

**AP[®] UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS
2009 SCORING GUIDELINES**

Question 3

6 points

Part (a): 2 points

One point is earned for each of two descriptions of majority party advantage in the House of Representatives.

The description must include three components:

- Majority party
- Advantage
- Factual statement about the advantage

Acceptable answers may include:

- Holds committee chairs
- Controls Rules Committee
- Sets the agenda
- Controls debate
- Chooses Speaker of the House
- Holds majority on each committee
- Assigns bills to committees

Part (b): 2 points

One point is earned for each of two descriptions of rules differences between the House and Senate. Acceptable answers may include:

	House	Senate
Procedures and rules	More formal	Less formal
Filibuster	No	Yes
Holds	No	Yes
Unanimous consent agreements	No	Yes
Germaneness requirement	Yes	No
Rules Committee	Yes	No

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Question 3 (continued)

Part (c): 2 points

One point is earned for each of two explanations of how a rules difference identified in part (b) affects passage of a bill in one chamber as opposed to the other. Acceptable answers may include:

- Filibuster—even though the House may pass a bill, the Senate can kill the bill with a filibuster.
- Holds—even though the House may pass a bill, the Senate can delay or stop it with a hold.
- Unanimous consent agreements—the Senate can ease passage of a bill with unanimous consent agreements, while the House has no such mechanism.
- Germaneness—the Senate can add unrelated content that members of the House might find objectionable.
- Rules Committee—even though the Senate may pass a bill, the House Rules Committee can hinder passage of that bill in the House.

A score of zero (0) is assigned to an attempted answer that earns no points.

A score of dash (—) is assigned to a blank or off-task answer.

3

Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the exam.

3A
1d2

The majority party has many advantages in the House of Representatives. One is that the Speaker of the House comes from the majority party. The Speaker is the most important member of Congress. They control the agenda, decide who gets to speak and when, and make the ~~committee~~ assignments to the committee that determines what committee every representative serves on. All of these powers greatly impact legislation and can ~~determine~~ increase the chances of getting the majority party's legislation passed. Also, the ~~also~~ chairs of every committee are members of the majority party. Because most of the work in the House is done in committees, the chairs are extremely important in determining the agenda for meetings, conducting business, etc. Even more helpful is the fact that the majority of people on every committee will be from the majority party, again making the ability to pass the majority party's legislation that much easier.

In the House there are strict time limits on debates because there are so many members. The smaller Senate may filibuster bills, or "talk a bill to death", where members opposing the bill continue to speak until a vote is called. This means that passing a bill in the Senate can be much harder than passing a bill in the House.

Also, in the House there is a Rules Committee that determines

Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the exam.

3A
2012

things like whether a bill can be amended, how much time it can be debated, and other rules pertaining to the bill. This strict ~~se~~ rules committee does not exist in the Senate. This means that members may not necessarily get to add on amendments that they'd want to in the House, making legislation therefore more difficult to pass in the House.

In the United States Congress, the majority party exhibits a large authority over legislative policy. In the House of Representatives, the majority party utilizes key advantages that work above and beyond the majority of votes. For example, Majority Party leaders typically hold committee chairships, and so they control the agenda of bills discussed in committee. The ability to stall a bill in committee is a way the Majority party can defeat legislation even before it comes to a vote. The majority party also controls the rules committee, which decides the agenda of bills discussed on the floor and the length of time allotted to floor debate. The control of parliamentary procedure allows the Majority Party in the House to have additional control.

However, there are ~~two~~ distinct differences between the chambers that makes it easily possible a bill will pass one but not the other. For example, often ~~some~~ Congressmen vote on B.I.s to lock a certain way before elections. However, a Senator has a longer six year term and thus is less often

worried about how filibustering will affect election outcome. Another key difference is that there is no limit to the amount of time a Senator can hold the floor. A Senator of a minority party can filibuster the Senate for a prolonged time and can thus defeat a majority party bill by delaying the vote. These two key differences often account for why a bill would pass one house and not the other. A Representative of a minority party cannot filibuster ~~the~~ the House, and so it is less likely a minority party in the House could defeat a Bill proposed by the majority. Likewise, the discrepancy in term limits could account for a discrepancy in voting priorities, so members of ~~both houses~~ both houses will vote different ways based on election cycle.

The majority in Congress has a vast authority over lawmaking. But the different houses of Congress react different ways for several reasons, accounting for the fact often the House will pass a Bill and the Senate will reject it, or vice versa.

3 a. The majority party possesses the proportional majority of seats within every committee.

2. The majority party holds the head seat within each House of Congress.

b. 1. The Senate can filibuster as long as they like.

2. The House initiates all appropriations bills.

c. 1. If the House approves a bill and then sends it to the Senate where a filibuster occurs, that bill may eventually die there unless a motion of cloture is completed.

2. The House initiates all appropriations bills.

~~3. 3. 3.~~ If the House approves it, the Senate must ~~be very strategic~~ be very strategic because once they approve it, they can not initiate an opposing bill. Therefore, appropriations bills may die in the Senate because if they do not,

3

Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the exam.

3C
2 of 2

The Senate has no way to counter.

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2009 SCORING COMMENTARY

Question 3

Overview

This question asked students (1) to describe advantages of the majority party in the House of Representatives (beyond numerical superiority); (2) to describe differences between House and Senate rules that may make it likely that legislation passes in one chamber but not in the other; and (3) to explain how the rules differences can lead to passage of legislation in one chamber but not the other. Students needed to have a factual knowledge of the United States Congress and an understanding of how rules structure can facilitate political conflict in order to do well on this question.

Sample: 3A

Score: 6

In part (a) the response earned 1 point for stating that “the Speaker of the House comes from the majority party. The Speaker is the most important member of Congress.” The response earned a second point for stating that “the chairs of every committee are members of the majority party. Because most of the work in the House is done in committees, the chairs are extremely important.”

In part (b) the response earned 1 point for stating that “[t]he smaller Senate may filibuster [*sic*] bills, or ‘talk a bill to death.’” The response earned a second point for stating that “in the House there is a Rules Committee that determines things like whether a bill can be amended, how much time it can be debated, and other rules.”

In part (c) the response earned 1 point for each explanation by adding a sentence after the description for part (b). For the first point, the response states that the filibuster “means that passing a bill in the Senate can be much harder than passing a bill in the House.” For the second point, the response states that the Rules Committee “means that members may not necessarily get to add on amendments that they’d want to in the House, making legislation therefore more difficult to pass in the House.”

Sample: 3B

Score: 4

In part (a) the response earned 1 point for stating that “Majority Party leaders typically hold committee chairships, and so they control the agenda of bills discussed in committee.” The response earned a second point for stating that “[t]he majority party also controls the rules committee, which decides the agenda of bills discussed on the floor and the length of time allotted [*sic*] to floor debate.”

In part (b) the response earned 1 point for stating that “there is no limit to the amount of time a Senator can hold the floor. A Senator of a minority party can filibuster the Senate . . . and can thus defeat a majority party bill.” The response failed to earn the second point because it discusses the length of terms in the Senate rather than a difference between House and Senate rules that makes it likely that legislation may pass in one chamber but not the other.

In part (c) the response earned 1 point for stating that “[a] Representative of a minority party cannot filibuster the House, and so it is less likely a minority party in the House could defeat a Bill proposed by the majority.” The response failed to earn the second point because there is no explanation of how a difference between House and Senate rules may make it likely that legislation may pass in one chamber but not the other.

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Question 3 (continued)

Sample: 3C

Score: 1

In part (a) the response failed to earn points because it identifies but does not describe that “[t]he majority party possesses the proportional majority of seats within every committee” and that “[t]he majority party holds the head seat within each House of Congress.”

In part (b) the response earned no points because it identifies but does not describe the filibuster in the Senate, and it identifies (incorrectly) the constitutional provision that “[t]he House initiates all appropriation bills,” which, even if it had been correct, is not a rule of the chamber.

In part (c) the response earned a point for stating that “[i]f the House approves a bill and then sends it the [sic] Senate where a filibuster [sic] occurs, that bill may eventually die there unless a motion of cloture is completed.” The response failed to earn a second point because the explanation is tied to the appropriation power of the House rather than to a rule.