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AP<sup>®</sup>

CollegeBoard

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# AP<sup>®</sup> United States Government and Politics

## Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary Set 1

### **Inside:**

#### **Free-Response Question 4**

- Scoring Guidelines**
- Student Samples**
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**Question 4: Argument Essay**

**6 points**

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
<p>Row A Claim/Thesis  (0–1 points)</p>	<p><b>0 points</b> Does not meet the criteria for one point.</p>	<p><b>1 point</b> Responds to the prompt with a defensible claim or thesis that establishes a line of reasoning.</p>
<b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b>		
<p><b>Responses that do not earn this point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only restate the prompt.</li> <li>Do not make a claim that responds to the prompt.</li> </ul>		<p><b>Responses that earn this point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respond to the prompt rather than restating or rephrasing the prompt and establish a line of reasoning.</li> <li>Provide a defensible claim or thesis that establishes a line of reasoning about whether legal challenges or social movements are the most effective means for changing federal policy.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Examples that do not earn this point:</b></p> <p><b>Restate the prompt</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“History has shown that legal challenges, which use the courts are clearly the most effective in changing federal policy when it comes to civil rights.”</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Do not respond to the prompt</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“Social movements work outside of the system and can mobilize citizens.”</i></li> </ul>		<p><b>Examples that earn this point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“Legal challenges are most effective because decisions of the court do not necessarily need to appeal to public opinion and have the effect of changing policy in the area of civil rights.”</i></li> <li><i>“Social movements are most effective because large numbers of people can put pressure on the political system which has resulted in policy changes in the area of civil rights.”</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Additional Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The claim or thesis must consist of one or more sentences that may be located anywhere in the response.</li> <li>A claim or thesis that meets the criteria can be awarded the point whether or not the rest of the response successfully supports that line of reasoning.</li> </ul>		

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria			
<p><b>Row B Evidence</b></p> <p><b>(0–3 points)</b></p>	<p><b>0 points</b> Does not meet the criteria for one point.</p>	<p><b>1 point</b> Provides one piece of evidence that is <u>relevant to the topic</u> of the prompt.</p>	<p><b>2 points</b> Uses <u>one</u> piece of specific and relevant evidence to <u>support the claim or thesis</u>.</p>	<p><b>3 points</b> Uses <u>two</u> pieces of specific and relevant evidence to <u>support the claim or thesis</u>.</p>
<b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b>				
<p><b>Responses that do not earn points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do not provide any accurate evidence.</li> <li>Provide evidence that is not relevant to the topic.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Responses that earn 1 point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide one piece of evidence relevant to the topic of the prompt.</li> <li>May or may not have a claim or thesis.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Responses that earn 2 points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide one piece of specific and relevant evidence that supports the claim or thesis. This evidence can come from one of the foundational documents listed in the prompt, any other foundational document, <b>or</b> from knowledge of course concepts.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Responses that earn 3 points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide two pieces of specific and relevant evidence that support the claim or thesis. One of these pieces of evidence <b>must</b> come from a foundational document listed in the prompt. The other piece of evidence can come from a different foundational document or from knowledge of course concepts.</li> </ul>	
<p><b>Examples that do not earn points:</b></p> <p><b>Provide evidence that is not specific</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“The Constitution protects Civil Rights.”</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Provide evidence that is not relevant to the topic of the prompt</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“Civil liberties protect citizens against the actions of the government.”</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Examples of evidence that are relevant to the <u>topic</u> of the prompt:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Social movements such as LGBTQ+, workers’, or women’s rights</li> <li><i>Brown v. Board of Education</i> (1954) and other relevant cases</li> <li>Civil Rights legislation such as the Civil Rights Act or Voting Rights Act</li> <li>The Fourteenth and Fifteenth Amendments</li> </ul>	<p><b>Examples of acceptable specific and relevant evidence that support the claim or thesis (one example is one piece of evidence):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“Mass social movements such as the women’s rights movement have used protests to bring attention to their causes.”</i></li> <li><i>“Brown was a legal challenge that desegregated schools even though it was unpopular in that school district.”</i></li> <li><i>“The Civil Rights Act was passed following the March on Washington.”</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Examples of acceptable specific and relevant evidence from the foundational documents that support the claim or thesis (one example is one piece of evidence):</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“The First Amendment protects freedom of speech which enables citizens to criticize federal policy.”</i></li> <li><i>“The First Amendment protects freedom of assembly which allows groups to gather.”</i></li> <li><i>“The First Amendment protects the right to petition which allows citizens to bring issues before the government.”</i></li> <li><i>“Federalist 78 argues that courts have the power to determine whether acts of Congress are constitutional, which allows citizens to challenge laws through the courts.”</i></li> <li><i>“Letter from Birmingham Jail argues in favor of non-violent, civil disobedience as a means to raise awareness of discriminatory policies or actions.”</i></li> </ul>		
<p><b>Additional Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To earn two or three points in Row B, the response must have a defensible claim or thesis (earned the point in Row A).</li> <li>To earn three points, the response must use one of the foundational documents listed in the prompt.</li> </ul>				

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria			
<p><b>Row C Reasoning</b></p> <p><b>(0–1 points)</b></p>	<p><b>0 points</b> Does not meet the criteria for one point.</p>	<p><b>1 point</b> Explains how or why the evidence supports the claim or thesis.</p>		
<b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b>				
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px; vertical-align: top;"> <p><b>Responses that do not earn this point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include evidence but offer no reasoning to connect the evidence to the claim or thesis.</li> <li>• Restate the prompt without explaining how the evidence supports the claim or thesis.</li> </ul> </td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px; vertical-align: top;"> <p><b>Responses that earn this point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain the relationship between the evidence provided and the claim or thesis.</li> </ul> <p><b>Examples of reasoning that explain how the evidence supports the claim or thesis:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“Court cases such as Brown v. Board of Education established a precedent for desegregating schools which was one of the biggest achievements of the Civil Rights movement. Because schools are locally controlled, it would have been much more difficult to achieve such a broad victory through a social movement.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“Political protest and civil disobedience are actions that can be taken when direct challenges to the system have been exhausted or are no longer effective. When a social movement gains prominent recognition, legislatures are more likely to move quickly to address the concerns of their citizens, unlike a legal challenge which can be costly and slow.”</i></li> </ul> </td> </tr> </table>			<p><b>Responses that do not earn this point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include evidence but offer no reasoning to connect the evidence to the claim or thesis.</li> <li>• Restate the prompt without explaining how the evidence supports the claim or thesis.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Responses that earn this point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain the relationship between the evidence provided and the claim or thesis.</li> </ul> <p><b>Examples of reasoning that explain how the evidence supports the claim or thesis:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“Court cases such as Brown v. Board of Education established a precedent for desegregating schools which was one of the biggest achievements of the Civil Rights movement. Because schools are locally controlled, it would have been much more difficult to achieve such a broad victory through a social movement.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“Political protest and civil disobedience are actions that can be taken when direct challenges to the system have been exhausted or are no longer effective. When a social movement gains prominent recognition, legislatures are more likely to move quickly to address the concerns of their citizens, unlike a legal challenge which can be costly and slow.”</i></li> </ul>
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<p><b>Additional Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To earn this point, the response must have a defensible claim or thesis (earned the point in Row A) and support that argument with at least one piece of specific and relevant evidence (earned at least two points in Row B).</li> <li>• The explanation of the relationship between one piece of evidence and the claim or thesis is sufficient to earn this point.</li> </ul>				

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
<p><b>Row D</b>  <b>Responds to Alternate Perspectives</b></p>	<p><b>0 points</b>                      Does not meet the criteria for one point.</p>	<p><b>1 point</b>                      Responds to an opposing or alternate perspective using refutation, concession, or rebuttal.</p>
<p><b>(0–1 points)</b></p>	<p><b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b></p>	
	<p><b>Responses that do not earn this point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restate the opposite of the claim or thesis.</li> <li>• May identify or describe an alternate perspective but do not refute, concede, or rebut that perspective.</li> <li>• Refute a foundational document rather than an alternate perspective to the provided claim or thesis.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Responses that earn this point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must describe an alternate perspective AND refute, concede, or rebut that perspective.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Examples of responses that do not earn the point:</b></p> <p><b>Restate the opposite of the claim or thesis</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“Many would argue that legal challenges are better, but this is simply untrue.”</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Describe an alternate perspective but do not refute, concede, or rebut that perspective</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“Some would argue that social movements are better because they mobilize people for change.”</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Examples of acceptable responses to an alternate perspective may include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“Some argue that social movements are better because they mobilize a large number of people for change, but social movements require coordination and participation which takes time.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“Some argue that legal challenges are more effective because they don’t require changing public opinion, but legal challenges generally require financial support and could take a long time.”</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Additional Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To earn this point, the response must have a defensible claim or thesis (earned the point in Row A).</li> <li>• Responses that demonstrate an incorrect understanding of the alternate perspective do not earn this point.</li> </ul>		

**Important:** Completely fill in the circle that corresponds to the question you are answering on this page.

Question 1

Question 2

Question 3

Question 4



Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

Social movements are the most effective means for changing federal policy in the area of civil rights because during the times of the greatest policy change it was a response to a social movement, lead by the voice of the public.

The constitution made sure that the public could express its opinions and views through the First Amendment. This amendment gave people the freedom of speech, religion, press, assembly, and petition. This amendment would set up the idea that the people are one great check on the government. So, even in it's foundation, the government was meant to be checked and assessed by the public. So, if the public found that their civil rights were being violated in any way, it could express that. One of the best ways that the public has used these freedoms is through social movements. Through these movements, they have greatly affected federal policy in giving them their civil rights. In the country's foundation, social movements, and the voice of the public were meant to affect policy.

One of the most influential movements in history was the Civil Rights Movement which fought for equal rights for African-Americans. In Martin Luther King Jr.'s Letter From Birmingham Jail, he expresses the troubles which African-Americans faced. He speaks of the racist laws of segregation that had still been in place at the time. He talks about these unjust laws and about how non-violent action need to be made to change these laws. He argues that without action, without a movement to demand change, change wouldn't happen. So, the Civil Rights movement was needed to make any change to the racist laws in place in some states in the country. King's argument in this letter conveys

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that without action of the people to demand change, then the laws wouldn't fix itself. Without social movements such as the civil rights movement, there would be no natural change to the law. As much has changed to prevent racist law, the Civil Rights Movement, over the years did what it was meant to do. Social Movements are therefore the most effective means for changing federal policy.

Due to the freedoms given to us in the foundational amendments of the Constitution, the government was meant to be reactive to the interests of the people. Through the first amendment, we are given freedoms of expression that leave room for the government to respond to our interests. King's Letter from Birmingham jail help to demonstrate a social movement in action. It helps to convey the fact that Social Movements are needed to make a change in policy. That would make it the most effective means for influencing federal policy.

Some might say that legal challenges are a more effective means for changing Federal Policy because Justices are not affected by the voice of the people as expressed in Federalist 78. Hamilton might argue that life tenure and the public not voting for justices might mean that Social Movement don't affect policy. However, though justices might not be affected by the voice of the people, the legislative branch is. So if the legislative branch is affected by the voice of the people, its policy will be greatly affected by Social Movements. Social movements have the greatest effect on federal policy.

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Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

Social movements are the most effective means for changing federal policy in the area of civil rights because they involve nonviolent protests which are the most effective form of protest. ~~and because social movements can involve more people since everyone has the right.~~

In the "Letter from ~~Birmingham~~ Birmingham Jail", Martin Luther King jr. emphasizes the importance of nonviolent protests, such as boycotts and sit-ins, to ~~know~~ <sup>spread</sup> ~~the~~ justice and civil rights. He also reinstates how his main goal is for there to be justice everywhere, eliminating injustice. Moreover, he encourages people to disobey unjust laws that conflict against ~~MLK~~ or limit justice and civil liberties. ~~MLK~~ MLK jr. emphasized that nonviolent protests allow for people's ideas to be communicated and for voices to be heard without chaos. Since nonviolent protests are a social movement, it shows the effectiveness of <sup>using</sup> social movements to change federal policy in civil rights because it allows for a peaceful way of communicating what the people want.

In "Tinker v. Des Moines", students held a peaceful protest by wearing black armbands to protest against the Vietnam war at school. ~~the~~ the Supreme Court said that they were allowed to do that because of the 1st amendment Free Speech clause. Even though this was a civil liberties case, and even though protesting never stopped the Vietnam war, it

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● **Important:** Completely fill in the circle that corresponds to the question you are answering on this page.

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Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

Shows that protesting and social movement is not only allowed but is also done often. ~~When~~ It proves that it is easier to accomplish than legal challenges if students can protest at school.

Some say that legal challenges are more effective because they are done by a branch of government.

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The United States as endured many different policy changes throughout history. The most effective way individuals have achieved said change is through legal challenges in cases <sup>in federal policy</sup> and amendments to protect their civil rights.

Legal challenges are more effective for changing federal policy in the area of civil rights. The First Amendments include the freedom of speech, religion, and peaceful assembly. However, many violations occurred in different cases, such as in *Yoder v. Wisconsin*. At first, the Amish were unable to remove their children from school in the 8<sup>th</sup> grade despite it being their custom in culture. Through legal action, this case established the free exercise clause in the First Amendment creating policy change due to the fact their First Amendment right was violated. The free exercise clause gives individuals the right to exercise whatever religion and lifestyle they want and, without legal challenges, federal policy could not have changed. Another case that had change in an individual's civil rights is *Brown v. Board of Education*. In this case, Linda Brown was denied from attending an all white school. This case emphasized

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how Linda's civil rights of being equal were violated. As a result, the Fourteenth Amendment ~~is~~ that includes the Equal Protection Clause was established, saying that everyone is equal despite race or gender. This important piece of legislation that protected important civil rights could not have been applied without legal challenges. Therefore, as seen in two impactful amendments and cases, legal challenges are the most effective for changing federal policy in the area of civil rights.

Although legal challenges are impactful to policy making, it can be argued that social movements are most effective when changing federal policy and protecting civil rights. Civil Rights Activist Martin Luther King Jr. wrote in his "Letter to Birmingham Jail" about how African Americans are dealing with continued racial discrimination and civil disobedience will continue to occur until vital action is taken. This social movement was considered impactful as federal policies continued to change as a result, such as the intergrating of schools and African Americans getting the right to vote. This social movement was considered crucial, and many believe

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Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

Social movements are more effective in bringing change in federal policy and highlighting civil rights that ~~we~~ were violated.

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## Question 4

**Note:** Student samples are quoted verbatim and may contain spelling and grammatical errors.

### Overview

This Argument Essay question expected students to demonstrate an understanding of how outside groups influence federal policy makers to effect changes in policy in the area of civil rights, as well as an understanding of foundational documents related to the concept of competing policy making interests (*The Federalist* 78, the First Amendment to the Constitution, and “Letter from Birmingham Jail”).

Students were expected to articulate a defensible claim/thesis and establish a line of reasoning; support the thesis with evidence from a foundational document(s) and/or the course concepts; use reasoning to explain why the evidence provided supports the thesis; and respond to an alternative perspective using refutation, concession, or rebuttal. Students were expected to write in the form of an argumentative essay, demonstrating each of the skills mentioned above.

### Sample: 4A

**Score: 6**

**Claim/Thesis: 1**

**Evidence: 3**

**Reasoning: 1**

**Alternative Perspectives: 1**

- A. The response earned 1 point because it contains a thesis. The claim that social movements are more effective because they are “lead by the voice of the public” is a defensible line of reasoning.
- B. The response earned 3 points for evidence. The response earned 2 points with its accurate description of the First Amendment, which is a given document, and the description supports the thesis. The response earned 1 point for an accurate description of “Letter from Birmingham Jail.” Responses only need to use one of the documents in order to earn points in this section. In this response, two documents are used.
- C. The response earned 1 point for reasoning with the explanation of how social movements, with the people demanding change, provide an opportunity for the government to respond to the interests of the people.
- D. The response earned 1 point for the alternative perspective by describing the alternative perspective with a reason why it would be argued and providing a rebuttal that supports the original thesis.

### Question 4 (continued)

**Sample: 4B**

**Score: 3**

**Claim/Thesis: 1**

**Evidence: 2**

**Reasoning: 0**

**Alternative Perspectives: 0**

A. The response earned 1 point for the thesis. The response makes the claim in the first paragraph. The line of reasoning appears later: “it shows the effectiveness of using social movements to change federal policy in civil rights because it allows for a peaceful way of communicating what the people want.”

B. The response earned 2 evidence points for the description of “Letter from Birmingham Jail,” which is relevant to the prompt (1 point) and supports the thesis (1 point). “Letter from Birmingham Jail” is also a given foundational document, but 2 points was the most that could be earned for one piece of evidence. The response did not earn evidence points for *Tinker v. Des Moines* because it is not relevant to the prompt as it is a civil liberties case rather than a civil rights case.

C. The response did not earn the reasoning point because the language it provides for reasoning (“it shows the effectiveness of using social movements to change federal policy in civil rights because it allows for a peaceful way of communicating what the people want”) was used to complete the thesis and responses could not earn points for the same language in multiple sections.

D. The response did not earn the alternative perspective point as it fails to fully describe the alternative perspective, and it did not offer a rebuttal.

**Sample: 4C**

**Score: 1**

**Claim/Thesis: 0**

**Evidence: 1**

**Reasoning: 0**

**Alternative Perspectives: 0**

A. The response did not earn the thesis point. The response makes a claim but does not have a defensible line of reasoning.

B. The response earned 1 point for evidence with the evidence about *Brown v. Board of Education*. The *Wisconsin v. Yoder* case is not acceptable as evidence because it concerns civil liberties, not civil rights.

C. The response does not have a thesis and could not earn the reasoning point.

D. The response does not have a thesis and could not earn the alternative perspectives point.