

Philosophical Underpinnings of American Government

Analytical Essay

AP United States Government and Politics

For the first part of your summer assignment, you've read excerpts from the works from the Enlightenment (1600s-1700s) that helped to serve as the basis for American government in the late 18th century. The guided questions (and required research on historical context) were designed to help you examine the main points and arguments most relevant to American government.

You are to take your understanding of these works and integrate it into an analytical essay concerning the roots of American government. The focus for this essay is:

The language and scope of the Virginia Declaration of Rights, the Declaration of Independence, and ultimately the United States Constitution can be traced back to Locke, Montesquieu, Rousseau. How did their works heavily influence Thomas Paine's writing of Common Sense and the writers of the Virginia Declaration of Rights and the Declaration of Independence? And how did all of these writings serve as the philosophical underpinnings of what would become government of the United States of America?

In this essay, you are to draw from specific parts of each philosopher's writings and connect them to various aspects of American government, which includes not only the Virginia Declaration and the Declaration of Independence but also what you know about the organization and powers of the United States government embedded in the Constitution (three branches, Bill of Rights, etc.).

Minimum Requirements

- ✓ 4-5 double-spaced pages
- ✓ Times New Roman, Arial, or another standard font (nothing fancy!)
- ✓ One-inch margins on all sides
- ✓ Simply your name and assignment title (AP Government Summer Assignment) in the top left-hand corner
- ✓ Proper citations and a works cited listed in MLA format if you use any outside interpretive sources, including information from your research on historical context. ***No citations are required if you use only the sources provided you.**