



AP[®] United States Government and Politics 2012 Scoring Guidelines

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AP[®] UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

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Question 1

5 points

Part (a): 3 points

Describe the **role** of each of the following in lawmaking (3 points total, 1 point per role):

- Senate filibuster allows a senator on the floor to:
 - Prevent/delay action on a particular bill.
 - Prevent/delay other business from being conducted.
- Rules Committee schedules or manages the flow of legislation on the floor to:
 - Make it easier or more difficult for a bill to pass.
 - Make the process more efficient/orderly/manageable.
- Conference Committee reconciles differences in House and Senate versions of a bill.

Must describe the role in lawmaking explicitly.

Part (b): 1 point

Describe one **method** by which Congress exercises oversight of the federal bureaucracy (1 point):

- Budgetary process (power of the purse)
- Committee hearings
- Confirmation or rejection of political appointments to the bureaucracy
- Investigations
- New legislation
- Legislative veto

Must describe the context in which Congress uses the method to oversee the bureaucracy.

Part (c): 1 point

Explain **how** casework affects members' attention to legislation (1 point):

- Diverts time, resources, and staff, thus reducing members' ability to focus on legislation.
- Develops awareness of problems, thus focusing more time and resources on related legislation.

A score of zero (0) is assigned to an answer that is completely off task or is on task but earns no points.

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

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Question 2

5 points

Part (a): 1 point

One point is earned for demonstrating an increase in minority representation between 1960 and 2010.

Part (b): 2 points

One point is earned for an explanation of **how** the Voting Rights Act of 1965 assisted in the removal of barriers to minority voting:

- Eliminating voter registration requirements (e.g., literacy tests, residency requirements) that prevented minorities from voting led to increased access for minority voters.
- Creating federal oversight of elections helped eliminate discriminatory mechanisms (e.g., voter intimidation, ballot fraud) that were used to prevent minority voters from voting, which led to increased access for minority voters.
- Eliminating the use of English-only ballots that prevented non-English-speaking minorities from voting led to increased access for minority voters.

A second point is earned for an explanation of **how** the Twenty-fourth Amendment assisted in the removal of barriers to minority voting: Eliminating poll taxes that limited voting by lower-income people led to an increase in minority voting because minorities are often overrepresented among poor people.

Part (c): 2 points

One point is earned for identifying one barrier that currently impedes minority representation in Congress. The barrier may affect either minority candidates running for Congress **or** minority voters attempting to vote for minority candidates.

Minority Candidates	Minority Voters
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Incumbency advantage• Gerrymandered districts• Majority-minority districts• Prejudice, racism, sexism• Electoral resources• Electoral qualifications• Single-member districts/winner-take-all	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• I.D. requirements• English-only ballots• Felony disenfranchisement• Purging voter rolls• Voter intimidation

A second point is earned for explaining **how** the barrier identified above inhibits minority representation in Congress:

- A minority candidate barrier must explain **how** the barrier identified above limits minority representation.
- A minority voter barrier must explain **how** the barrier limits minority participation and **how** that directly affects minority representation in Congress.

A score of zero (0) is assigned to an answer that is completely off task or is on task but earns no points.

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

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Question 3

8 points

Part (a): 2 points

One point is earned for each of two descriptions of political factors that affect presidential appointment decisions.

Acceptable descriptions include:

campaign promises	party
gender	potential for confirmation success
geographic diversity	professional background, experience, education
home-state senator (if lower courts)	race
ideology	religion
interest group input	scandal
issue positions	

Part (b): 4 points

One point is earned for each of two identifications of political factors that affect the confirmation process for presidential nominees. One point is earned for each of two explanations for **how** the political factor complicates the confirmation of judicial appointees.

Acceptable factors include:

advice and consent	the media (televising Judiciary Committee hearings)
campaign promises	party
filibuster	professional background, experience, education
gender	race
geographic diversity	religion
holds	safe/weak nominee
home-state senator (if lower courts)	scandal
ideology	senatorial courtesy
interest group input	
issue positions	

Part (c): 1 point

One point is earned for correctly explaining **how** a legislative power serves as a check on court decisions.

Acceptable legislative powers include:

amendments	impeachment
confirmation	jurisdiction stripping
congressional funding	legislation

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Question 3 (continued)

Part (d): 1 point

One point is earned for correctly explaining **how** an executive power serves as a check on court decisions.

Acceptable executive powers include:

- power of appointment
- executive enforcement

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

A score of zero (0) is assigned to an answer that is completely off task or is on task but earns no points.

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Question 4

6 points

Part (a): 2 points

One point is earned for each correct description of a technique used by interest groups to influence elections.

Techniques include:

campaign contributions	GOTV efforts
candidate ratings	independent expenditures
endorsements	issue ads
501(c)4	PACs
527	providing information on issue and candidates
funneling volunteers to campaigns	

Notes: Must describe a technique, not merely identify it. No double dipping on PACs and Super PACs.

Part (b): 2 points

One point is earned for an acceptable explanation that demonstrates **how** interest groups use issue networks (iron triangles). One point is also earned for an acceptable explanation that demonstrates **how** interest groups use amicus briefs:

- Interest groups participate in issue networks by providing money, information, and resources in hopes of obtaining political support from Congress, the bureaucracy, or the White House.
- Interest groups use amicus briefs to inform the Court in hopes of influencing the acceptance of cases, Court reasoning, or decisions.

Part (c): 2 points

One point is earned for a correct explanation of **how** the media acts to limit interest group influence. An additional point is earned for a correct explanation of **how** pluralism acts to limit interest group influence:

- Media can act as a gatekeeper of information or a watchdog of interest group behavior.
- Pluralism limits interest group influence because of the competition among a vast number of groups.

A score of zero (0) is assigned to an answer that is completely off-task or is on-task but earns no points.

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