



The Bureaucracy Flashcards

Part of the AP U.S. Government collection

Overview

This resource contains a collection of 51 flashcards that will help students master key Bureaucracy concepts that may be covered on the AP U.S. Government exam.

These are not actual test questions, nor do they involve much “application” of knowledge. Instead, they focus on the basic factual and conceptual knowledge that students must first internalize if they are to successfully formulate logical responses to multiple-choice or essay questions on the eventual exam.

Brainscape has created this content in partnership with several AP U.S. Government teachers and tutors, as well as ex-executives from test prep publishers such as Kaplan and The Princeton Review. The material is as comprehensive as possible, while still being broken down into small bite-sized chunks that make it easy to study. We have included a variety of question formats to help students’ minds encode the knowledge as deeply as possible.

How to Use This Resource

Teachers and students can use these flashcards in a variety of creative ways. Below are a few common use cases:

1. Post this PDF on your class website, so students can download it on their own, and potentially print their own copy as a study aid (and even *cut out* individual flashcards)
2. Use these questions as inspiration for your own quiz questions
3. Use these flashcards as a “game”, where one student (or group of students) asks another student (or group) a random question, and keeps score of how well the questions are being answered
4. Encourage students to use the digital version of the flashcards (see below)

Online and Mobile Version

All of these flashcards are available to study on the Brainscape website (brainscape.com) and in our mobile app(s). Brainscape’s “smart flashcards” study system uses our unique “Confidence-Based Repetition” method, which repeats questions in a progressive pattern based on students’ personalized path of mastery. Teachers can track students’ progress and identify students who need more guidance.

Students can study a portion of Brainscape’s premium flashcards for FREE and can gain unlimited access for a small fee. Students can also use Brainscape to create & share their own supplementary flashcards (which is ALWAYS FREE).

If you are interested in a bulk class license for Brainscape’s web & mobile study system, please contact info@brainscape.com, and we can set up some time for a call.

#	Question	Answer
1	Define: bureaucracy	A bureaucracy is a large and complex system of administration consisting of appointed officials. Bureaucracies feature a hierarchical authority structure, job specialization, and established rules and procedures.
2	The federal bureaucracy is organized into four major department types. What are they?	<p>The four major departments in the federal bureaucracy are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. cabinet departments 2. independent regulatory agencies 3. independent executive agencies 4. government corporations
3	How many federal executive departments comprise the cabinet?	<p>Fifteen</p> <p>The 15 departments are headed by secretaries (except for the Justice Department, which is headed by the attorney general). The president appoints the secretaries, who then must be approved by the Senate.</p> <p>Some of the 15 cabinet departments include State, Health and Human Services, and Homeland Security.</p>
4	What are the two types of executive-level departments?	<p>The two types of executive-level departments are:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Independent regulatory agencies: not part of the cabinet, but report to the president, e.g. the Federal Trade Commission (FTC) 2. Independent executive agencies: independent of a cabinet department, e.g. NASA

#	Question	Answer
5	The executive branch contains many independent regulatory agencies. How do these agencies differ from cabinet departments?	<p>The independent regulatory agencies, such as the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC) or the Federal Trade Commission (FTC), are constitutionally part of the executive branch, but operate fairly independent of presidential control.</p> <p>Most independent agencies are run by commissions of between five and seven members who share power. While the president has the power to name the commissions' members, these commissions have staggered terms; thus, no one president can name all a commission's members.</p>
6	What are government corporations?	<p>Government corporations operate somewhat like private companies; however, they do not have stockholders and, if profitable, the profits remain in the corporation.</p> <p>Some examples of government corporations include the U.S. Postal Service, Tennessee Valley Authority, and Amtrak.</p>
7	What rule-making powers do executive regulatory agencies possess?	<p>Most federal agencies possess rule-making and rule-adjudication powers (commonly termed "quasi legislative" and "quasi judicial," respectively) given to them by the Congress.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • rule-making: federal agencies have the power to pass regulations pursuant to their statutory grant of authority; these regulations have the power of laws passed by Congress • rule-adjudication: most federal agencies have the power to initiate proceedings for violations of regulations passed under their rule-making authority

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8	How does the president exercise control over the bureaucracy?	<p>The president influences control over the bureaucracy by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • appointing agency directors and subheads (with Senate approval) • issuing executive orders compelling an agency to do/not do something • increasing or decreasing an agency's budget (through the Office of Management and Budget)
9	How may Congress exercise control over the executive bureaucracy?	<p>Congress may restrain executive agencies in a number of ways by:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • revising statutes that established the agency's mission • exercising control over an agency's budget • conducting audits or holding hearings • influencing the selection of agency directors (Senate)
10	What judicial branch controls exist over the executive bureaucracy?	<p>Although judicial branch power is limited, it can exercise control by making rulings, overturning or supporting acts taken under an agency's rule-making, or by rule-adjudication authority.</p> <p>For the most part, the federal judiciary defers to the agency by requiring that before a case is heard, all administrative (agency) remedies must be exhausted.</p> <p>Appeals from administrative rulings are heard by the Federal Circuit Court, sitting in Washington, D.C.</p>
11	What are the main agencies of the legislative branch?	<p>The main agencies of the legislative branch are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congressional Budget Office • Library of Congress • Copyright Office • Government Accountability Office <p>Congress also supervises several minor agencies, such as the Capitol Police, the United States Botanical Garden, and the Architect of the Capitol.</p>



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12	What is the one independent agency in the judicial branch?	The judicial branch's only independent agency is the United States Sentencing Commission. This commission establishes sentencing guidelines for a variety of federal crimes.
13	What is the role of the Congressional Budget Office (CBO)?	The Congressional Budget Office (CBO) submits periodic reports about fiscal policy to the House and Senate committees on the budget and provides baseline projections of the federal budget. The CBO is objective and non-partisan.
14	What does the Government Accountability Office (GAO) do?	As part of the legislative branch, the GAO provides support to Congress to ensure the accountability of the federal government to the American people. Known as the "congressional watchdog," the GAO conducts frequent audits and investigations that uncover government inefficiency and waste.
15	What is the Central Intelligence Agency's (CIA) role?	As an independent agency in the executive branch, the CIA gathers intelligence about activities in foreign countries and provides national security information to policymakers in the United States.
16	What is the Federal Communications Commission's (FCC) mission?	As an independent agency in the executive branch, the FCC regulates interstate satellite, cable, television, and radio transmissions. The FCC assigns radio frequencies, grants broadcast licenses, monitors wireless and landline telephone companies, and acts to ensure reasonable cable television rates.
17	What is the Federal Trade Commission's (FTC) primary responsibility?	The FTC's primary responsibility is the encouragement of fair trade and competition by enforcing antitrust and consumer protection statutes.
18	Which independent agency of the executive branch is responsible for overseeing Social Security?	The Social Security Administration (SSA) oversees Social Security.
19	What is the role of the Securities and Exchange Commission (SEC)?	The SEC is an independent regulatory agency of the executive branch and regulates the securities markets (stocks, bonds, etc.) in the United States.

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20	Which independent agency of the executive branch investigates employment discrimination complaints?	The Equal Employment Opportunity Commission (EEOC) investigates employment-related discrimination issues.
21	What agency's mission is to "pioneer the future in space exploration, scientific discovery and aeronautics research."	The National Aeronautics and Space Administration (NASA) The vast majority of U.S. space exploration efforts have been led by NASA, including the Apollo moon-landing missions, the Skylab space station, and the Space Shuttle. NASA is an independent executive agency.
22	What is the role of the Environmental Protection Agency (EPA)?	The EPA, an independent executive agency, writes and enforces regulations for the purpose of protecting human health and the environment.
23	What independent agency of the executive branch summarizes its threefold mission as "providing technical assistance in foreign countries, helping people outside the United States to understand American culture, and helping Americans to understand the cultures of other countries."	The Peace Corps The Peace Corps was founded in 1961 under the direction of President John F. Kennedy.
24	What is the role of the Executive Office of the President?	The Executive Office of the President's role is to support the president in formulating public policy. The Executive Office of the President consists of the president's immediate staff and is headed by his Chief of Staff. The Executive Office includes, but is not limited to, Special Assistants to the president, the National Security Council, the Office of Management and Budget, and the National Economic Council. Most members of the Executive Office require Senate confirmation.

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25	What role does the Chief of Staff play?	<p>The Chief of Staff hires and manages the White House staff, oversees the president's schedule, and controls who gets to meet with the president. This person also serves as a top adviser to the the president on a variety of issues.</p> <p>In recent years, the Chief of Staff has evolved into a very powerful role.</p>
26	What does the United States National Economic Council (NEC) do?	As an executive office agency, the NEC provides economic advice to the president, monitors implementation of the president's economic agenda, and coordinates economic policy-making for domestic and international economic issues.
27	Which executive office agency advises the president on issues of national security?	<p>The National Security Council (NSC) serves as the primary advisory body to the president on national security issues. The NSC coordinates the activities of the armed forces, the CIA, and other federal agencies.</p> <p>By statute, the president, vice president, and secretaries of state, defense, and treasury are required to attend meetings. The national security advisor, the chairman of the Joint Chiefs of Staff, the director of national intelligence, and the director of national drug control policy are invited to attend.</p>
28	Which agency of the Executive Office of the President assists the president in preparing the budget?	<p>The Office of Management and Budget (OMB)</p> <p>The presidential budget must be submitted to Congress on February 1st of each year. In addition to preparing the federal budget, the OMB oversees congressional appropriations.</p>
29	Which cabinet department oversees the foreign relations of the United States?	<p>The State Department, which operates U.S. embassies and coordinates U.S. foreign policy, oversees the country's foreign relations.</p> <p>The State Department was the first established executive-level department.</p>



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30	Which cabinet department oversees the federal government's revenue?	<p>Overseeing government revenue falls under the Treasury Department. In addition to overseeing the Internal Revenue Service, which collects taxes, the Treasury Department prints currency, supervises national banks, and manages federal finances.</p> <p>Alexander Hamilton was the first Secretary of the Treasury.</p>
31	Which cabinet office is the world's largest employer?	<p>Headed by the Secretary of Defense, the Department of Defense (DOD) is the world's largest employer and the overseer of all agencies and government functions directly related to national security. The DOD employs a total of 3.2 million servicemen and servicewomen, including civilian support staff.</p> <p>The Department of Defense oversees the Army, Navy, Air Force, Marines, and the National Guard.</p>
32	What body advises the president, Secretary of Defense, the Homeland Security Council, and the National Security Council on military matters?	<p>The Joint Chiefs of Staff (JCS), a body of senior uniformed leaders in the United States Department of Defense, provide advice on military matters.</p>
33	Which cabinet department does the U.S. Attorney General head?	<p>The Attorney General heads the Department of Justice (DOJ), responsible for enforcement of federal laws and the administration of justice. Among others, the DOJ oversees the U.S. Marshals, the Bureau of Alcohol, Tobacco, and Firearms, and prosecutes tax fraud and civil rights violations.</p>
34	What is the role of the Department of the Interior?	<p>The Department of the Interior administers federal lands and programs related to indigenous Americans.</p> <p>Some 507 million acres (one-fifth of the U.S.) are under the control of the Department of the Interior. It manages 388 national parks and 544 national wildlife refuges.</p>



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35	Which executive department oversees the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program (aka food stamps)?	<p>The Department of Agriculture oversees the Supplemental Nutritional Assistance Program.</p> <p>Among other responsibilities, the Department of Agriculture leads federal government policy on farming, forestry, and food.</p>
36	What is the mission of the Department of Commerce?	<p>The Department of Commerce focuses on ensuring U.S. economic growth. The Department's stated goal is to "promote job creation and improved living standards for all Americans by creating an infrastructure that promotes economic growth, technological competitiveness, and sustainable development."</p>
37	Which executive department oversees the Occupational Health and Safety Administration (OSHA)?	<p>OSHA is overseen by the Department of Labor, the executive department tasked with assisting wage earners, job seekers, and retirees by advancing employment opportunities, improving working conditions, and assuring work-related benefits and rights.</p>
38	Which cabinet department's motto is "Improving the health, safety, and well-being of America"?	<p>The Department of Health and Human Services (HHS)</p> <p>Among other things, HHS oversees the Medicare and Medicaid programs, many of the provisions of the Patient Protection and Affordable Care Act (aka Obamacare), and the Centers for Disease Control.</p>
39	What does the cabinet department of Housing and Urban Development do?	<p>The Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) works to strengthen both the rental and purchase housing markets, ensures adequate supplies of both, and protects consumers.</p> <p>Among HUD's many tasks are overseeing the Section 8 housing voucher program; the Office of Fair Housing, whose mission is to prevent housing discrimination; and Fannie Mae and Freddie Mac, two loan guarantee programs.</p>



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40	Which cabinet department oversees the nation's highways, railroads, and air facilities?	<p>The Department of Transportation (DOT)</p> <p>The DOT's mission is to "[s]erve the United States by ensuring a fast, safe, efficient, accessible, and convenient transportation system that meets our vital national interests and enhances the quality of life of the American people, today and into the future."</p>
41	Which cabinet department oversees U.S. nuclear weapons and nuclear reactors, as well as peaceful nuclear developments, such as power plants?	<p>The Department of Energy (DOE) oversees U.S. nuclear energy safety and domestic energy development. The Department of Energy also runs a number of laboratories and is the largest sponsor of physical science research of any federal agency or department.</p> <p>The mapping of the human genome (the Human Genome Project) began in the DOE.</p>
42	By number of employees, which executive department is the smallest among the 15 cabinet-level departments?	<p>The Department of Education (ED) is the smallest of the executive departments, with just over 5,000 employees. The department coordinates federal education assistance and collects data on U.S. schools.</p> <p>Though an original Department of Education was created in 1867, it was not a cabinet office. President Jimmy Carter requested Congress establish the ED as a cabinet-level department in 1979.</p>
43	Which executive department cares for U.S. military veterans after their time of service?	<p>Caring for veterans falls under the Department of Veteran's Affairs (VA), which administers hospitals, medical facilities, and veterans' benefits programs.</p>
44	Which executive department is the most recent, created in the aftermath of the September 11th attacks?	<p>In 2002, President Bush and the Congress created the Department of Homeland Security (DHS), which protects the United States from terrorist attacks and responds to natural disasters.</p> <p>Among other agencies, DHS oversees the Transportation Safety Administration, the Federal Emergency Management Agency, and the U.S. Border Patrol.</p>

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45	Define: red tape	Red tape refers to the complex bureaucratic rules and procedures that must be completed in order to get things done. As an example, to secure a Housing and Urban Development Loan, a potential borrower must fill out significant amounts of paper work.
46	What is the iron triangle?	The iron triangle refers to a close, potentially mutually beneficial relationship between an executive agency, the congressional committee that oversees that agency, and an interest group. Individual groups on all three sides of the triangle exchange political favors and information, leading to the development of significant power to steer public policy, which may not be in the best interest of the public.
47	Define: issue networks	An issue network is an alliance of people who regularly meet to discuss public policies and issues in order to push for policy change in the bureaucracy. These networks contain a broad array of individuals such as media pundits, congressional staff, lobbyists, and academics.
48	What does the Open Meetings Act of 1974 provide?	The Open Meetings Act provides that members of the public may attend any meeting of a government body (rather than just receive records from the meeting), as long as the meeting does not deal with government secrets.
49	What is a "spoils system"?	A spoils system refers to rewarding party loyalists and friends with positions in the bureaucracy after an election. The spoils system was a prominent feature of national and local elections after the presidency of Andrew Jackson, but began to wane with civil service reforms of the late 1800s, which instituted merit-based examinations.

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50	What did the Pendelton Act, passed in 1883, provide?	<p>The Pendelton Act provided that government jobs should be awarded by merit, and that government employees should be chosen based not upon ties to politicians, but by competitive exams.</p> <p>The Pendelton Act created the United States Civil Service Commission, which administers the civil service of the United States government.</p>
51	What are sunshine laws?	<p>Sunshine laws require local and state governments to make the records of meetings, including deliberations and votes, available to the public. They also mandate that notice of government meetings be provided to the public, which can freely attend.</p>