

2019

AP[®] CollegeBoard

AP[®] United States Government and Politics

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

Inside:

Free Response Question 4

- Scoring Guideline**
- Student Samples**
- Scoring Commentary**

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**AP[®] UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS
2019 SCORING GUIDELINES**

Question 4

6 points

Row A: Articulate a defensible claim or thesis that responds to the prompt and establishes a line of reasoning.	
0 points	1 point Responds to the prompt with a defensible claim or thesis that establishes a line of reasoning.
Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
<p>Responses that do not earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The intended claim or thesis only restates the prompt. The intended claim or thesis does not make a claim that responds to the prompt. <p>Examples that do not earn this point:</p> <p>Restates the prompt:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“Because of my knowledge of the United States Government, I believe the expanded powers of the national government benefit policy making.”</i> <p>Does not respond to the prompt:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“The federal government has expanded power over time.”</i> 	<p>Responses that earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The claim or thesis responds to the prompt rather than restating or rephrasing the prompt and establishes a line of reasoning. The response includes a defensible claim or thesis that establishes a line of reasoning about whether the expanded powers of national government benefits or hinders policy making. <p>Examples that earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“The expanded powers of the national government have made it more efficient, and if states had more power it would be dangerous.”</i> <i>“The expanded powers of the national government benefit policy making because of the strength of the Constitution, the increase of cooperative federalism, and the advantages of fiscal federalism.”</i>
<p>Additional Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The claim or thesis must consist of one or more sentences that may be located anywhere in the response. 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. 	

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2019 SCORING GUIDELINES**

Question 4 (continued)

Row B: Support your claim or thesis with at least TWO pieces of accurate and relevant evidence.			
0 points	1 point Provides one piece of evidence that is <u>relevant to the topic</u> of the prompt.	2 points Uses <u>one</u> piece of specific and relevant evidence to <u>support the claim or thesis</u> .	3 points Uses <u>two</u> pieces of specific and relevant evidence to <u>support the claim or thesis</u> .
Decision Rules and Scoring Notes			
Responses that do not earn points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not provide any accurate evidence Provide evidence that is not relevant to the topic 	Responses that earn 1 point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must provide one piece of evidence relevant to the topic of the prompt May or may not have a claim or thesis 	Response that earns 2 points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must provide one piece of specific and relevant evidence that supports the claim or thesis. This evidence can come from one of the foundational documents listed in the prompt, any other foundational document, or from knowledge of course concepts. 	Response that earns 3 points: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must provide two pieces of specific and relevant evidence that support the claim or thesis. One of these pieces of evidence must 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.

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2019 SCORING GUIDELINES**

Question 4 (continued)

		<p>Example that earns 2 points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“The U.S. has already tried giving states more power than the national government, and it has proved to be ineffective. The Articles of Confederation are a prime example of why a strong national government is better. With the Articles, the government could do very little. It made the states more independent by allowing them to have their own currency and impose their own taxes.”</i> 	<p>Example that earns 3 points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“According to Federalist 70, a strong executive benefits the country because it is easier for one person than a group to make decisions, and someone is held accountable.”</i>
<p>Additional Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To earn 2 or 3 points in Row B, the response must have a defensible claim or thesis (earned the point in Row A). • To earn 3 points, the response must use one of the foundational documents listed in the prompt. 			

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2019 SCORING GUIDELINES**

Question 4 (continued)

Row C: Use reasoning to explain why your evidence supports your claim or thesis.	
0 points	1 point Explains how or why the evidence supports the claim or thesis
Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
<p>Responses that do not earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include evidence but offer no reasoning to connect the evidence to the claim or thesis • Restate the prompt without explaining how the evidence supports the claim or thesis 	<p>Response that earns this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must explain the relationship between the evidence provided and the claim or thesis <p>Examples that earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“The Articles of Confederation made it harder to pass laws because each state has very different agendas, and it required over a majority of them to agree. To amend, it required a unanimous decision. This makes it nearly impossible to add a new amendment to change policy.”</i> • <i>“This efficiency and accountability from a strong executive benefits policy making.”</i>
<p>Additional Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To earn this point, the response must have a defensible claim or thesis (earned the point in Row A) and support that argument with at least one piece of specific and relevant evidence (earned at least 2 points in Row B). • The explanation of the relationship between one piece of evidence and the claim or thesis is sufficient to earn this point. 	

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2019 SCORING GUIDELINES**

Question 4 (continued)

Row D: Respond to an opposing or alternative perspective using refutation, concession, or rebuttal.	
0 points	1 point Responds to an opposing or alternate perspective using refutation, concession, or rebuttal
Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
<p>Responses that do not earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restate the opposite of the claim or thesis • May identify or describe an alternate perspective but do not refute, concede, or rebut that perspective • Refute a foundational document rather than an alternate perspective to the provided claim or thesis 	<p>Response that earns this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must describe an alternate perspective AND refute, concede, or rebut that perspective <p>Example that earns this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Some people may argue that the federal government is too large, and that states are best suited to address the needs of their people without interference from the federal government. However, this is not true. The state governments are not equipped to handle all of the problems they face without the federal government. The federal government can act with uniformity to affect all states, to ensure everyone is guaranteed the same protections as everyone else.”</i>
<p>Additional Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To earn this point, the response must have a defensible claim or thesis (earned the point in Row A). • Responses that demonstrate an incorrect understanding of the alternate perspective do not earn this point. 	

A score of zero (0) is assigned to an answer that is off-task or is attempted but earns no points.

A score of NR is assigned to a blank essay. A score of NR cannot be assigned to only one task within the essay. If an NR is assigned, it must be applied to all four tasks.

Important: Completely fill in the circle that corresponds to the question you are answering on this page. Do not skip lines.

Question 1

Question 2

Question 3

Question 4



Within the United States' system of government, the states and federal governments are separated under a system of federalism. Initially, the states and federal governments were equal with each other, with states having some powers that the federal doesn't, and the federal having powers the states don't. However, over time the powers of the national government have increased compared to the states. ~~which is not true~~ The expanding powers of the national government benefits policymaking overall, because it prevents delays such as states making conflicting laws, or states violating federal laws, ~~and the United States' first gov~~ civil rights laws.

In the United States' first government, the Articles of Confederation, the national government was much weaker than the state governments. Because of this, the Articles of Confederation (AOC) were very weak, and were unable to do many things. One of the weakest points of the AOC was the inability for the federal government to raise ~~and~~ taxes. Instead, the states were given this ability. This was a detriment to the country, as the national government was now unable to afford a standing army. Because of this, there was the massive ^{Shays} Whiskey Rebellion that the government was unable to put down. The AOC is a strong reasoning that increased federal power is beneficial, because the lack of one caused rebellions within the country that were unable to be put

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Question 1

Question 2

Question 3

Question 4



down due to a weak federal government and selfish States. If the AOC strengthened the National government initially, ~~the~~ ~~rebell~~ Shay's rebellion would have been stopped and the AOC would have been made stronger.

Another benefit to the expanded powers of the National government is the ensuring that civil rights are not infringed by the States. Throughout history, several States have implemented segregationist policies ~~the~~ against minorities, without check. In the case, *Shaw v. Reno*, the State of North Carolina had used gerrymandering to split voters up racially, with districts as thin as an interstate. In this case, the Supreme Court had ruled that this act by North Carolina was unconstitutional, and had violated the Fourteenth Amendment. ~~the~~ This case is a strong proof for a strong federal government, because without a Supreme Court looking over the States, North Carolina would have been able to racially gerrymander indefinitely. Allowing States to have no checks on them would do more harm than good because States could get out of hand and violate amendments, as seen in *Shaw v. Reno*.

Although some states-rights may claim that expanding the powers of the National government is harmful, or could infringe on the rights of the individual, as stated in

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Question 1

Question 2

Question 3

Question 4



Brutus I, ~~this~~ this simply wouldn't happen as often as some claim. Within the federal government, there exists several forms of checks and balances, and separation of powers, like Fed. 51 points out. These separation of powers would prevent many of the fears such as a president becoming too king-like. With the powers of vetoes, that issue would be resolved swiftly. The fear of a tyrannical government that would trump over the states is an unrealistic one built on ~~an~~ ignorance of the government's structure. Because of these systems currently in place, the federal government has the ability to grow while at the same time not intringe on the rights of the individual, much like the states have in many cases.

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Question 1

Question 2

Question 3

Question 4



The expanded powers of the national government hinders policy making by ignoring regional differences ~~and~~ between states and by ignoring how specific states vote.

The first issue with the expanded national government is the state-by-state differences which cannot be addressed ~~at~~ at a national level. National policy ignores how regions are affected by issues in different ways. For example, if the National government were to decide that ~~it~~ it would ~~provide~~ provide clean energy everywhere, that seems like a good thing. Until you realize that by doing that, anywhere ~~that~~ that has a large oil or coal industry will become poverty stricken due to there being no more jobs. The issue described can even be called a minority rights issue, as the sweeping national policies will always trumps over the rights of some. This same issue is described within Brutus 1 warning of a powerful national government.

The other issue with an expanded national government is a states right to vote. This idea is essentially that how the population of a state votes, is how the policy within the state should ~~be~~ be enacted. If a state votes for legalization of marijuana, then it is legal within the state.

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Question 1



Question 2



Question 3



Question 4



The current system allows this, but only to a certain extent. A major example is how states can set their own blood alcohol limit, but if it's not meeting the national policy the states will lose their national funding for infrastructure.

Some instances of national policy can be positive. Selective Service is a necessary policy for times of crisis.

By ignoring regional issues, and states rights, the expanded national government is hindering proper policy from being fairly enacted.

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Question 1

Question 2

Question 3

Question 4



The powers of the national government have increased relative to those of the state governments. In government today, the President can issue executive orders which cannot be checked by other branches. It is giving the president power to create a law that stays inacted until their term is up. Also, presidents can send in troops without approval from any other branch. A president can add a signing statement when signing a bill into a law which allows him to bend and alter the meaning of the law into his interpretation. All these unchecked powers show just how the expanded powers of the national government hinders policy making. These powers of the national government hinders policy making since it gives it too much will and power which takes away from the power of state governments and Congress's policy making power. In Brutus I, the anti-federalists believed having a strong national government would take away the power from other branches, and in this case, policy making power. This supports my belief that the expanded powers of the national government hinders policy making. It takes away the power of the people since they elect congress members, and the policies made in Congress can be vetoed and the President can make their own policy through executive

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Question 1

Question 2

Question 3

Question 4



orders. On the other hand, some people believe the expanded power of the national government benefits policy making since the president can make policy (through executive order) when there is partisan gridlock and nothing is getting done. However, the power to make policy unchecked is dangerous and takes away from the people's voice in policy making. In conclusion, the expanded powers of the national government hinders ~~and is harmful to~~ policy making.

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AP[®] UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

2019 SCORING COMMENTARY

Question 4

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

Overview

This question expected students to demonstrate an understanding of federalism and its impact on policymaking as well as an understanding of foundational documents related to the concept of federalism (the Articles of Confederation, *The Federalist* #10, and Brutus 1).

Students were expected to articulate a defensible claim/thesis and establish a line of reasoning, support the thesis with evidence from a foundational document or the course, use reasoning to explain why the evidence provided supports the thesis, and respond to an alternate perspective using refutation, concession, or rebuttal. Students were expected to write in the form of an argumentative essay, demonstrating each of the skills mentioned above.

Sample: 4A

Score: 6

Row A: Claim/Thesis

Score: 1

The response earned 1 point for articulating a thesis by stating that “[t]he expanding powers of the national government benefits policymaking overall, because it prevents delays such as states making conflicting laws, or states violating federal laws and civil rights laws.”

Row B: Evidence

Score: 3

The response earned 3 points for supporting the claim with two pieces of accurate and relevant information by first stating that “[i]n the United States' first government, the Articles of Confederation, the national government was much weaker than the state governments. ... One of the weakest points of the AOC was the inability of the federal government to raise taxes.”

Secondly, the response states that “[a]nother benefit to the expanded powers of the national government is the ensuring that Civil Rights are not infringed by the states. Throughout history, several states have implemented segregational policies against minorities without check.”

Row C: Reasoning

Score: 1

The response earned 1 point for using reasoning to explain why the evidence supported the claim by stating that “[t]his was a detriment to the country, as the National Government was unable to afford a standing Army. ... The AOC is a strong reasoning that increased federal power is beneficial, because the lack of one caused rebellions within the country that were unable to be put down due to a weak federal government and selfish states.” This appears at the end of the paragraph discussing the Articles of Confederation.

**AP[®] UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS
2019 SCORING COMMENTARY**

Question 4 (continued)

Row D: Evidence

Score: 1

The response earned 1 point for responding to an opposing perspective using refutation, concession, or rebuttal by stating that “[a]lthough some states-righters may claim that expanding the powers of the National government is harmful, or could infringe on the rights of the individual, as stated in Brutus 1, this simply wouldn’t happen as often as some claim. Within the federal government, there exists several forms of checks and balances, and separation of powers, like Fed. 51 points out. These separation of powers would prevent many of the fears such as the president becoming too king-like.”

Sample: 4B

Score: 4

Row A: Claim/Thesis

Score: 1

The response earned 1 point for articulating a thesis by stating that “[t]he expanded powers of the national government hinders policy making by ignoring regional differences between states and by ignoring how specific states vote.”

Row B: Evidence

Score: 2

The response earned 2 points for supporting the claim with one piece of accurate and relevant information: “The first issue with the expanded national government is the state-by-state differences which cannot be addressed at a national level. ... For example, if the National government were to decide that it would provide clean energy everywhere, that seems like a good thing. Until you realize that by doing that, anywhere that has a large oil or coal industry will become poverty stricken due to there being no jobs.”

The response did not earn a third point for supporting the claim, because the response does not provide specific and relevant evidence from a foundational document listed in the prompt. While it mentions Brutus 1 at the end of the second paragraph, there is not sufficient information to demonstrate an understanding of Brutus 1.

Row C: Reasoning

Score: 1

The response earned 1 point for explaining why the evidence supported the claim by stating that “[n]ational policy ignores how regions are affected by issues in different ways.” This appears in the second paragraph when the response discusses state-by-state differences.

Row D: Evidence

Score: 0

The response did not earn this point because it does not attempt to provide an alternate perspective.

**AP[®] UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS
2019 SCORING COMMENTARY**

Question 4 (continued)

Sample: 4C

Score: 2

Row A: Claim/Thesis

Score: 1

The response earned 1 point for articulating a thesis by stating that “[t]hese powers of the national government hinders policy making since it gives too much will and power which takes away from the power of state governments.”

Row B: Evidence

Score: 0

The response did not earn any points for evidence because it does not provide any accurate and relevant information. The content related to Brutus I relates to horizontal separation of power and does not address the federalism aspect of the prompt.

Row C: Reasoning

Score: 0

The response did not earn a reasoning point because it did not earn any points in row B.

Row D: Evidence

Score: 1

The response earned 1 point for the alternative perspective because it states that “[o]n the other hand, some people believe the expanded power of the national government benefits policy making since the president can make policy (through executive order). ... However, the power to make policy unchecked is dangerous and takes away from the people’s voice in policy making.”