A.P. UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT and POLITICS SUMMER

Dear Student,

Sorry for the informal greeting; I do not know your name yet. If I did know your name, I would gladly place that in the greeting, but alas I do not...yet. You may, however, know my name. I am Mr. Lambert and I will be your teacher for A.P. United States Government and Politics this coming school year at Pikesville High School. Greetings and salutations!

You will have an opportunity to earn college credit for this course through the College Board by taking the AP Exam in May of this coming year. This date is already set (wild, right?!?) and will be provided to you on our first day of class. This is a rigorous course that moves quickly; never fear! My job is to help you in the exploration of the structure and function of the United States government as it is designed, along with the popular interpretation of such in modern society.

This class, and the instruction I value as an educator, requires you to think critically about concrete examples and apply them to the abstract principles that make up these ridiculous rules we call laws. Success in this class will come from effort, yes, but depends less on you telling me what something is and more about what something means. A singular event may mean many different things! But being able to explain what something means for the people is what makes the study of society really cool.

This summer assignment is designed to help stimulate your background knowledge necessary for examining the United States government in depth as well as the resulting political structure. It is to be due on the first day of class; late submissions will be accepted up to two weeks late, per Baltimore County Public School policy, however putting off these assessments will be noticeable and may significantly impact your achievement in this course. The summer assignment is as follows:

- Current Events Journal
- Constitution “Scavenger Hunt’

I look forward to our studies this year; I hope you are excited to examine what makes American society so interesting and complex! If you have any questions or concerns regarding the summer assignment, please do not hesitate to be in contact via email: jlambert2@bcps.org.

Have an enjoyable and thought-provoking summer!

Yours truly,

Mr. Lambert
Throughout the summer, track an issue of current events and create a journal entry at least five (5) times. Two events should be examined in June, two events in July, and one event in August. “An issue of current events” means this: read at least one current event each week from a reputable news source and report on the topic. These topics may change each week, but a similar theme may emerge as you investigate the happenings of the United States.

You may select any topic that interests you; yes, that means controversial topics are allowed. These topics are in the news and in our lives, so it is best to investigate them and think about them critically so we may make informed decisions about their use in our lives. If you need some help as to what a good topic might be to examine, issues of significant importance to American government and politics take all shapes and sizes. Think about what the President is up to, what Congress is debating or legislation they are passing, constitutional issues or major federal court decisions that concern them, continuing debate over issues, and/or international events the United States is involved in are good places to start.

You can access current events of through the following:

- Read a print or online version of a major newspaper
  - The Baltimore Sun is accepted in this category
- Watch a national/international news broadcast
  - ABC, Al Jazeera, BBC, CBS, CNN, FOX News, MSNBC, NBC, PBS
- Read a major news magazine or political journal
  - Print or online versions are both acceptable!
- Read articles from an online political journalism website
  - Five-Thirty-Eight, Politico
  - Please note that “far-left” (i.e. The Daily Kos) and “far-right” (i.e. Breitbart) sites are not included. These sites display greater bias to political ideology, have a propensity to play on conspiracy, are incendiary, and are propaganda. Examination of such sites will make your achievement on this assignment challenging.
  - Opinion-based interpretations of current events, likewise, are someone else’s ideas and not yours. “Op-eds” are not an acceptable article for use in the completion of this assignment.
- Watch daily or weekly current affairs programming
  - Face the Nation, Hardball, Meet the Press, This Week

After examination of your topic, be sure to complete the following in either typed or written format:

- Date
- Source
  - Cite in MLA format
  - Check out http://www.easybib.com/ for help in this!
- One paragraph summarizing the event
  - Copy and paste will not be accepted and will invalidate your effort for the given journal entry.
- One paragraph with your analysis
  - Significance of the item, personal opinion and thoughts on the topic
  - Be sure to support your opinion with reasoning! Without this your opinion is simply an opinion and not a thought, and an opinion, my dude, is wrong.
Complete the following analysis of the Constitution of the United States of America. Responses may be either typed or handwritten, however copy and paste will not be accepted and will invalidate your effort for the given response.

1. Identify the basic function of each branch of American government:
   a. Legislative
   b. Executive
   c. Judicial

2. Describe Article I, Sec. 1.
   a. What is the meaning of bicameral?
   b. Why is the legislature created in this manner?

3. Describe Article I, Sec. 2. – House of Representatives
   a. Term of office?
   b. Qualifications?
   c. Apportionment? What impacts apportionment? Why was this done?

4. Describe Article I, Sec. 3. – Senate
   a. Term of office?
   b. Qualifications?

5. Identify the enumerated powers.
   a. There are eighteen of these!

6. Describe Article II. – Executive
   a. Term of office?
   b. Qualifications?
   c. Domestic powers?
   d. Foreign powers?

7. Describe Article III. – Judiciary
   a. Court established by the Constitution?
   b. Power of the Court?

8. Describe Article IV.
   a. This includes the important clauses and their effect on American government!

9. Describe Article V.
   a. This includes how the document may be amended!

10. Describe Article VI.
    a. This includes important clauses and their effect on American government!

11. Describe Article VII.
    a. This includes important clauses and their effect on American government!