

American Government:

Unit 4—State and Local Government

"All politics is local"

-- Former Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill

Despite the fact that most attention in politics goes to high profile positions such as the President, Senators and Representatives, most of the direct impacts of government on your life come from decisions made much closer to home. State, regional, and local elected officials and the policies they pursue make a daily impact on your life, even if you aren't aware of it.

In this brief unit, based on Chapters 24 and 25 of your text, we'll be taking a close look at what those elective offices are, what actions they are responsible for carrying out, and who

we currently have serving in them. Special attention will be paid to the round of elections currently coming to a close, and looking at what the results of those elections might mean in your life in the near future.

Key Questions for the Unit:

- *How are candidates for local and state offices chosen?
- *What issues bring voters to the polls for local and state elections?
- *What limits are there on local elected officials' powers?
- *How does the electorate change depending on issues, attitudes, and political climate?
- *What are the impacts of local government on your life?
- *How can you take a role in your government?

Assignment	Pages	Questions	Due	Poss	Pts
1. The State Legislatures (24.1)	631-637	2-6	4/28	25	
2. The Governor and State Administration (24.2)	637-642	In-Class	4/28	15	
3. Counties, Towns, etc. (24.3)	643-648	1, 2,3,5	4/29	20	
Get to know your elected officials	Online	In-Class	4/29	20	
4. Cities and Metropolitan Areas (24.4)	650-657	2,3,5,6	4/30	20	
5. Providing Important Services (25.1)	663-667	1-4	5/1	20	
Using your local government	Online	In-Class	5/1	20	
6. Financing State Government (25.2)	667-671	In-Class	5/5	15	
7. In the Courtroom (25.3)	672-674	1, 3, 4, 5	5/6	20	
8. The Courts and Their Judges (25.4)	676-681	In-Class	5/6	15	
Unit 4 Test	All above		5/8	50	
Week 7 Vocab Test ("Postmaster General" to "separate but equal")			5/11	20	
Unit 4 Essay	See below		5/12	50	

Unit 4 Essay

Your unit handout begins with a quote from Former Speaker of the House Tip O'Neill that "All politics is local", and the unit has presented various levels of local government, from the actions and responsibilities at the state level, down to your very own town and county councils. Your unit essay is based on your understanding and reactions to some aspect of local government.

To complete this essay, you'll need to learn some new information, perhaps by looking at recent issues of the Enterprise, (or the Olympian or the Seattle Times if you want to look at state-level issues). You may want to talk to parents or others who have been following the issues. You may even want to call up a member of your local government involved in the decisions to learn more. Whatever you decide is fine, as long as you:

- 1) Choose an action or decision of your local government (city, county, state) that has been in the news recently.
- 2) Learn about the background of the decision or action -- What was the problem? What were the options? Who was impacted by the decision?
- 3) Explain your opinion on the government's action or decision -- Was it the right one? Will it address the problems as desired? Will it cause new ones? Why do you think so?

Use these three requirements to write a brief, well-organized, academic essay (1 - 2 pages long double-spaced, typed, 1 inch margins) that includes enough information about the government issue and action taken, as well as your opinion on the topic with support.

Unit 4 Essay Scoring Guide

GRADED ELEMENTS	E	G	A	F	P	M
INTRODUCTION clearly identifies topic & gives sense of beginning for essay	5	4	3	2	1	0
BACKGROUND on chosen topic clearly identified; evidence that writer understands & can clearly explain problem, options, and current situation (step 2 above)	15	12	9	6	3	0
OPINION/ PERSUASIVE evidence, arguments, and language used to explain writer's point of view (step 3)	10	8	6	4	2	0
BODY remains focused on main argument of essay; paragraphs/ideas logically presented	5	4	3	2	1	0
CONCLUSION wraps up essay with summary or restatement of thesis	5	4	3	2	1	0
CONVENTIONS applied correctly to support essay; Spelling, grammar, punctuation support message	10	8	6	4	2	0
TOTAL	/ 50					

<p>E=Excellent G=Good A=Average F=Fair P=Poor M=Missing</p>
