

2019

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# AP<sup>®</sup> Seminar

## Free-Response Questions

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# 2019 AP® SEMINAR FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS

## AP SEMINAR

### Part A

Suggested time — 30 minutes

**Directions:** Read the passage below and then respond to the following three questions.

1. Identify the author’s argument, main idea, or thesis. (3 points)
2. Explain the author’s line of reasoning by identifying the claims used to build the argument and the connections between them. (6 points)
3. Evaluate the effectiveness of the evidence the author uses to support the claims made in the argument. (6 points)

Write your responses to Part A only on the designated pages in the Free Response booklet.

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From “Why the Voting Age Should Be 17”  
by Peter Levine (*Politico Magazine*, February 24, 2015)

It is time to try lowering the voting age to 17 nationwide. Takoma Park, Maryland, has done it. Iowa, too, for caucuses. Scotland went down to age 16 for its recent independence referendum. Evidence suggests it will boost informed participation in our democracy over time.

In 1971, at the peak of the youth protests of the baby boom, the United States passed the 26th Amendment, lowering the voting age from 21 to 18. Congress and the necessary 38 states passed the measure in a mere three months, the fastest passage of any amendment in U.S. history. Why? Because the nation grasped that it was unacceptable to draft people and not allow them to vote on matters of war and peace, life and death.

If the government affects you, you get to vote. That is the fundamental principle of democracy. Of course, small children are too young to vote wisely and independently. But how could 18-year-olds be too immature to vote if they were mature enough to wear the uniform in a foreign land?

Those arguments for the 26th Amendment all made excellent sense, and yet 18 may have been a bad age at which to settle. Most of us will not vote unless we see people around us voting; that is where we get the idea that it is a civic responsibility. To get into the voting booth, we also need to hear arguments, debates and emotional appeals about the importance of current issues. . . .

Penn State political scientist Eric Plutzer has shown that voting is habitual. Once you vote, you are more likely to vote again. By the same token, not voting is also a habit. If people miss the first election that they face as eligible voters, they are starting off with a habit of nonparticipation. In the 2014 elections, just 5.2 percent of eligible 18-year-olds voted in the state of California, lower than the turnout of any other age.

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The political scientist Mark Franklin studied 22 democracies and found a pattern: Lowering the voting age to 18 actually caused turnout to fall in most countries. Why? Because 18-year-olds are less likely to vote than 21-year-olds. And once those 18-year-olds missed their first year as eligible voters, they were less likely to vote again—not even when they reached 21. Franklin argued that, in the United States, changing our voting age to 18 may be the sole reason voter turnout has declined since the 1970s.

But 17 may be a better age. At 17, most people are still living at home, where they can see parents voting and probably hear about local issues and candidates. They also are still in school, where voting can be encouraged and become a social norm.

Indeed, Notre Dame professor David E. Campbell finds that people in their 30s still have a higher turnout rate if they attended high schools where a majority of students believed that they should vote. That means that civic engagement of high school students has long-term implications for our democracy.

But what about the argument that teenagers just don't know enough to vote? We might reasonably worry that Americans of all ages are not adequately informed. But Rutgers-Camden professors Daniel Hart and Robert Atkins found that 16-year-olds' political knowledge was about the same as that of 21-year-olds. And one unique advantage of high school students is that we can improve their knowledge of the Constitution, the political system and current issues before an election. We can teach those topics in school—as most states still require. A local election can be an excellent “teachable moment” in a high school civics class. . . .

Just months ago, Scotland lowered its voting age from 18 so that residents who were at least 16 years old could vote in the independence referendum. It appears that turnout in that age range was high.

Hyattsville, Maryland, voted in January to lower the voting age in municipal elections to 16. Another Maryland town, Takoma Park, had already allowed young people to vote in its 2013 local races. Lowell, Massachusetts, San Francisco and the state of Missouri are considering lowering their voting ages as well.

Some might claim that lowering the voting age will benefit Democrats, since young voters preferred Obama in both of his national elections. But it's a mistake to look only at the past decade for evidence of how young people vote. Over the past 30 years, young voters have often opted for Republican candidates, and they might again in the future. Political scientists John Holbein and Sunshine Hillygus recently examined the impact of a different reform—allowing high school students to “preregister” when they turn 17 so that they are automatically registered on their 18th birthdays. Holbein and Hillygus found that youth turnout rose as a result, but the proportion of young voters who actually voted Democratic fell. In other words, this reform broadened the youth electorate from its current Democratic core to include more young Republican voters.

Lowering the voting age probably won't help Democrats, but it will help democracy—in three important ways. First, it is a strategy for connecting civic learning in schools to an important act of citizenship: voting. Students can be taught about the process before they vote and reflect on the experience in class. Learning before voting will increase the proportion of voters who are informed; discussion will then cement the habit.

Second, it is a strategy for expanding the electorate long term. The United States has one of the lowest turnout rates of any democracy in the world. Lowering the voting age in municipal elections won't push us to the top, but it's a step in the right direction.

Finally, encouraging older adolescents to vote on local issues recognizes that they are deeply affected by public policy, and especially by schools, police and employment programs. We need their voice to make those policies and institutions better.

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After all, if the government affects you, you should get to vote.

Peter Levine, Tufts University

**END OF PART A  
GO ON TO PART B.**

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## Part B

Suggested time — 1 hour and 30 minutes

**Directions:** Read the four sources carefully, focusing on a theme or issue that connects them and the different perspective each represents. Then, write a logically organized, well-reasoned, and well-written argument that presents your own perspective on the theme or issue you identified. You must incorporate at least two of the sources provided and link the claims in your argument to supporting evidence. You may also use the other provided sources or draw upon your own knowledge. In your response, refer to the provided sources as Source A, Source B, Source C, or Source D, or by the author's name.

Write your response to Part B only on the designated pages in the Free Response booklet.

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### Source A

From “Interior and Exterior Landscapes: The Pueblo Migration Stories,” *Yellow Woman and a Beauty of the Spirit: Essays on Native American Life Today*  
by Leslie Marmon Silko (1996)

#### From A High Arid Plateau in New Mexico

You see that, after a thing is dead, it dries up. It might take weeks or years, but eventually, if you touch the thing, it crumbles under your fingers. It goes back to dust. The soul of the thing has long since departed. With the plants and wild game the soul may have already been born back into bones and blood or thick green stalks and leaves. Nothing is wasted. What cannot be eaten by people or in some way used must then be left where other living creatures may benefit. What domestic animals or wild scavengers can't eat will be fed to the plants. The plants feed on the dust of these few remains. . . .

. . . Archaeologists have remarked over formal burials complete with elaborate funerary objects excavated in trash middens of abandon rooms. But the rocks and adobe mortar of collapsed walls were valued by the ancient people, because each rock had been carefully selected for size and shape, then chiseled to an even face. Even the pink clay adobe melting with each rainstorm had to be prayed over, then dug and carried to some distance. Corn-cob and husks, the rinds and stalks and animal bones were not regarded by the ancient people as filth or garbage. The remains were merely resting at a midpoint in their journey back to dust. . . .

The dead become dust, and in this becoming they are once more joined with the Mother. The ancient Pueblo people called the earth the Mother Creator of all things in this world. Her sister, the Corn Mother, occasionally merges with her because all succulent green life rises out of the depths of the earth.

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### Source B

From “Garbage Art and Garbage Housing”  
by Alessandra Ponte (*Log*, 2006)

[A] group of artists organized various initiatives linked to the founding of the Dumpster Divers in 1992. This association took its name from the practice of rummaging through the garbage of private individuals and commercial enterprises in search of salvageable things: food, clothing, books, information. Dumpstering, along with curbing (salvaging furniture and appliances abandoned on the sidewalks of American cities), may be a spontaneous reaction to the sight of something useful in a garbage can. It may also be a radical rejection of consumer society, an act aimed at protecting the environment, or even a skill developed by individuals who have no other means of procuring food and clothing. Because garbage containers are usually located on private property and dumpster diving is considered illegal in some parts of the US, an ample literature has emerged to address its legal aspects. For example, the police and other agencies have the right to make use of information gathered in this way. John Hoffman, the controversial “guru of garbage” and author of *The Art and Science of Dumpster Diving* (1993) and *Dumpster Diving: The Advanced Course: How to Turn Other People’s Trash into Money, Publicity, and Power* (2002), radically altered the perception of garbage recycling in the national American consciousness. What was seen in the early ’90s as the last resort of a desperate, down-and-out population is now recognized as a field of experimentation for artists, activists, and enterprising freethinkers who dig things out and reuse them, in part to stem the general, immoderate waste of resources.

In an interview, Hoffman explains that his parents taught him the dumpster-diving lifestyle. Beset by economic problems, they were forced to use cast-off furniture, electrical appliances, books, and food for themselves and their children. Far from procuring only the minimum needs, they found themselves living a strangely opulent lifestyle. According to Hoffman, his parents had imitated systems of survival devised by great numbers of Americans during the Depression. Hoffman’s story, however, suggests a more recent source of inspiration: the lifestyle practices of members of the ’60s and ’70s counterculture. The origins of both dumpster diving and garbage art appear to lie in the ideological and experimental ferment of those years.

Take, for example, the Dumpster Divers of Philadelphia, who helped to create the Please Take Materials Exchange in 1998. Initially described as a museum, the exchange is a depository for discarded objects and materials collected by the participants or donated by various government agencies and corporations in greater Philadelphia: paper, artists’ materials, light bulbs, medical equipment, textiles, electronics, etc. A membership fee gives artists access to the materials. The Divers also coined the word *garbitrage* to define this process by which their members use garbage as currency. These practices are reminiscent of some of the initiatives of the Diggers, a radical group based in the Haight-Ashbury district of San Francisco in the mid-60s.

. . . [T]he Diggers distributed free food in the panhandle of San Francisco’s Golden Gate Park, serving stews made with donated or stolen meat and vegetables. At the same time, they opened a large number of Free Stores in which all the goods on display, used but in good condition, could be taken (or given) without payment.

Copyright Log, Observations on architecture and the contemporary city

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### Source C

From *Walden*

by Henry David Thoreau (1846)

A man who has at length found something to do will not need to get a new suit to do it in; for him the old will do, that has lain dusty in the garret for an indeterminate period. Old shoes will serve a hero longer than they have served his valet—if a hero ever has a valet—bare feet are older than shoes, and he can make them do. Only they who go to soireés and legislative balls must have new coats, coats to change as often as the man changes in them. But if my jacket and trousers, my hat and shoes, are fit to worship God in, they will do; will they not? Who ever saw his old clothes—his old coat, actually worn out, resolved into its primitive elements, so that it was not a deed of charity to bestow it on some poor boy, by him perchance to be bestowed on some poorer still, or shall we say richer, who could do with less? I say, beware of all enterprises that require new clothes, and not rather a new wearer of clothes. If there is not a new man, how can the new clothes be made to fit? If you have any enterprise before you, try it in your old clothes. All men want, not something to do with, but something to do, or rather something to be. Perhaps we should never procure a new suit, however ragged or dirty the old, until we have so conducted, so enterprised or sailed in some way, that we feel like new men in the old, and that to retain it would be like keeping new wine in old bottles. Our moulting season, like that of the fowls, must be a crisis in our lives. The loon retires to solitary ponds to spend it. Thus also the snake casts its slough, and the caterpillar its wormy coat, by an internal industry and expansion; for clothes are but our outmost cuticle and mortal coil. Otherwise we shall be found sailing under false colors, and be inevitably cashiered at last by our own opinion, as well as that of mankind.

We don garment after garment, as if we grew like exogenous plants by addition without. Our outside and often thin and fanciful clothes are our epidermis, or false skin, which partakes not of our life, and may be stripped off here and there without fatal injury; our thicker garments, constantly worn, are our cellular integument, or cortex; but our shirts are our liber, or true bark, which cannot be removed without girdling and so destroying the man. I believe that all races at some seasons wear something equivalent to the shirt. It is desirable that a man be clad so simply that he can lay his hands on himself in the dark, and that he live in all respects so compactly and preparedly that, if an enemy take the town, he can, like the old philosopher, walk out the gate empty-handed without anxiety. While one thick garment is, for most purposes, as good as three thin ones, and cheap clothing can be obtained at prices really to suit customers; while a thick coat can be bought for five dollars, which will last as many years, thick pantaloons for two dollars, cowhide boots for a dollar and a half a pair, a summer hat for a quarter of a dollar, and a winter cap for sixty-two and a half cents, or a better be made at home at a nominal cost, where is he so poor that, clad in such a suit, of his own earning, there will not be found wise men to do him reverence?

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### Source D

From “How Biomimicry Is Inspiring Human Innovation”  
by Tom Vanderbilt (*Smithsonian Magazine*, 2012)

Though biomimicry has inspired human innovations for decades—one of the most often-cited examples is Velcro, which the Swiss engineer Georges de Mestral patented in 1955 after studying how burs stuck to his clothes—better technology and more nuanced research have enabled increasingly complex adaptations. Design software created by German researcher Claus Mattheck—and used in Opel and Mercedes cars—reflects the ways trees and bones distribute strength and loads. A fan created by Pax Scientific borrows from the patterns of swirling kelp, nautilus and whelks to move air more efficiently. A saltwater-irrigated greenhouse in the Qatari desert will use condensation and evaporation tricks gleaned from the nose of a camel. Now, thanks in part to continuing innovations in nanoscale fabrication, manufacturers are bringing an expanding array of products to market.

Biomimicry isn't itself a product but a process, drawing on natural organisms and processes in order to spark innovation. Organizations and even cities can look to ecosystems for inspiration, says Tim McGee, a biologist and member of Biomimicry 3.8, a Montana-based consultancy. In Lavasa—described as “India's first planned hill city” by its developers, who hope to eventually build homes for more than 300,000 people there—the guild consulted with landscape architects. Thus the planting strategy included deciduous trees, forming a canopy to catch, and then reflect, through evaporation, nearly a third of the monsoon rain that hits it. That effect acts “like an engine that drives the monsoon inland,” says McGee, which helps prevent drought there. The hydrodynamically efficient shape of banyan tree leaves influenced the design of a better water-dispatching roof shingle, while water divertment systems were inspired by the ways harvester ants direct water away from their nests. The first Lavasa “town” has been completed, with four more projected to follow by 2020.

Everyone's talking about ways to reduce the human footprint, or to get to “net zero” impact. But nature, says McGee, usually goes one step further: “It's almost never net zero—the output from that system is usually beneficial to everything around it.” What if we could build our cities the same way? “What if, in New York City, when it rained, the water that went into the East River was cleaner than when it fell?” And what if, when forests caught fire, the flames could be extinguished by means that didn't depend on toxic substances? “Nature creates flame retardants that are nontoxic,” notes McGee. “Why can't we?”

For years researchers have focused on the chemistry of flame retardants, without results. But perhaps natural processes could offer some path to innovation in the laboratory, McGee says. Maybe it's the way jack-pine cones open in the face of heat (to allow reproduction even as fire destroys the forest), or the way eucalyptus trees shed scattered pieces of quick-burning bark to suck up oxygen and take fire away from the main trunk. Jaime Grunlan, a mechanical engineer at Texas A&M, has developed a fire-resistant fabric that uses chitosan, a renewable material taken from lobster and shrimp shells (and a chemical relative of the chitin in butterflies' wings), to create a nanolayer polymer coating that, when exposed to heat, produces a carbon “shell” that protects the fabric.

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**STOP**  
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