
AP United States Government and Politics

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

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AP[®] UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS 2018 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 2

5 points

Part (a): 2 points

Two points are earned for identifying two characteristics of a reliable scientific public opinion poll.

- Random sample
- Representative sample
- Large sample size/low margin of error
- Question wording (unbiased and/or unambiguous wording)
- Survey format (question type, open- versus close-ended questions, sequencing)

Part (b): 2 points

Two points are earned for a description of two ways polling results are used by politicians.

- Collecting information on how to conduct their campaign
- Collecting information to shape policy
- Promoting themselves to the public (platform formation)
- Conducting opposition research
- Collecting information to inform votes on bills
- Gaining support from donors

Part (c): 1 point

One point is earned for an explanation of how frequent release of public opinion polls impacts media coverage of political campaigns.

- Amount/type of campaign media coverage changes because of changing polling numbers.
- Frequent polling contributes to horse race journalism.
- Polling shapes what campaign-related stories the media will cover.
- Results in a lack of policy coverage.

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

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

2. Public opinion polls are commonly used by politicians and the media.

(a) Identify two characteristics of a reliable scientific public opinion poll.

(b) Describe two ways polling results are used by politicians.

(c) Explain how frequent public opinion polls impact media coverage of political campaigns.

a) One characteristic of a reliable poll is having unbiased questions that don't lead people to answer one way. Another characteristic is randomly choosing who will answer the poll.

b) Polling results can help a politician decide what policies they will attention to. If a majority of people have ~~the~~ the same concern a politician might consider addressing that concern. Polling results can also help a politician decide where they will spend their time campaigning. If one area is strongly Republican and a ~~the~~ candidate is Democratic they might consider not campaigning there.

c) Frequent public opinion polls that show an interest in some subject or policy might lead the media to focus on issues similar to that subject. ~~They~~ They might decrease media coverage on campaigns if the media is spending more time on polls. Frequent public opinion polls might also make the media focus on campaigns that are addressing more popular issues.

2 B

2. Public opinion polls are commonly used by politicians and the media.

✓ (a) Identify two characteristics of a reliable scientific public opinion poll.

✓ (b) Describe two ways polling results are used by politicians.

✓ (c) Explain how frequent public opinion polls impact media coverage of political campaigns.

A) Two characteristics of a reliable scientific public opinion poll include there being no bias and selecting a random set of people.

B) Polling results are used by politicians to get a gist of how everyone feels politically and on certain issues. It helps politicians see others viewpoints to help match up with theirs to get their vote. Polling results also allow politicians to see where they would not get that many votes so they can travel there and campaign. They do this especially in big states that would affect the electoral college, and in states that tend to go back and forth.

C) Frequent public opinion polls impact media coverage of political campaigns because they will only share the news that they think is relevant or important. There is also always a bias standpoint on every issue shared on the news.

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2C

2. Public opinion polls are commonly used by politicians and the media.
- (a) Identify two characteristics of a reliable scientific public opinion poll.
 - (b) Describe two ways polling results are used by politicians.
 - (c) Explain how frequent public opinion polls impact media coverage of political campaigns.

a.)

b) Polling results are used by politicians in order to see what ^{more} they can do in order to receive ~~the necessary~~ the votes needed to win the election. they are also able to see if ~~the citizens~~ ^{citizens} agree with their ^{policy} or not.

c) Frequent public opinion polls impact media coverage because it shows what the ^{politicians} are planning and ^{what} they ^{media} can ~~expect~~ ^{expect} from the politician, in the future.

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2018 SCORING COMMENTARY

Question 2

Overview

This question examined the characteristics of a reliable scientific poll and how politicians use polls. Students were also asked to explain how frequent polling changes media coverage of political campaigns. Part (a) asked students to identify two characteristics of a valid scientific poll. Part (b) required students to describe two ways that politicians use polls. Finally, part (c) asked students to explain how frequent polling impacts media coverage of political campaigns.

Sample: 2A

Score: 5

Part (a) – (2 points): The response earned 1 point for identifying question wording as a characteristic of a reliable poll by stating, “One characteristic of a reliable poll is having unbiased questions.” The response earned a second point for identifying random sample, “Another characteristic is randomly choosing who will answer,” as a second characteristic of a reliable scientific public opinion poll.

Part (b) – (2 points): The response earned 1 point for describing that politicians use polling to shape policy by stating, “Polling results can also help a politician decide what policies they will [pay] attention to.” The response earned a second point for describing how politicians use polls to collect information on how to conduct campaigns by stating, “Polling results can also help a politician decide where they will spend their time campaigning.”

Part (c) – (1 point): The response earned 1 point for explaining how frequent public opinion polls impact the type of media coverage of political campaigns by stating, “Frequent public opinion polls might also make the media focus on campaigns that are addressing more popular issues.”

Sample: 2B

Score: 3

Part (a) – (2 points): The response did not earn a point for identifying unbiased question wording. “Two characteristics of a reliable scientific public opinion poll include there being no bias” is insufficient because it does not address question wording. To have earned this point, the response should have described the wording of questions as unbiased or unambiguous. The response earned 1 point for identifying “selecting a random set of people” as a characteristic of a reliable scientific public opinion poll.

Part (b) – (2 points): The response earned 1 point for describing that politicians use polling to promote themselves to the public by stating, “Polling results are used by politicians to get a gist of how everyone feels politically and on certain issues. It helps politicians see others [*sic*] viewpoints to help match up with theirs to get their vote.” The response earned a second point for describing how politicians use polls to collect information to conduct their campaign by stating, “Polling results also allow politicians to see where they would not get that many votes so they can travel there and campaign.”

Part (c) – (1 point): No point was earned because the response does not link the use of polling by the media back to coverage of political campaigns. To have earned this point, the response should have stated that the amount or type of campaign media coverage would have changed because of changing polling numbers.

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2018 SCORING COMMENTARY**

Question 2 (continued)

Sample: 2C

Score: 1

Part (a) – (2 points): There is no response for part (a). To have earned this point, the response should have correctly identified two characteristics of a reliable scientific public opinion poll.

Part (b) – (2 points): The response earned 1 point for explaining that politicians use polls to collect information on how to conduct their campaigns by stating, “Polling results are used by politicians in order to see what more they can do in order to receive the votes needed to win the election.” The response did not earn a point for stating, “They are also used to see if citizens agree with their views or not.” This is insufficient because the response does not explain how the information acquired will be used. To have earned this point, the response should have tied this information to a specific use.

Part (c) – (1 point): No point was earned because the response does not link the use of polling by the media back to coverage of political campaigns. To have earned this point, the response should have correctly explained how frequent public opinion polls impact media coverage of political campaigns.