

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCING GOVERNMENT IN AMERICA



CHAPTER OUTLINE

- I. Introduction: Politics and Government Matter (pp. 3–8)
 - A. Many Americans are apathetic about politics and government.
 - B. Political knowledge fosters civic virtues, educates citizens on policy, and promotes participation.
 - C. Voter turnout among the youth is lower than any other group.
- II. Government (pp. 8–9)
 - A. The institutions that make authoritative decisions for any given society are collectively known as **government**.
 - B. Two fundamental questions about governing serve as themes of this book.
 1. How should we govern?
 2. What should government do?
 - C. All national governments have certain functions in common:
 1. Governments maintain national defense.
 2. Governments provide public services called **public goods**.
 3. Governments preserve order.
 4. Governments socialize the young.
 5. Governments collect taxes.
- III. Politics (pp. 9–10)
 - A. **Politics** determines whom we select as our governmental leaders and what policies they pursue.
 - B. The ways in which people get involved in politics make up their **political participation**.
 - C. **Single-issue groups** are so concerned with one issue that their members will cast their votes on the basis of that issue only.
- IV. The Policymaking System (pp. 10–13)
 - A. People Shape Policy
 1. The **policymaking system** is the process by which policy comes into being and evolves over time. (See Figure 1.4)
 2. Political parties, elections, interest groups, and the media are key **linkage institutions** that transmit the preferences of Americans to the policymakers in government.
 3. The **policy agenda** consists of the issues that attract the serious attention of public officials and other people actively involved in politics at a given time.
 4. A **political issue** arises when people disagree about a problem or about a public policy choice made to fix a problem.

Study Guide For Government In America

George C. Edwards



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Table of Contents Study Guide For Government In America

1. Understanding the eBook Study Guide For Government In America
 - The Rise of Digital Reading Study Guide For Government In America
 - Advantages of eBooks Over Traditional Books
2. Identifying Study Guide For Government In America
 - Exploring Different Genres
 - Considering Fiction vs. Non-Fiction
 - Determining Your Reading Goals
3. Choosing the Right eBook Platform
 - Popular eBook Platforms
 - Features to Look for in an Study Guide For Government In America
 - User-Friendly Interface
4. Exploring eBook Recommendations from Study Guide For Government In America
 - Personalized Recommendations
 - Study Guide For Government In America User Reviews and Ratings
 - Study Guide For Government In America and Bestseller Lists
5. Accessing Study Guide For Government In America Free and Paid eBooks
 - Study Guide For Government In America Public Domain eBooks
 - Study Guide For Government In America eBook Subscription Services
 - Study Guide For Government In America Budget-Friendly Options
6. Navigating Study Guide For Government In America eBook Formats

- ePub, PDF, MOBI, and More
- Study Guide For Government In America Compatibility with Devices
- Study Guide For Government In America Enhanced eBook Features
- 7. Enhancing Your Reading Experience
 - Adjustable Fonts and Text Sizes of Study Guide For Government In America
 - Highlighting and Note-Taking Study Guide For Government In America
 - Interactive Elements Study Guide For Government In America
- 8. Staying Engaged with Study Guide For Government In America
 - Joining Online Reading Communities
 - Participating in Virtual Book Clubs
 - Following Authors and Publishers Study Guide For Government In America
- 9. Balancing eBooks and Physical Books Study Guide For Government In America
 - Benefits of a Digital Library
 - Creating a Diverse Reading Collection Study Guide For Government In America
- 10. Overcoming Reading Challenges
 - Dealing with Digital Eye Strain
 - Minimizing Distractions
 - Managing Screen Time
- 11. Cultivating a Reading Routine Study Guide For Government In America
 - Setting Reading Goals Study Guide For Government In America
 - Carving Out Dedicated Reading Time
- 12. Sourcing Reliable Information of Study Guide For Government In America
 - Fact-Checking eBook Content of Study Guide For Government In America
 - Distinguishing Credible Sources
- 13. Promoting Lifelong Learning
 - Utilizing eBooks for Skill Development
 - Exploring Educational eBooks
- 14. Embracing eBook Trends
 - Integration of Multimedia Elements
 - Interactive and Gamified eBooks

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