

American Government/Civics Parent Guide (9th Grade)

Unit 1

Connecting Themes in American Government/Civics

Unit Focus

This unit is designed to teach the themes used in the course: Rule of law, distribution of power, beliefs and ideals, conflict resolution, and individuals, groups, and institutions.

Concepts Explored

- How beliefs and ideals of a society influence the social, political, and economic decisions of that society.
- Societies resolve conflicts through legal procedures, force, or compromise.
- Distribution of power in government is based on documents and laws combined with contemporary values and beliefs.
- How individuals, groups, and institutions make decisions that impact a society through intended and unintended consequences.
- Understand that in a democracy, rule of law influences the behavior of citizens, establishes procedures for making policies, and limits the power of government.

How You Can Support Your Child

You can support your child by providing them quality text/resources related to the unit content. Below you will find a few suggested resources.

Print Resources (suggested text only others may be used)

- Newspapers and magazines related to the American Government and Civics themes (Rule of Law, Distribution of Power in Government, Ideals and Beliefs, Conflict, How Individuals, Groups, and Institutions make decisions)

Digital Resources (suggested text only others may be used)

- CNN - <http://www.cnn.com/> - Various current events related to the connecting themes.
- Atlanta Journal Constitution - Ajc.com – Current events related to specific news and issues in Georgia.
- New York Times – <http://learning.blogs.nytimes.com/> - Search for current events and activities related to each theme in the New York Times.

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Unit 2

Your Day in Court is Coming

Unit Focus

The focus of this unit is on the structure of the courts and their role in maintaining the balance of powers and protecting civil liberties. The unit also considers the study of crime and what happens to individuals who commit criminal acts and become part of the criminal justice system. Emphasis is placed on an individual's due process rights as they apply throughout the criminal justice process.

Concepts Explored

- How beliefs and ideals of a society influence the social, political, and economic decisions of that society.
- How societies resolve conflicts through legal procedures, force, or compromise.
- Understand that in a democracy, rule of law influences the behavior of citizens, establishes procedures for making policies, and limits the power of government.

How You Can Support Your Child

You can support your child by providing them quality text/resources related to the unit content. Below you will find a few suggested resources.

Print Resources (suggested text only others may be used)

- Do the Crime, Do the Time, Juvenile Criminals and Adult Justice in the American Court System; Author: Larry Mays
- Read landmark cases that includes legal history and charts and diagrams depicting the court systems.

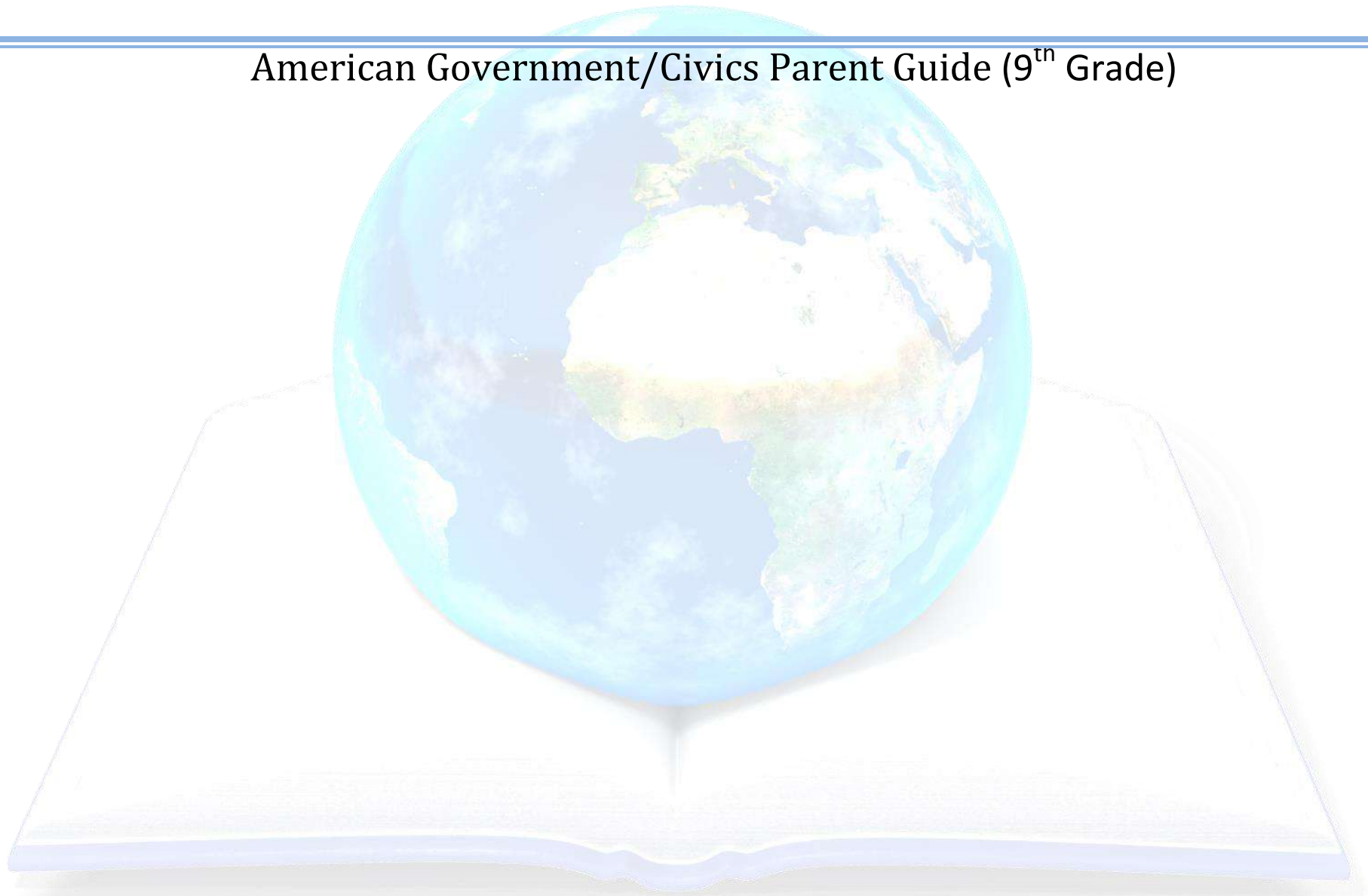
Digital Resources (suggested text only others may be used)

- School House Rock Video - www.youtube.com/watch?v=tyeJ55o3E10
- American Government and Civics Links to Learning – Online quizzes and content resources aligned to each standard
http://www.linkstolearning.com/links/Atlanta/government_civics1.html#ssc2

Community Resources - Obtain information from local law enforcement and the courts regarding the criminal justice system and civil liberties.

- Atlanta Police Department - <http://www.atlantapd.org/supportservices.aspx>
- Superior Court of Fulton County - <http://www.fultoncourt.org/programs/>
- State Bar of Georgia - <http://www.gabar.org/forthepublic/forteachersstudents/lre/index.cfm>

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Unit 3

Rules Were Made to be Broken...or at Least Interpreted

Unit Focus

The unit focuses on the legislative branch of government. An emphasis is placed on the powers and organization of the legislative branch and the role of lobbyists and special interest groups in the legislative process.

Concepts Explored

- Distribution of power in government is based on documents and laws combined with contemporary values and beliefs.
- Individuals, groups, and institutions make decisions during the legislative process that impact a society through intended and unintended consequences.
- Role of lobbyists and special interests groups in the legislative process.
- In a democracy, rule of law influences the behavior of citizens, establishes procedures for making policies, and limits the power of government.

How You Can Support Your Child

You can support your child by providing them quality text/resources related to the unit content. Below you will find a few suggested resources.

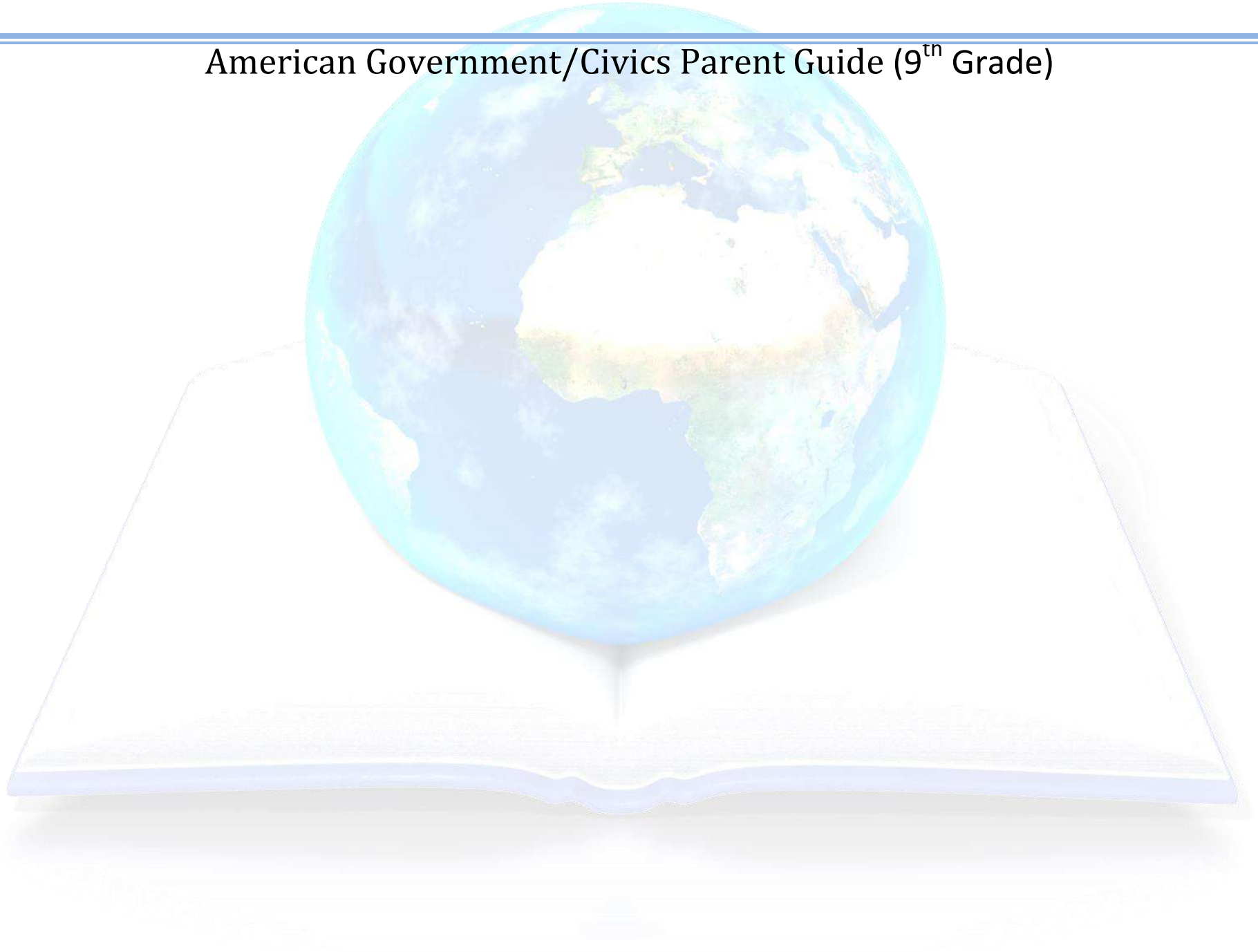
Print Resources (suggested text only others may be used)

- What is the Legislative Branch?, Author: James Dow
- The Congress, A Look at the Legislative Branch, Authors: Robyn Nelson and Sandy Donovan

Digital Resources (suggested text only others may be used)

- http://www.linkstolearning.com/links/Atlanta/government_civics1.html#sscg4 – Information aligned to each standard to help students obtain a better understanding of key concepts.
- <http://www.firstgov.gov/Agencies/Federal/Legislative.shtml> - Resources to help students learn about the legislative branch
- http://www.socialstudieshelp.com/Lesson_13_Notes.htm - Students can explore the powers and organization of the legislative branch.

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Unit 4

Government and the Economy: Superhero or Villain?

Unit Focus

This unit focuses on the executive branch of government. Emphasis is placed on the role of the executive branch in administering policy.

Concepts Explored

- How a democracy, rule of law influences the behavior of citizens, establishes procedures for making policies, and limits the power of government: limited powers of a president.
- Societies resolve conflicts through legal procedures, force, or compromise: resolution of conflicts between the president and other branches of government, and impeachment.
- Individuals, groups, and institutions make decisions that impact a society through intended and unintended consequences: presidential decisions and its impact.

How You Can Support Your Child

You can support your child by providing them quality text/resources related to the unit content. Below you will find a few suggested resources.

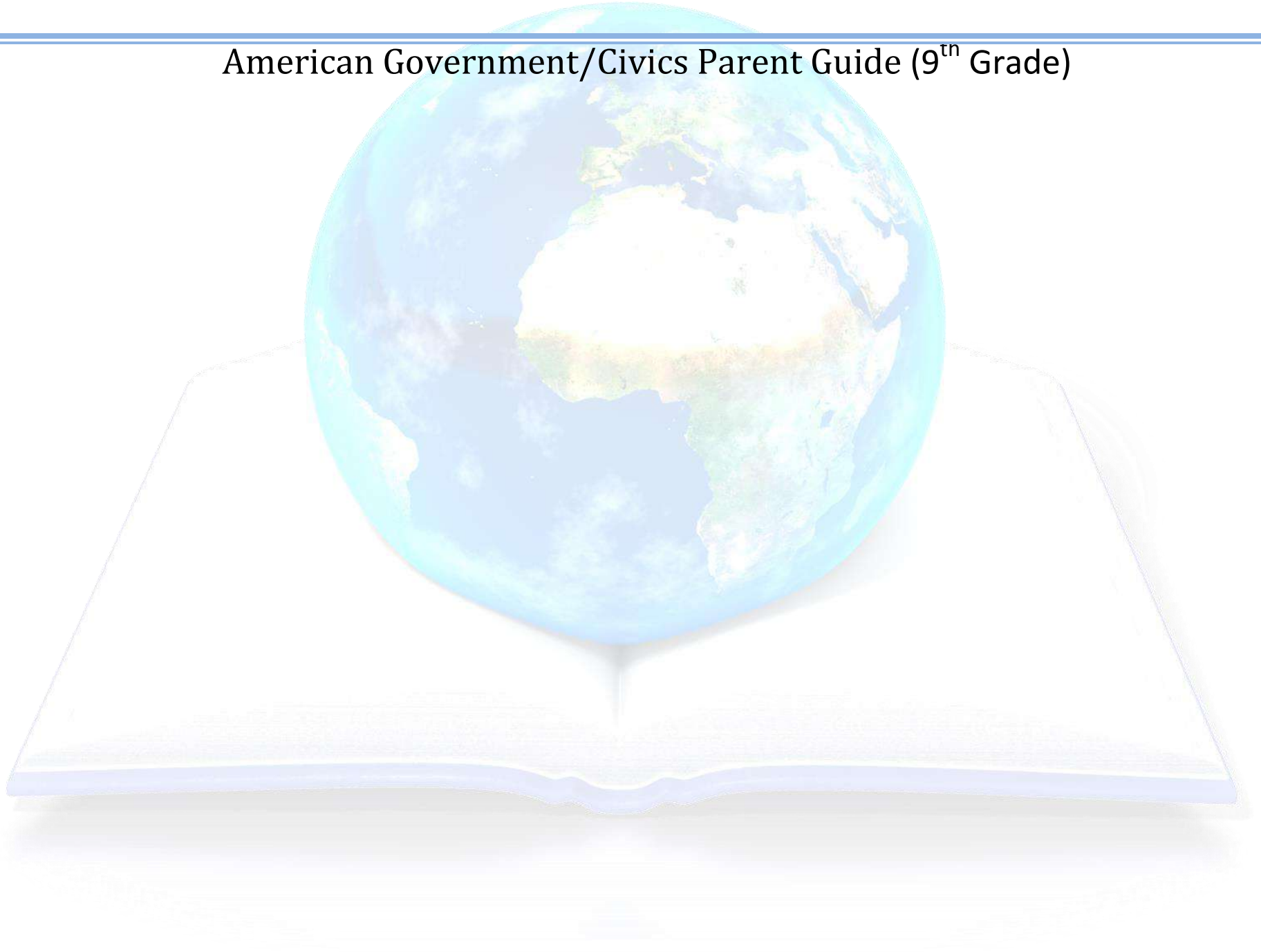
Print Resources (suggested text only others may be used)

- The Executive Branch, Author: James Dow
- The Impeachment Process, Author: John Murphy

Digital Resources (suggested text only others may be used)

- Links to Learning – Online quizzes and information pertaining to each standard.
<http://www.linkstolearning.com/links/Atlanta/government - civics1.html>
- Atlanta Virtual Schools (MyBackpack) – Modules aligned to the standards -
<https://mybackpack.apsk12.org/Pages/myBackpack.aspx>

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American Government/Civics

Unit 5 Title: America's Federal System

Course Overview

Unit Focus:

In this unit, students will explore the political philosophies that influenced the Founding Fathers in the writing of the Declaration of Independence, the structure of the U.S. Constitution, and the principles of popular sovereignty, federalism, separation of powers, and checks and balances.

Concepts Explored

- How rule of law manifests itself in the Constitution
- Effectiveness of the Constitution at distributing power in terms of checks and balances and separation of powers
- Comparison of America's distribution of power with other forms of government in the world
- How beliefs and ideals found in our early government documents have changed or remained the same through our country's development
- How beliefs and ideals of a society influence the social, economic, and political decisions of the society

How You Can Support Your Child

You can support your child by providing them quality text that is directly correlated with the content in this unit. There are a host of print and digital resources that are available for your child to read, as well as reliable online interactive sites that will help your child understand the information.

Print Resources (suggested text only others may be used)

- America's Constitution: A Biography (Amar)
- How Congress Works and Why You Should Care (Hamilton)

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Digital Resources (suggested text only others may be used)

- American Government/Civics Links to Learning – Activities and information pertaining to each standard
[http://www.linkstolearning.com/links/Atlanta/government - civics1.html#ssc1](http://www.linkstolearning.com/links/Atlanta/government_-_civics1.html#ssc1)
- E-Books - **Atlanta- Fulton Public Library** allows library card holders to check out e-books and e-audiobooks online. More information is available at:
<http://afpls.lib.overdrive.com/5B5F9ABA-BAA0-40E6-AAAF-684C5522A7AE/10/725/en/Default.htm>
- **Project Gutenberg** offers over 38,000 free e-books: choose among free electronic published books, free kindle books, download them or read them online. Some books are available as audio books. No fee or registration is required.
Website: <http://www.gutenberg.org/>
- Georgia Virtual Learning (MyBackpack) Online Modules Aligned to the standards (videos, quizzes, and notes)
- Civic Games - Students are placed in different civic roles and play games related to real-world problems and issues -
<https://www.icivics.org/games>

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Unit 6

Why This Form of Government? How Did We Get Here?

Unit Focus

In this unit, students will obtain an understanding of decisions made at the Constitutional Convention, the historical basis for our government, and the fundamental principles found in the Constitution, checks and balances and separation of powers, as well as a framework for comparing our government with other styles of government; the need for a constitution, the case of Marbury v. Madison, and historical documents that influenced the writers of the Constitution and Declaration of Independence.

Concepts Explored

- In a democracy, rule of law influences the behavior of citizens, establishes procedures for making policies, and limits the power of government.
- How rule of law manifest itself in the Constitution.
- How effective is the Constitution at distributing power in terms of checks and balances and separation of powers
- Comparison of the American distribution of power with other forms of government around the world.
- Conflict of ideals with regards to the ratification of the Constitution.

How You Can Support Your Child

You can support your child by providing them quality text/resources related to the unit content. Below you will find a few suggested resources.

Print Resource (suggested text only others may be used)

- Democracy, Author: James Laxer, 2009

Digital Resource (suggested text only others may be used)

- Bill of Rights Institute – Resources explain the role of the judiciary
<http://billofrightsinstitute.org/resources/educator-resources/americanpedia/americanpedia-documents/judiciary-act-1789/>
- The Constitution – This website contains links to documents that influenced the Constitution and the Declaration of Independence.
<http://www.constitution.org>

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Unit 7 Individuals, Groups, and Choices

Unit Focus

In this unit, students will explore two major aspects of American Government, examine the importance of choices made by political parties and voters in election years, examine the importance of individual freedoms found in the first amendment, students a better understanding of why the first amendment is important, as well as a better understanding of civic participation in this country. Clarify the election process, rules and laws governing elections, and amendments that expand the right to vote.

Concepts Explored

- How are rules or laws that govern the election process beneficial to the citizens of America?
- How suffrage has impacted changing beliefs and ideals over time
- Role beliefs and ideals have played in interpreting the first amendment over time
- Importance of being an informed voter
- How do actions taken by individuals, groups, and institutions expand and inhibit the first amendment freedoms

How You Can Support Your Child

You can support your child by providing them quality text/resources related to the unit content. Below you will find a few suggested resources.

Print Resource (suggested text only others may be used)

- Reforming the Electoral Process in America Toward More Democracy in the 21st Century, Author: Brian L. Fife

Digital Resources(suggested text only others may be used)

- Bill of Rights Institute – Primary source documents and other resources explaining political parties and voting and the first amendment freedoms.
<http://billofrightsinstitute.org/resources/educator-resources/amicapedia/amicapedia-documents/judiciary-act-1789/>
- Library of Congress – Primary Documents in American History – The Bill of Rights,
<http://loc.gov/rr/program/bib/ourdocs/billofrights.html>

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