

## ~ What You Need to Know About Government Vocab 101 ~

**Directions:** The following is a list of terms the AP Gov exam writers assume you are familiar with. A number of exam questions will hinge on your understanding of these words. Many of them you have already mastered, but just to make sure we are prepared for anything they throw at us, study them all and be ready for a matching test on the first day of school. If you have any questions you can contact me over the summer at kristilynnbridges@gmail.com.

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1. **Ambassador:** The highest ranking diplomat appointed to represent the United States in a foreign country.
2. **Bandwagon:** Follow the crowd; be with the majority. For example, "A is voting for X, so are B, C, and D. Why not you, too?"
3. **Bankruptcy:** Having an estate or business reorganized for the benefit of creditors by court order.
4. **Beneficiary:** The person legally designated to receive proceeds or benefits from a government program or a will.
5. **Bill:** A proposed law.
6. **Bill of Rights:** The first 10 amendments of the US Constitution, containing guarantees of personal freedoms.
7. **Bipartisan:** Involving cooperation, agreement, and compromise between two major political parties.
8. **Budget:** A policy document allocating burdens (taxes) and benefits (expenditures).
9. **Bureaucracy:** A body of non-elective government officials. An administrative group. A way of organizing people to perform work.
10. **Campaign:** The master plan candidates lay out to guide their electoral strategy.
11. **Capitalism:** An economic system in which people and corporations, not the government, own the means of production (i.e. land and factories) and use them to seek profits.
12. **Challenger:** A person running for election to a political office that he/she does not currently hold. The opposite of the incumbent.
13. **Civil:** Relating to the state or its citizens. For example, civil law deals with issues not under criminal law.
14. **Civilian:** One not on active duty in the armed services or on a police or firefighting force.
15. **Clause:** A distinct article in a formal document i.e. the Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment.
16. **Coalition:** A temporary alliance of distinct parties, persons, or states for joint action.
17. **Commerce:** The exchange or buying and selling of goods and services involving transportation from place to place.
18. **Communism:** A totalitarian system of government in which a single authoritarian party controls state-owned means of production (i.e. land and factories).
19. **Confirmation:** The power of the Senate to approve the president's appointments of people to fill offices such as judge, ambassador and cabinet secretary.
20. **Congressman / Congresswoman:** An elected member of the United States House of Representatives.
21. **Conservative:** A political viewpoint which supports more military spending, a smaller scope of government, traditional family values and seeks to keep taxes low.
22. **Constituents:** The residents in an electoral district who are entitled to elect a representative to a legislative or executive position.
23. **Copyright:** The exclusive legal right to reproduce, publish, sell, or distribute a literary, musical, or artistic work.
24. **Corporation:** A company formed and authorized by law to sell portions of its ownership in the form of stocks, which spreads the risks and rewards of business operations among a larger group of people who cannot be held individual liable for the actions of the corporation.
25. **Democracy:** A system of selecting policymakers and of organizing government so that policy represents and responds to the public's preferences.
26. **Dictatorship:** A form of government in which absolute power is concentrated in a tyrant or a small clique.
27. **District:** A geographical region entitled to elect a member of the US House of Representatives to represent their interests in Congress. There are a total of 435 districts in the US. Each one contains approximately 650,000 people.
28. **Economic:** Relating to the production, distribution, and consumption of goods and services.
29. **Economical:** Operating with little waste or at a savings.
30. **Electorate:** A body of people entitled to vote.
31. **Embargo:** A legal prohibition on commerce, i.e. a trade embargo.
32. **Excise tax:** Any of various tax levied on privileges or on the use of something, often assessed in the form of a license or fee i.e. national park entrance fees and tolls on bridges.
33. **Executive branch:** The portion of the government that carries out laws passed by Congress, consisting of the president, his cabinet and the bureaucratic agencies responsible to him.
34. **Faction:** Self-interested group who might work against the common good.

35. **Federal:** Congress, the President and the Supreme Court, which together make up the highest level of governmental authority in the United States.
36. **Fiscal:** Relating to the federal budget, through taxing, spending, borrowing.
37. **Foreign aid:** Assistance from one country to another, which can be given in the form of grants, loans, military assistance, or even Peace Corps volunteers.
38. **General Election:** The contest between one Democrat and one Republican to determine who will hold the office they are campaigning for.
39. **Grant:** Government funds given for a particular purpose, which do not need to be repaid.
40. **Grassroots:** The people at the source of a political movement; the basic level of an organization.
41. **Gross Domestic Product:** The value of all the goods and services produced in a nation in a year.
42. **Gubernatorial:** Of or relating to the office of governor.
43. **Humanitarian interventions:** Military operations with the goal of relieving human suffering, often these operations do not have a political objective.
44. **Ideology:** A set of beliefs about politics, public policy and public purpose. In the US the common ideologies are liberal and conservative.
45. **Inauguration:** Ceremonial induction into office, which includes an elected official taking the oath of office.
46. **Income tax:** Shares of individual wages and corporate revenues paid to the government.
47. **Incumbent:** One that holds an elected position.
48. **Indicted:** To be formally charged with a crime. The stage before a trial is held.
49. **Intelligence:** Information concerning an enemy or possible enemy; also an agency engaged in obtaining such information.
50. **Interstate commerce:** Commercial activity involving one of more states, crossing state boundaries.
51. **Intrastate commerce:** Commercial activity occurring within the boundaries on one state, no crossing of state boundaries.
52. **Judicial branch:** The Supreme Court and lower federal courts, whose job it is to interpret laws passed by Congress and carried out by the executive branch.
53. **Jurisdiction:** Legal authority over an area or a person.
54. **Labor union:** An organization of workers formed for the purpose of advancing its members' interests in respect to wages, benefits, and working conditions.
55. **Lame duck:** A person at the end of his/her term of elected office. People stop taking a lame duck seriously because they know he/she can't run for office again.
56. **Law:** A rule or order passed through both houses of Congress that it is obligatory to observe.
57. **Legislation:** The laws made by a legislative body.
58. **Legislative branch:** Congress, the branch responsible for making the laws, which are then carried out by the executive branch and interpreted by the judicial branch.
59. **Legislative session:** The time period a legislative body is scheduled to meet. This can be Congress or the individual state legislatures, which have varying schedules.
60. **Legislator:** An elected representative whose job it is to vote on proposed legislation. These can be members of Congress or members of the individual state legislatures.
61. **Legislature:** A body of persons having the power to legislate; an organized body having the authority to make laws for a political unit. This term can refer to Congress or the individual state legislatures.
62. **Liberal:** A political viewpoint which opposes more military spending, favors taxing the rich more, supports more generous government programs, and advocates for less government involvement in personal lives.
63. **Litigation:** Use of the courts to resolve a conflict.
64. **Malpractice lawsuit:** A case arising from an incident where a patient or patient's family perceives a dereliction of professional duty or a failure to exercise an ordinary degree of professional skill or learning on the part of a physician, which results in injury, loss, or damage.
65. **Mandate:** An authorization to act given to a representative, i.e. a mandate from the people.
66. **Maritime:** Of or relating to navigation or commerce on the sea.
67. **Minimum wage:** A wage fixed by legal authority as the least that may be paid to employed persons.
68. **Monopoly:** Exclusive possession or control of a commodity through legal privilege or command of supply.
69. **Municipal:** Of or relating to city government.
70. **National Guard:** A militia force recruited by each state of the United States, equipped by the federal government, jointly maintained and subject to the call of either.
71. **Naturalization:** To confer the rights of a nation on someone; to grant citizenship.
72. **Nomination:** The official endorsement of a candidate for office by a political party.
73. **Nonpartisan:** Free from party affiliation, bias, or designation.

74. **Outsourcing:** The trend of contracting lower paid and less skilled jobs to be performed outside the United States at a reduced cost to the producing company.
75. **Partisan:** A firm adherent to a party; especially one exhibiting blind, prejudiced, and unreasoning allegiance.
76. **Party platform:** Statement of a political party's beliefs and policy goals.
77. **Party polarization:** Parties becoming more extreme and refusing to work together; opposite of bipartisanship.
78. **Patent:** The exclusive legal right to reproduce, publish, sell, or distribute an invention.
79. **Petition:** A formal written request made to an official person or organized body (as a court). In some states petitions are voter-generated ideas that are placed on the ballot.
80. **Plurality:** A number of votes cast for a candidate in a contest of more than two candidates that is greater than the number cast for any other candidate but not a majority.
81. **Police Powers:** State governments' power over issues relating to health, safety, welfare and morals.
82. **Pigeonhole:** Refusing to act on a bill, and thereby killing it.
83. **Propaganda:** Ideas, facts, or allegations spread deliberately to further one's cause or to damage an opposing cause.
84. **Protestant:** Any version of Christianity outside of Catholicism.
85. **Pundit:** Someone who offers his or her opinion on a particular subject area (most typically political analysis, the social sciences or sport) on which they are knowledgeable.
86. **Ratify:** To approve and sanction formally; to confirm, i.e. to ratify a treaty.
87. **Representative:** An elected official standing or acting for his/ her constituents.
88. **Republic:** A form of government in which leaders acquire the power to govern by means of a competitive struggle for people's votes A.K.A. Representative Democracy.
89. **Revenue:** Sources of money for the government.
90. **Simple majority:** at least 51% of the vote
91. **Sovereign:** To be legally and politically independent.
92. **Status quo:** The existing state of affairs.
93. **Statute:** A law.
94. **Stem cell research:** Scientific inquiry into the use of human stem cell (cells which are unassigned and can become any type of cell) to heal various diseases. A point of controversy between Democrats, who support all types of stem cell research and Republican who do not support embryonic stem cell research.
95. **Subpoena:** A writ commanding a person designated in it to appear in court under a penalty for failure.
96. **Subsidy:** A grant by a government to a private person or company to assist an enterprise deemed advantageous to the public; often times given to farmers to support the continued production of a necessary crop.
97. **Suffrage:** The right to vote.
98. **Supermajority:** a requirement for a proposal to gain a specified level of support greater than a 51% simple majority.
99. **Territory:** A part of the United States not included within any state and therefore under federal jurisdiction.
100. **Treaty:** A contract in writing between the US and one or more governments, signed by the president and ratified by a 2/3 vote in the Senate.
101. **Warrant:** A written order issued by a judge to make an arrest, a seizure, or a search.