

**2011 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. The United States Supreme Court receives many appeals, but it hears and rules on a small percentage of cases each year. Numerous factors influence the actions of the Court, both in deciding to hear a case and in the decisions it hands down.
 - a. Define judicial review.
 - b. Explain how judicial review empowers the Supreme Court within the system of checks and balances.
 - c. Describe the process through which the Court grants a writ of certiorari.
 - d. Explain how each of the following influences decisions made by individual justices when deciding cases heard by the Court.
 - Stare decisis
 - Judicial activism

2. Public opinion polls are a way to link the public with elected officials. Members of Congress often use polls to understand the views of their constituents, but they must also pay attention to other political considerations.
 - a. Identify two characteristics of a valid, scientific, public opinion poll.
 - b. Explain why each of the following enhances the influence of public opinion on the voting decisions of members of Congress.
 - Strong public opinion as expressed in polling results
 - Competitive re-elections
 - c. Explain why each of the following limits the influence of public opinion on the voting decisions of members of Congress.
 - Legislators' voting records
 - Party leadership

AP® UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS 2011 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 1

5 points

Part (a): 1 point

One point is earned for a correct definition of judicial review. An acceptable definition of judicial review is the power of the court to rule on the constitutionality of laws, acts, statutes, executive orders.

Part (b): 1 point

One point is earned for an acceptable explanation that demonstrates how judicial review empowers the Supreme Court to exercise power relative to the other branches of government within the system of checks and balances by including one of the following:

- It gives the Court the power to overturn laws passed by Congress/legislative branch or actions taken by the president/executive branch.
- It gives the Court the power to limit actions taken by Congress/legislative branch or the president/executive branch.

Part (c): 1 point

One point is earned for correctly describing the process through which the Court grants a writ of certiorari by including both of the following:

- A reference to lower courts
- A reference to the rule of 4

Part (d): 2 points

One point is earned for a correct explanation of how stare decisis influences decisions made by justices when deciding cases heard by the Court. One point is earned for a correct explanation of how judicial activism influences decisions made by justices when deciding cases heard by the Court.

An acceptable explanation of how stare decisis influences justices includes one of the following:

- Justices defer to prior Supreme Court decisions.
- Justices apply precedent to current cases and rule based on past decision.

An acceptable explanation of how judicial activism influences justices includes one of the following:

- Justices are more likely to strike down laws and policies as unconstitutional.
- Justices are influenced by the future/societal ramifications/needs of the nation.

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

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