

American Government Research paper guidelines.

Due Dates to be aware of: Draft (optional for preliminary feedback on Turnitin.com) is due
Monday, April 17 at 8AM
Paper is due **Monday, April 24 (at 8AM)**
(if desired) Rewrite of paper is due **Friday, May 5 (at 11:59PM)**

This paper assignment is given to seniors in AP and regular American Government. Students in AP Government are working completely independently on this project while students in regular Government are going to have slightly more direction and help in organizing and researching.

TOPICS- (Please note that the following topics are NOT ALLOWED: Abortion, 2nd Amendment/Right to bear arms, and Legalization of Marijuana)

1. Choose an aspect of American Government that piques your interest.
2. Find a subject within the broad area that stirs your curiosity (narrow down your topic).
3. Your paper must make an argument answering your research question, address the opposition to that argument, and then provide evidence supporting your argument
4. Your use of common internet sources should be limited. Please use the resources included in our databases on the Library Learning Commons website.

BASIC REQUIREMENTS-

1. Your paper should be typed in Times New Roman, 12pt font. The body of the paper should be double spaced with 1" margins.
2. The paper should be at least 6 FULL pages at a minimum!
3. You need a Title page including: title of paper, your name, class/hour, teacher's name, date
4. You need a Works Cited page using the APA guidelines. (Purdue University has a great guide to using APA format. I would also suggest using EasyBib as a tool to organize your research and format your paper's citations
5. Include 3-5 direct quotations. Make sure they are quality pieces of research and they are not used like "croutons" in your paper
6. Use formal writing style, avoiding first and second person and contractions.
7. You will NOT hand in a hard copy to me! You will submit to turnitin.com as well as do peer-reviews of other papers.

SOURCES-

1. A minimum of 5 academic sources are required. (Peer Reviewed)
2. Limit 2 Internet sources. These will need to be of academic value and not "popular" tools used most often (i.e. about.com, Wikipedia.com, "google", etc). **These internet sources DO NOT include database research obtained from Library databases.**

PLAGIARISM-

1. Your final paper will be submitted to Turnitin.com to check for plagiarism.
2. Any instances of plagiarism will result in a zero on the term paper and a referral to the office.
3. There should be no duplicate papers- all papers should have different thesis statements.

EVALUATION-

1. Quality of research (both historical and current content)
2. How well you prove your thesis (not only present a description, draw conclusions).
3. How well you explain your historical points
4. How well you explain the current context
5. Organization, usage, mechanics, and style.

Tips as you begin to work through this paper...

RESEARCH-

1. Write down all reference information for each source used for parenthetical notation.

2. Suggestions:

- Create a list of subject headings or descriptors for the topic, such as “Court cases”, “state laws vs federal laws”, or examples of devolution” for a paper dealing with Federalism. Be careful while researching any Government topic- there is a lot of propaganda from each side of the political spectrum to wade through.
- Use these descriptors to find material in the library’s reference tools.

RESEARCH QUESTION AND THESIS- One or two sentences which briefly answer your topic question.

1. This is the most important part of your paper. Your entire paper should be devoted to answering your research question. Your thesis is your answer to the research question. No information should be added that does not work towards proving your thesis. A strong clear thesis statement usually means a good paper; a weak disorganized thesis guarantees a poor paper.

2. To come up with your thesis, you must complete preliminary research on your topic.

3. Your thesis statement will distinguish your term paper from a research paper. You must formulate your own position or thesis. Become an authority on your topic. Gather information from many different sources to DEVELOP and PROVE your thesis.

4. This is not the time to be “w wishy-washy”. Come right out and say what you think. The thesis, along with the rest of the paper, needs to be written in formal research writing style. Avoid 1st and 2nd person and questions.

5. Your thesis statement must appear in your first copy and final paper as the last sentence in your introductory paragraph. The last paragraph of your term paper needs to have the thesis restated.

TAKING NOTES-

1. Choose your thesis statement before you start taking detailed notes. This helps you to avoid taking notes on what won’t help you prove your thesis.

2. Suggestion: To keep your notes organized, limit yourself to one source and one subject per page. At the top of each page, write down the complete bibliographical information for that book. This information will be used later for Parenthetical Notation and Quotations. If you do not have the bibliographical information for a source, you will not be able to include the research in your paper.

3. DO NOT take notes in complete sentences. This will help you avoid plagiarism. If you must copy something word for word, be sure to use quotation marks around it and note the page number in the margin.

Always record all bibliographical information for all notes.

OUTLINE-

1. An outline forces you to organize your thoughts in preparation for writing your paper.

2. The outline needs to be extensive and written using complete sentences (Main points, thorough subpoints).

After completion of the outline, you should be able to write your paper directly from the information on the outline.

STAGES-

1. The paper should follow your outline but be written in paragraph form with complete sentences.

2. Writing the paper can be the easiest step if you have followed all the other steps.

3. Suggestion: Using your outline, go through your notes and label sections in your notes in colored ink according to where they fit on your outline. Cross through each section of your notes as you write about them in your paper.

4. Have a dictionary handy to check spelling and usage.

5. Have a thesaurus handy to elaborate on word usage.

6. Your paper should go from general to specific to general (intro-body-conclusion).

7. Your introductory paragraph should begin in a general manner. It should set up your topic and become more specific including your thesis statement.

8. The body of your paper is specific support points, researched and explained by you with continual references back to your thesis.

9. Your conclusion should start by restating your generalization that applies your thesis to another topic or another period.

10. Transitional words and sentences are important to link each paragraph to the one before it. A handy list of transitions will be provided.