

CLASSICAL BACCALAUREATE

Government & Politics Exam Overview *Student Study Guide*

EXAM OVERVIEW

The Classical Baccalaureate (CB) Government & Politics exam assesses students' understanding of the foundational principles, institutions, and historical development of the American political system. It evaluates students' knowledge of the structure of American government, as well as their ability to analyze the ideas, debates, and constitutional tensions that have shaped the United States from the Founding era to the present day.

In the CB Government & Politics exam, students encounter the foundational principles of the common good, social contract theory, natural law and natural rights, popular sovereignty and self-determination, republicanism, separation of powers and checks and balances, constitutionalism with due process and the rule of law, federalism, transparency, accountability and good faith, and civil liberties and civil rights. These concepts are not treated as isolated domains to be mastered but as living instruments for forming the free citizen, ordering the student's intellect and will toward the reciprocal flourishing of the individual and the common good.

EXAM DOMAINS

- Principles of American Government
- Institutions of American Government
- Political Values, Interests, Ideologies and Parties
- Other Political Actors: Interest Groups, Social Movements and the Media
- Legislation and Policy

EXAM FORMAT

- American Principles essay
- Institutions of Government essay
- Supreme Court Case analysis
- Comparative documents oral response essay
- Multiple-choice questions

The exam will be administered over two-and-a-half hours, with a print format for the essays and multiple-choice questions. Oral responses will be recorded by administration.

SAMPLE ESSAY QUESTIONS

1. The author of Federalist 62 claims that “the necessity of a senate is not less indicated by the propensity of all single and numerous assemblies, to yield to the impulse of violent passions and to be seduced by factious leaders, into intemperate and pernicious resolutions.” Write an exploratory essay assessing the degree to which the structure of the United States government has created and continues to create resistance against the “impulse of violent passions.”

2. In Volume 1, Part 2, Chapter 4 of “Democracy in America,” Alexis de Tocqueville claims that “America is, among the countries of the world, the one where they have taken most advantage of association and where they have applied that powerful mode of action to a greater diversity of objects.” Write an exploratory essay assessing the role of associations in American politics throughout history and today.

3. Oral: Compare the perspectives of the Declaration of Independence and Thomas Paine’s “Common Sense” with regard to tyranny. Incorporate one textual piece of evidence from each document to support your comparison.

SAMPLE MULTIPLE-CHOICE QUESTIONS

1. Which of the following pieces of legislation created a framework for territorial government, outlining townships, emphasizing the role of education, and banning slavery in the territory?

- A) Homestead Act of 1862
- B) Northwest Ordinance of 1787
- C) Morrill Land-Grant Act of 1862
- D) Missouri Compromise of 1820

2. The "Iron Triangle" in contemporary American politics emphasizes the relationship between congressional committees and what two other entities in creating public policy?

- A) regulatory agencies and special interest groups
- B) Executive Branch and Judicial Branch
- C) House of Representatives and the Senate
- D) circuit courts and regulatory agencies



FOUNDATIONAL DOCUMENTS TO REVIEW

1. Mayflower Compact (1620)
2. Petition of the Virginia House of Burgesses to the House of Commons (December 18, 1764; in response to the Stamp Act)
3. Thomas Paine, “Common Sense” (January, 1776)
4. John Adams, “Thoughts on Government” (April, 1776)
5. United States Declaration of Independence (1776)
6. United States Constitution (1787; original text and amendments)
7. Brutus 1
8. Federalist 10
9. Federalist 39
10. Federalist 51
11. Federalist 62
12. Federalist 70
13. Federalist 78
14. Federal Farmer 4
15. Alexis de Tocqueville, Democracy in America:
 - a. Volume 1, Part 2, Chapter 4, “On Political Association in the United States”
 - b. Volume 2, Part 1, Chapter 5, “How in the United States, Religion Knows How to Make Use of Democratic Instincts”
 - c. Volume 2, Part 2, Chapter 5, “On the Use That the Americans Make of Association in Civil Life”
16. Seneca Falls Declaration of Sentiments (1848)
17. Abraham Lincoln, Fragment on the Constitution and Union (1861)
18. Abraham Lincoln, Gettysburg Address (1863)
19. John Dewey, “The Future of Liberalism” (1935)
20. Franklin D. Roosevelt, 1944 State of the Union Address
21. Milton Friedman, Capitalism and Freedom (Article in New Individualist Review, 1961)
22. Martin Luther King Jr., “I Have a Dream” Speech (1963)
23. Ronald Reagan, “A Time for Choosing” Speech (1964)
24. Antonin Scalia, “Constitutional Interpretation the Old-Fashioned Way” (2005)

REQUIRED SUPREME COURT CASES TO REVIEW

1. Marbury v. Madison (1803)
2. McCulloch v. Maryland (1819)
3. Lochner v. New York (1905)
4. J.W. Hampton, Junior & Co. v. United States (1928)
5. Humphrey's Executor v. United States (1935)
6. Wickard v. Filburn (1942)
7. NLRB v. Hearst Publications Inc. (1944)
8. Everson v. Board of Education (1947)
9. Brown v. Board of Education (1954)
10. Mapp v. Ohio (1961)
11. Baker v. Carr (1962)
12. Griswold v. Connecticut (1965)
13. United States v. Lopez (1995)

