



AP[®] United States Government & Politics 2003 Scoring Commentary

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Question 1

Sample 1 US J Score: 8

In part A the student identifies scandal and a failed war as factors causing presidential approval ratings to decrease (2 points). The student explains that scandals cause the public to “feel cheated or upset” (1 point). The student also explains that a failed war causes the people to lose confidence in the president (1 point).

In part B the student identifies war and a good economy as factors causing approval ratings to increase (2 points). The student explains that war causes a rallying effect (1 point). The student also explains that a good economy causes people “to feel grateful and supportive of the president” (1 point).

Sample 1 US O Score: 4

In part A the student identifies scandal and foreign policy failures as factors causing presidential approval ratings to decrease (2 points). The student did not explain either scandals or foreign policy failures and, therefore, earns no explanation points.

In part B the student identifies war and a good economy as factors causing presidential approval ratings to increase (2 points). The student did not explain either war or a good economy and, therefore, earns no explanation points.

Sample 1 US I Score: 1

In part A the student did not identify any factors causing presidential approval ratings to decrease. The student earns no points in part A.

In part B the student identifies war as a factor causing presidential approval ratings to increase (1 point). The student did not explain how war increases ratings and, therefore, earns no point.

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Question 2

Sample 2 US A Score 6

Part A.

The student identifies two methods of participation other than voting: protesting (1 point) and contacting elected officials (1 point).

Part B

The paragraph on protest explains the advantage that it is a low cost activity since, “anyone can take part in whether they can vote or not,” (1 point) and that such protests can call attention to an issue (1 point).

Contacting public officials can provide direct access to leaders (1 point) and magnify the effect of one person, in that such contact “allows the representative to see that a number of people are dealing with the same issue.” (1 point)

Sample 2 US R Score 4

Part A

The student identifies two ways of participating in politics aside from voting as running for office (1 point) and joining an interest group (1 point).

Part B

The student explains an advantage of running for office as having “a say in laws that effect the whole country” (1 point). The student also explains that joining an interest group has the advantage of being in a group that can “lobby, support a candidate with funds [or] trash a candidate...then have a say in laws that effect the whole county” (1 point.)

Sample 2 US O Score 1

Part A

The student identifies “joining a political action committee” as a method of participating aside from voting (1 point).

Part B

The student correctly identifies PAC’s as an “overtly political organization” but gives no explanation (0 points).

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Question 3

Sample 3 US K Score: 5

In part A, the student identifies an increase in the number of state and local government employees and the number of federal government employees remaining constant (1 point). It is clear from later discussion that the student is referring to federal employees.

In part B, the student describes mandates as “things that the federal government requires the state or local governments to do without giving them funds with which to do it” (1 point) and links mandates to “more state and local employees had to be hired” (1 point). The student then explains that grants are “given to the state governments by the federal government with few strings attached” (1 point). The student then links this money to hiring more employees (1 point).

Sample 3 US A Score: 3

In part A, the student identifies federal employees as “steady” and state and local employees as having “quadrupled” (1 point).

In part B, the student understands that block grants are sent from the federal government to the states “with a broad goal in mind” and acknowledges state discretion (1 point). This is linked to increases in state and local personnel (1 point). The student fails to properly discuss federal mandates.

Sample 3 US C Score: 1

In part A, the student recognizes that “the number of state and local government employees has dramatically increased while the number of paid federal government civilian employees has stayed constant” (1 point).

In part B, the student blends a discussion of grants with a discussion of mandates in such a way that does not indicate an adequate understanding of either.

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Question 4

Sample 4 US G Score 8

In part A the student receives 4 points: the student is awarded 1 point for the definition of specialization and 1 point for the explanation of how specialization influences the legislative process. The student is also awarded 1 point for the definition of party representation and 1 point for the explanation of how party representation influences the legislative process.

In part B the student receives 4 points: the student is awarded 1 point for the identification of scheduling and 1 point for the explanation of how scheduling influences the legislative process. The student is also awarded 1 point for the identification of party discipline and 1 point for the explanation of how party discipline influences the legislative process.

Sample 4 US Q Score 5

In part A the student receives 3 points: the student is awarded 1 point for the definition of specialization. The student is also awarded 1 point for the definition of party representation and 1 point for the explanation of how party representation influences the legislative process.

In part B the student receives 2 points: the student is awarded 1 point for the identification of assignment of members to committees and 1 point for the identification of party discipline.

Sample 4 US U Score 2

In part A the student receives 2 points: the student is awarded 1 point for the definition of specialization and 1 point for the explanation of how specialization influences the legislative process.

In part B the student receives 0 points.