4. A company manufactures model rockets that require igniters to launch. Once an igniter is used to launch a rocket, the igniter cannot be reused. Sometimes an igniter fails to operate correctly, and the rocket does not launch. The company estimates that the overall failure rate, defined as the percent of all igniters that fail to operate correctly, is 15 percent.

   A company engineer develops a new igniter, called the super igniter, with the intent of lowering the failure rate. To test the performance of the super igniters, the engineer uses the following process.

   Step 1: One super igniter is selected at random and used in a rocket.

   Step 2: If the rocket launches, another super igniter is selected at random and used in a rocket.

   Step 2 is repeated until the process stops. The process stops when a super igniter fails to operate correctly or 32 super igniters have successfully launched rockets, whichever comes first. Assume that super igniter failures are independent.

   (a) If the failure rate of the super igniters is 15 percent, what is the probability that the first 30 super igniters selected using the testing process successfully launch rockets?

   (b) Given that the first 30 super igniters successfully launch rockets, what is the probability that the first failure occurs on the thirty-first or the thirty-second super igniter tested if the failure rate of the super igniters is 15 percent?

   (c) Given that the first 30 super igniters successfully launch rockets, is it reasonable to believe that the failure rate of the super igniters is less than 15 percent? Explain.

5. A polling agency showed the following two statements to a random sample of 1,048 adults in the United States.

> Environment statement: Protection of the environment should be given priority over economic growth.
>
> Economy statement: Economic growth should be given priority over protection of the environment.

The order in which the statements were shown was randomly selected for each person in the sample. After reading the statements, each person was asked to choose the statement that was most consistent with his or her opinion. The results are shown in the table.

	Environment Statement	Economy Statement	No Preference
Percent of sample	58%	37%	5%

(a) Assume the conditions for inference have been met. Construct and interpret a 95 percent confidence interval for the proportion of all adults in the United States who would have chosen the economy statement.

(b) One of the conditions for inference that was met is that the number who chose the economy statement and the number who did not choose the economy statement are both greater than 10. Explain why it is necessary to satisfy that condition.

(c) A suggestion was made to use a two-sample z-interval for a difference between proportions to investigate whether the difference in proportions between adults in the United States who would have chosen the environment statement and adults in the United States who would have chosen the economy statement is statistically significant. Is the two-sample z-interval for a difference between proportions an appropriate procedure to investigate the difference? Justify your answer.

AP® STATISTICS
2016 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 4

Intent of Question

The primary goals of this question were to assess a student's ability to (1) calculate a probability using basic probability rules or the geometric distribution; (2) recognize that a probability calculation for independent events does not depend on the previous outcomes of those events; and (3) assess whether a claim about the probability of a single event is reasonable based on a calculated probability of a series of those events.

Solution

Part (a):

If the failure rate for the super igniters is 15 percent, then the probability that each igniter fails is 0.15, and the probability that it does not fail is 0.85. Therefore the probability that the first 30 igniters tested do not fail is $(0.85)^{30} \approx 0.0076$. The solution can also be written as $(1 - 0.15)^{30} \approx 0.0076$.

Part (b):

Given that there are no failures in the first 30 trials, the probability that the first failure occurs on the 31^{st} trial is 0.15, and the probability that it does not occur on the 31^{st} but occurs on the 32^{nd} trial is $(0.85)(0.15) = 0.1275$. Therefore the probability that the first failure occurs on the 31^{st} or 32^{nd} super igniter tested is $0.15 + 0.1275 = 0.2775$.

Note that this is equivalent to asking for the probability that the first failure occurs on the first or second trial, which is $0.15 + (0.85)(0.15) = 0.2775$.

Part (c):

The result of the probability calculation in part (a) provides a reason to believe that the failure rate of the super igniters is less than 15 percent. The calculated probability of 0.0076 shows that there is less than a 1 percent chance that 30 or more igniters in a row would not fail if the failure rate was 15 percent. This probability is smaller than conventional significance levels such as $\alpha = 0.05$ or $\alpha = 0.01$, and thus is small enough to make it reasonable to believe that the failure rate of the super igniters is less than 15 percent.

Scoring

Parts (a), (b), and (c) are scored as essentially correct (E), partially correct (P), or incorrect (I).

Part (a) is scored as follows:

Essentially correct (E) if the response gives the correct probability *AND* correct justification.

Partially correct (P) if the response correctly notes that the answer is the probability that there will be 30 successes in 30 attempts, but does not carry out a correct probability calculation;
OR

Question 4 (continued)

if the response defines the random variable X as the trial with the first failure, identifies X as having a geometric distribution with $p = 0.15$, and writes the desired probability as $P(X > 30)$, but does not carry out a correct probability calculation;
OR
if the response defines the random variable X as the number of failures in the first 30 attempts, identifies X as a binomial random variable with $p = 0.15$ and $n = 30$, and writes the desired probability as $P(X = 0)$, but does not carry out a correct probability calculation;
OR
if the response gives the correct probability but, in specifying a geometric or binomial distribution, has an incorrect or incomplete definition of parameters or value(s) of the random variable.

Incorrect (I) if the response does not meet the criteria for E or P.

Note: Justification can be given using the multiplication rule; *OR* by defining X to be the trial with the first failure, recognizing that X has a geometric distribution, and using that information to find $P(X > 30)$; *OR* by defining X to be the number of failures in the first 30 attempts, and then finding $P(X = 0)$ using either probability rules or the binomial distribution with $n = 30$ and $p = 0.15$.

Part (b) is scored as follows:

Essentially correct (E) if the response gives the correct probability AND correct justification.

Partially correct (P) if the response makes a reasonable attempt to calculate a geometric, binomial, or conditional probability, but does not successfully carry out the calculation;
OR
if the response gives the correct probability but, in specifying a geometric or binomial distribution, has an incorrect or incomplete definition of parameters or value(s) of the random variable.

Incorrect (I) if the response finds an incorrect probability resulting from an unreasonable attempt to calculate a geometric, binomial, or conditional probability or otherwise does not meet the criteria for E or P.

Note: Similar to part (a) justification can be given using probability rules; *OR* by stating that X is geometric where X is the trial with the first failure, then finding $P(X = 1 \text{ or } X = 2)$; *OR* by stating that X is the number of failures in two trials and finding $1 - P(X = 0)$ or $P(X = 1 \text{ or } X = 2)$ using the binomial distribution.

Part (c) is scored as follows:

Essentially correct (E) if the response states that it is reasonable to believe that the failure rate is less than 15 percent *AND* bases this decision on the fact that the probability of 30 consecutive successful launches with a failure rate of 15 percent (that is, answer from part (a)) is small *AND* does so in the context of the situation.

Partially correct (P) if the response otherwise satisfies the criteria for an (E) but does so without any context;
OR