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

## **2015 Free-Response Questions**

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**2015 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. American politics has often been called an “invitation to struggle.” Although in recent years the president has been thought to have an advantage in policy making, there are still constraints on the power of the president.
  - (a) Describe a power of the president in each of the following roles.
    - Chief legislator
    - Chief bureaucrat or chief administrator
  - (b) Explain how each of the following limits the president’s influence in policy making.
    - Civil service employees
    - The Supreme Court
  - (c) Describe the influence of divided government on the policy-making process.

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2. The framers of the Constitution devised a federal system of government that affected the relationship between the national and state governments.
  - (a) Compare state sovereignty under the Articles of Confederation and under the Constitution.
  - (b) Explain how each of the following has been used to expand the power of the federal government over the states.
    - Commerce clause
    - Mandates
  - (c) Explain how each of the following has played a role in the devolution of power from the national government to the states.
    - Block grants
    - Supreme Court decisions

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3. The framers created the electoral college to elect the president of the United States. This system influences the campaign strategies of presidential candidates.
- Describe one reason that the framers chose to use the electoral college as the method to elect the president.
  - Describe the message the cartoon above conveys about presidential elections.
  - Explain why California, Texas, and New York do not appear prominently in the cartoon above.
  - Describe two campaign tactics presidential candidates use to win the key states identified in the cartoon above.

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4. The Fourteenth Amendment protects civil rights and civil liberties.
- (a) Describe the difference between civil rights and civil liberties.
- (b) Identify the primary clause of the Fourteenth Amendment that is used to extend civil rights.
- (c) Describe a specific legislative action that extended civil rights to each of the following.
- Women
  - Persons with disabilities
- (d) Identify the primary clause of the Fourteenth Amendment that is used to extend civil liberties.
- (e) Explain how civil liberties were incorporated by the Supreme Court in two of the following cases.
- *Gideon v. Wainwright*
  - *Mapp v. Ohio*
  - *Miranda v. Arizona*

**STOP**

**END OF EXAM**