a Muslim minority group, have been forced into relocation camps. And, of course, the Communist Party has developed the most sophisticated surveillance system for its own citizens in the history of civilization.

So, is it time for the United States to get tougher on China?

It Is Past Time to Act

It is a sign of how badly the Chinese have played their hand that in Washington, D.C., hostility toward the Chinese government is widespread in both major political parties. Certainly, we should not allow ourselves to become dependent on China for goods that are vital to our national security, such as antibiotics or personal protection equipment (PPE), which were in short supply worldwide when the COVID-19 pandemic struck. China did the world no favors by downplaying the pandemic until it was too late to stop it.

In the longer run, we must stop China's constant theft of U.S. intellectual property. China has promised to address that issue, but there is little evidence that they have kept that promise. For decades, the United States has shifted its manufacturing production offshore, especially to China. Now is the time to bring it back onshore. We need those jobs, but above all we need to be free from the danger of Chinese economic blackmail.

It is worthwhile to build a tough, bipartisan line against China. That means that the political parties should not compete as to who is the most hostile to that country. A unified national response is what we need.

China Is a Problem, but Trump's Response Doesn't Work

The Communist Party of China certainly consists of hard men (yes, men) who believe that China

should be the world's number-one power. Because China is strong, we cannot effectively counter it all by ourselves. We need allies—Europe, Canada, Mexico, Japan, South Korea, Australia, and others. Together, we can write new rules for international behavior that China will not be able to ignore. This is something that Donald Trump refused to recognize. Instead of strengthening our alliances, he seemed bent on destroying them.

Restricting trade or imposing high tariffs on Chinese imports will not slow China down. All that does is raise prices for American consumers. We should focus instead on making American manufacturing competitive with that of China. Keeping Chinese students out of the United States—another Trump notion—has not been the right way to deal with Chinese espionage. Of course, Chinese nationals should not work in areas that involve military and economic secrets. But many foreign students prefer to remain here after they graduate, and their work has been of enormous economic benefit to all of us. Trying to seal ourselves off from China will never be a winning strategy.

► Critical Analysis

Why is it important to distinguish between China's communist leaders and the Chinese people?

and economic life. The leadership establishes the goals of society. Citizens must conform to the government's dictates in all fields of endeavor—in the economy, in literature and entertainment, and even in private conversation. Typically, these collective goals benefit only the leaders and are damaging to the nation as a whole.

Examples of the totalitarian form of government include Adolf Hitler's Nazi regime in Germany from 1933 to 1945 and Joseph Stalin's dictatorship in the Soviet Union (Russia) from 1929 to 1953. A more contemporary example of a totalitarian dictator is the leader of North Korea, Kim Jong-un.

Democratic Systems

The most familiar form of government to Americans is **democracy**, in which the supreme political authority rests with the people. The word *democracy* comes from the Greek *demos*, meaning “the people,” and *kratia*, meaning “rule.” The main idea of democracy is that government exists only by the consent of the people and reflects the will of the majority. Figure 1.1 shows the extent of democracy in the world today—with “democratic” defined as “free.”

The Athenian Model of Direct Democracy

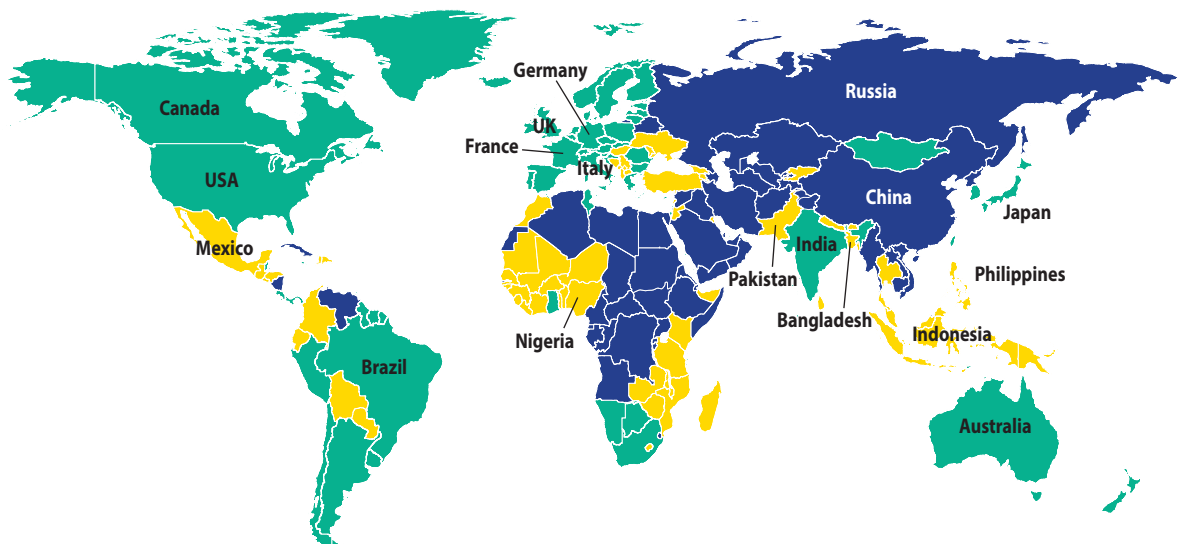
Democracy as a form of government began long ago. In its earliest form, democracy was simpler than the system we know today. What we now call **direct democracy** exists when the people participate directly in government decision making. In its purest form, direct democracy was practiced in Athens and several other ancient Greek city-states about 2,500 years ago. Every Athenian citizen participated in the governing assembly and voted on all major issues. Some consider the Athenian form of direct democracy ideal because it demanded a high degree of citizen participation. Others point out that most residents in the Athenian city-state (women, foreigners, and slaves) were not considered citizens. Thus, they were not allowed to participate in government.⁴

democracy A system of government in which the people have ultimate political authority. The word is derived from the Greek *demos* (“the people”) and *kratia* (“rule”).

direct democracy A system of government in which political decisions are made by the people themselves rather than by elected representatives. This form of government was practiced in some parts of ancient Greece.

Figure 1.1 Free and Unfree Nations of the World, February 2020

In this classification of nations by Freedom House, green means free, yellow means partly free, and blue means unfree. Bear in mind that these are the assessments of a single organization. *Why might another organization come up with a different system of classification?*



Sources: Sarah Repucci et al., *Freedom in the World 2020: A Leaderless Struggle for Democracy*, (Washington, D.C.: Freedom House, 2020). Outline map adapted from Wikimedia.