

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.

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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2015 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 1

5 points

Part (a): 2 points

One point is earned for an accurate description of a power of the president in each of the following roles:

- Chief legislator: agenda-setting; veto; message power/State of the Union address; going public/bully pulpit
- Chief bureaucrat: appointments (e.g., vetting); executive orders; manage/oversee the bureaucracy; use White House staff to control bureaucrats (e.g., Office of Management and Budget); prioritize agency activities

Part (b): 2 points

One point is earned for each of the following accurate explanations of limits on the president's influence on policymaking:

- Civil service employees: bureaucratic discretion; agency view; civil service protection; interest group capture of agencies; expertise
- The Supreme Court: declares presidential actions unconstitutional

Part (c): 1 point

One point is earned for an accurate description of the influence of divided government on the policymaking process. Descriptions must demonstrate an understanding of the political concept of divided government and then describe the influence it has on policymaking. Description may include:

- Control of Congress by one party and control of the presidency by the other party makes it more difficult to enact legislation.
- Control of the two chambers of Congress by opposing political parties makes it more difficult to pass legislation.

A score of zero (0) is assigned to an answer that is off-task or is attempted but earns no points.

A score of dash (—) is assigned to an answer that is blank.