

**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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3. The framers created the electoral college to elect the president of the United States. This system influences the campaign strategies of presidential candidates.
- Describe one reason that the framers chose to use the electoral college as the method to elect the president.
 - Describe the message the cartoon above conveys about presidential elections.
 - Explain why California, Texas, and New York do not appear prominently in the cartoon above.
 - Describe two campaign tactics presidential candidates use to win the key states identified in the cartoon above.

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Question 2

5 points

Part (a): 1 point

One point is earned for an accurate comparison of state sovereignty under the Articles of Confederation and state sovereignty under the Constitution.

Correct comparisons will state that states were sovereign under the Articles of Confederation, but under the Constitution they have shared power/limited power.

Part (b): 2 points

One point is earned for each of two accurate explanations of how each of the following has been used to expand the power of the federal government over the states:

- Commerce clause
 - Federal government/Congress controls interstate commerce (transportation, civil rights, etc.), and the states cannot control; it is an exclusive federal authority.
 - Federal government/U.S. Supreme Court increases the power of the federal government through decisions (such as *Gibbons*, *Heart of Atlanta*, etc.), and the states cannot; it is an exclusive federal authority.
- Mandates — the federal government directs the states to implement policies (such as the American with Disabilities Act (ADA), school integration, busing, etc.), thus reducing state discretion and increasing federal discretion

Part (c): 2 points

One point is earned for an accurate explanation of how each of the following has played a role in the devolution of power from the national government to the states:

- Block grants — broad federal funding that allows states to have more discretion in how funding is spent, thus states have greater flexibility in policy implementation.
- Supreme Court decisions
 - Struck down encroachments of national government attempts to take states' power, thereby protecting states' powers.
 - Through the use of judicial review, state power is protected.

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.