



AP[®] United States Government and Politics 2009 Free-Response Questions

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**2009 AP[®] UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS
FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS**

UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

SECTION II

Time—1 hour and 40 minutes

Directions: You have 100 minutes to answer all four of the following questions. Unless the directions indicate otherwise, respond to all parts of all four questions. It is suggested that you take a few minutes to plan and outline each answer. Spend approximately one-fourth of your time (25 minutes) on each question. In your response, use substantive examples where appropriate. Make certain to number each of your answers as the question is numbered below.

1. In *The Federalist* paper number 10, James Madison expressed concern over the possibility that both majority and minority factions would have too much power over government, and he presented ways of minimizing that danger. The United States Constitution established a democratic government but also contained several provisions that limited majority rule. Throughout the next two centuries, the role of majority rule in the United States government and politics continued to change.
 - (a) Identify the part of the national government that was originally most closely tied to citizens and explain how it was tied to citizens.
 - (b) Explain two ways the United States Constitution limited majority rule.
 - (c) Choose two of the following twentieth-century developments and explain how each moved the United States from a less democratic system to a more democratic system.
 - Primary elections
 - The Seventeenth Amendment
 - Expansion of suffrage

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2. In the United States political system, there are several linkage institutions that can connect citizens to government. Elections constitute one such institution. Because of low voter turnout, elections represent an imperfect method of linking citizens to their government. Even when there is low voter turnout, however, other linkage institutions can connect citizens to government.
- (a) Describe how each of the following is related to the likelihood of voting.
- Age
 - Education
- (b) Identify one current government electoral requirement that decreases voter turnout. Explain how it decreases voter turnout.
- (c) Identify one linkage institution other than elections and explain two ways it connects citizens to government.
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3. In the United States Congress, the majority party exerts a substantial influence over lawmaking. However, even when one party has a numerical majority in each chamber of the United States Congress, there is no guarantee that legislation supported by that majority party will be passed by both chambers. Rules of each chamber independently influence the likelihood that legislation will pass in that chamber; legislation passed by one chamber is not always passed by the other.
- (a) Describe two advantages the majority party in the United States House of Representatives has in lawmaking, above and beyond the numerical advantage that that majority party enjoys in floor voting.
- (b) Describe two differences between House and Senate rules that may make it likely that legislation may pass in one chamber but not in the other.
- (c) Explain how the differences identified in (b) can lead to the passage of a bill in one chamber but not in the other.

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Viewers' Ages and Frequency of Viewing of Network Nightly News: 1974 and 2002 Combined		
1974	Frequently (%)	Rarely (%)
18–29	45	13
30–44	50	12
45–64	68	8
65 and older	71	5
2002	Frequently (%)	Rarely (%)
18–29	19	22
30–44	22	17
45–64	40	11
65 and older	53	8

Source: Martin Wattenberg, 2004. "The Changing Presidential Media Environment." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 34(3):557–572. Originally taken from the 1974 National Election Study and the 2002 Pew Center Media Study.

4. One of the most important ways the news media influence politics is through agenda setting.
- (a) Define policy agenda.
 - (b) Explain how the national news media engage in agenda setting.
 - (c) Explain the primary reason the president tends to have an advantage over Congress in gaining media attention.
 - (d) Consider the table above.
 - Describe the difference in the viewing patterns of older and younger age-groups.
 - Describe the change from 1974 to 2002 in viewing habits that exists for all age categories.
 - (e) Given the information in the table, describe one implication for presidents in their use of the media to promote their political and policy objectives to the American public.

STOP

END OF EXAM