
AP[®] United States History

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary Set 1

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Short-Answer Question 1

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Question 1: Short Answer Secondary Source**3 points****General Scoring Notes**

- Each point is earned independently.
- **Accuracy:** These scoring guidelines require that students demonstrate historically defensible content knowledge. Given the timed nature of the exam, responses may contain errors that do not detract from their overall quality, as long as the historical content used to advance the argument is accurate.
- **Clarity:** Exam responses should be considered first drafts and thus may contain grammatical errors. Those errors will not be counted against a student unless they obscure the successful demonstration of the content knowledge, skills, and practices described below.
- **Describe:** Provide the relevant characteristics of a specified topic. Description requires more than simply mentioning an isolated term.
- **Explain:** Provide information about how or why a historical development or process occurs or how or why a relationship exists.

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- A** Briefly describe one major difference between Wilentz's and Bouton's historical interpretations of early United States politics. **1 point**

Examples of acceptable responses may include the following:

- Wilentz claims that early United States politics proved more egalitarian than the Founders had wanted, while Bouton argues that elite men remained in positions of power after the Revolution.
- Wilentz argues that the influence of the Federalists on early United States politics diminished after the Election of 1800, whereas Bouton argues that Federalist ideals continued to shape the political system after the decline of the Federalists.
- Wilentz argues that the Jeffersonian ascendancy opened up the political system, while Bouton argues that elites sought to create a barrier against democracy.
- Wilentz argues that the rise of the Democratic-Republicans after 1800 helped the expansion of democracy, while Bouton argues that the Federalists' limitations on democracy were largely maintained.
- Source 1 argues that the Revolution created more opportunities for democratic participation, while Source 2 argues that the Revolution did not result in widespread democracy.

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- B** Briefly explain how one event or development from 1789 to 1820 not directly mentioned in the excerpts could be used to support Wilentz's argument about early United States politics. **1 point**

Examples of acceptable responses may include the following:

- The passage of the Bill of Rights shows how the new government protected the rights of individuals, which supports Wilentz's argument about growing democratic power.
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- The expansion of suffrage to adult white men by states removing property restrictions on voting supports Wilentz’s argument about the expansion of democracy in the United States.
- The gradual emancipation of enslaved people in some states supports Wilentz’s argument about democratic ideals.

C Briefly explain how one event or development from 1789 to 1820 not directly mentioned in the excerpts could be used to support Bouton’s argument about early United States politics. **1 point**

Examples of acceptable responses may include the following:

- Bouton argues that elites retained most of the power in the federal government under the Constitution, and the Supreme Court decisions that established the primacy of the judiciary in deciding whether laws passed by elected officials were constitutional supports this claim.
 - Most early political leaders and presidents were wealthy men, which supports Bouton’s argument that the Revolution did not result in democratic change.
 - After 1800 Democratic Republican leadership continued Federalist economic and political policies regarding a strong central government.
 - The restriction on voting rights for women supports Bouton’s argument that the Revolution did not immediately result in a fully democratic society.
 - The framework of government established by the Constitution, including the Senate and the Electoral College, insulated elites from popular democratic influence.
 - The continuation of slavery, despite the ideals of the Declaration of Independence, showed the limits of the American Revolution.
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A. One major difference between Wilnetz's and Bouton's historical interpretations of early United States politics is the fact that Wilnetz believes that the United States early politics benefitted everyone compared to Bouton which said they benefitted the elite only. Wilnetz says that the United States were proving porous and were more egalitarian than it would be in 1776, while Bouton said it would be an enduring victory for the elite.

B. One event or development not directly mentioned that could be used to help support Wilnetz's early argument about United States politics from the period 1789-1820, is the Bill of Rights. The Bill of Rights was added to the Constitution to declare more rights explicitly. This also supports Wilnetz's argument as it goes along with the idea that United States politics was more equal than benefitted one side of society.

C. One event or development not directly mentioned that could be used to help support Bouton's early argument about United States politics from the period 1789-1820, is the Whiskey Rebellion. The Whiskey Rebellion was a rebellion by farmers to go against the fact that they didn't have many rights. These farmers were poor and immediately put down by Washington himself. This supports Bouton's argument as the elite were winning and the ordinary couldn't mobilize together.

A. One major difference between Wilentz's and Bouton's views of early United States politics is to whom political say and opportunities were given. Wilentz argues that early politics in the United States (US) opened new opportunities of power to the common people who were previously excluded. However, Bouton writes how the early political system was only a victory for the elite; the common man did not have political power. This is important because both of these points of views can be extracted from that time period-one of them is not wrong-and these views illustrate the clashing perspectives and events that happened from 1789 to 1820.

B. One development from 1789 to 1820 that supports Wilentz's argument is the Era of Good Feelings. Following the War of 1812 and the triumphal victory at the Battle of New Orleans, the United States experienced a period of unity and nationalism. During this time period, many Americans had the opportunity to vote for the first time (men's suffrage). This is important because this development increased the political say for the common man, as illustrated in the text.

C. One event that supports Bouton's argument was the Age of Jackson. For the first time ever in US history, the power of Veto was used to the greatest extent under Jackson, who became known as the Veto King. Most notably, he vetoed the charter for the second National Bank of the United States. This is important because this increase in federal power did not promote the individual political say in the US during 1789 to 1820, but rather increased the power for the elite, as described in Bouton's text.

A: One major difference between Wilentz's and Bouton's historical interpretations of early United States politics was that Wilentz believed this new form of government led to equal rights while Bouton's interpretation believes it to mostly benefit the elite men in the country. Wilentz states that the American Revolution had proved to be more egalitarian or equal than most political leaders had hoped. This demonstrates that he interpreted this to be beneficial for most while Bouton states that it would be an enduring victory for the elite which shows how his interpretation of the early United States government is solely helping out the elite men.

B: One event or development from 1789 to 1820 that was not mentioned in the expert that supported Wilentz's argument about early United States politics was the early divide between the Federalists and Jeffersonians that led to disagreement over foreign policies with European countries. The separation of the Federalists and Jeffersonians was very obvious early on in the United States. This divide demonstrated how fragile this new form of government was especially in its early stages. This led to disagreement by the 2 parties on whether or not to engage in European affairs or not as well as which European countries would be supported. This divide was first demonstrated when Washington decided whether or not we would assist France or not with their war with Britain as they assisted us with the Revolutionary War and they continued through the Adams and Jefferson presidencies.

C: One event or development from 1789 to 1820 that could be used to support Bouton's argument about early United States Politics was Bacon's rebellion. Bacon's rebellion showed light to elite men gaining all the power while ordinary folk resisted this new form of government. The rebellion showed early flaws in the Articles of Confederation which were later changed in response to the growing resistance of ordinary folk to the elite men.

Short Answer Question 1

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: 1A

SAQ Part A Score: 1

SAQ Part B Score: 1

SAQ Part C Score: 1

Total Score: 3

The response to Part A earned 1 point by correctly describing a major difference between Wilentz and Bouton’s interpretations of early United States politics. The response accurately describes Wilentz’s claim that early United States politics benefited everyone, whereas Bouton argues that the politics of the early United States benefited the elite.

The response to Part B earned 1 point by explaining that the addition of the Bill of Rights to the Constitution, which “more ... explicitly” protected rights, supports Wilentz’s argument that United States politics were becoming more egalitarian in the period from 1789 to 1820.

The response to Part C earned 1 point by correctly explaining that the Whiskey Rebellion was a historical event that supports Bouton’s argument because it demonstrated how poorer farmers were unable to effectively mobilize against the power of elites in the period from 1789 to 1820.

Sample: 1B

SAQ Part A Score: 1

SAQ Part B Score: 1

SAQ Part C Score: 0

Total Score: 2

The response to Part A earned 1 point by describing one major difference between Wilentz’s and Bouton’s argument. It describes how Wilentz argues that the American Revolution and the Revolution of 1800 led to expanded opportunities for ordinary people to participate in politics, while Bouton argues that early United States politics represented “a victory for the elite” and excluded ordinary Americans.

The response to Part B earned 1 point by correctly explaining that the expansion of voting rights for men in the years after the War of 1812 supports Wilentz’s argument about expanding access to political participation.

The response to Part C earned 0 points because the piece of evidence used to support Bouton’s argument, the presidency of Andrew Jackson, is outside the time frame of the prompt.

Short Answer Question 1 (continued)**Sample: 1C****SAQ Part A Score: 1****SAQ Part B Score: 0****SAQ Part C Score: 0****Total Score: 1**

The response to Part A earned 1 point by correctly describing Bouton’s argument that elite men primarily benefited after the American Revolution, contrasting it with Wilentz’s argument that the aftermath of the Revolution was more egalitarian than “most political leaders had hoped.”

The response to Part B earned 0 points because it attempts to explain Wilentz’s argument regarding equality with the foreign policy differences between Federalists and Jeffersonians. Although the response addresses a historical event in the period, it does not explain how it supports Wilentz’s argument that politics were becoming more egalitarian.

The response to Part C earned 0 points because the explanation that Bacon’s Rebellion contributed to the replacement of the Articles of Confederation is historically inaccurate.