

AP U.S. Government & Politics

Simulation Integration Guide & Curriculum Map

Statecraft: The Situation Room

To the Instructor: Why Simulate?

AP Government students often struggle to connect abstract concepts (Federalism, Checks and Balances) with reality. This curriculum map demonstrates how the Statecraft simulation replaces passive lecturing with active political conflict. By placing students in the roles of President, Senator, or Justice, we force them to 'live' the required documents rather than just memorize them.

AP® Disciplinary Practices & Big Ideas

- Concept Application: Apply political concepts (War Powers, Federalism) to real-world scenarios.
- Data Analysis: Analyze approval ratings, polling data, and budget deficits.
- Source Analysis: Interpret primary documents (Executive Orders, Legislative Bills).
- Argumentation: Develop defensible claims about policy choices (Security vs. Liberty).

Curriculum Map: Mapping Simulation to AP Units

Unit 1: Foundations of American Democracy

FEDERALISM & CONSTITUTIONAL POWER

Simulation Mechanics: State Governors block Federal prisoner transfers (Guantanamo). President battles Congress over War Powers Resolution compliance.

Required Documents Applied: Federalist No. 10, Brutus No. 1, Constitution

Unit 2: Interactions Among Branches

CHECKS & BALANCES / IRON TRIANGLES

Simulation Mechanics: Congress attempts to override Presidential Veto on budget. Bureaucratic agencies fight for funding (Turf Wars). Senate confirms/rejects appointments.

Required Documents Applied: Federalist No. 51, Federalist No. 70

Unit 3: Civil Liberties & Civil Rights

BALANCING LIBERTY & ORDER

Simulation Mechanics: President chooses between 4th Amendment rights and 'Enhanced Surveillance' directives to stop a terror plot. Courts rule on constitutionality.

Required Documents Applied: Bill of Rights, Letter from Birmingham Jail

Unit 4: American Political Ideologies

POLLING & PUBLIC OPINION

Simulation Mechanics: Candidates analyze 'Approval Rating' tracking polls. Impact of 'Scandal' events on voter sentiment in swing districts.

Required Documents Applied: Reliability of Data, Keynesian vs. Supply-Side budgets

Unit 5: Political Participation

MEDIA, PARTIES & ELECTIONS

Simulation Mechanics: The 'Symbiotic Relationship' between Press and Politicians. Leaking classified intel to shape the narrative. Interest Group lobbying (ACLU vs. Security Hawks).

Required Documents Applied: Citizens United (simulated via Campaign Finance mechanics)

AP Exam Preparation: The FRQ Advantage

The simulation directly prepares students for the Argument Essay (FRQ #4). By forcing students to make policy choices (e.g., 'Should I veto the budget?'), they build a reservoir of concrete examples to use as evidence. They don't just know that Congress has the 'Power of the Purse'—they have felt the political cost of using it.