



AP® United States Government and Politics 2011 Free-Response Questions

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**2011 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. Make certain to number each of your answers as the question is numbered below.

1. The United States Supreme Court receives many appeals, but it hears and rules on a small percentage of cases each year. Numerous factors influence the actions of the Court, both in deciding to hear a case and in the decisions it hands down.
 - a. Define judicial review.
 - b. Explain how judicial review empowers the Supreme Court within the system of checks and balances.
 - c. Describe the process through which the Court grants a writ of certiorari.
 - d. Explain how each of the following influences decisions made by individual justices when deciding cases heard by the Court.
 - Stare decisis
 - Judicial activism

2. Public opinion polls are a way to link the public with elected officials. Members of Congress often use polls to understand the views of their constituents, but they must also pay attention to other political considerations.
 - a. Identify two characteristics of a valid, scientific, public opinion poll.
 - b. Explain why each of the following enhances the influence of public opinion on the voting decisions of members of Congress.
 - Strong public opinion as expressed in polling results
 - Competitive re-elections
 - c. Explain why each of the following limits the influence of public opinion on the voting decisions of members of Congress.
 - Legislators' voting records
 - Party leadership

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3. Nominees for the presidency of the two major parties are chosen by delegates at national conventions. How these delegates are chosen varies across states and between the political parties.
- a. Define each of the following methods used by states to choose delegates to party conventions.
 - Open primary
 - Caucus
 - b. Republican Party rules permit winner-take-all primaries. Describe one consequence of this rule for the Republican nomination process.
 - c. The Democratic Party has used superdelegates in the presidential nominating process since 1984. Explain why the use of superdelegates increases the influence of party leaders in the Democratic nomination process.
 - d. Explain why a candidate's strategy to win the nomination is often different from the strategy developed to win the general election.
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4. The Constitution of the United States creates a government of separate institutions that share power rather than a government that delegates power exclusively to a single branch. Frequently, this means that presidents and Congress struggle with each other.
- a. For each of the presidential powers below, explain one way that congressional decision making is affected by that power.
 - Veto power
 - Power to issue executive orders
 - Power as commander in chief
 - b. For each of the congressional powers below, explain one way that presidential decision making is affected by that power.
 - Legislative oversight power
 - Senate advice and consent power
 - Budgetary power

STOP

END OF EXAM