

1. Concept Application	Presents students with an authentic scenario. Assesses student ability to describe and explain the effects of a political institution, behavior, or process. Additionally, this question assesses student ability to transfer understanding of course concepts and apply them in a new situation or scenario.
4. Argument Essay	<p>Assesses students' ability to do the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Articulate a defensible claim or thesis that responds to the question and establishes a line of reasoning</li> <li>• Provide evidence from one of the foundational documents listed in the question to support the claim</li> <li>• Provide evidence from a second foundational document or from knowledge of course concepts to support the claim</li> <li>• Use reasoning to explain why the evidence supports the claim</li> <li>• Respond to an opposing or alternate perspective using refutation, concession, or rebuttal</li> </ul>

### Step 1: Read the Introductory and Concluding Sentences

Free-response questions will include passages. **Skim the first and final sentences of the passage before you get to the tasks** (labeled A-C or A-D). This will help you get a rough sense of what to expect in the rest of the question.

**It's a good idea to read the intros and conclusions to *all* the FRQs before choosing which one to begin with.** Doing this might help build up your confidence and improve your efficiency to start with a question that's easier for you.

### Step 2: Identify (and Underline, If You Want) the Command Verb

For each task in each FRQ, you're given specific instructions on the type of answer that is expected; these instructions include command verbs that tell you what to do. **It's important to be aware of exactly what the question is asking so you can earn full points.**

These command verbs are the *first words* you should zero in on as you approach a question. If you think it'll help keep you focused, **you can underline these verbs.**

Here are the most commonly used task verbs, as described in the [AP Gov Exam Description](#):

**Compare:** Provide a description or explanation of similarities and/or differences.

**Define:** Provide a specific meaning for a word or concept.

**Describe:** Provide the relevant characteristics of a specified topic.

**Develop an argument:** Articulate a claim and support it with evidence.

**Discuss:**

**Draw a conclusion:** Use available information to formulate an accurate statement that demonstrates understanding based on evidence.

**Explain:** Provide information about how or why a relationship, process, pattern, position, situation, or outcome occurs, using evidence and/or reasoning. Explain "how" typically requires analyzing the relationship, process, pattern, position, situation, or outcome, whereas explain "why" typically requires analysis of motivations or reasons for the relationship, process, pattern, position, situation, or outcome.

**Identify:** Indicate or provide information about a specified topic, without elaboration or explanation.

### Step 3: Know Where You'll Earn Your Raw Points

In general, each part in a question (A, B, C, and D) will correspond to 1 raw point, but not all questions are like this.

After finding the task verb in the part of the question you're answering, **take note of how many examples or descriptions you need to provide**, as each will likely correspond to a point in your raw score for the question. There might also be **more than one task verb** in a question, in which case you'll likely get at least 2 raw points for it.

**Take care to answer the question thoroughly but directly**, addressing all points in a way that will make it easy for graders to assess your response. Remember that you don't need to write an essay for the first three FRQs, so just go straight for the answer to avoid any ambiguity.

You can [see more sample FRQs and how they're graded with the official scoring guidelines here](#).

#### **Step 4: Reread Your Answer**

Once you've come up with an answer, **reread what you wrote to ensure it makes sense and addresses the question completely**. Did you give the **correct number of descriptions** or examples asked of you? Does your answer directly respond to what the question is asking?

If you're satisfied, move on to the next part of the question and return to step 2!

#### **Step 5: Pace Yourself**

The final step is to keep track of time so you can be sure you're pacing yourself effectively and are not spending too much time on any one question. As a reminder, you'll have 15 minutes to respond and 5 minutes to upload your response for the concept question, 25 minutes to respond and 5 minutes to upload your response for the argumentative questions.

#### **Recap: Everything to Know About AP US Government FRQs**

Read the intro and conclusion to the question first so you can get your bearings. Then, for each of the separate parts, identify the task verb, figure out where you'll earn your raw points, and double-check your answer for any missing pieces or careless errors.

You should also **pace yourself!**

**I suggest...suggest is the wrong word, as I am assigning practice FRQ's for the next three weeks... practicing at least a few free-response questions before heading into the AP exam.** The best resource to use is the College Board website, which contains an archive of past questions accompanied by scoring guidelines and sample student responses. These questions are pretty simple compared to the free-response questions on other AP tests once you get the hang of them!