

**Chief Reader Report on Student Responses:
2022 AP[®] United States Government and Politics Set 2
Free-Response Questions**

• Number of Students Scored	298,118		
• Number of Readers	1,001		
• Score Distribution	Exam Score	N	%At
	5	35,673	12.0
	4	32,514	10.9
	3	76,786	25.8
	2	76,534	25.7
	1	76,611	25.7
• Global Mean	2.58		

The following comments on the 2022 free-response questions for AP[®] United States Government and Politics were written by the Chief Reader, Stella Rouse, Professor, University of Maryland. They give an overview of each free-response question and of how students performed on the question, including typical student errors. General comments regarding the skills and content that students frequently have the most problems with are included. Some suggestions for improving student preparation in these areas are also provided. Teachers are encouraged to attend a College Board workshop to learn strategies for improving student performance in specific areas.

Question 1

Task: Concept Application

Topic: Interest Group Influence

Max Score: 3

Mean Score: 1.67

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

The Concept Application question expected students to describe course concepts using real-world scenarios. In this scenario they were given information about teacher shortages and low teacher salaries across the country based on a report issued by the National Education Association (NEA). As an interest group, the NEA advocates for teacher benefits. Students were expected to recognize interest group influence on policy making in the context of the scenario. Students were expected to describe a strategy that the NEA could use to address teacher shortages and low teacher salaries: organizing political participation, raising awareness of the issue through media campaigns, lobbying lawmakers, and/or supporting candidates via electioneering strategies.

In addition, students were expected to recognize how variation in types of resources of interest groups, in this case, NEA membership and annual budget, affected their ability to influence the strategy earlier in the response. This effect could have been positive or negative: not having enough of the resource versus having a lot of the resource, were both acceptable to demonstrate these variations. Students could interpret 3.2 million members and an annual budget of over \$300 million dollars as either excess or insufficient resources to address teacher shortages and low teacher salaries.

Finally, the question required students to understand how the issues in the scenario could potentially remain unsolved, even if states were given block grants for education, as a result of state discretion over funds. Students needed to address how one state could choose to use the funds to raise teacher salaries, or hire more teachers, and another state could use the grant on something else related to education spending (i.e., school facilities, textbooks, classroom technology, etc.), but they did not need to state specific examples as long as discretion was implied.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?

It was challenging for students to apply knowledge of course content in the context of the provided scenario. In part A many students described a correct strategy, but with abstract language that never indicated they had made a connection to the scenario. Or students were able to reference the scenario, but they described an unrealistic or inaccurate interest group strategy (i.e., start a program to train more teachers, recruit more teachers to the field, lobby to increase their own budget so they can increase teacher salaries).

In part B many students were not able to make a connection between the resources available to the NEA in the scenario, money and/or members, and how these resources would affect the strategy described in part A. The knowledge expected for part B required students to show a connection between the available resources and how those resources would impact the strategy described in part A. Some students failed to recognize that the annual budget and membership provided in the scenario were the resources being referred to in the question, while others failed to demonstrate how the resources could impact the interest group strategy.

In part C students needed to demonstrate a contextual knowledge of how block grants for education could affect teacher salaries/teacher shortages from state to state. While most students could accurately define block

grants (not a requirement to get the point), they could not demonstrate how state discretion in the spending of grant money could impact the issues in the scenario. Instead, some students focused incorrectly on a lack of funds from the grants, or how states with higher populations would be at a disadvantage because they had more teachers, so the grant money would not extend as far as in lower populated states. For the most part, students knew that block grants had something to do with funding, but they failed to make the larger connections to state discretion, and how that would impact teacher salaries or shortages from state to state.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part A: assuming that the NEA would directly receive funding from the use of strategies described and then utilize those funds to increase teacher salaries or use their own budget to increase teacher salaries. • Part A: failing to reference the scenario. • Part A: identifying lobbying as a strategy without targeting lawmakers or policy-making bodies. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The National Education Association could lobby to Congress to apportion more government funding to education to increase teacher salaries.” • “fund and contribute to the campaigns of politicians who promise to provide more funding to education to boost teacher’s salaries to help them get elected.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part B: using a resource that was not in the scenario provided. • Part B: providing a different strategy than the one described in part A. • Part B: including a resource and connecting it to the strategy in part A, but failing to address the impact of the resource on said strategy. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The NEA has significant membership and funding. This would significantly enhance the effectiveness of their lobbying.” • “Due to the NEA being a national organization with a sizable budget, it can make the strategy of campaign contributions more effective as the NEA could potentially use their large amount of resources to influence high level national elections.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Part C: demonstrating that one state could use the block grant on teacher salaries/teacher shortages but another state could use the block grant on something other than education (i.e., roads). • Part C: providing information that may be accurate but does not answer the question: The issue of teacher salaries or teacher shortages could not be addressed based on state demographics (populations, levels of high-poverty or low-poverty areas), or amount of money the block grant was for. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “A block grant is money given to the states by the federal government with significant freedom ... on where to spend the money. Some states could certainly use the money to help increase teacher salary; however, some states might not want to increase teacher salary.”

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Part C: explaining accurately that states have discretion over how the money was spent but never addressing the issue(s) in the scenario: teacher salaries/teacher shortages. | |
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Based on your experience at the AP[®] Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?

Teachers should focus on the skill of applying political concepts and processes from the course to specific scenarios. When the prompt says “referencing the scenario” students must specifically reference the scenario in context. Simply stating “in the scenario” in their response is not enough. Students need to reference items like National Education Association (NEA), teacher shortages, teacher salaries, etc. It needs to be clear that the students have to read and understood the context of the scenario provided. Students should be able to explain how the resources of interest groups vary, and how those resources impact an interest group’s abilities and strategies in attempting to influence policy outcomes.

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

Consider taking advantage of the following resources to help students prepare for the content and skills required in this free-response question:

- The Course and Exam Description (CED) addresses how interest groups may represent specific interests and can educate voters and office holders, conduct lobbying, draft legislation, and mobilize membership to apply pressure on and work with legislators and government agencies in Topic 5.6: Interest Groups Influencing Policy. The CED also addresses block grants in Topic 1.7: Relationship Between the States and Federal Government.
- In AP Classroom, teachers will find a rich collection of resources to support learning about these topics. These resources include formative and summative assessment items for every unit of the course, including practice FRQs for teachers to use as formative assessment pieces. The formative items are scaffolded so that early items represent what students are ready for at the beginning of the school year and later items increase in challenge as teachers progress through the course.
- AP Classroom also includes topic-specific AP Daily Videos, including Topic 5.6: Daily Video 1 (Interest Groups) and Topic 1.7: Daily Video 2 (block grants) that cover topics related to this FRQ.
- The Review section under Course Resources has AP Daily Videos for review. While the content in Review Session 1 and Review Session 5 is different than in this FRQ, these videos provide detailed information on responding to the Concept Application FRQs.
- Additionally, the Professional Learning tab in AP Classroom has a skill-based module on teaching the concept application FRQ, Unit 2: Data Analysis and Concept Application.
- Finally, the online AP Teacher Community includes a library of instructional resources and a forum for teachers to share instructional ideas regarding these topics.

Question 2

Task: Quantitative Analysis

Topic: Popular Vote Share in Presidential Elections by Party

Max Score: 4

Mean Score: 2.48

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

The quantitative analysis question expected students to read and interpret data related to the popular vote share in presidential elections by political party, from 1968 to 2016. Students were expected to identify the year in which a presidential candidate received the highest percent of the popular vote. Students were then expected to describe the overall trend in the data as it related to third-party/independent candidates, after which they were expected to use the data in the graph to draw a conclusion about how third-party/independent candidates impact the outcome of presidential elections. Finally, this question expected students to explain why the data in the bar graph was not necessarily related to the outcome of the presidential election.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?

Student performance in identifying specific data points within the data was very strong. In part A the overwhelming majority of responses correctly identified 1972 as the year in which a presidential candidate had the greatest percentage of the popular vote in a presidential election.

In part B most responses were able to describe a trend in the percent of the popular vote of third-party/independent candidates. While some responses pointed to individual data points, rather than a trend, most responses were able to describe an overall trend.

Part C called for a more sophisticated response, requiring students to identify a single data point within the chart and use that data to draw a conclusion between third-party/independent votes and their impact on the outcome of presidential elections. The knowledge required for part C included an understanding of how third-party/independent candidates “siphon” votes away from one or both major party candidates and the effect that a larger-than-normal percentage of third-party/independent voters would have on the outcome of the presidential election. Part C was one of the more challenging aspects of this prompt in that students needed to apply their understanding of course knowledge to a set of data. Many responses tended to focus on the popular vote and not the Electoral College vote, which is what the prompt required because it specifically asked about changing the outcome of the presidential election.

Part D also required students to apply course content knowledge related to the presidential election and explain how the popular vote is not an accurate reflection of the outcome of the election. The knowledge required for Part D centered on the students’ understanding that the Electoral College is the decisive process for determining the outcome of the presidential election, not the popular vote. Responses that earned the point in part D focused on explaining how although a candidate may win the popular vote, it is not necessarily related to the outcome of the election due to the fact that presidential elections are determined by the Electoral College process. Other responses focused on the winner-take-all system and how this allows for the popular vote as displayed in the graph to be an accurate reflection of the outcome of the presidential election.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

- Some students struggled to identify an overall trend. Instead they would offer an explanation of data points over time without noting any trend.
- Many students struggled to draw an accurate conclusion that the unusually high percentage of the popular vote that went to third-party/independent candidates in 1992 could have affected the number of electoral votes and that this could have changed the outcome of the presidential election.
- Many students struggled to explain that the Electoral College is the decisive mechanism for electing the president.

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not describing an overall trend in the data as it related to third-party/independent candidates. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The popular vote percentage of the third-party candidate is always significantly lower than that of the democrats and republicans.” • “The third-party/independent candidates never get more than 20% of the popular vote.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Drawing a conclusion about how third party/independent candidates impact the outcome of presidential elections. Many responses continued to focus on the popular vote without discussing the role of the Electoral College. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “It is very likely that the election race was much closer in terms of the two-party results due to the fact that the third party candidate garnered an unusually higher number of votes. This means that ... it may have affected the electoral college votes making it a much closer race for the two-party candidates.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not explaining that the Electoral College is the decisive process for electing the president and that the outcome may differ from the results of the popular vote. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Presidents are not elected by the popular vote, but by the electoral college. In some cases, the candidate that wins the popular vote loses the electoral college so they lose the election.” • “This data in the graph relates to the citizens popular vote but it does not relate to the outcome of the presidential election. The electoral college determines the presidential outcome and not the popular vote.”

Based on your experience at the AP[®] Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?

Teachers should emphasize the application of political concepts and processes to data provided in graphs and charts. Students should be able to recall relevant course information and apply it to the provided data. Teachers should emphasize the difference between the popular vote and Electoral College vote. Many students did not specify the Electoral College when discussing the outcome of presidential elections. Also,

many students were not able to describe an overall trend in the data and appeared to believe that describing specific data points or a relationship between variables was the correct way to describe a trend.

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

Consider taking advantage of the following resources to help students prepare for the content and skills required in this free-response question:

- The CED provides a framework for teaching and learning about the topics that are covered on the exam. The CED addresses third parties and the barriers they face in Topic 5.5: Third-Party Politics. Topic 5.8: Electing a President examines the Electoral College and the winner-take-all allocation of votes in most states. Understanding these topics is helpful in responding accurately to this FRQ.
- In AP Classroom, teachers will find a rich collection of resources to support learning about these topics. These resources include formative and summative assessment items for every unit of the course, including practice FRQs for teachers to use as formative assessment pieces. The formative items are scaffolded so that early items represent what students are ready for at the beginning of the school year and later items increase in challenge as teachers progress through the course.
- AP Classroom also includes topic-specific AP Daily Videos, including Topic 5.5: Daily Video 1 as well as Topic 5.8: Daily Video 2, that cover topics related to this FRQ. Also, Topic 5.5: Daily Video 2 reviews a data analysis exercise related to this topic. Each of these AP Daily Videos provide content information and skill practice for this FRQ.
- The Review section under Course Resources has AP Daily Videos for review. While the content in Review Session 2 and Review Session 6 is different than in this FRQ, these videos provide detailed information on responding to the Quantitative Analysis FRQs.
- Additionally, the Professional Learning tab in AP Classroom has skill-based modules on teaching the Quantitative Analysis FRQ, Unit 2: Data Analysis and Concept Application and Unit 4: Data Analysis.
- Finally, the online AP Teacher Community includes a library of instructional resources and a forum for teachers to share instructional ideas regarding these topics.

Question 3

Task: SCOTUS Comparison

Topic: Amendments: Selective Incorporation and Rights of the Accused

Max Score: 4

Mean Score 1.27

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

This Supreme Court Comparison question expected students to read a case summary of a nonrequired Supreme Court case (*Timbs v. Indiana*) and compare it to a case required in the course (*McDonald v. Chicago*). Students were asked to identify the legal doctrine common to both cases. Students were then expected to explain how the holding in *McDonald v. Chicago* was similar to the holding in *Timbs v. Indiana*. Finally, students were expected to explain how the decision in *Timbs v. Indiana* affects the reserve powers of the states.

The task of comparing the required case to a nonrequired case necessitated that students demonstrate increasingly higher order thinking skills, applying their substantive knowledge of case facts, reasoning and holdings, while integrating comparison skills with other course topics/concepts.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?

Students were proficient at describing the fact that *McDonald* upheld the Second Amendment right to bear arms but struggled with the fact that *McDonald* applied the Second Amendment to the states. Students also had difficulty with the higher-order task of comparing *McDonald* to *Timbs*, the provided case. This demonstrates that students did not understand the common legal doctrine of selective incorporation between the two cases because the facts of *Timbs* were given in the scenario. Many students struggled to identify legal doctrine common to both cases and referenced constitutional principles instead, which illustrates an inability to recall the relevant legal doctrine and how the legal doctrine of selective incorporation places limits on states' reserve powers and prohibits states from passing laws that exceed the constitutional protections against excessive fines.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">Identifying the Due Process or Equal Protection Clause of the Fourteenth Amendment as the legal doctrine. Many students were unable to correctly identify selective incorporation. Some students identified the Supremacy Clause, the Necessary and Proper Clause, or Federalism.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">"The legal doctrine common in both cases is selective incorporation."

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most students provided accurate statements about <i>McDonald</i> and the Second Amendment right to bear arms but did not include the holding’s application to the states. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “In <i>McDonald</i>, the Court held that the Second Amendment applied to the states.” • “<i>McDonald</i> incorporated the Second Amendment right to keep and bear arms for the purpose of self-defense to the states.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most students explained how the <i>Timbs</i> holding prohibited the state from imposing excessive fines but did not demonstrate an understanding of the holding incorporating the excessive fines clause to all states, just as the <i>McDonald</i> holding did. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “In <i>McDonald</i>, the court held that the Second Amendment applied to the states. In <i>Timbs</i>, the court held that the excessive fines clause of the Eighth Amendment applied to the states. Both cases involved the incorporation of civil liberties from the Bill of Rights to the states.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Most students explained that the <i>Timbs</i> holding limits state reserve power by taking away the power of the states to excessively fine. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The decision in <i>Timbs</i> incorporated the Eighth Amendment to the states and will limit states’ powers related to sentencing and punishments.”

Based on your experience at the AP[®] Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?

Teachers should emphasize that students read the tasks in the prompt carefully to understand specifically what the prompt is asking students to identify, describe, or explain. Also, teachers should emphasize the difference between a legal doctrine and what constitutional provisions are used with the legal doctrine.

Teachers should emphasize the relevant information about each required case, the constitutional provision and legal doctrine that the case involves. They should also have students practice how to compare the decisions of required cases to nonrequired cases, and how these decisions impact the constitutional provision and legal doctrine.

Teachers should emphasize that strong responses use the information from the nonrequired case as a starting point but go beyond the provided material to demonstrate a deeper understanding of the prompt.

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

Consider taking advantage of the following resources to help students prepare for the content and skills required in this free-response question:

- The CED provides a framework for teaching and learning about the topics that are covered on the exam. The CED addresses *McDonald v. Chicago* as well as selective incorporation in Topic 3.7: Selective Incorporation. Topic 1.8: Constitutional Interpretations of Federalism provides further information about issues related to the balance of power between the national and state governments. Understanding these topics is important in order to respond accurately to this FRQ.
- In AP Classroom, teachers will find a rich collection of resources to support learning about these topics. These resources include formative and summative assessment items for every unit of the course, including practice FRQs for teachers to use as formative assessment pieces. The formative items are scaffolded so that early items represent what students are ready for at the beginning of the school year and later items increase in challenge as teachers progress through the course.

- AP Classroom also includes topic-specific AP Daily Videos, including Topic 3.7: Daily Video 2, which examines selective incorporation as well as reviewing a SCOTUS Comparison FRQ based on *McDonald v. Chicago*. Topic 1.8: Daily Video 1 and Daily Video 2 examine the balance of power between the national and state governments. Each of these AP Daily Videos provide content information and skill practice for this FRQ.
- The Review section under Course Resources has AP Daily Videos for review. While the content in Review Session 3 and Review Session 7 is different than in this FRQ, these videos provide detailed information on responding to the SCOTUS Comparison FRQs.
- Additionally, the Professional Learning tab in AP Classroom has a skill-based module on teaching the SCOTUS Comparison FRQ, Unit 3: Supreme Court Case Analysis.
- Finally, the online AP Teacher Community includes a library of instructional resources and a forum for teachers to share instructional ideas regarding these topics.

Question 4

Task: Argument Essay

Topic: Policy making—Take a position on whether the filibuster is beneficial or detrimental to policy making in the United States Congress.

Max Score: 6

Mean Score: 2.73

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

This free-response question expected students to demonstrate an understanding of the concepts of the filibuster and the policy making process in Congress, specifically, the Senate. Responses should also demonstrate an understanding of foundational documents related to the concept of policy making (Article I of the United States Constitution, *Federalist* 10, *Federalist* 51), while taking a position on the topic of the prompt.

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 also expected to write in the form of an argumentative essay, demonstrating each of the skills mentioned above.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?

The different tasks within this question required students to demonstrate several higher-order thinking skills and apply their substantive knowledge about policy making, while using the argumentation practice from the course. This type of question requires the content knowledge from the course to be integrated with the practices, and most students were successful in demonstrating some substantive knowledge and a number of the practices associated with the argumentative essay. Most students were successful in providing a correct piece of specific and relevant evidence related to the prompt.

Students generally demonstrated an understanding of the filibuster, with many students being able to explain how the filibuster connects to policy making in Congress. Although many students struggled with successfully making a defensible claim with a line of reasoning, students who were able to do so were also generally able to provide at least one accurate piece of evidence that supported their claim, with many being able to provide a correct piece of evidence from one of the provided foundational documents. Students were least successful in providing multiple pieces of reasoning, particularly the line of reasoning that should have been adjacent to their claim. While many students were able to provide an alternative perspective, students struggled with describing that alternative perspective.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

- The most common misconceptions for the thesis point included the following: Many students simply restated the prompt without establishing a line of reasoning or providing a thesis that addressed the policymaking process. Many students did not provide a line of reasoning adjacent to the claim. This caused those responses to not earn the C reasoning point that was intended to support their evidence because the line of reasoning had to be used to support the thesis rather than the evidence. A common error was listing the evidence or documents as the line of reasoning. Some students did not choose a

position and took a neutral approach to the prompt (i.e., The filibuster is both beneficial and detrimental to policymaking because ...).

- For the evidence portion of the question, the most frequent error included students confusing foundational documents (i.e., mentioning *Federalist* 10, but describing *Federalist* 51 or describing the First Amendment as an evidence description for Article I of the Constitution). Many responses made broad or vague claims about the documents, which fit as a description for any document in the list of choices, rather than providing evidence specific to only that document.
- For the reasoning portion of the question, the reasoning that students provided for the evidence had to be used to support the claim they made when they didn't have a line of reasoning attached to their claim. In these instances, because students did not clearly articulate a line of reasoning adjacent to their claim, the readers were directed to use this reasoning as the completion of the thesis. Although many students did well with the reasoning portion of the essay, those students who did not earn this point commonly described course concepts like checks and balances, a general definition of the filibuster, or factions, using examples without providing reasoning for how/why the evidence supported their claim/thesis.
- For the alternative perspective portion of the question, common missteps included that students did not provide a description of an alternative perspective before responding to it or did not attempt an alternative perspective at all. Many students stated an alternative perspective but failed to explain that perspective before explaining why their position was still most accurate.

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A claim was made either without a clear line of reasoning or without a clear line of reasoning adjacent to the claim (i.e., the line of reasoning was found later in the essay, often attached to a piece of evidence). • A clear claim with a value judgment was not made and/or there was not a line of reasoning by the student. Instead, students listed documents and/or concepts as their attempt at a line of reasoning. • A clear claim was made, but the line of reasoning did not relate to the policy-making process (i.e., the line of reasoning vaguely referred to the length of time wasted without referencing legislation, debate, lawmaking process, etc.). 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The filibuster is beneficial to policymaking in the United States Congress because it allows for more deliberation in the lawmaking process which leads to more thorough, well planned legislation and it also prevents a tyranny of majority within a government body such as the Senate.” • “The filibuster is detrimental to policymaking, as it slows down progress and prevents necessary legislation that should be voted on.”

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students incorrectly used foundational documents, including using the title of one document with a description of a different document or making vague, general claims about the documents that are not specific to the ideas in the documents. • Students confused the description of Article I of the U.S. Constitution with the First Amendment. • Students used an incorrect document in order to support the claim, for example, using <i>Federalist</i> 70 to support checks and balances within Congress. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “In the Federalist 10, Madison reasons that a strong central government is the best way to ensure the proper representation of the people and stresses the negative nature of factions.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students described examples of a course concept without having provided a reasoned explanation. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “If the majority faction in the Senate is trying to push very hard for certain legislation, and the minority faction(s) do not agree, they can filibuster to voice their opinions and make themselves heard.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students stated an alternate perspective without providing a description. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Opposers of the filibusters may feel in a situation of crisis, the filibuster will hinder the ability of the government to respond quickly and effectively. However, there are two arguments against this claim. Firstly, it is the executive, not the legislative branch, who is meant to act quickly. ... If the Senate as a governing body needs to move quickly, filibusters can be ended by cloture.”

Based on your experience at the AP[®] Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?

Emphasize the benefit of beginning the response with a clear thesis that goes beyond restating the prompt and taking a clear position that establishes a line of reasoning. For example, “The filibuster is beneficial to policymaking in the US Congress because ...”. It is most helpful for the reader to be able to see the clear thesis at the very start of the response. The clear thesis is also the “gateway” to earning all other points.

Spend time conducting structured, mini-lessons that break down each section of the argumentative essay: design exercises based around thesis creation, with a heavy emphasis on crafting thesis statements that take a clear position and establish a line of reasoning; create a lesson centered around how to accurately describe the information contained within the foundational documents; utilize practices designed to analyze and explain how the information found in these documents relates to both course concepts and more current events in order to better develop reasoning skills.

Spend time on the nine foundational documents to ensure that students can recall specific, descriptive information about each document that is relevant to major course concepts.

Each section of the essay should be addressed as a separate skill that students should work toward mastering. After students become comfortable with each section, then classroom practices and assessments can be designed to integrate the various elements of a successful argumentative essay.

Consider providing students with a template for writing the argument essay that begins with a thesis statement, continues with two pieces of evidence and reasoning, and concludes with an alternate perspective.

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

Consider taking advantage of the following resources to help students prepare for the content and skills required in this free-response question:

- The CED provides a framework for teaching and learning about the topics that are covered on the exam. The CED addresses the filibuster and its potential impact on the policy-making process in Topic 2.2: Structures, Powers, and Functions of Congress. Topic 1.6: Principles of American Government introduces *Federalist* 51 and the constitutional provisions for the separation of power and a system of checks and balances. Topic 1.2: Types of Democracy introduces *Federalist* 10 and reflects on the tensions inherent in various models of democracy. The enumerated and implied powers of Congress are examined in Topic 2.1: Congress: The Senate and the House of Representatives. Understanding these topics is important in order to respond accurately to this FRQ.
- In AP Classroom, teachers will find a rich collection of resources to support learning about these topics. These resources include formative and summative assessment items for every unit of the course, including practice FRQs for teachers to use as formative assessment pieces. The formative items are scaffolded so that early items represent what students are ready for at the beginning of the school year and later items increase in challenge as teachers progress through the course.
- AP Classroom also includes topic-specific AP Daily Videos related to this FRQ, such as Topic 2.2: Daily Video 1, which looks at how the differences between the House and Senate procedures can impact policy making. Topic 1.2: Daily Video 1 reviews various models of democracy. Topic 1.2: Daily Video 2 examines *Brutus* 1 and Topic 1.2: Daily Video 2 takes a closer look at *Federalist* 10. Topic 1.6: Daily Video 1 and Daily Video 2 provide information about separation of power and checks and balances. Additionally, part of Topic 1.6: Daily Video 3 focuses on writing the Argument Essay. Each of these AP Daily Videos provides content information useful for understanding this FRQ.
- The Review section under Course Resources has AP Daily Videos for review. The content in Review Session 4 is different than in this FRQ, but this video provides detailed information on responding to the Argument Essay FRQs. Review Session 8 covers an argument essay on checks and balances.
- Additionally, the Professional Learning tab in AP Classroom has a skill-based module on teaching the Argument Essay FRQ, Unit 5: Argumentation.
- Finally, the online AP Teacher Community includes a library of instructional resources and a forum for teachers to share instructional ideas regarding these topics.