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

## Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary Set 2

### **Inside:**

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

- ☒ **Scoring Guidelines**
- ☒ **Student Samples**
- ☒ **Scoring Commentary**

**Question 4: Argument Essay****6 points**

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
<b>Row A</b> <b>Claim/Thesis</b>  <b>(0–1 points)</b>	<b>0 points</b> Does not meet the criteria for one point.	<b>1 point</b> Responds to the prompt with a defensible claim or thesis that establishes a line of reasoning.
	<b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b>	
	<b>Responses that do not earn this point:</b> <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>	<b>Responses that earn this point:</b> <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 regarding whether interest groups or social movements better reflect the participatory model of democracy.</li> </ul>
	<b>Examples that do not earn this point:</b>  <b>Restate the prompt</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“Interest groups better reflect the participatory model of democracy.”</i></li> </ul> <b>Do not respond to the prompt</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“Social movements are better at pressuring the government to change laws.”</i></li> </ul>	<b>Examples that earn this point:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“Interest groups better reflect the participatory model because they bring together people with common goals.”</i></li> <li><i>“Interest groups better reflect the participatory model of democracy because they are an established part of the policy making process.”</i></li> <li><i>“Social movements better reflect the participatory model, and they are inclusive.”</i></li> <li><i>“Social movements better reflect the participatory model of democracy since people can directly and immediately create the change they seek.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Additional Notes:</b> <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			
Row B Evidence  (0–3 points)	<b>0 points</b> Does not meet the criteria for one point.	<b>1 point</b> Provides one piece of evidence that is <u>relevant to the topic</u> of the prompt.	<b>2 points</b> Uses <u>one</u> piece of specific and relevant evidence to <u>support the claim or thesis</u> . OR Provides two pieces of evidence that are relevant to the topic of the prompt.	<b>3 points</b> Uses <u>two</u> pieces of specific and relevant evidence to <u>support the claim or thesis</u> .
Decision Rules and Scoring Notes				
<b>Responses that do not earn points:</b> <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>	<b>Responses that earn 1 point:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Must provide one piece of evidence relevant to the topic of the prompt. This evidence can come from one of the foundational documents listed in the prompt, any other foundational document, or from knowledge of course concepts.</li></ul>	<b>Responses that earn 2 points:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Provide one piece of specific and relevant evidence that supports the claim or thesis.</li></ul> <b>OR</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Must provide two pieces of evidence relevant to the topic of the prompt. This evidence can come from one of the foundational documents listed in the prompt, any other foundational document, or from knowledge of course concepts.</li></ul>	<b>Responses that earn 3 points:</b> <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>	
<b>Examples that do not earn points:</b>  <b>Provide evidence that is not specific</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>“Social movements give power to the people.”</li></ul> <b>Provide evidence that is not relevant to the topic of the prompt</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>“Letter from a Birmingham Jail was a statement in a local newspaper.”</li></ul>	<b>Examples of evidence that are relevant to the <u>topic</u> of the prompt:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>“Political parties organize voters based on their ideological interests.”</li><li>“Social media has made it easier for groups of people to organize.”</li><li>“Federalist No. 10 discussed the impact that factions can have on a republic.”</li><li>“The First Amendment allows people to petition the government for change.”</li><li>“Letter from a Birmingham Jail advocates for social movements, like the Civil Rights Movement.”</li></ul> <b>Examples of acceptable specific and relevant evidence that support the claim or thesis (one example is one piece of evidence):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>“Political efficacy is the feeling that you can influence what government does. Interest groups give people a wide variety of ways to influence governmental actions.”</li><li>“Representatives in Congress are concerned about re-election, which makes them sensitive to activists and social movements in the places they represent.”</li><li>“In Federalist No. 10, the Federalists advocated for a large republic because they were concerned about factions, their word for interest groups, and how factions would have too much power in a small republic or a direct democracy.”</li><li>“The First Amendment protects the rights of assembly and free speech, which means that people can express their political views easily.”</li><li>“In Letter from a Birmingham Jail, Martin Luther King suggests that people shouldn’t wait for the courts to change unjust laws and argues that people should protest instead.”</li></ul>			
<b>Additional Notes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>To earn one or two points in Row B, the response does not need to have earned the point for claim/thesis in Row A.</li><li>To earn three points in Row B, the response must have a defensible claim/thesis (earned the point in Row A).</li><li>To earn three points in Row B, the response must use one of the foundational documents listed in the prompt.</li></ul>				

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row C Reasoning	<b>0 points</b> Does not meet the criteria for one point.	<b>1 point</b> Uses reasoning (classification, process, causation, or comparison) to explain how or why the evidence supports an argument relevant to the prompt.
(0–1 points)	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	<b>Responses that do not earn this point:</b> <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>	<b>Responses that earn this point:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain the relationship between the evidence provided and an argument.</li> </ul> <b>Examples of reasoning that explains how the evidence supports the claim or thesis:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>"Interest groups are made up of elites, lobbyists, and concerned citizens. By bringing together a wide range of voices, interest groups reflect the participatory model of democracy because interest groups desire to satisfy the needs of their members."</i></li> <li>• <i>"Through the right of protest, which is protected by the First Amendment, social movements can get the attention of policymakers, which directly connects the people to the government and is closer to the participatory model of democracy."</i></li> </ul>
	<b>Additional Notes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To earn this point, the response must have provided at least one piece of specific and relevant evidence.</li> <li>• The explanation of the relationship between one piece of evidence and a well reasoned argument relevant to the prompt is sufficient to earn this point.</li> </ul>	

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row D Responds to Alternate Perspectives	<b>0 points</b> Does not meet the criteria for one point.	<b>1 point</b> Responds to an opposing or alternate perspective using rebuttal or refutation.
(0–1 points)	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	<b>Responses that do not earn this point:</b> <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 rebut or refute that perspective.</li> <li>Rebut or refute a foundational document rather than an alternate perspective.</li> </ul>	<b>Responses that earn this point:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must describe an alternate perspective AND rebut or refute that perspective.</li> </ul>
	<b>Examples of responses that do not earn the point:</b> <b>Restate the opposite of the claim or thesis</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“Social movements better reflect the participatory model of democracy.”</i></li> </ul> <b>Describe an alternate perspective but do not rebut or refute that perspective</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“Some people might argue that social movements better reflect the participatory model because they include people who are typically outside the system.”</i></li> </ul>	<b>Examples of acceptable responses to an alternate perspective may include:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“It might be true that social movements include more people, but this is only true in times of crisis or injustice. On the other hand, interest groups are always working to increase participation.”</i></li> <li><i>“Some people might argue that social movements better reflect the participatory model of democracy because they include large groups of people. However, social movements do not always target wide segments of the population and some deliberately limit their membership to certain groups of people.”</i></li> <li><i>“Interest groups aren’t as inclusive as one might think, since many require members to have resources. Social movements offer participation that requires little from people except their time and their voices.”</i></li> <li><i>“Some people might argue that interest groups better represent the participatory model because they have more direct access to members of Congress. However, even with better access, interest groups only benefit a certain segment of the population, while social movements have the potential to include a much broader range of people.”</i></li> </ul>
	<b>Additional Notes</b> <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.

Although one may say that interest groups better reflect the participatory model of democracy it is actually social movements b/c of its ability to gather a widespread influence that allows people to participate. According to the The First Amendment of the United States Constitution it states that the people have the right to protest, free speech, & the freedom of expression. These are all freedoms that are required for a participatory democracy b/c everyone needs to be able to spread their ideals or protest against certain things in order for people to stay active in the democracy. These freedoms are the key to social movements b/c social movements often go against common views so they need right to free speech & protest which allows them to participate in democracy b/c they are expressing their view for change in the government. Another piece of evidence to support this is the "letter from a Birmingham Jail" which was written by Martin Luther King Jr. This letter helped pick up traction to the civil rights movement. This shows a participatory ~~gov~~ democracy b/c this civil rights movement led to the passing of the civil rights act of 1964. This shows that social movements can even push the government to pass acts such as these which clearly exemplifies a participatory democracy. Some may say however, that interest groups reflect the participatory model of democracy better b/c of its ability to have a concentrated idea to push

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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.

to the government. Although this may be true interest groups are not as widespread as social movements due to their small concentration. Social movements really show that a large quantity of people believe in something which allows not only more people to be active in democracy but to have more change in the government.

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

Question 1

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Question 4

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

Interest groups and social movements better reflect the participatory model of democracy because it allows the scattered thoughts and opinions of the people be heard more loudly by coming together and letting their collective voice be heard.

In the 1st amendment of the U.S. Constitution, it guarantees the right to protest, organization, speech, religion, and press. The most important ones to interest groups are protest and organization because this is what allows them to exist and cause change. The founding fathers understood that groups or interest are able to create change for the better which is why it is enumerated in the Constitution, they understood that interest groups and social movements allow the people to engage in democracy because they would be able to band together and let the government know about their issues in a unified front so the government would have to listen to the demands of the people.

In "Letter from a Birmingham Jail" by Martin Luther King Jr., he writes about how it is important that the Civil Rights Movement stands together and to protest non-violently to let the government know their issues in the nation. The letter inspired the Civil Rights Movement to keep up their non-violent protest which eventually led to the Civil Rights Act being passed and the abolition on poll taxes and literacy test which allowed lots of previously-disenfranchised people to vote. Through the actions of a social movement, more people were able to vote leading a more participatory model of democracy.

~~However~~ some people say that interest groups and social movements do not lead to more participatory form of democracy. In Federalist No. 10, the author writes about how having different group (factions) leads to

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Question 4



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

The bigger factions overpowering the voices of minority factions which leads to less people being able to participate in the participatory model of democracy. However, what these people fail to realize that these interest groups are held in check by the federal government, no interest group/social movement will get so large in U.S. that they take over the government, there is always a minority in power which can oppose the group of the majority.

Use a pen with black or dark blue ink only. Do NOT write your name. Do NOT write outside the box.

- 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 a better reflection of Participatory democracy as it states the opinion of the people and not a secret agenda. Throughout time in our country, social movements have been a big part in how we have grown as a country. And without them many problems would still be here today.

The First amendment clause, is a big part of why we are able to have these social movements. It has given many people a voice in which reflects a participatory democracy. And yes it can be argued that because of that reason, mobile & equal representation would be hard to do or even possible as explained in the tenth Federalist paper. But with just interest group, that would be more to the benefit of the people who are paying them the most. And we see that time & time again with lobbyist. While we have Cesar Chavez marching for rights to workers & without creates big change & gets the little guy's voice heard.

And for that reasoning I believe that social movements have a better representation of what a participatory democracy is. It gives more of a chance for those who are unrepresented to have a voice in this country.

## Question 4

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

### Overview

This Argument Essay question expected responses to demonstrate an understanding of the concept of participatory democracy and apply that to interest groups or social movements as the best reflection of participatory democracy.

Responses should have demonstrated an understanding of foundational documents related to the concept of participatory democracy (*Federalist No. 10*, First Amendment to the United States Constitution, and “Letter from a Birmingham Jail”), while taking a position on the topic of the prompt. Responses 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 or rebuttal.

### Sample: 4A

**Score: 6**

**Claim/Thesis: 1**

**Evidence: 3**

**Reasoning: 1**

**Alternative Perspectives: 1**

A. The response earned 1 point for the thesis. The response makes the argument that “it is actually social movements.” The argument is supported by the line of reasoning of “b/c of its ability to gather a widespread influence that allows people to participate.”

B. The response earned 3 points for evidence. This response uses two pieces of specific and relevant evidence to support the claim or thesis. First, the response states that “The First Amendment of the United States Constitution it states that people have the right to protest, free speech, & the freedom of expression. These are all freedoms that are required for a participatory democracy b/c everyone needs to be able to spread their ideals or protest against certain things in order for people to stay active in the democracy.” The response earned two points for providing a piece of evidence from the prompt and connecting the evidence to their thesis. The response earned the third evidence point by using a second piece of evidence. The response states “Another piece of evidence to support this is the ‘letter from a Birmingham jail’ which was written by Martin Luther King Jr. This letter helped pick up traction to the civil rights movement ... led to the passing of the civil rights act of 1964.”

C. The response earned 1 point for reasoning. This response explains how or why the evidence supports an argument relevant to the prompt. The response states “This shows that social movements can even push the government to pass acts such as these which clearly exemplifies a participatory democracy” and “These freedoms are the key to social movements b/c social movements often go against common views so they need right to free speech & protest which allows them to participate in democracy b/c they are expressing their view for change in the government.” Either of the examples alone are sufficient for the response to have earned the point.

### Question 4 (continued)

D. The response earned 1 point for the alternative perspective. The response states the alternative perspective that “Some may say however, that interest groups reflect the participatory model of democracy better b/c of its ability to have a concentrated idea to push to the government.” The response refutes that perspective by stating “Although this may be true interest groups are not as widespread as social movements due to their small concentration. Social movements really show that a large quantity of people believe in something which allows not only more people to be active in democracy but to have more change in the government.”

**Sample: 4B**

**Score: 3**

**Claim/Thesis: 0**

**Evidence: 2**

**Reasoning: 1**

**Alternative Perspectives: 0**

A. The response earned 0 points for the thesis. The response does not make a claim/thesis that responds to the prompt. While the response does state that “Interest groups and social movements better reflect the participatory model of democracy,” this does not respond to the prompt with a defensible claim as it did not clearly present an argument with a line of reasoning.

B. The response earned 2 points for evidence. The response provides two pieces of evidence relevant to the prompt: “In the 1st amendment of the U.S. Constitution, it guarantees the right to protest, organization, speech, religion, and press” and “In ‘Letter from a Birmingham Jail’ by Martin Luther King Jr., he writes about how it is important that the Civil Rights Movement stands together and to protest non-violently to let the government know that there issues in the nation.” The response did not earn the thesis point and therefore could not earn the third evidence point.

C. The response earned 1 point for reasoning. The response states “Through the actions of a social movement, more people were able to vote creating a more participatory model of democracy!” This is sufficient because it explains how or why the evidence supports an argument relevant to the prompt.

D. The response earned 0 points for alternate perspective. The response did not earn the thesis point and therefore earned 0 points for the alternative perspective.

**Sample: 4C**

**Score: 1**

**Claim/Thesis: 1**

**Evidence: 0**

**Reasoning: 0**

**Alternative Perspectives: 0**

A. The response earned 1 point for the thesis. The response makes the argument that “Social movements are a better reflection of participatory democracy.” The argument is supported by the line

**Question 4 (continued)**

of reasoning of “as it states the opinion of the people and not a secret agenda.” This is sufficient because the response makes a defensible claim with a line of reasoning.

B. The response earned 0 points for evidence. While the response mentions the “First amendment” and the “tenth Fedederalist paper,” it does not provide information about either document that is relevant to the topic of the prompt.

C. The response earned 0 points for reasoning. The response does not explain the relationship between the evidence provided and an argument.

D. The response earned 0 points for the alternative perspective. The response does not provide an alternative perspective.