



**LHS Wants You For
AP US Government!**

Students are to read Chris Matthews' book Hardball: How Politics is Played Told by One Knows the Game. (1988; published by Free Press) The assignment/book review is a combination of a book review and series of hypothetical situations to respond to based on what you learn from the book.

The assignment should be typed. It is due on the second day of school by 7:30AM (submitted via TurnItIn.com; class ID number 10094907; password is *politics*). We will also have a Socratic seminar on the text on the second day of school.

PART I: Complete a book review

Reading is absolutely essential in order for you to be successful in college and in your career. It is also necessary for you to be a generally well-informed person. History is made up of literally millions of fascinating, funny and exciting stories. I believe it is important to your experience of history for you to do some in-depth reading in United States government and politics. Therefore, you will be required to do a first semester book review.

Your book review will be made up of three parts. The first part will be a brief summary of the content of the book. It will be necessary for you to write in broad generalizations. Your paragraph should give the reader a good idea of what the book is about and what the author believes about the subject (his thesis). For instance the book might be about the American presidency, and the author's thesis is that the power of the office depends on the timeframe and circumstances. Another example would be that the book was about Kennedy's foreign policy, and the author's thesis is that it was unsuccessful because Kennedy was so busy trying to appear tough, that he was unwilling to seek compromise.

The second part of the review will be a critical analysis of the book as a resource for understanding the American Government. In this section you will discuss things like the author's objectivity, extensiveness of the citations, usefulness of the bibliography, assumptions made by the author, and any other factors that determine the quality of the book as a resource. In other words explain if the book is informative, reliable and helpful for someone who desires to begin an in depth study of the topic.

The third part of the review will be your own subjective comments about the book. One thing you should include in this section is what you **specifically** liked or didn't like about it. For example, don't say, "It was confusing." Say, "The author went into so much detail about the military background of all the officers in the battle, that the events of the current battle were unclear." Another thing you might include in this part of the review is what you learned from the book that was important. You could point out areas in which you disagreed with the author, or things that you think the author should have added to make the book more complete.

The review should be typed and double-spaced. You must include the author, title and publishing information at the end of the review. You will be graded on clear, error-free writing and the quality of your evaluation.¹

PART II: HYPOTHETICAL SITUATIONS

Answer the following hypothetical situations, using examples from what you've read, and page numbers in parentheses to support your responses. There are correct responses based on the book. If you have an incorrect response but the correct explanation/supporting evidence, you can receive some credit.

1. You are a member of the House of Representatives and a member of the House Appropriations Committee. This committee is responsible for authorizing money for programs/bills passed by Congress. You would like to obtain funding for a major highway in your district that will cost around \$20 million to complete. Should you seek all \$20 million in one year, or \$5 million in each of the next four years? Explain why.
2. You are serving your third term in the House and would like to one day be either Speaker of the House or Majority Leader (highest ranking member of the majority party in the House). The current Speaker offers you either a seat on the Ways and Means Committee (committee responsible for all bills dealing with money/revenue), or the chairmanship of your party's Congressional Campaign Committee. The former is a highly coveted seat that will enable you to influence tax Legislation that could have a significant impact on the economy; the later will require that you spend hundreds of hours raising money for your party's congressional candidates. Which should you choose? Explain why.
3. You are a member of the House and are exploring running for the Senate. If you decide to run, you will need to assemble a campaign organization quickly so that you can expand your political base beyond your own congressional district. How should you go about building a devoted core of supporters?
4. You are a Senator who is hoping to one day run for President. You learn that a reporter from *Newsweek* is interviewing one of your old business associates about a real estate deal that went bad several years ago and led to your being sued for breach of contract. At the time, you agreed to settle out of court by agreeing to pay the plaintiff a substantial sum of money. How should you handle the potentially damaging story? Explain why.
5. You are a prominent governor who has recently been nominated for President. Your opponent has begun running highly critical television ads which you believe distort your record. Do you ignore the charges on the grounds that it is unseemly to stoop to your opponent's level, or do you quickly and aggressively respond to each charge with an emphatic rebuttal? Explain why.
6. You are the campaign manager for a presidential candidate. Your boss is facing an uphill battle in the upcoming New Hampshire primary (historically the first primary) and is not expected to win, but could finish a distant second or third. In your press

¹ Adapted from: Karen Fairbank, Thomas Jefferson School, St. Louis, MO 63127

briefing, should you predict a landslide victory, a strong second place finish, or a respectable third place finish? Explain why.

7. You have just been elected President and are now seeking to fill important positions in your administration. Several party leaders have urged you to appoint as your chief of staff the campaign manager of one of your rivals for the presidential nomination. Should you appoint this person? Explain why/why not.

If you have any questions about the course, text, or what is expected of you in order to complete this assignment, do not hesitate to contact me via e-mail at AlmeidaR@lincolnps.org.

