

2008 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. Congressional reapportionment and redistricting are conducted every ten years. When redistricting is conducted, politicians often engage in gerrymandering.
 - (a) Define congressional reapportionment and explain one reason why it is important to states.
 - (b) Define congressional redistricting.
 - (c) Explain two goals of politicians when they gerrymander during redistricting.
 - (d) Describe two limits that the United States Supreme Court has placed on congressional redistricting.

2. A number of factors enable presidents to exert influence over Congress in the area of domestic policy. However, presidents are also limited in their influence over domestic policymaking in Congress.
 - (a) The Constitution grants the president certain enumerated powers. Describe two of these formal powers that enable the president to exert influence over domestic policy.
 - (b) Choose two of the following. Define each term and explain how each limits the president's ability to influence domestic policymaking in Congress.
 - mandatory spending
 - party polarization
 - lame-duck period

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3. Fiscal policy and monetary policy are two tools used by the federal government to influence the United States economy. The executive and legislative branches share the responsibility of setting fiscal policy. The Federal Reserve Board has the primary role of setting monetary policy.
- (a) Define fiscal policy.
 - (b) Describe one significant way the executive branch influences fiscal policy.
 - (c) Describe one significant way the legislative branch influences fiscal policy.
 - (d) Define monetary policy.
 - (e) Explain two reasons why the Federal Reserve Board is given independence in establishing monetary policy.
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4. “The right of citizens of the United States to vote shall not be denied or abridged by the United States or by any State on account of race, color, or previous condition of servitude.”

Fifteenth Amendment to the United States Constitution, 1870

Despite the ratification of the Fifteenth Amendment, voter turnout among African American citizens was very low throughout the first half of the twentieth century. Over the past 50 years, civil rights policies have changed substantially, along with a significant increase in African American voter turnout.

- (a) Explain how two measures taken by some states prior to the 1960s affected voter turnout among African American citizens.
- (b) Facing discrimination at the voting booth, many African American citizens turned to alternative forms of political participation. Describe two alternative forms of participation that helped bring about changes in civil rights policies.
- (c) Choose one of the forms of participation you described in (b) and explain why it was effective in changing civil rights policies.

STOP

END OF EXAM

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Question 2

6 points

Part (a): 2 points

One point is earned for each of two descriptions of formal, enumerated powers that enable the president to exert influence over domestic policy. Acceptable descriptions may include:

- Legislative powers (veto, pocket veto, signing legislation).
- State of the Union address.
- Appointment power (to a domestic office).
- Calling Congress into session.
- Chief executive role (“faithfully execute the law” clause).
- Commander-in-chief role (must connect it to domestic policy in order to earn the point).

Part (b): 4 points

One point is earned for each of two definitions and two explanations of limits to the president’s ability to influence domestic policymaking in Congress. Explanations must be tied to a correct, though not necessarily complete, definition.

	Correct Definition	Examples of Acceptable Explanations
Mandatory Spending	Spending not controlled by annual budget decisions (nondiscretionary spending, automatic spending, etc.)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Budgetary constraints make it difficult to accomplish policy goals.• It is difficult to make budget cuts that might accomplish policy goals.
Party Polarization	Increased interparty differences	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Opposing party may block policy goals.• There is a lack of moderates with whom to build coalitions.
Lame-Duck Period	Period of time in which an officeholder’s term is coming to an end	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• President’s power is perceived as being diminished.• Congress is less responsive to the president.

A score of zero (0) is earned for an attempted answer that earns no points.

A score of dash (—) is earned for a blank or off-task answer.