

**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 3

6 points total

Part A: 1 point for identification of feature; 2 points for explanation of feature as an obstacle

Part B: 1 point for identification of feature; 2 points for explanation of feature as an opportunity

- 1-point explanation is a simple statement that indicates understanding that the identified feature is an obstacle/opportunity.
- 2-point explanation states “how” the identified feature is an obstacle/opportunity, and is clearly linked to the feature identified.

Notes:

- May identify and explain the same or different feature in parts A and B.
- Identification specifically mentions a valid, relevant feature of a listed political institution.

Part A: “Obstacles” may include:

Federalism:

- Enabled states to prevent minority group members from voting
- two-tier court system; state courts hostile, regional bias
- State control over voter registration and elections
- State control over legislation (e.g., Jim Crow laws can be discussed, but must be placed in context of federalism for full credit)

United States political party system:

- Taking minority votes for granted
- Closed membership (e.g., “white” primary)
- Less opportunity for representation of minority views
- Lack of choice of candidates (only two)
- Bias against third or minority parties
- Lack of party discipline in enforcing adherence to policies favorable to minority groups

United States’ electoral system:

- Winner take all/ plurality vote
- At-large vs. single-member districts
- Redistricting; racial gerrymandering
- Runoff elections

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Question 3 (cont'd.)

Part B: “Opportunities” may include:

Federalism:

- Appeal to the federal government (e.g., judicial review)
- Civil liberties under federal constitution that provide protection at the state level (incorporation of the Bill of Rights)
- Geographic concentration allows for greater influence

United States political party system:

- Become a valued constituency in one of the major parties
- Proportional representation of delegates to the Democratic Party convention
- Recruitment of minorities as party workers
- Ideological slant of primary voters
- Open membership

United States electoral system:

- Voting blocs; being the margin of difference in a given election
- Single-member districts
- Greater number of seats
- Voting system
- Minority redistricting, gerrymandering

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

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