
AP[®] United States Government and Politics

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary Set 1

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Free-Response Question 2

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Question 2: Quantitative Analysis**4 points**

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- A** Identify the percentage of Americans in 2010 who believed that climate change would pose a serious threat in their lifetime, according to the data in the line graph. **1 point**

Acceptable response:

- 32%

Scoring notes: Answers between 31% and 34% (inclusive) are also acceptable.

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- B** Describe a trend in the data shown in the line graph. **1 point**

Examples of acceptable responses may include the following:

- The percentage of Americans who feel climate change would pose a serious threat increased over the period shown.
- The percentage of Americans who believed climate change would pose a serious threat to them increased from 1997 to 2008.
- From 2008 to 2010, the percentage of Americans who believed climate change would pose a serious threat in their lifetimes declined.

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- C** Draw a conclusion about how a trend in the line graph could be used by an interest group to influence policymaking. **1 point**

Examples of acceptable responses may include the following:

- Interest groups could see an upward trend in those concerned about climate change and lobby Congress to pass policies responding to those concerns.
- Since the percentage of Americans worried about the environment is trending upward, an environmental interest group could engage in an educational campaign to convince voters to put pressure on their representatives.
- Since the percentage of Americans who felt climate change would pose a threat in their lifetime never exceeded 50%, interest groups could put pressure on government agencies to ease environmental regulations.

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- D** Explain how the overall trend shown in the line graph could be a result of political socialization. **1 point**

Examples of acceptable responses may include the following:

- Increased exposure to media reports about climate change might have been one of the factors that increased the belief over time that climate change is an issue.
 - The increase in the percentage of Americans who believe that climate change is a serious problem could be a result of changes in educational experiences.
 - The overall percentage of Americans who are concerned about climate change never exceeded 40% between 1997 and 2015. This could be a result of peer or family groups reinforcing beliefs amongst their members that climate change is not a severe issue.
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A. The percentage of Americans in 2010 who, based on the line graph, believed that climate change would pose a serious threat in their lifetime is roughly 32%.

B. The data shown in the line graph suggests an overall upward trend. Meaning that the percentage of Americans who believed climate change would pose a serious threat in their lifetime overall increased from 1997 to 2015.

C. Because of the overall upward trend in the percentage of Americans who believed climate change would pose a serious threat in their lifetime between 1997 and 2015, an interest group could use this data to inform Congress on the issue of climate change and its importance to the American people. An interest group could pressure Congress with the data to push for environmentally friendly policies. This action would align with the purpose of interest groups which is to influence policy, highlighting how this could be done through lobbying, or directly informing and thus influencing Congressional representatives.

D. Political socialization is the formation of political ideologies based on the people with whom you associate. In the line graph, the upward trend in the percentage of Americans who believed climate change would pose a serious threat in their lifetime between 1997 and 2015 suggests that people are becoming more solidified in their beliefs about climate change. During this period of time, people who were aware of climate change could have spoken to their family, friends, and other acquaintances and enlightened them on the issue of climate change. In this way, by sharing information on the importance of climate change, more people likely recognized the issue as well, resulting in the overall upward trend as more people became aware and recognized the importance of climate change due to their associating with others.

- A. According to the data presented in the graph, in 2010 approximately 32% of Americans believed that Climate Change would pose a serious threat in their lifetime.
- B. This data set, starting in 1997, has primarily been experiencing a gradual increase in the percentage of Americans who believed climate change would pose a threat in their lifetime. While there were a few moments where concern saw a decrease, both large and small, the overall trend was an increase in concern.
- C. An interest group focused on the environment could use this data in an attempt to persuade congress that a somewhat large percentage of Americans have become more and more worried about what climate change may do to their lives. They could show that because of this steady increase in worries, it would be best for the people to pass more eco-friendly laws and regulations
- D. This trend could be a result of political socialization if those taking the poll were raised by people who value the eco-system, were someone who grew up in rural America, or whose family and peers were traditionally more liberal.

- A. The percentage of American in 2010 who belived that climate change whould pose a serious threat in their life time was 32%.
- B. The trend in the line graph shows a steady incline from 1997-2007, but it spikes in 2008 and then declines in 2010, then goes back up in 2012.
- C. The decline of belief that climate change would pose a serious threat in a persons lifetime in 2010 could be used by intrest groups supporting Obama because it shows that he had some influence in the decline of climate change, because he was the presidant at the time. Giving comfort to the people who though it might pose a threat to them in their lifetime.
- D. The overall trend in the line graph might show the result of political socialization because the graph shows a steady incline insinuating that political socialization was used to help keep the line steady until some more serious issues came up in 2007 and onward.

Question 2

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

Overview

NEW for 2025: The question overviews can be found in the *Chief Reader Report on Student Responses* on [AP Central](#).

Sample: 2A

Score: 4

Part A Score: 1

Part B Score: 1

Part C Score: 1

Part D Score: 1

The response earned 1 point in Part A. The response correctly identifies 32% as the percentage of Americans in 2010 who believed that climate change would pose a serious threat in their lifetime.

The response earned 1 point in Part B. The response states that “the percentage of Americans who believed climate change would pose a serious threat in their lifetime overall increased from 1997 to 2015.” This correctly describes a trend in the data shown in the line graph.

The response earned 1 point in Part C. The response states “Because of the overall upward trend in the percentage of Americans who believed climate change would pose a serious threat in their lifetime ... An interest group could pressure Congress with the data to push for environmentally friendly policies.” This correctly draws a conclusion about how a trend in the line graph could be used by an interest group to influence policymaking.

The response earned 1 point in Part D. The response states, “people who were aware of climate change could have spoken to their family, friends, and other acquaintances [and] by sharing information on the importance of climate change, more people likely recognized the issue as well, resulting in the overall upward trend.” This response correctly explains how the overall trend shown in the line graph could be a result of political socialization.

Sample: 2B

Score: 3

Part A Score: 1

Part B Score: 1

Part C Score: 1

Part D Score: 0

The response earned 1 point in Part A. The response correctly identifies that 32% of Americans in 2010 believed that climate change would pose a serious threat in their lifetime.

Question 2 (continued)

The response earned 1 point in Part B. The response states “This data set, starting in 1997, has primarily been experiencing a gradual increase in the percentage of Americans who believed climate change would pose a threat in their lifetime.” This answer correctly describes a trend in the data.

The response earned 1 point in Part C. The response states, “An interest group focused on the environment could use this data in an attempt to persuade congress that a somewhat large percentage of Americans have become more and more worried about what climate change may do to their lives. They could show that ... it would be best for the people to pass more eco-friendly laws and regulations.” This response correctly draws a conclusion about how a trend in the line graph could be used by an interest group to influence policymaking.

The response earned 0 points in Part D. The response does not provide an explanation as to how the direction of the overall trend shown in the line graph could be a result of political socialization.

Sample: 2C**Score: 2****Part A Score: 1****Part B Score: 1****Part C Score: 0****Part D Score: 0**

The response earned 1 point in Part A. The response correctly identifies 32% as the percentage of Americans in 2010 who believed that climate change would pose a serious threat in their lifetime.

The response earned 1 point in Part B. The response states “The trend in the line graph shows a steady incline from 1997–2007.” “ This correctly describes a trend in the data shown in the line graph.

The response earned 0 points in Part C. The response does not draw a conclusion about how the trend in the line graph could be used by an interest group to influence policymaking.

The response earned 0 points in Part D. The response does not provide an explanation as to how the overall trend shown in the line graph could be a result of political socialization because it does not correctly identify an agent of political socialization.