
Sample Responses from the
AP[®] U.S. Government
and Politics
Practice Exam

INCLUDING

- Free-Response Questions
- Scoring Guidelines
- Student Responses
- Commentaries on the Responses

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Preface

This publication is designed to help teachers and students understand and prepare for the AP[®] U.S. Government and Politics Exam. The publication includes sample free-response questions, scoring guidelines, student responses at various levels of achievement, and reader commentaries. Collectively, these materials accurately reflect the design, composition, and rigor of the exam.

The sample questions are those that appear on the Practice Exam that appears in the *AP U.S. Government and Politics Course & Exam Description*, and the student responses were collected from actual AP students during a field test of the exam. The students gave permission to have their work reproduced at the time of the field test, and the responses were read and scored by AP U.S. Government and Politics Readers in 2017.

Following each free-response question, its scoring guideline, and student samples, you will find a commentary about each sample. The number of samples and commentaries varies from question to question. Commentaries include the score that each response would have earned, as well as a brief rationale to support the score.

Free-Response Question 1

1. Consumers complained after EpiPen maker Mylan “hiked the price of the emergency auto-injector by \$100 in recent months for no obvious reason. . . . The price has increased 450 percent since 2004, when a dose cost \$100 in today’s dollars, to its current price of more than \$600. . . . The medication itself isn’t expensive. Analysts calculate that the dosage contained in a single pen is worth about \$1.”

Washington Post, August 23, 2016

After reading the scenario, respond to A, B, and C below:

- (A) Describe a power Congress could use to address the comments outlined in the scenario.
- (B) In the context of the scenario, explain how the use of congressional power described in Part A can be affected by its interaction with the presidency.
- (C) In the context of the scenario, explain how the interaction between Congress and the presidency can be affected by linkage institutions.

Scoring the Concept Application Question

A good response should:

- Describe a political institution, behavior, or process connected with the scenario (0–1 point) (Disciplinary Practice 1.a)
- Explain how the response in part (A) affects or is affected by a political process, government entity, or citizen behavior as related to the scenario (0–1 point) (Disciplinary Practice 1.d)
- Explain how the scenario relates to a political institution, behavior, or process in the course (0–1 point) (Disciplinary Practice 1.d)

Concept Application Question (3 points)			
Rubric Row		Scoring Criteria	Scoring Notes
A	Describe (0–1 pt)	1pt Describe a political institution, behavior, or process in connection with a scenario.	The response must reference content from the scenario and provide a description.
B	Explain (0–1 pt)	1pt In the context of the scenario, explain how the response in part A affects a political process, government entity, or citizen behavior.	The response needs to demonstrate an action and the impact of that action.
C	Explain (0–1 pt)	1pt Explain how the scenario relates to a political institution, behavior, or process.	To earn this point, the response must demonstrate grasp of the appropriate Enduring Understanding

Student Responses

Sample: 1A

Congress could pass a bill prohibiting important life-or-death medications from being marked up above a certain value. By doing this, Mylan would be forced to lower their prices to a more reasonable value.

If the President is not in favor of this sort of legislation, he can veto the bill passed by Congress, making it so Mylan can keep their rates as high as they currently are. As a result, Congress' use of their power was mitigated by the President's use of his.

In order to push their ideas forward, many interest groups and lobbyists would likely meet with congressmen and the president urging them to either change their position on the bill or hold firm. For example, many lobbying organizations that fight for the right of patients would urge congress to override a presidential veto of the bill. That would mean the bill becomes a law if they vote to override the veto.

Note: Student responses have been typed for clarity.

Sample: 1B

An oversight power Congress could use to take action on the complaints above would be making it illegal to charge that much for a medication when the medication itself was extremely cheap, especially since EpiPens are used in life and death emergencies.

If Congress does write a bill to try to pass as law prohibiting making the medication so expensive, then the President must approve of or veto the bill. So, the President has to agree with Congress in order for the bill to become a law.

Interactions between Congress and the President can be affected by linkage institutions because linkage institutions link one branch of government to another. So, interactions between the legislative branch and Congress can affect whether the bill gets passed.

Sample: 1C

Congress can pass a law setting a price limit of medication on epipens.

The president may veto law if he chooses.

Linkage institutions can affect it as well.

Scores and Commentary

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

Sample: 1A

SCORE: 3

- (a) The response earned one point for describing a legislative action that Congress could take to address consumers' concerns by stating, "Congress could pass a bill prohibiting important life-or-death medications from being marked up above a certain value."
- (b) The response earned one point for explaining how the president could limit Congress' authority by vetoing the bill by stating, "If the President is not in favor of this sort of legislation, he can veto the bill passed by Congress, making it so Mylan can keep their rates as high as they currently are. As a result, Congress' use of their power was mitigated by the President's use of his."
- (c) The response earned one point for explaining how interest groups and lobbyists could affect Congress' authority by meeting with members of Congress and urging them to override a presidential veto. The response states, "In order to push their ideas forward, many interest groups and lobbyists would likely meet with congressmen and the president urging them to either change their position on the bill or hold firm. For example, many lobbying organizations that fight for the right of patients would urge congress to override a presidential veto of the bill. That would mean the bill becomes a law if they vote to override the veto."

Sample: 1B

SCORE: 2

- (a) The response earned one point for describing a legislative action Congress could take to address consumers' complaints by stating, "An oversight power Congress could use to take action on the complaints above would be making it illegal to charge that much for a medication when the medication itself was extremely cheap, especially since EpiPens are used in life and death emergencies." Although the response incorrectly identifies an oversight power in the first paragraph, the second paragraph includes an accurate description of the legislative power, therefore earning the point.
- (b) The response earned one point for explaining how the interaction between the president and Congress has an impact on congressional power by stating, "If Congress does write a bill to try to pass as law prohibiting making the medication so expensive, then the President must approve of or veto the bill. So, the President has to agree with Congress in order for the bill to become a law."
- (c) The response did not earn one point, because it did not explain how a linkage institution affects Congress' authority. The response should cite a linkage institution and explain how that institution could help or hinder the process of passing a bill, rather than simply state that interaction between Congress and a linkage institution affects whether a bill is passed.

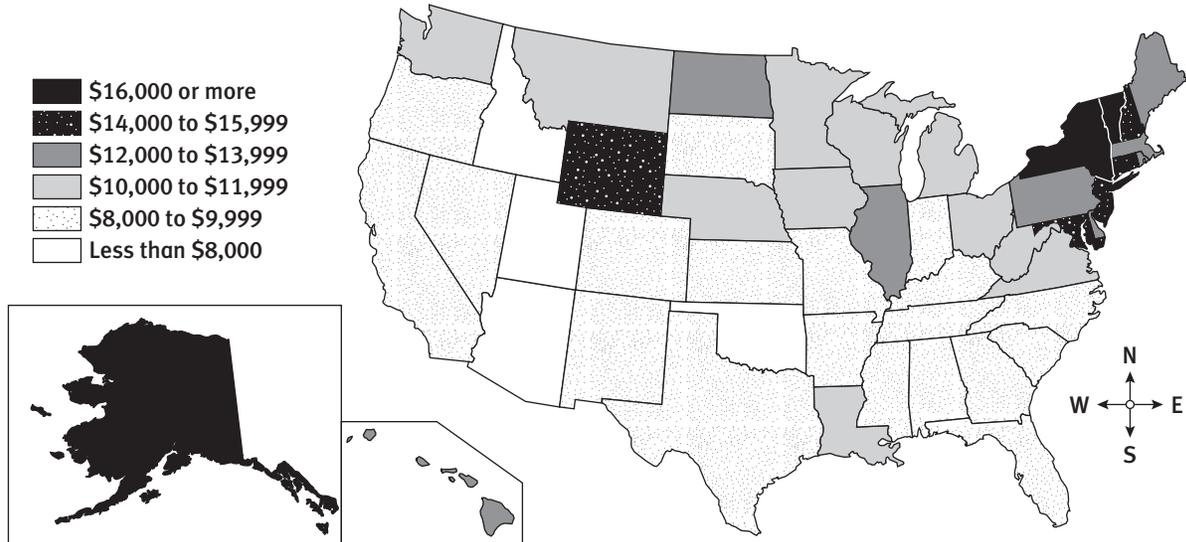
Sample: 1C

SCORE: 1

- (a) The response earned one point for describing a legislative action Congress could take to address consumers' complaints by stating by stating, "Congress can pass a law setting a price limit of medication on epipens."
- (b) The response did not earn one point for explaining how, in the context of the scenario, the response in part A affects a political process, government entity, or citizen behavior. The response simply pointed out that the president holds the veto power without explaining how that power affects Congressional power.
- (c) The response did not earn one point for explaining how, in the context of the scenario, Congress' authority can be affected by its interaction with a linkage institution. The response simply pointed out that linkage institutions (which are not specified in the response) may affect the process without explaining how they do so.

Free-Response Question 2

PUBLIC EDUCATION SPENDING: AMOUNT SPENT PER PUPIL BY STATE IN 2014



Source: www.census.gov

2. Use the information graphic to answer the questions.
- (A) Identify the most common level of education spending by states in the Southeast.
 - (B) Describe a similarity or difference in public education spending by state or region, as illustrated in the information graphic, and draw a conclusion about that similarity or difference.
 - (C) Explain how public education spending as shown in the information graphic demonstrates the principle of federalism.

Scoring the Quantitative Analysis Question

A good response should:

- Identify or describe the data in the quantitative visual (0–1 point) (Disciplinary Practice 3.a)
- Describe a pattern, trend, or similarity/difference as prompted in the question (0–1 point) (Disciplinary Practice 3.b) and draw a conclusion for that pattern, trend, or similarity/difference (0–1 point) (Disciplinary Practice 3.c or 3.e)
- Explain how specific data in the quantitative visual demonstrates a principle in the prompt (0–1 point) (Disciplinary Practice 3.d)

Quantitative Analysis Question (4 points)			
Rubric Row		Scoring Criteria	Scoring Notes
A	Identify (0–1 pt)	1pt Identify or describe the data	
B1	Describe (0–1 pt)	1pt Describe a pattern, trend, or similarity/difference as prompted	
B2	Draw a conclusion (0–1 pt)	1pt Draw a conclusion for that similarity or difference	
C	Explain (0–1 pt)	1pt Explain how _____ in the information graphic demonstrates _____.	To earn this point, the response must demonstrate grasp of the appropriate Enduring Understanding; focus must be on transfer of new concept.

Student Responses

Sample: 2A

The most common level of education spending by states in the southeast is around \$8,000 to \$9,999.

The Northeast region of the United States spends the highest amount of money on public education than any other region in the U.S. In the Northeast region they spend around \$12,000 or up on public education. This could possibly show that this part of the U.S. has a higher percentage of higher incomes, meaning larger taxes. This could be the case of comparing the Northeast or Southeast regions. The Northeast may have a larger amount of people with larger incomes or the Southeast could have a lower percentage of people with high incomes, meaning lower taxes.

The public education spending as shown in the information graphic demonstrates the principle of federalism. It shows that if the state government receives less money from taxes, then the local governments are going to receive less money from the state, leaving the public schools with little to no money. This can happen vice versa as well. If the state government receives a good amount of money from taxes, then the local governments will receive a good amount, which this then means the public schools are going to receive a good amount. How much to spend on education is based on state and local taxes and money, not federal.

Note: Student responses have been typed for clarity.

Sample: 2B

- A. The most common level of education spending by states in the Southeast is \$8,000 to \$9,999.
- B. One difference between Florida and New York is that Florida spends approximately \$8,000 to \$9,999 per pupil while New York spends approximately \$16,000 or more per pupil. One conclusion that can be made when comparing these two states is that New York cares more about education and has allotted more state budget to education than Florida.
- C. Public spending as shown in the graphic titled "Public Education Spending: Amount Sums per pupil by State in 2014" demonstrates the principle of federalism as each state is allowed to spend whatever amount of money on a pupil that they see fit.

Sample: 2C

The most common level of spending by states in the southeast is \$8,000 to \$9,999. From information graphic above it looks as in the more populated states/cities that more money is being spent on education. Although Alaska is not that populated it is in the \$16,000 or more range for education spending. Public education spending demonstrates the principle of federalism because the government is providing for "services" like schools.

Scores and Commentary

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

Sample: 2A

SCORE: 4

- (a) The response earned one point by correctly identifying the most common level of education spending by states in the Southeast as \$8,000-\$9,999.
- (b) The response earned one point by correctly describing that "The Northeast region of the United States spends the highest amount of money on public education."

The response earned an additional point for concluding that the Northeast may spend more on education because of higher taxes than in other regions when it stated, "this part of the U.S. has a higher percentage of higher incomes, meaning larger taxes."

- (c) The response earned one point by correctly explaining federalism in the context of education. The response noted the relationship between the state and local governments, and also noted that the federal government does not determine how much to spend on education when it states, "How much to spend on education is based on state and local taxes and money, not federal."

Sample: 2B

SCORE: 3

- (a) The response earned one point for identifying the most common level of education spending by states by stating, "The most common level of education spending by states in the Southeast is \$8,000 to \$9,999."
- (b) The response earned one point for describing a difference in public education spending by a state or region, as illustrated in the information graphic, by stating, "One difference between Florida and New York is that Florida spends approximately \$8,000 to \$9,000 per student while New York spends \$16,000 or more per pupil."

The response earned a second point for drawing a conclusion about that similarity or difference by stating, "One conclusion that can be made when comparing these two states is that New York cares more about education and has allotted more state budget to education than Florida."

- (c) The response did not earn one point for the explanation of how public education spending as shown in the information graphic demonstrates the principle of federalism because it did not exhibit an understanding of federalism.

Sample: 2C

SCORE: 1

- (a) The response earned one point for identifying the most common level of education spending by states in the Southeast as "\$8,000 to \$9,999."
- (b) The response did not earn one point for describing a difference in public education spending by a state or region as illustrated in the information graphic. The statement "in the more populated states/cities... more money is being spent on education" is inaccurate. Moreover, population is not illustrated in the information graphic.

The response did not attempt to earn a second point for drawing a conclusion about a similarity or difference.

- (c) The response did not earn one point for explaining how public education spending, as shown in the information graphic, demonstrates the principle of federalism. The statement "the government is providing for 'services' like schools" does not address the task.

Free-Response Question 3

3. Monthly town board meetings in Greece, New York, opened with a prayer given by clergy selected from the congregations listed in a local directory, but nearly all the local churches were Christian, so nearly all of the participating prayer givers were, too. A lawsuit was filed alleging that the town violated the Constitution by preferring Christians over other religious groups and by sponsoring sectarian prayers. Petitioners sought to limit the town to “inclusive and ecumenical” prayers that referred only to a “generic God.”

In the ensuing case, *Town of Greece v. Galloway* (2014), the Supreme Court held in a 5–4 decision that no constitutional violation existed. The majority opinion stated that legislative prayer in this situation lent gravity to public business, reminded lawmakers to transcend petty differences to pursue a higher purpose, reflected values that were a part of the nation’s heritage, provided a spirit of cooperation, and celebrated the changing of seasons. The audience was primarily lawmakers themselves, and though many bowed their heads during the prayer, they did not solicit similar gestures by the public. It was delivered as a ceremonial portion of the town’s meeting.

- (A) Identify the constitutional clause that is common to both *Greece v. Galloway* (2014) and *Engel v. Vitale* (1962).
- (B) Based on the constitutional clause identified in part A, explain why the facts of *Engel v. Vitale* led to a different holding than the holding in *Greece v. Galloway*.
- (C) Describe an action that members of the public who disagree with the holding in *Greece v. Galloway* could take to limit its impact.

Scoring the SCOTUS Comparison Question

A good response should:

- Identify a similarity or difference between the two Supreme Court cases, as specified in the question (0–1 point) (Disciplinary Practice 2.c)
- Provide prompted factual information from the specified required Supreme Court case (0–1 point) (Disciplinary Practice 2.a), and explain how or why that information from the specified required Supreme Court case is relevant to the non-required Supreme Court case described in the question (0–1 point) (Disciplinary Practice 2.c)
- Describe or explain an interaction between the holding in the non-required Supreme Court case and a relevant political institution, behavior, or process (0–1 point) (Disciplinary Practice 2.d)

SCOTUS Comparison Question (4 points)			
Rubric Row		Scoring Criteria	Scoring Notes
A	Identify (0–1 pt)	1pt Identify a similarity or difference between the two Supreme Court cases (as specified in the question).	
B1	Identify (0–1 pt)	1 pt Provide prompted information from the specified required Supreme Court case.	Point is earned for knowing facts for required Supreme Court case.
B2	Explain (0–1 pt)	1 pt Explain how or why that information from the specified required Supreme Court case is relevant to the non-required Supreme Court case provided in the question.	In order to earn the second point in part B, the response must correctly relate specific information from the required source to the new source by comparing similarities or differences between the two cases.
C	Describe/ Explain (0–1 pt)	1 pt Describe or explain an interaction between the holding in the non-required Supreme Court case and a relevant political institution, behavior, or process.	To earn this point, the response must demonstrate grasp of the appropriate Enduring Understanding.

Student Responses

Sample: 3A

The constitutional provision that is common to both cases is the establishment of religion clause located in the first amendment

As opposed to *Greece v. Galloway*, the court held in *Engel v. Vitale* that prayer in public school as a school sponsored activity was unconstitutional. The court said in *Engel* that the school was coercing the students into prayer and thus establishing a religion. This is different from *Greece v. Galloway* where the court held that this public prayer was not forcing the public into anything and thus not establishing a religion.

For those that did not agree with the courts decision in *Greece v. Galloway*, they do have some options to limit its impact. First they can protest. It is their first amendment right to be able to protest and they can do so by a variety of ways. They could stand outside the area and hold signs, or they could start a website, etc. They could also petition their congressional representative to make a law banning this ceremonial prayer. This law would then solve their issue if it passed and held up in court.

Note: Student responses have been typed for clarity.

Sample: 3B

The Constitutional provision in common with both of these cases is the Establishment Clause of the first Amendment.

Engel v. Vitale was about prayer in the schools and Greece v. Galloway was about prayer in town board meetings. In Engel v. Vitale the students in the school were pressured to say a prayer while in Greece v. Galloway the people were not. Also in the Engel v. Vitale case the teacher was the one that was leading the prayer and in the Greece v. Galloway there were different clergy from different practicing faiths.

An activist judge who disagrees with the holding in Greece v. Galloway could issue a ruling stopping the prayer, even though the Supreme Court said it was constitutional.

Sample: 3C

The Constitutional provision that is common to both *Greece v. Galloway* & *Engel v. Vitale* is the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment.

Greece v. Galloway is about Legislative Prayer that happens before a meeting; whereas *Engel v. Vitale* is prayer in school. The problem with *Engel v. Vitale* is that it influences the public.

The public can't really do much because *Greece* was a supreme court case.

Sample: 3D

The Establishment clause is a constitutional provision common to both *Greece v. Galloway* & *Engle v. Vitale*.

Engle v. Vitale led to the holding that state sponsored prayer was unconstitutional whereas *Greece v. Galloway* led to the prayer being constitutional because of how relevant it was to their current situation.

Members of the public who disagree with the holding could vote out the judges.

Scores and Commentary

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

Sample: 3A

SCORE: 4

(a) The response earned one point for identifying the constitutional clause that is common to both *Greece v. Galloway* (2014) and *Engel v. Vitale* (1962) by stating, "The constitutional provision that is common to both cases is the establishment of religion clause located in the first amendment."

(b) The response earned one point for describing correct facts of *Engel v. Vitale* by stating, "prayer in public school as a school sponsored activity was unconstitutional."

The response earned a second point for using correct facts about *Engel v. Vitale* to explain why the holding in *Greece v. Galloway* is different by stating, "The court said in *Engel v. Vitale* that the school was coercing the students into prayer and thus establishing a religion. This is different from *Greece v. Galloway* where the court held that this public prayer was not forcing the public into anything and thus not establishing a religion."

(c) The response earned one point for explaining how members of the public who disagree with the holding of *Greece v. Galloway* could act to limit its impact by stating, "First, they can protest. It is their first amendment right to be able to protest and they can do so by a variety of ways. They could stand outside the area and hold signs."

Sample: 3B

SCORE: 3

(a) The response earned one point for identifying the constitutional clause that is common to both *Greece v. Galloway* and *Engel v. Vitale* by stating, "The Constitutional provision in common with both of these cases is the Establishment Clause of the first Amendment."

(b) The response earned one point for describing correct facts of *Engel v. Vitale* by stating, "Engel v. Vitale was about prayer in the schools and Greece v. Galloway was about prayer in town board meetings."

The response earned an additional one point for using correct facts about *Engel v. Vitale* to explain why the holding in *Greece v. Galloway* is different from the holding in *Engel v. Vitale* by stating, "In *Engel v. Vitale* the students in the school were pressured to say a prayer while in *Greece v. Galloway* the people were not."

(c) The response did not earn one point for explaining how members of the public who disagree with the holding of *Greece v. Galloway* could act to limit its impact. The response stated, "An activist judge who disagrees with the holding in *Greece v. Galloway* could issue a ruling stopping the prayer, even though the Supreme Court said it was constitutional." This response did not respond to the prompt, because it did not describe an action that could be taken by members of the public.

Sample: 3C

SCORE: 2

- (a) The response earned one point for identifying the constitutional clause that is common to both *Greece v. Galloway* and *Engel v. Vitale* (1962) by stating, "The Constitutional provision that is common to both Greece v. Galloway & Engel v. Vitale is the Establishment Clause of the First Amendment."
- (b) The response earned one point for describing correct facts about *Engel v. Vitale*: "Engel v. Vitale is prayer in school."

The response did not earn a second point for using correct facts about *Engel v. Vitale* to explain why the holding in *Greece v. Galloway* is different from the holding in *Engel v. Vitale*. While the response included a correct fact about *Engel v. Vitale*, the attempt to apply that fact to Greece ("is about Legislative Prayer") is inaccurate.

- (c) The response did not earn one point for explaining how members of the public who disagree with the holding in *Greece v. Galloway* could act to limit its impact. Rather, the response indicated that there is nothing the public can do.

Sample: 3D

SCORE: 1

- (a) The response earned one point for identifying the constitutional clause that is common to both *Greece v. Galloway* (2014) and *Engel v. Vitale* (1962) by stating, "The Establishment clause is a constitutional provision common to both Greece v. Galloway & Engle v. Vitale."
- (b) The response did not earn one point for describing correct facts of *Engel v. Vitale*. While the response references "state sponsored prayer," it does not describe how the state did that in this case.

The response did not earn an additional point because it failed to adequately address why the facts in *Engel* differ from those in *Greece* and, thus, did not explain how *Engel* led to a different holding than in *Greece v. Galloway*.

- (c) The response did not earn one point for explaining how members of the public who disagree with the holding of *Greece v. Galloway* could act to limit its impact. The public did not elect federal judges.

Free-Response Question 4

4. Develop an argument that explains which of the three models of representative democracy—participatory, pluralist, or elite—best achieves the founders’ intent for American democracy in terms of ensuring a stable government run by the people.

In your essay, you must:

- Articulate a defensible claim or thesis that responds to the prompt and establishes a line of reasoning
- Support your claim with at least TWO pieces of accurate and relevant information:
 - At least ONE piece of evidence must be from one of the following foundational documents:
 - Brutus 1
 - Federalist No. 10
 - U.S. Constitution
 - Use a second piece of evidence from another foundational document from the list or from your study of the electoral process
- Use reasoning to explain why your evidence supports your claim/thesis
- Respond to an opposing or alternative perspective using refutation, concession, or rebuttal

Scoring the Argument Essay

A good response should:

- Articulate a defensible claim or thesis that responds to the question and establishes a line of reasoning (0–1 point) (Disciplinary Practice 5.a)
- Describe one piece of evidence that is accurately linked to the topic of the question (1 out of 3 points); use one piece of specific and relevant evidence to support the argument (2 out of 3 points); use two pieces of specific and relevant evidence to support the argument (3 out of 3 points) (Disciplinary Practice 5.b)
- Explain how or why the evidence supports the claim or thesis (0–1 point) (Disciplinary Practice 5.c)
- Respond to an opposing or alternate perspective using refutation, concession, or rebuttal that is consistent with the argument (0–1 point) (Disciplinary Practice 5.d)

Argumentation Essay (6 points)				
Rubric Row	Scoring Criteria			Scoring Notes
Claim/Thesis (0–1 pt)	1 pt Articulates a defensible claim or thesis that responds to the question and establishes a line of reasoning			The response cannot earn this point for simply restating the prompt.
Evidence (0–3 pts)	1 pt Provides one piece of evidence that is accurately linked to the topic of the question	Or 2 pts Uses one piece of specific and relevant evidence to support the argument	Or 3 pts Uses two pieces of specific and relevant evidence to support the argument	To earn more than one evidence point, the response must establish an argument, and have earned the point for claim/thesis (Row A).
Reasoning (0–1 pt)	1 pt Explain how or why the evidence supports the claim or thesis			<p>The response must have a claim/thesis to earn a point.</p> <p>The response cannot simply restate the prompt to explain why the evidence supports the claim/thesis.</p> <p>The response cannot earn a point without previously supporting the claim/thesis in B.</p> <p>To earn the point the response must address at least one piece of evidence.</p>
Responds to alternative perspectives (0–1 pt)	1 pt Responds to an opposing or alternate perspective using refutation, concession, or rebuttal			<p>The response must have a claim or thesis to earn a point.</p> <p>The response must identify an alternative perspective; demonstrate a correct understanding of the perspective; and refute, concede, or rebut the perspective.</p>

Student Responses

Sample: 4A

The founders originally wanted the most power for the people as well as protection from the tyranny of a federal government. Therefore the founders would have most wanted a participatory representative democracy. In this scenario, the people need to participate in order to make the government and the decisions for the government are made by the people who mobilized and advocate for themselves.

Federalist 10 is a document that describes the use and the existence of factions in society and how they affect government. These groups include people participating in parties and other groups that support a participatory model of democracy. If a citizen cannot find a faction to identify with it may deter them from participating in government. However in a participatory society, everyone's vote matters, and factions may not have the affect they would in other types of representative democracy. For example in an elite representative democracy, only the "elite" help to make decisions in government. In this society, factions may be required to show interest and to get the attention of the elite. If a citizen does not relate to a large faction, their ideas may not be heard by an elite and in that case the individual citizen would not be represented, which is the opposite of what the founders wanted.

In Brutus I, the author describes his fear of tyranny when the Constitution gives so much power to the federal government. He worries that Congress will take over and rule unchecked over the country. His concerns would be much less with a participatory society. He advocates the need for state and individual power to avoid tyranny and this would be exactly what he is getting in a participatory society.

Note: Student responses have been typed for clarity.

Sample: 4A (cont.)

A participatory society most closely represents what the founders wanted for a system of representative democracy. It prevents tyranny from the federal government or the elite, as well as gives individual citizens a voice in government decisions.

An argument that could be made in an elite society would be that the best, smartest people are making the important decisions for a country and they know what is best. With the most qualified people making important decisions, the country will be the best off they could be. While this way may be a way in which to make the most successful country, it is not consistent with the founders original intention of avoiding tyranny and giving citizens representation in government.

Later on, founder[s] of the Constitution may prefer a slightly modified version of this society. Because they give the federal government more power, they might support more of a pluralist or elite form of democracy. However, they still have the goal of preventing tyranny and giving the people power so it continues to be a participatory society. The people still have to vote in order to elect leaders and this is all based on participation. Even founders that advocate for more federal power would still choose a participatory society as the best form of a representative democracy.

Sample: 4B

The founders wanted the people to play a main role in the government and that is why the participatory model of representative democracy best describes the American political system. The US Constitution exemplifies American government and participatory democracy because it gives citizens' freedoms and a place in politics.

The Constitution includes a Bill of Rights which includes the rights/liberties of the people. This gives people an incentive to be a part of the governing process. Either way, all of their rights will always be protected by the government.

The Constitution also includes several amendments that give the people more of a say in government. For example, the 17th Amendment gives the people the power to vote for their senators. Allowing them to participate more in the government. The 19th Amendment granted women suffrage and the 15th Amendment made it possible for all men to vote. All of these Amendments to the constitution, allowed the people to participate more in government, demonstrating that the founders wanted the public to be involved in their government.

Someone might argue that the Constitution is outdated and no longer represents our current country. That is an irrelevant statement because it is a living document that will always be altering for years to come.

Sample: 4C

The model that best describes the American political system is the pluralist theory of representative democracy, where groups compete to make society better.

Federalist 10 shows that the founders wanted a pluralist democracy. Federalist 10 describes that factions are dangerous, but are inevitable. This is a prime example of how pluralism is the best representation of American Democracy because there are factions like political parties in the government, but they allow everyone's voice to be heard and through pluralism people compromise which makes everyone somewhat happy.

Another example is the Electoral College. This let different people choose who the president would be, and not the masses, so this shows the founders wanted a pluralist government too.

The people who opposed the Constitution were the Anti-Federalists. They wrote their own Anti-Federalist essays. Brutus I was a part of that. They feared that checks and balances would not prevent the President from having unlimited power like a King would.

Sample: 4D

The founders of the United States Constitution wanted to form an elite model of democracy. They wanted the power of the government to be held by a select few, and this is seen in the Constitution. The Constitution shows this because the founders required Senators be elected by state legislatures and not the people.

It can be concluded that America is a nation of elite few. Why would the rich powerful Founding Fathers want to give power to the people?

Sample: 4E

The model that I feel achieves the founders' intent for American democracy today is the pluralist theory. The pluralist theory is shown today with all the interest groups and other rallies occurring.

The founders wanted for everyone to be able to participate in government and have their voice. The electoral process also demonstrates the pluralist theory because every vote counts, therefore the electoral process today allows for everyone's voice to be heard.

Though I think the pluralist theory accurately describes the American political system, one could argue that it does not. One could argue that with too many people and too many voices, nothing would get done, resulting in gridlock. Though this could be true, neither of the other theories describe the American political system better. The Elite theory suggests that only higher up people are important and get a say in things, which does not describe our political system but the pluralist model of democracy allows for everyone's voices to be heard by getting involved in groups to change politics. This is why I feel that the pluralist theory is the best and accurately describes Americas political system.

Sample: 4F

The Declaration of Independence was written to escape the government of England. The Federalist Papers were written to support the Constitution. Brutus 1 was written against the Constitution. All of these were written about government and the Constitution is the frame of the United States government. This is why the United States Constitution best supports the founder's intent for a stable government, run by the people.

The first reason the Constitution best achieves the founders intent is Article I. In this article of the Constitution, the founders layed out the legislative and judicial branch. The legislative branch was made bicameral, meaning two houses of Congress, so that not one can get too powerful. The judicial branch has the power to state that any act of Congress or the Executive branch, the president, was unconstitutional thanks to judicial review given through the court case Marbury v. Madison. These branches make sure that no part of the government becomes too powerful.

The second reason it achieves the founders intent is the Bill of Rights. The Bill of Rights are amendments to the constitution stating rights that are given. The first amendment give people the right of speech, religion, petition, assembly and press. The second amendment gives citizens the right to bear arms. The Ninth amendment gives citizens any rights not stated in the constitution are given to the people, like the right to drink water.

The third reason is the constitution gives the people the right to vote in those they want in office. The constitution states the the terms of offices and after those holding office must enter reelection. This provides a sturdy government and some key rights to the people.

Sample: 4F (cont.)

Someone might state that the Declaration of Independence best fits the founders intent of democracy, but it does not contain all of the facts. For example, the Constitution provides a sturdy, well thought layout of the government, while the Declaration of Independence critiques the "unpleasant" government of Great Britain with no plan of government in response. The Declaration of Independence was very important, but it does not fit what the founders intended for the democracy we have today.

In conclusion, the United States Constitution best fits the founders intent of a strong, stable, government.

Scores and Commentary

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

Sample: 4A

SCORE: 6

Claim/Thesis

The response earned one point for articulating a thesis by stating, "Therefore the founders would have most wanted a participatory representative democracy. In this scenario, the people need to participate in order to make the government and the decisions for the government are made by the people who mobilized and advocate for themselves."

Evidence

The response earned three points for supporting the claim, with two pieces of accurate and relevant information, by first stating, "Federalist 10 is a document that describes the use and the existence of factions in society and how the[y] affect government. These groups include people participating in parties and other groups that supports a participatory model of democracy. If a citizen cannot find a faction to identify with it may deter them from participating in government."

Secondly, the response stated, "In Brutus I, the author describes his fear of tyranny when the Constitution gives so much power to the federal government. He worries that Congress will take over and rule unchecked over the country. His concerns would be much less with a participatory society."

Reasoning

The response earned one point for using reasoning to explain why the evidence supported the claim by stating, "A participatory society most closely represents what the founders wanted for a system of representative democracy. It prevents tyranny from the federal government or the elite, as well as gives individual citizens a voice in government decisions."

Responds to Alternative Perspectives

The response earned one point for responding to an opposing perspective using refutation by stating, "An argument that could be made in an elite society would be that the best, smartest people are making the important decisions for a country and they know what is best. With the most qualified people making important decisions, the country will be the best off they could be. While this way may be a way in which to make the most successful country, it is not consistent with the founders original intention of avoiding tyranny and giving citizens representation in government."

Sample: 4B**SCORE: 5****Claim/Thesis**

The response earned one point for articulating a thesis by stating, "The founders wanted the people to play a main role in the government and that is why the participatory model of representative democracy best describes the American political system. The US Constitution exemplifies American government and participatory democracy because it gives citizens' freedoms and a place in politics."

Evidence

The response earned three points for supporting the claim with two pieces of accurate and relevant information by first stating, "The Constitution includes a Bill of Rights which includes the rights/liberties of the people. This gives people an incentive to be a part of the governing process. Either way, all of their rights will always be protected by the government."

Secondly, the response stated, "The Constitution also includes several amendments that give the people more of a say in government. For example, the 17th Amendment gives the people the power to vote for their senators. Allowing them to participate more in the government. The 19th Amendment granted women suffrage and the 15th Amendment made it possible for all men to vote."

Reasoning

The response earned one point for using reasoning to explain why the evidence supported the claim by stating, "All of these Amendments to the constitution, allowed the people to participate more in government, demonstrating that the founders wanted the public to be involved in their government."

Responds to Alternative Perspectives

The response did not earn one point for providing an opposing perspective using refutation, concession, or rebuttal. The response stated, "Someone might argue that the Constitution is outdated and no longer represents our current country. That is an irrelevant statement because it is a living document that will always be altering for years to come." The response did not accurately identify an argument in favor of one of the other models of representative democracy, and therefore cannot respond to it using refutation, concession, or rebuttal.

Sample: 4C**SCORE: 4**

Claim/Thesis

The response earned one point for articulating a thesis by stating, "The model that best describes the American political system is the pluralist theory of representative democracy, where groups compete to make society better."

Evidence

The response earned two points for supporting the claim with one piece of accurate and relevant information by stating, "Federalist 10 shows that the founders wanted a pluralist democracy. Federalist 10 describes that factions are dangerous, but are inevitable. This is a prime example of how pluralism is the best representation of American Democracy because there are factions like political parties in the government, but they allow everyone's voice to be heard and through pluralism people compromise which makes everyone somewhat happy."

The response did not earn a third point for supporting the claim, because the response did not provide a second accurate piece of evidence. The response stated, "Another example is the Electoral College. This let different people choose who the president would be, and not the masses, so this shows the founders wanted a pluralist government too," however it did not accurately connect the Electoral College to pluralism.

Reasoning

The response earned one point for explaining why the evidence supported the claim, stating, "This is a prime example of how pluralism is the best representation of American Democracy because there are factions like political parties in the government, but they allow everyone's voice to be heard and through pluralism people compromise which makes everyone somewhat happy."

Responds to Alternative Perspectives

The response did not earn one point for providing an opposing perspective using refutation, concession, or rebuttal. The response stated, "The people who opposed the Constitution were the Anti-Federalists. They wrote their own Anti-Federalist essays. Brutus I was a part of that. They feared that checks and balances would not prevent the President from having unlimited power like a King would." The response did not accurately identify an argument in favor of one of the other models of representative democracy, and therefore cannot respond to it using refutation, concession, or rebuttal.

Sample: 4D**SCORE: 3**

Claim/Thesis

The response earned one point for articulating a thesis by stating, "The founders of the United States Constitution wanted to form an elite model of democracy. They wanted the power of the government to be held by a select few, and this is seen in the Constitution."

Evidence

The response earned two points for supporting the claim with one piece of relevant evidence by stating, "The Constitution shows this because the founders required Senators be elected by state legislatures and not the people."

The response did not attempt to support the claim with a second piece of evidence.

Reasoning

The response did not attempt to use reasoning to explain why the evidence supports the claim or thesis.

Responds to Alternative Perspectives

The response did not respond to an opposing or alternative perspective using refutation, concession, and rebuttal. The response simply restated the claim that "It can be concluded that America is a nation of elite few."

Sample: 4E**SCORE: 2**

Claim/Thesis

The response earned one point for articulating a thesis by stating, "The model that I feel achieves the founders' intent for American democracy today is the pluralist theory. The pluralist theory is shown today with all the interest groups and other rallies occurring."

Evidence

The response did not earn points for supporting the claim with one piece of relevant evidence. The response provided evidence that is correct for the participatory model but is not relevant to the pluralist model.

Reasoning

The response did not attempt to use reasoning to explain why the evidence supports the claim or thesis.

Responds to Alternative Perspectives

The response earned one point for responding to an alternative perspective by stating, "Though I think the pluralist theory accurately describes the American political system, one could argue that it does not....The Elite theory suggests that only higher up people are important and get a say in things, which does not describe our political system but the pluralist model of democracy allows for everyone's voices to be heard by getting involved in groups to change politics."

Sample: 4F

SCORE: 1

Claim/Thesis

The response did not earn one point for articulating a claim or thesis. The response did not address the prompt. Rather, the response explained why a number of the foundational documents best achieved the founders' intent for American democracy.

Evidence

The response earned one point for providing information relevant to the prompt by stating, "The constitution states the terms of offices and after those holding office must enter reelection." This information is relevant to the prompt, as it discussed the electoral process, but the response did not relate the information to a model of democracy, nor was there a thesis or claim. Thus, the response could not provide two pieces of accurate and relevant information to support a thesis or claim, so no additional points were earned.

Reasoning

The response did not earn one point for explaining why the evidence supported the claim, as the response did not provide a thesis or claim.

Responds to Alternative Perspectives

The response did not earn one point for responding to an opposing perspective using refutation, as the response did not reference a model of democracy but rather referenced the Constitution.

