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# **AP<sup>®</sup> United States Government and Politics**

## **2016 Free-Response Questions**

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**2016 AP® UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS  
FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS**

**UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS**

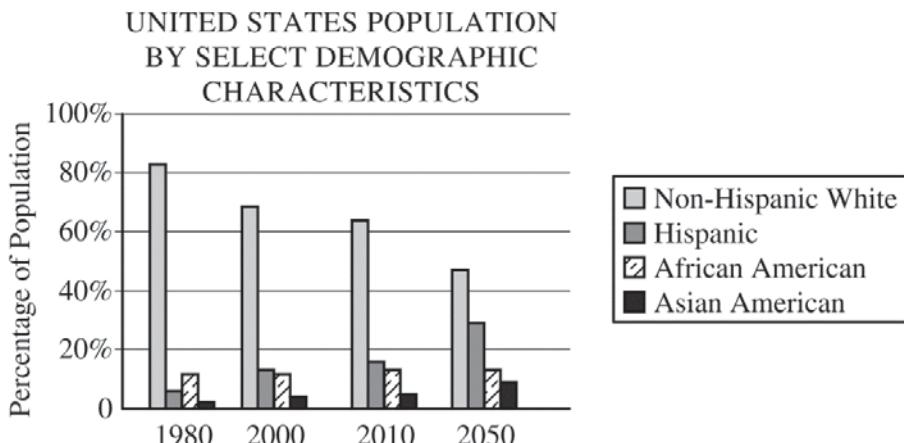
**SECTION II**

**Time—1 hour and 40 minutes**

**Directions:** You have 100 minutes to answer all four of the following questions. Unless the directions indicate otherwise, respond to all parts of all four questions. It is suggested that you take a few minutes to plan and outline each answer. Spend approximately one-fourth of your time (25 minutes) on each question. In your response, use substantive examples where appropriate.

1. Linkage institutions—such as political parties, the media, and interest groups—connect citizens to the government and play significant roles in the electoral process.
  - (a) Describe one important function of political parties as a linkage institution in elections.
  - (b) Describe the influence of the media on the electoral process in each of the following roles.
    - Gatekeeping/agenda setting
    - Scorekeeping/horse race journalism
  - (c) Describe two strategies interest groups use to influence the electoral process.
  - (d) Explain how, according to critics, interest groups may limit representative democracy.

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\* Note: 2050 projections are based on data from the U.S. Census Bureau

2. The United States is experiencing a dramatic change in the makeup of its population. These changes have political consequences for political institutions.
- Identify a trend depicted in the chart.
  - Assuming that recent voting patterns continue, explain how the trend identified in (a) is likely to affect the electoral success of either the Democratic Party or the Republican Party.
  - Explain how the demographic changes shown in the chart above are likely to affect the way in which parties operate in Congress.
  - Describe two specific actions that presidents can take to respond to the demographic changes in the chart above.
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3. The public policy process involves interactions between Congress and the bureaucracy.
- Identify the primary role of Congress in the policy process.
  - Explain how divided party control of Congress can make the policy process difficult.
  - Identify the primary role of the bureaucracy in the policy process.
  - Explain how one of the following increases the power of the bureaucracy in the policy process.
    - Rule making
    - Bureaucratic discretion
  - Explain how each of the following enables Congress to limit the power of the bureaucracy.
    - Oversight hearings
    - Power of the purse
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4. The Constitution limited the power of the national government and restricted popular control; however, citizen participation has changed over time.
- (a) Explain how each of the following constitutional features protects against the concentration of power in the national government.
- Checks and balances
  - Federalism
- (b) Explain how one of the following features of the Constitution limited the people's ability to influence the national government.
- Electoral college
  - Selection of senators before the Seventeenth Amendment
- (c) Describe a constitutional amendment that increased suffrage.
- (d) Describe the effect of one of the following laws on citizen participation in elections.
- Voting Rights Act of 1965
  - National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (Motor Voter Act)

**STOP**

**END OF EXAM**