

2021

AP[®] CollegeBoard

AP[®] United States Government and Politics

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary Set 2

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Free Response Question 2

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Question 2: Quantitative Analysis**4 points**

A. Identify the party that won the highest percentage of votes and seats in 1982. **1 point**

- The Democrats won the highest percentage of votes and seats in 1982.

B. Describe a change between the percentage of seats won by Republicans in 1982 and 2012. **1 point**

Acceptable descriptions include:

- The Republicans won more seats in 2012 than in 1982.
- The Republicans won 26% more seats in 2012 than in 1982.

C. Draw a conclusion about the difference in percentage of votes won and seats won in Ohio in the 2012 election as shown in the charts. **1 point**

Acceptable conclusions include:

- While Democrats won 48% of the votes in Ohio in 2012, they only won 25% of the seats. This change could have come about due to redistricting and/or gerrymandering.

D. Explain why the information in the charts could pose a challenge to participatory democracy. **1 point**

Acceptable explanations include:

- The data, which shows that the Republicans won about the same percentage of votes but gained a disproportionate number of seats in Ohio, poses a challenge to participatory democracy, which emphasizes broad participation of constituents.
- Political efficacy can be impacted when voters believe that their votes do not matter and that the system is rigged. Low political efficacy will lead to a narrower participation of constituents.

Total for question 2 4 points



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

- A) In the 1982 election, the democratic party won the highest percentage of votes and seats. Democrats won 52% of the vote and 51% of the seats.
- B) In 1982, Republicans won 49% of the seats in the House of Representatives for the state of Ohio. In 2012, this number greatly increased as Republicans won 75% of seats.
- C) In 2012, Democrats won 48% of votes and ended up only winning 25% of seats whereas the Republicans won 52% of votes yet captured 75% of seats. This disproportionate difference between percentage of votes won and percentage of seats won is likely due to gerrymandering by Ohio Republicans. This means the Republicans in Ohio altered the district lines to create more republican heavy districts, ultimately leading to more Republicans representing Ohio in the House of Representatives.
- D) The information in the charts poses a challenge to participatory democracy because it illustrates how over time, an individual's vote holds less weight and is unable to influence elections as much. Democratic voters in the state of Ohio particularly may be discouraged from voting as they are no longer represented equally.

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

- Ⓐ The party that won the highest percentage of votes and seats in 1982 would be the Democratic party.
- Ⓑ A change between the percentage of seats won by Republicans in 1982 and 2012 would be that in 1982, Republicans were receiving a lower percentage than Democrats ~~was~~ with votes and seats won, and in 2012 the Republicans were receiving a higher percentage of votes won and seats won than the Democrats. In ~~the~~ 1982, the Republicans only had 49% of the votes and seats won, whereas in 2012, the Republicans had 52% of the votes won and 75% of the seats won.
- Ⓒ The difference in percentage of votes won and seats won in Ohio in the 2012 election as shown in the charts is an extreme difference with the Republicans winning 52% of the votes and 75% of the seats. This could be because of a ~~the~~ difference in the political beliefs of the people who are in charge of being involved in the votes and the seats.
- Ⓓ The information in the charts could pose a challenge to participatory democracy because due to the fact that the Democratic votes that were won were far less than the percentage of the seats that were given to the Democrats, the voters could believe that in the end, they have little actual say in the outcome of elections. They could also believe that they are

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.

underrepresented and therefore could lead to them believing that their vote does not matter which could then lead to participation in voting to decrease, therefore posing as a serious challenge to participatory democracy.

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.

In the United States House of Representatives Elections for Ohio in 1982, the democratic party won the highest percentage of votes and seats. In 2012, the Republican party won the votes, and the seats, but they won the seats by at least 50%, the number of seats won by the Republican party in 2012 increased dramatically while the seats won for the democrats in 2012 decreased also dramatically. The difference in percentage of votes won and seats won in Ohio in the 2012 election compared to the 1982 election might have had such a dramatic change due to the population that might have increased. So more political standards would have been varied in Ohio. The information in the charts could pose a challenge to participatory democracy ~~that~~ because of how dramatic the changes in the seats were. The votes barely changed though.

Question 2

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

Overview

This question expected students to read and interpret data related to congressional elections in Ohio. Students were expected to describe changes through analysis of data related to these elections. Students were then expected to draw a conclusion about the cause of the difference presented in the data. Finally, students were expected to explain the political implications of the evidence related to congressional elections.

Sample: 2A

Score: 4

In part A the response earned 1 point for correctly identifying the “democratic party won the highest percentage of votes and seats.”

In part B the response earned 1 point by correctly describing a directional change: “this number greatly increased as Republicans won 75% of seats.”

In part C the response earned 1 point for correctly concluding, “This disproportionate difference between percentage of votes won and percentage of seats won is likely due to gerrymandering.” The response further goes on to clarify the process of gerrymandering.

In part D the response earned 1 point by correctly stating that “an individual’s vote holds less weight and is unable to influence elections as much” and that Democrats “may be discouraged from voting” to explain a decrease in political efficacy.

Sample: 2B

Score: 3

In part A the response earned 1 point for correctly identifying the “Democratic party.”

In part B the response earned 1 point by correctly stating that “in 2012 the Republicans were receiving a higher percentage of votes and seats won.”

In part C the response did not earn a point for falsely stating that “the political beliefs of the people who are in charge of being involved in the votes and the seats” were accountable for the difference in percentages in 2012.

In part D the response earned 1 point by correctly stating that “the Democratic votes that were won were far less than the percentage of seats that were given to the Democrats” (disproportionate representation) and that voters “could also believe that they are underrepresented and therefore could lead to them believing that their vote does not matter which could then lead to participation in voting to decrease” (efficacy).

Sample: 2C

Score: 2

In part A the response earned 1 point for correctly identifying that the “democratic party won the highest percentage of votes and seats.”

Question 2 (continued)

In part B the response earned 1 point by stating that “the number of seats won by the Republican party in 2012 increased dramatically.” This response describes the directional change in the number of seats between 1982 and 2012.

In part C the response did not earn the point by drawing a false conclusion that population change would account for the differences illustrated in the chart.

In part D the response did not earn the point because it is a statement of fact, rather than an explanation of how the information in the charts may serve as a challenge to participatory democracy.