



# ACTIVE LEARNING IN A REQUIRED LOWER- DIVISION COURSE

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## Sample Assignments

The Seven Articles of the Constitution

Article 1:  
Legislative Branch

- **House:** two-year terms, elected directly by the people.
- **Senate:** six-year terms (staggered so that only one-third of the Senate changes in any given election), appointed by state legislature (changed in 1913 to direct election).
- **Expressed powers of the national government:** collecting taxes, borrowing money, regulating commerce, declaring war, and maintaining an army and a navy; all other power belongs to the states, unless deemed otherwise by the *elastic ("necessary and proper") clause*.
- **Exclusive powers of the national government:** states are expressly forbidden to issue their own paper money, tax imports and exports, regulate trade outside their own borders, and impair the obligation of contracts; these powers are the exclusive domain of the national government.

Article 2:  
Executive Branch

- **Presidency:** four-year terms (limited in 1951 to a maximum of two terms), elected indirectly by the electoral college.
- **Powers:** can recognize other countries, negotiate treaties, grant reprieves and pardons, convene Congress in special sessions, and veto congressional enactment.

Article 3:  
Judicial Branch

- **Supreme Court:** lifetime terms, appointed by the president with the approval of the Senate.
- **Powers:** include resolving conflicts between federal and state laws, determining whether power belongs to the national government or the states, and setting controversies between citizens of different states.

Article 4:  
National Unity & Power

- **Reciprocity among states:** establishes that each state must give "full faith and credit" to official acts of other states, and guarantees citizens of any state the "privileges and immunities" of every other state, requires states to extradite individuals fleeing justice back to state where crime was committed
- **Admission of new states:** no new state within the jurisdiction of current state; have to have consent of states to join two or more states or parts of states to make a new state
- **Protection:** federal government guarantees republican form of government for the states and protect them from invasion; help protect against domestic unrest when asked by the state government

Article 5:  
Amending the Constitution

- **Procedure:** most commonly used requires approval by two-thirds of Congress and adoption by three-fourths of the states

Article 6:  
National Supremacy

- The Constitution and national law are the supreme law of the land and cannot be overruled by state law.
- No religious test to serve in any office or public trust in the United States.

Article 7:  
Ratification

- The Constitution became effective when approved by nine states.
- **THIS ARTICLE CANNOT BE AMENDED IN THIS ASSIGNMENT**

Proposed Amendments

Describe your proposed amendments in the spaces below

Article \_\_\_\_\_

Article \_\_\_\_\_

Article \_\_\_\_\_

Article \_\_\_\_\_

Article \_\_\_\_\_

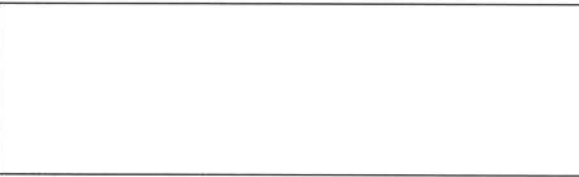
Article \_\_\_\_\_

Article \_\_\_\_\_

Printed Name: \_\_\_\_\_

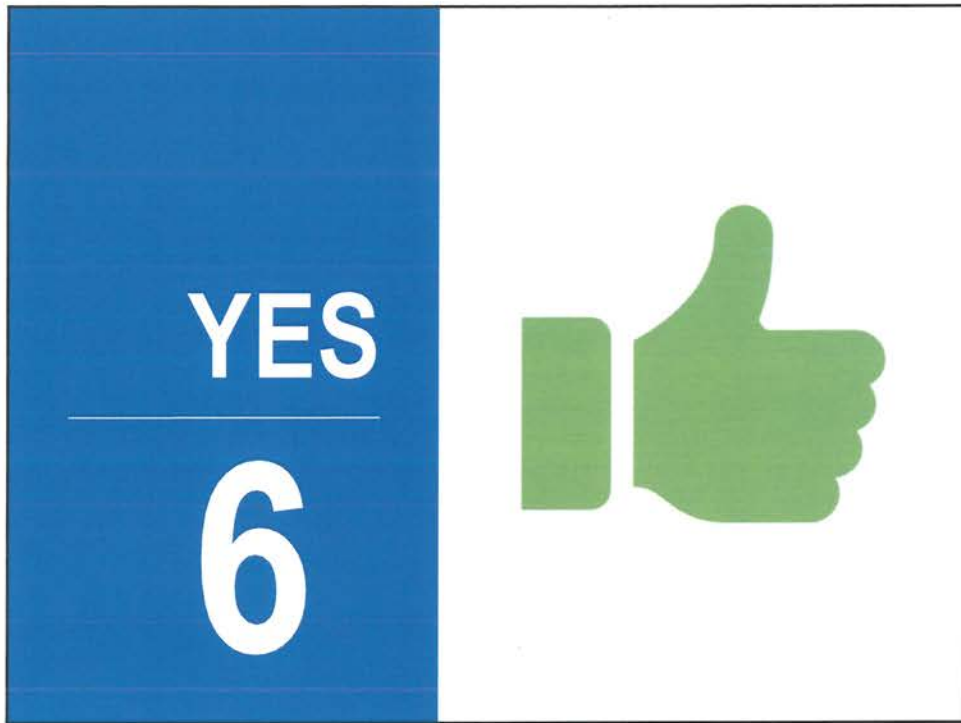
Section: \_\_\_\_\_

Of your proposed amendments, which ONE amendment do you wish to present for a vote?

Article \_\_\_\_\_ { 

State number \_\_\_\_\_

What arguments do you want to make to support your amendment?  
Why should the other states vote in favor of your amendment?



### Creating a Government

We often take our system of government for granted, without giving much thought into how it was created.

Thinking back to our discussions and the readings on American Democracy, the founding and Constitution, and federalism, put yourself in the position of "framer." You have been asked to form/create a governmental system for a large (both in terms of area and population) and diverse country.

When creating your government, you will need to address the following questions:

- What kind of governmental system would you create? (answer on page 2)
- What types of institutions would it have? (answer on page 2)
- What powers would it be given? (answer on page 3)
- Why would this government be the best option for a large and diverse country? (answer on page 3)

Use the following questions to help you design your government.

- **What kind of governmental system would you adopt?** Remember, regime type and structure are not the same thing. Pick **ONE** type of regime and **ONE** structure of government.

Regime Type		Structure of Government
Authoritarian	Democracy	
• Autocracy	• Direct Democracy	• Confederation
• Oligarchy	• Representative	• Federal
• Totalitarian	• Democracy (Republic)	• Unitary

- **What types of institutions should carry out different activities?** When we think about institutions, we are generally thinking about parts of the legislative, executive, and judicial branches in the US government. But, you do not need to limit yourself to the structure used by the US.
  - What are the institutions?
  - What can these institutions do?
  - How are people selected to serve in these institutions?
  - Are there specific qualifications needed to serve in office?
  - How long are their terms in office?
  - Would you limit the number of times someone can serve in office?
- **What powers would your government have?** When thinking about the powers given to the government, consider two different parts:
  - What should be the role of government? (Think back to the discussions about why we have government—this is more of a theoretical description of *why* we have government)
  - What are the most important functions of government? (This is more of a policy question—a concrete description of *what* government should do)

Please make sure that you are carefully reading all the information provided (there are some helpful tips listed above). Additionally, please make sure that you are clearly explaining your answers **using complete sentences** and that you are directly addressing the specific questions asked.

**When you are creating your government, please remember the following:**

- All of your writing should be clear and legible. **Submissions that are illegible will not be graded and will be scored 0.**
- Please make sure that you are directly address the specific questions asked and following all instructions listed above. **Assignments that are not on topic or do not follow the instructions will not be graded and will be scored 0.**

Printed Name:

Section:

### What kind of governmental system would you adopt?

### What types of institutions would it have?

**What powers would it be given?**

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**Why would this government be the best option for a large and diverse country?**

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### Creating a Political Party & Party Platform

State Law Concerning Establishment of Political Parties (<http://www.statutes.legis.state.tx.us/?link=EL>)

ELECTION CODE

TITLE 10. POLITICAL PARTIES

SUBTITLE A. INTRODUCTORY PROVISIONS

§161.001. INHERENT POWERS. A political party retains all of its inherent powers except as limited by this code.

§161.002. PARTY NAME.

(a) The name of a political party as printed on the ballot for an election may not consist of more than three words.

(b) A party may not select for its name a name previously assumed by another existing party.

§163.003. CONSISTENCY WITH STATE LAW. The rules adopted by a political party must be consistent with state law.

#### Instructions:

You are being asked to create a political party under the rules and guidelines listed in Title 10 of the Texas Election Code. The questions listed on pages 2 – 4 (attached) are designed to guide you through this process. When creating your party, keep in mind the purpose of political parties: parties are mechanisms to get people who share common viewpoints elected to government office. Additionally, since political parties are, by definition, comprised of groups of people, you cannot complete this assignment by yourself. Please write the first and last names of those you work with on page 5.

Please make sure that you are **clearly and directly** addressing the specific questions that are asked. Additionally, please make sure that your writing is legible. If I cannot read what you have written, I cannot grade your assignment.

#### When you are creating your party, please remember the following:

- All of your writing should be clear and legible. **Submissions that are illegible will not be graded and will be scored 0.**
- Please make sure that you are directly address the specific questions asked and following all instructions listed above. **Assignments that are not on topic or do not follow the instructions will not be graded and will be scored 0.**
- Take your time and make sure that you are completing the whole assignment. **Incomplete assignments will not be graded and will be scored 0 .**

Printed Name:

Section:

You are responsible for the creation of a new political party. In order to accomplish this, you will need to do several things:

Legal Requirement

What is the **name** of your party (must be 3 words or less)?

Beliefs & Values

Using **complete sentences**, how would you classify the **ideology** of your party?

Marketing

What is your party's **slogan**?

What is your party's **logo**?

Since all elections are conducted at the state level, **using complete sentences**, describe which **areas** or which **voters of Texas** will your party target? (Which demographic groups would your party target? Who you think would be most likely to vote for you party?)

Party Platform

Using complete sentences, describe the top 3 issues for your party.

Party Platform

Using complete sentences, what solutions does your party propose for each of these issues?



Please list the names of the other students that you worked with to create your party. You **must** work with other students to create your party, and **you will not get credit for the assignment if you do not create your party and platform without working with other students.** Please make sure that the names written below are clear and legible, with both first and last names included.

1. \_\_\_\_\_

2. \_\_\_\_\_

3. \_\_\_\_\_

4. \_\_\_\_\_