

**2018 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 1 hour and 40 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. Political parties seek to win elections to control government.
 - (a) Identify two activities that political parties do to win elections.
 - (b) Describe one way third parties can affect elections.
 - (c) Explain how single-member districts make it difficult for third parties to win elections.
 - (d) Explain how electoral competition is affected by gerrymandering.

2. Public opinion polls are commonly used by politicians and the media.
 - (a) Identify two characteristics of a reliable scientific public opinion poll.
 - (b) Describe two ways polling results are used by politicians.
 - (c) Explain how frequent public opinion polls impact media coverage of political campaigns.

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Question 1

5 points

Part (a): 2 points

Two points are earned for identifying two activities that political parties do to win elections.

- Advertise
- Fundraise
- Nominate candidates
- Organize rallies
- Hold conventions
- Mobilize voters/Get out the vote (GOTV)
- Generate a platform of issues
- Conduct public opinion polling
- Recruit candidates

Part (b): 1 point

One point is earned for describing a way that third parties can affect elections.

- Take votes away from one of the major party candidates (spoiler effect)
- Bring new issues to the forefront/set the agenda
- Give voters another option
- Shift attention away from the major party candidates

Part (c): 1 point

One point is earned for an explanation of how single-member districts make it difficult for third parties to win elections.

In winner-take-all, or plurality systems, third-party candidates in single-member districts have a difficult time getting enough votes to win.

Part (d): 1 point

One point is earned for explaining how electoral competition is affected by gerrymandering.

- Drawing district lines to favor/protect one group/incumbent, making the district less competitive electorally
- Drawing district lines to spread opposition party voters across districts, making the district more competitive electorally
- Drawing district lines to allow a party with fewer votes statewide to win a majority of seats

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.