

**2002 AP® UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS
FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS**

3. Political institutions can present both obstacles and opportunities to racial minority groups in their efforts to gain political influence.
 - (a) Identify one feature of one of the following and explain how that feature has presented obstacles to racial minority groups in their efforts to achieve political goals.
 - Federalism
 - The United States political party system
 - The United States electoral system
 - (b) Identify one feature of one of the following and explain how that feature might present opportunities to racial minority groups in their efforts to achieve political goals.
 - Federalism
 - The United States political party system
 - The United States electoral system
4. In the last half of the twentieth century, voter turnout in federal elections has declined. During the same period, voter turnout has been higher in presidential elections than in midterm elections.
 - (a) Identify two factors that have contributed to the overall decline in turnout in federal elections and explain how each factor has contributed to the overall decline.
 - (b) Identify and explain two reasons why voter turnout has been higher in presidential elections than in midterm elections.

END OF EXAMINATION

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Question 4

8 points total

Part A: 4 points possible

Part B: 4 points possible

Part A: 4 points possible:

- 1 point for **each** of 2 factors identified
- 1 point for **each** of 2 factors explained (explanation must address the “how”)

Contributing factors:

- larger electorate (increasing voter base – drop in voting age, minorities enfranchised, population increase)
- less party mobilization
- more mobile population
- demographic changes; as minority groups/young people increase proportionally in the population, voting turnout declines
- de-alignment (less party identification)
- rising cynicism – people don’t vote because, e.g., they don’t see a difference between candidates/ declining trust in government
- apathy (“too busy” comes under apathy)
- loss of efficacy (sense that vote doesn’t matter)
[cynicism, efficacy, apathy not counted separately unless made clearly distinct in explanation – higher threshold]

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Question 4 (cont'd.)

Part B: 4 points possible

- 1 point for **each** of 2 reasons identified
- 1 point for **each** of 2 reasons explained (explanation must address the “why”)

Reasons for difference between presidential and midterm elections:

- media interest greater in presidential elections
- greater information available about presidential candidates and issues
- national party conventions as infomercials
- mobilization (organized turnout drives)
- more money spent on presidential elections / less money spent on midterm elections
- higher visibility of the presidential office
- incumbency advantage in congressional races/ large number of uncontested congressional seats
- perception of greater importance of presidential elections

No explanation points earned without acceptable identification.

Score of zero (0) for attempted answer that earns no points

Score of dash (—) for blank or off-task answer