



AP® United States Government and Politics 2011 Scoring Guidelines

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AP® UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS 2011 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 1

5 points

Part (a): 1 point

One point is earned for a correct definition of judicial review. An acceptable definition of judicial review is the power of the court to rule on the constitutionality of laws, acts, statutes, executive orders.

Part (b): 1 point

One point is earned for an acceptable explanation that demonstrates how judicial review empowers the Supreme Court to exercise power relative to the other branches of government within the system of checks and balances by including one of the following:

- It gives the Court the power to overturn laws passed by Congress/legislative branch or actions taken by the president/executive branch.
- It gives the Court the power to limit actions taken by Congress/legislative branch or the president/executive branch.

Part (c): 1 point

One point is earned for correctly describing the process through which the Court grants a writ of certiorari by including both of the following:

- A reference to lower courts
- A reference to the rule of 4

Part (d): 2 points

One point is earned for a correct explanation of how stare decisis influences decisions made by justices when deciding cases heard by the Court. One point is earned for a correct explanation of how judicial activism influences decisions made by justices when deciding cases heard by the Court.

An acceptable explanation of how stare decisis influences justices includes one of the following:

- Justices defer to prior Supreme Court decisions.
- Justices apply precedent to current cases and rule based on past decision.

An acceptable explanation of how judicial activism influences justices includes one of the following:

- Justices are more likely to strike down laws and policies as unconstitutional.
- Justices are influenced by the future/societal ramifications/needs of the nation.

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

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

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Question 2

6 points

Part (a): 2 points

One point is earned for each correct identification of a characteristic of a valid, scientific public opinion poll. Acceptable characteristics may include the following:

- Randomized sample
- Representative sample
- Question wording (unbiased, unambiguous)
- Large sample size/low margin of error

Part (b): 2 points

One point is earned for a correct explanation of why each of the following enhances the influence of public opinion on the voting decisions of members of Congress.

- Strong public opinion as expressed in polling results
 - Because of the desire to get reelected/electoral ambition
 - Because of the perceived obligation/duty to represent their constituents
- Competitive reelections
 - Because of the desire to get reelected

Part (c): 2 points

One point is earned for a correct explanation of why each of the following limits the influence of public opinion on the voting decisions of members of Congress.

- Legislators' voting records
 - To avoid being perceived as indecisive by voters/supporters
- Party leadership:
 - To avoid the risk of losing party support
 - To gain party support

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

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

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Question 3

5 points

Part (a): 2 points

One point is earned for a correct definition of open primary: a primary election in which any voter can cast a ballot in any party's primary.

One point is earned for a correct definition of caucus: a meeting or gathering of members of a political party where members deliberate and choose from the list of those seeking the presidential nomination.

Part (b): 1 point

One point is earned for an acceptable consequence for a winner-take-all primary, which can include the following:

- Shortens the timeframe for candidates wrapping up the nomination.
- Affects strategic decisions (e.g., allocation of funds, time).
- Advantages those with more prominence or better name recognition early in the process.

Part (c): 1 point

One point is earned for an acceptable explanation of how superdelegates increase the power of party leaders, which can include the following:

- Party leaders are now assured a role in the nomination process, regardless of which candidate they support.
- Party leaders can cast the deciding vote in close nomination contests.
- Superdelegates are unpledged and therefore can change their minds on candidates as the process unfolds.

Part (d): 1 point

One point is earned for an acceptable explanation for why campaign strategies often differ between primary and general elections, which can include the following:

- The electorate in the primary election is different from the electorate in the general election.
- A candidate's opponents in the primary are fellow partisans, whereas opponents in the general election are from other parties.
- There are differences in financing, media coverage and current events leading up to the general election.

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

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

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Question 4

6 points

Part (a): 3 points

One point is earned for each explanation of how congressional decision making is affected by the following presidential powers:

- Veto power
 - Results in congressional interaction with the president/executive branch during the legislative process (e.g., bargaining, negotiation, compromising, consulting).
 - Prevents or discourages congressional action if the president makes a statement of clear opposition or threatens a veto.
- Power to issue executive orders
 - Congress acts in response to or anticipates executive orders (e.g., countermands, preempts, compromises).
 - Congress avoids taking action on controversial issues.
- Power as commander in chief
 - Congress engages in oversight activities.
 - Congress clarifies its role associated with the power to declare war (i.e., War Powers Act).
 - Congress controls military spending and thus can approve, modify or reject funding.

Part (b): 3 points

One point is earned for each explanation of how presidential decision making is affected by the following congressional powers:

- Power of legislative oversight
 - Presidents minimize the number or extent of actions that might draw congressional scrutiny.
- Senate advice and consent power
 - Presidents weigh the implications of making controversial or ideological nominations or appointments.
 - Presidents use recess appointments, avoiding controversial confirmation battles.
 - Presidents use executive agreements to avoid the need to have treaties ratified.
- Budgetary power
 - Presidents consider budget items or programs that are important to members of Congress.
 - Presidents consult with members of Congress during the budget process.
 - Presidents sign budgets that include provisions they oppose rather than veto the budget.
 - Presidents postpone agenda items because of difficulty in getting congressional budgetary approval.

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

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