

us government and politics ap

US Government and Politics AP: A Deep Dive into the Foundations of American Democracy

us government and politics ap is a fascinating and challenging course that offers high school students an opportunity to explore the intricate workings of the United States political system. Whether you are a student preparing for the AP exam or simply curious about how the American government functions, this subject provides valuable insights into the principles, institutions, and political behaviors that shape the nation. Understanding the US government and politics is not only essential for academic success but also for becoming an informed and engaged citizen.

What Is the US Government and Politics AP Course?

The US Government and Politics AP course is designed to introduce students to key concepts and structures of American government. It covers topics like the Constitution, federalism, civil liberties, political parties, and policymaking. The course combines historical context with current political dynamics, helping students grasp how laws are made, how power is distributed, and how citizens participate in democracy.

Unlike a typical history class, this AP course emphasizes critical thinking and analysis of political institutions and behaviors. Students learn to interpret Supreme Court decisions, evaluate election results, and assess the impact of interest groups and the media on politics. The curriculum aligns with the College Board's standards and culminates in a standardized exam that can earn students college credit.

Core Content Areas in US Government and Politics AP

The Constitution and Federalism

At the heart of the US government lies the Constitution. The AP course dedicates significant time to understanding the document's structure, including the separation of powers among the legislative, executive, and judicial branches. Students explore key principles like checks and balances, popular sovereignty, and limited government.

Federalism is another crucial concept, describing the division of power between the national government and the states. This dynamic relationship influences policies on education, healthcare, and criminal justice. Recognizing how federal and state governments interact helps students appreciate the complexity of American governance.

Political Beliefs and Behaviors

Another essential area in the curriculum covers how citizens develop political opinions and participate in the democratic process. This includes the study of political socialization—how family, media, and education shape beliefs—and voter behavior trends.

Understanding the role of public opinion polls, political efficacy, and voter turnout patterns equips students to analyze election outcomes more critically. This section often ties into discussions on political participation, including protests, campaigns, and grassroots organizing.

Political Parties, Interest Groups, and Mass Media

Political parties serve as vehicles for organizing elections and promoting policy agendas. The AP course explores the evolution of the two-party system, party platforms, and the role of third parties in American politics.

Interest groups, such as labor unions and advocacy organizations, influence legislation and public policy through lobbying and campaign contributions. Students examine how these groups shape political discourse and government decision-making.

Mass media plays an increasingly significant role in politics, especially with the rise of social media platforms. Students analyze media bias, agenda-setting, and the impact of news coverage on public perception and political mobilization.

Institutions of National Government

This section delves into the operational aspects of the three branches of government:

- **Congress:** Students study the legislative process, committee systems, and the roles of the House and Senate.
- **The Presidency:** The course covers presidential powers, executive orders, and the role of the president in foreign and domestic policy.
- **The Judiciary:** Understanding the Supreme Court's role, judicial review, and landmark cases is crucial for grasping constitutional law.

Analyzing how these institutions interact and balance power is central to understanding American governance.

Public Policy and Civil Rights

US Government and Politics AP also focuses on how policies are created and implemented. Students explore domestic policy areas such as healthcare, education, and environmental regulation, as well as foreign policy challenges.

Civil liberties and civil rights are pivotal topics, encompassing debates over freedom of speech, equal protection under the law, and voting rights. The course highlights important Supreme Court rulings and legislative acts that have shaped civil rights in the United States.

Tips for Success in US Government and Politics AP

Succeeding in this AP course requires more than memorizing facts. Here are some strategies to excel:

1. **Engage with Current Events:** Connecting classroom concepts to real-world politics makes the material more relevant and easier to understand.
2. **Practice Free-Response Questions:** The AP exam includes essay questions that test analytical skills. Regular practice helps in formulating clear and supported arguments.
3. **Use Primary Sources:** Reading the Constitution, Federalist Papers, and Supreme Court opinions deepens comprehension beyond textbook summaries.
4. **Create Visual Aids:** Charts, diagrams, and timelines can clarify complex processes like the legislative procedure or election cycles.
5. **Join Discussions or Study Groups:** Debating political ideas with peers can sharpen critical thinking and expose you to diverse perspectives.

How US Government and Politics AP Prepares You for the Future

Taking the US Government and Politics AP course is not just about passing an exam; it cultivates civic literacy. Students gain a nuanced understanding of their rights and responsibilities as Americans. This knowledge empowers them to engage thoughtfully in democracy, whether by voting, activism, or informed debate.

Moreover, the analytical skills developed through this course—evaluating sources,

constructing arguments, and understanding policy implications—are valuable in college and beyond. For those considering careers in law, public policy, journalism, or education, this AP course lays a strong foundation.

Incorporating Technology and Resources

Today's students have access to a wealth of digital tools to complement their studies. Online platforms offer interactive quizzes, video lectures, and up-to-date political analyses that align with AP curriculum standards. Utilizing these resources can enhance understanding and keep students abreast of evolving political landscapes.

Understanding the Exam Structure

The AP exam for US Government and Politics typically consists of multiple-choice questions and free-response sections. The multiple-choice portion tests knowledge across all course topics, while free-response questions assess analytical and writing skills.

Being familiar with the exam format and timing is crucial. Students should practice under timed conditions and review scoring guidelines to improve their exam technique.

Mastering US government and politics AP opens doors to understanding the core principles that sustain American democracy. It challenges students to think critically about governance, political behavior, and the constant evolution of policies that affect everyday life. Whether you are passionate about politics or simply eager to learn how your government operates, this course offers a comprehensive and rewarding educational experience.

Frequently Asked Questions

What are the main functions of the three branches of the U.S. government?

The legislative branch makes laws, the executive branch enforces laws, and the judicial branch interprets laws.

How does the system of checks and balances work in the U.S. government?

Each branch of government has powers that can limit or check the powers of the other branches to prevent any one branch from becoming too powerful.

What is federalism in the context of U.S. government?

Federalism is the division of power between the national government and the state governments, allowing each to have certain exclusive powers.

What is the significance of the Supreme Court case Marbury v. Madison?

Marbury v. Madison established the principle of judicial review, allowing the Supreme Court to declare laws unconstitutional.

How do interest groups influence U.S. politics?

Interest groups influence U.S. politics by lobbying lawmakers, funding campaigns, mobilizing voters, and shaping public policy to reflect their interests.

Additional Resources

US Government and Politics AP: An In-Depth Exploration of Curriculum, Exam Structure, and Academic Impact

us government and politics ap stands as one of the most pivotal Advanced Placement courses offered to high school students aiming to deepen their understanding of American political systems. The course not only equips students with foundational knowledge of the U.S. Constitution, political institutions, and policy-making processes, but it also sharpens analytical skills necessary for comprehending complex political phenomena. As the AP curriculum continues to evolve, its role in preparing students for college-level political science and fostering civic engagement becomes increasingly significant.

Understanding the US Government and Politics AP Course

The us government and politics ap course is meticulously designed to cover a broad spectrum of topics that define the American political landscape. From the foundational principles enshrined in the Constitution to the intricate workings of federal and state governments, students gain a panoramic view of governance in the United States. The curriculum emphasizes critical thinking, encouraging learners to analyze political behavior, institutional dynamics, and public policies.

At its core, the course is divided into key thematic areas: constitutional underpinnings, political beliefs and behaviors, political parties and interest groups, institutions of national government, public policy, and civil rights and liberties. This comprehensive structure ensures that students do not merely memorize facts but engage with the material in a meaningful, evaluative manner.

Curriculum Highlights and Learning Objectives

The College Board, which administers the AP exams, outlines clear learning objectives aimed at enabling students to:

- Understand the origins and implications of the U.S. Constitution and federalism.
- Analyze political participation and voting behavior trends.
- Examine the role of political parties, interest groups, and the mass media within the political system.
- Evaluate the structure and functions of Congress, the Presidency, the Bureaucracy, and the Judiciary.
- Assess how public policies are formulated and implemented.
- Explore civil rights and liberties and their impact on American society.

These objectives reflect a balance between historical knowledge and contemporary political analysis, providing students with a nuanced understanding of how government operates in real-world contexts.

Exam Structure and Scoring Methodology

The AP exam for US government and politics is a rigorous assessment designed to measure students' comprehension and analytical abilities. The exam typically spans two hours and consists of two main sections: multiple-choice questions and free-response questions.

Multiple-Choice Section

This section usually contains 55 questions, which test students' grasp of key concepts, terminology, and the ability to interpret political data, such as election results, policy impacts, and institutional functions. The multiple-choice questions require not only factual recall but also application and analysis, reflecting the course's emphasis on critical thinking.

Free-Response Section

The free-response portion demands that students craft well-organized essays in response

to prompts that cover various aspects of the curriculum. These questions may involve:

- Analyzing and interpreting political data or scenarios.
- Discussing the influence of political ideologies on policy decisions.
- Evaluating the effectiveness of government institutions.
- Exploring the evolution of civil rights and liberties over time.

The scoring rubric rewards clarity, evidence-based reasoning, and the ability to synthesize information from multiple areas of study.

Comparative Perspectives: US Government and Politics AP vs. Other AP Social Sciences

When compared to other AP social science courses, such as AP U.S. History or AP Comparative Government and Politics, the US Government and Politics AP course stands out for its focused examination of American political institutions and processes. While AP U.S. History covers a broader historical timeline, including social and cultural developments, AP U.S. Government zeroes in on the political mechanics and constitutional framework that shape governance.

Moreover, AP Comparative Government and Politics offers a global perspective by analyzing political systems across different countries. In contrast, US Government and Politics AP is deeply rooted in domestic institutions, making it indispensable for students interested specifically in American politics or preparing for advanced studies in political science, law, or public administration.

Advantages of Taking US Government and Politics AP

- **College Credit and Placement:** Successful exam performance can earn students college credits or advanced placement in introductory political science courses.
- **Civic Literacy:** The course fosters informed citizenship by enhancing understanding of government functions and political participation.
- **Skill Development:** Emphasis on critical thinking, essay writing, and data interpretation serves students across academic disciplines.
- **Preparation for Advanced Studies:** The analytical rigor prepares students for collegiate coursework in law, public policy, and political science.

Potential Challenges and Considerations

While the US government and politics AP course offers numerous benefits, students must also navigate some challenges. The dense nature of constitutional law and federalism concepts can be daunting, requiring consistent study and engagement. Additionally, the free-response section demands strong writing skills and the ability to construct coherent, evidence-backed arguments under time constraints.

Educators and students alike emphasize the importance of utilizing diverse study resources, including review books, practice exams, and supplemental materials like political documentaries or current events analyses, to effectively master the content.

Impact on Civic Engagement and Political Awareness

Beyond academic achievement, US government and politics AP plays a critical role in shaping the political awareness of young adults. By dissecting the mechanisms of democracy and the challenges faced by American institutions, students develop a more nuanced perspective on current political debates and policymaking processes.

Research indicates that students who participate in AP government courses are more likely to engage in voting, advocacy, and community involvement. This correlation underscores the course's broader educational mission to cultivate active, informed citizens capable of contributing thoughtfully to democratic society.

Integration of Current Events into the Curriculum

One of the course's strengths lies in its adaptability to contemporary political developments. Teachers often incorporate recent Supreme Court decisions, election analyses, and legislative actions into lessons, bridging theoretical knowledge with real-world applications. This approach not only keeps the material relevant but also enhances students' ability to critically evaluate ongoing political issues.

Resources and Study Strategies for Success

Success in the US government and politics AP exam hinges on effective study habits and resource utilization. Students benefit from:

- **Reviewing Primary Documents:** Familiarity with foundational texts like the Federalist Papers, the U.S. Constitution, and landmark Supreme Court rulings

deepens understanding.

- **Analyzing Practice Questions:** Regular engagement with past exam questions helps students internalize question formats and expectations.
- **Participating in Discussion Groups:** Collaborative learning fosters diverse perspectives and sharpens argumentation skills.
- **Staying Informed:** Following credible news sources and political analyses keeps students attuned to the evolving political climate.

Educational platforms and AP-focused websites also offer tailored materials that align closely with the College Board's framework, providing structured pathways to exam readiness.

The us government and politics ap course remains a cornerstone for students aspiring to comprehend the intricate workings of American democracy fully. Its comprehensive curriculum, combined with rigorous assessment standards, ensures that learners are not only prepared for academic success but are also equipped to participate meaningfully in the political processes that shape their communities and nation.

[Us Government And Politics Ap](#)

us government and politics ap: Barron's AP U.S. Government and Politics Curt Lader, 2016-02-01 In-depth preparation for the AP U.S. Government and Politics exam features: Two full-length model AP exams with answer keys and explanations An extensive subject review covering constitutional development, the branches of federal government, political parties, social welfare, foreign policy, and more Updated content includes recent Supreme Court decisions Newly revised free-response questions with rubrics The manual can be purchased alone or with an optional CD-ROM that presents two additional full-length practice tests with automatic scoring and fully explained answers.

us government and politics ap: Barron's AP U.S. Government and Politics With CD-ROM Curt Lader, 2016-02-01 Always study with the most up-to-date prep! Look for AP US Government and Politics Premium, ISBN 9781506258690, on sale January 07, 2020. Publisher's Note: Products purchased from third-party sellers are not guaranteed by the publisher for quality, authenticity, or access to any online entitles included with the product.

us government and politics ap: American Government: Stories of a Nation Scott Abernathy, Karen Waples, 2018-12-05 This new offering from AP® teacher Karen Waples and college professor Scott Abernathy is tailor-made to help teachers and students transition to the redesigned AP® U. S. Government and Politics course. Carefully aligned to the course framework, this brief book is loaded with instructional tools to help you and your students meet the demands of the new course, such as integrated skills instruction, coverage of required cases and documents, public policy threaded throughout the book, and AP® practice after every chapter and unit, all in a simple organization that will ease your course planning and save you time. We've got you covered! With a program specifically tailored for the new AP® framework and exam. With a brief student edition that students will read and enjoy. With pedagogy and features that prepare students for the AP® exam like no

other book on the market. With a teacher edition and resources that save you time in transitioning to the new course. With professional development to help you transition your instruction.

us government and politics ap: *AP Government and Politics* Research and Education Associa, Research & Education Association, Jack Hamilton, Robert F Gorman, Robert F. Gorman, Scott J Hammond, Scott J. Hammond, P Babbitt, Elliot Kalner, Wesley Phelan, J Hamilton, Gerald G. Watson, Keith Mitchell, 1992-12-09 A NEWER EDITION OF THIS TITLE IS AVAILABLE. SEE ISBN: 978-0-7386-0267-7 Get the AP college credits you've worked so hard for... Our savvy test experts show you the way to master the test and score higher. This new and fully expanded edition examines all AP US & Comparative Government & Politics areas including in-depth coverage of branches of the US government and US voting behaviors. The comprehensive review covers every possible exam topic: the entire US Federal government; a comparative review of the governments of England, France, the former Soviet Union and the People's Republic of China; US political institutions, public opinion, voting behavior and more. Features 3 full-length practice exams with all answers thoroughly explained. Follow up your study with REA's test-taking strategies, powerhouse drills and study schedule that get you ready for test day. DETAILS - Comprehensive, up-to-date subject review of every US & Comparative Government & Politics area used in the AP exam - 3 Full-Length Practice Exams: All exam answers are fully detailed with easy-to-follow, easy-to-grasp explanations - Study schedule tailored to your needs - Packed with proven exam tips, insights and advice TABLE OF CONTENTS About Research & Education Association Study Schedules Study Schedule for the AP Exam in U.S. Government & Politics Study Schedule for the AP Exam in Comparative Government & Politics Chapter 1 - Succeeding on the AP Government & Politics Exams About the Advanced Placement Program The AP United States Government & Politics Exam The AP Comparative Government & Politics Exam About the Review Sections Scoring the Exam Scoring the Multiple-Choice Section Scoring the Free-Response Section The Composite Score Scores that Earn College Credit and/or Advanced Placement Studying for Your AP Examination Test-Taking Tips Chapter 2 - United States Government & Politics Review Constitutional Framework The Federal Government Public Policy Political Institutions and Special Interests Public Opinion and Voter Behavior Civil Rights and the Supreme Court Answer Key Chapter 3 - Comparative Government & Politics Review Britain France The Former Soviet Union (Commonwealth of Independent States) The People's Republic of China Answer Key Practice Test 1 - AP Examination in U.S. Government & Politics Answer Key Detailed Explanations of Answers Practice Test 2 - AP Examination in U.S. Government & Politics Answer Key Detailed Explanations of Answers Practice Test 3 - AP Examination in Comparative Government & Politics Answer Key Detailed Explanations of Answers Glossary ANSWER SHEETS APPENDICES including Annotated Articles of Confederation and United States Constitution Chapter 1 - Succeeding on the AP Government & Politics Exams This book will prepare you for the Advanced Placement Examinations in Government and Politics by giving you, first and foremost, an accurate and complete representation of the actual exams for both United States Government and Politics and Comparative Government and Politics. But REA doesn't stop there: we give you thorough yet concise topical reviews, a series of targeted drills, and an up-to-date glossary that comprises the full range of terminology with which you should be familiar. If you are taking the United States Government and Politics exam, you'll want to concentrate on the first part of this book. The second part of the book is devoted to the Comparative Government and Politics exam. In both cases, you'll find a lively course review keyed to exactly the material you'll need to know to score well on the test, complemented by our handy glossary to help you get the most out of your study time. Two complete practice exams are provided for U.S. Government and Politics, while one full-length practice exam is provided for Comparative Government and Politics. Each REA practice exam features an answer key and detailed explanations for every question. The explanations not only provide the correct response but also tell you why the remaining answers shouldn't be chosen. By going over the appropriate review section(s), taking the corresponding exam(s), and studying our detailed explanations, you will discover your strengths and weaknesses and prepare yourself to score well on the AP Government and Politics exams. About the Advanced Placement

Program The Advanced Placement Program is designed to provide high school students with the opportunity to pursue college-level studies while still attending high school. The program consists of two components: an AP course and an AP exam. In addition, the AP in Government and Politics curriculum is divided into two courses: United States Government & Politics and Comparative Government & Politics. If you wish to pursue an Advanced Placement in Government and Politics course you may enroll in the United States course, the Comparative course, or both. You will be expected to leave the course(s) with college-level writing skills and knowledge of government and politics. Upon completion of the course(s), you may then take the corresponding AP exam(s). Test results are then used to grant course credit and/or determine placement level in the subject when you enter college. AP exams are administered every May. The exam schedule has been designed to allow you the opportunity to take both exams, if you are enrolled in both courses. If the United States exam is given during the morning administration, the Comparative exam will be given during the afternoon administration.

The AP United States Government & Politics Exam

The United States exam is 145 minutes in length and is divided into two sections: I. Multiple-Choice (50% of your grade): This 45-minute section is composed of 60 questions designed to measure your understanding of facts, concepts, and theories pertinent to United States government and politics. Your ability to analyze and understand data, and the patterns and consequences involved with political processes and behaviors will also be tested. In addition you must have knowledge of the various institutions, groups, beliefs, and ideas relevant to United States government and politics. II. Free-Response (50% of your grade): This 100-minute section consists of four mandatory questions, each of which accounts for one-fourth of your total free-response score. You should allot roughly 25 minutes - or one-quarter of the total time in the free-response segment - for each essay. Each question normally asks you to interrelate ideas from different content areas from among the topics listed below. In addition, you may also be asked to evaluate and define fundamental concepts in the study of United States politics, and possibly to analyze case studies that bear on political relationships and events in the United States. You will be required to demonstrate mastery of political interpretation, and analytic and organizational skills through writing. In addition, you may be presented with graphs, charts and tables from whose data you would be asked to draw logical conclusions. Here's a breakdown of coverage on the United States exam: Topics / % of Exam

- I. Constitutional Underpinnings of United States Government / 5-15%
- II. Political Beliefs and Behaviors / 10-20%
- III. Political Parties, Interest Groups, and Mass Media / 10-20%
- IV. Institutions of National Government: The Congress, the Presidency, the Bureaucracy, and the Federal Courts / 35-45%
- V. Public Policy / 5-15%
- VI. Civil Rights and Civil Liberties / 5-15%

The AP Comparative Government & Politics Exam

The Comparative exam is 145 minutes long and is divided into two sections: I. Multiple-Choice (50% of your grade): This 45-minute section is composed of 60 questions designed to measure your understanding of facts, concepts, and theories pertinent to Comparative government and politics. Your ability to analyze and understand data, and the patterns and consequences involved with political processes and behaviors will also be tested. The countries normally tested in the multiple-choice questions include Great Britain, France, the former Soviet Union (Commonwealth of Independent States), and China; these are referred to as the core countries tested on the exam. For certain questions, basic knowledge of the United States will be assumed. II. Free-Response (50% of your grade): This 100-minute section consists of four mandatory questions, each of which accounts for one-fourth of your total free-response score. You should allot roughly 25 minutes - or one-quarter of the total time in the free-response segment - for each essay. Comparative Free-Response questions may require you to compare one or two of the core countries (Great Britain, France, China, and the former Soviet Union) with the developing nations of either India, Mexico, or Nigeria. To do this, you must be able to demonstrate knowledge of the politics of one of these developing nations. Here's a breakdown of coverage on the Comparative exam: Topics / % of Exam

- I. The Sources of Public Authority and Political Power / 5-15%
- II. Society and Politics / 5-15%
- III. The Relationship Between Citizen and State / 5-15%
- IV. Political and Institutional Frameworks / 35-45%
- V. Political Change / 15-25%
- VI. The Comparative Method / 5-10%

About the Review Sections As

mentioned earlier, this book includes two reviews: one for United States Government and Politics, the other for Comparative Government and Politics. The United States Government and Politics Review covers all of the key information you'll need to score well on the United States exam. These topics include: - Constitutional Framework - The Federal Government - Political Institutions and Special Interests - Public Opinion and Voter Behavior - Civil Rights and the Supreme Court We also provide a glossary for the United States Government and Politics exam. Included are the key historical figures, court cases, programs, laws, etc., that often appear on this AP exam. The Comparative Review provides a thorough discussion of the material most often tested on the Comparative exam. Special emphasis is placed on the governments and politics of: - Britain - France - The former Soviet Union - The People's Republic of China A glossary for the Comparative Government and Politics exam enables you to brush up on terms that you are likely to encounter on this test. Scoring the Exam After the AP administrations, more than 1,700 college professors and secondary school teachers are brought together to grade the exams during the first two weeks of June. These readers are chosen from around the United States for their familiarity with the AP program. The Multiple-Choice sections of the Comparative Government & Politics and U.S. Government & Politics exams are scored by granting one point for each correct answer and deducting one-fourth of a point for each incorrect answer. Unanswered questions receive neither credit nor deduction. The Free-Response answers are read and scored using a specific set of objective criteria, but the actual points available for each question may vary from administration to administration. For purposes of this discussion - and REA's practice tests - the Comparative exam questions will yield a score between 0 and 9 (with 0 being the lowest and 9 the highest) on Free-Response Part I, and a score of between 0 and 5 (with 0 being the lowest and 5 the highest) on Free-Response Part II. All four Free-Response items on our U.S. Government practice exam are scored on the 0-to-9 scale. Once the responses are graded, the scores can be converted. The AP Government and Politics exam is based on a 120-point scale. The breakdown of the percentages and points is as follows (note that the available free-response points will vary): Once raw scores have been obtained for each section, they are weighted to produce a composite score. Then the composite scores for each section are added together to form a total composite score for the exam. The range for the composite score is from 0 to 120. Finally, the composite score is translated into a range of from 1 to 5, with 1 being the lowest and 5 the highest.

Scoring the Multiple-Choice Section Use this formula to calculate your raw score for the multiple-choice section: $(\# \text{ right answers}) - (\# \text{ wrong} \times 1/4) = \text{raw score}$ round off to nearest whole number; if the number is less than zero, enter zero

Scoring the Free-Response Section The following guide explains typical free-response scoring criteria:

Score Explanation of Score 8-9 The thesis is extremely well developed and is supported with concrete evidence; all aspects of the question have been addressed thoroughly; discussions presented are balanced.

6-7 The thesis is defined and supported; the evidence provided is very organized; the essay may be slightly imbalanced with one strong argument and one weak argument and/or discuss one topic more thoroughly than the next; sporadic factual errors may appear.

5 A basic argument or thesis is provided; evidence given supports the argument or thesis, but does not clearly connect with the argument or thesis; only the formal facets of the question are dealt with, and informal facets are not adequately covered; not all aspects of the question are discussed.

4 The thesis is not organized and is not referred to in the essay; the essay is little more than a recounting of facts and events; the essay may be overloaded with data; only one facet of the questions may be discussed; numerous factual errors may appear.

3 The thesis is weak; evidence provided in support does not apply to the thesis; factual errors are apparent.

2 The thesis is very weak; little or no factual evidence is provided to support the thesis; irrelevant and inaccurate information appears.

1 An attempt is made to answer the question, but the support given is insignificant and the coverage of topics is incomplete.

0 The question is not answered with any significance.

Free-Response Part II (Comparative only)

Score Explanation of Score 5 The thesis is extremely well developed and is supported with concrete evidence; all aspects of the question have been addressed thoroughly; discussions are presented in a balanced way.

4 The thesis is defined and supported; the evidence

provided is very organized; the essay may be slightly imbalanced, with one strong argument and one weak argument; likewise, one topic may be more thoroughly explored than another; may be marred by sporadic factual errors. 3 A basic argument or thesis is presented; evidence given supports the argument or thesis, but does not clearly connect with the argument or thesis; only the formal facets of the question are dealt with, and informal facets are not adequately covered; not all aspects of the question are discussed. 2 The thesis is weak; evidence provided in support does not apply to the thesis; factual errors are apparent. 1 An attempt is made to answer the question, but the support given is insignificant and the coverage of topics is incomplete. 0 The question is not answered with any significance. It would be extremely helpful to find someone who is willing to score your essay - your teachers or anyone who is familiar with the test material. If you do, ask the person to assign each of your U.S. and Comparative (Part I) essays a score of 0 to 9. For your Comparative (Part II) essays, use the 0-to-5 scale. If you must grade your own essays, try to be objective! In addition, you may want to give your essays three different grades. For instance, if you feel you did well, try giving the essay a score of 5, 6, or 7 to represent the various scores you may receive. By underestimating what your score may be, you are more likely to receive a better score on the actual exam. Use the following formulae to determine your raw score for the Free-Response section: United States Exam (Free-Response) Response (1) score $\times 1.66$ = raw score Response (2) score $\times 1.66$ = raw score Response (3) score $\times 1.66$ = raw score Response (4) score $\times 1.66$ = raw score Comparative Exam Response (1) score $\times 1.66$ = raw score Response (2) score $\times 1.66$ = raw score Response (3) score $\times 3$ = raw score Response (4) score $\times 3$ = raw score The Composite Score Once you have obtained your raw scores for both the Multiple-Choice and the Free-Response sections, add the scores together to get your composite score: United States Exam Multiple-Choice raw score + Free-Response raw score = composite score (round to nearest whole number) Score Essay 1 + Score Essay 2 + Score Essay 3 + Score Essay 4 = raw score Comparative Exam Multiple-Choice raw score + Free-Response raw score = composite score (round to nearest whole number) Now compare your composite score with the scale below: Composite Score / AP Grade 88 - 120 / 5 74 - 87 / 4 54 - 73 / 3 35 - 53 / 2 0 - 34 / 1 AP grades are interpreted as follows: 5-extremely well qualified, 4-well qualified, 3-qualified, 2-possibly qualified, and 1-no recommendation. Scores that Earn College Credit and/or Advanced Placement Most colleges grant students who earn a 3 or above college credit and/or advanced placement. You should check with your school guidance office about specific college requirements. Studying for Your AP Examination It is never too early to start studying. The earlier you begin, the more time you will have to sharpen your skills. Do not procrastinate! Cramming is not an effective way to study, since it does not allow you the time needed to learn the test material. It is very important for you to choose the time and place for studying that works best for you. Some students may set aside a certain number of hours every morning to study, while others may choose to study at night before going to sleep. Other students may study during the day, while waiting on a line, or even while eating lunch. Only you can determine when and where your study time will be most effective. But, be consistent and use your time wisely. Work out a study routine and stick to it! When you take the practice exam(s), try to make your testing conditions as much like the actual test as possible. Turn your television and radio off, and sit down at a quiet table free from distraction. Make sure to time yourself. As you complete the practice test(s), score your test(s) and thoroughly review the explanations to the questions you answered incorrectly, but do not review too much during any one sitting. Concentrate on one problem area at a time by reviewing the question and explanation, and by studying our review(s) until you are confident that you completely understand the material. Since you will be allowed to write in your test booklet during the actual exam, you may want to write in the margins and spaces of this book when practicing. However, do not make miscellaneous notes on your answer sheet. Mark your answers clearly and make sure the answer you have chosen corresponds to the question you are answering. Keep track of your scores! By doing so, you will be able to gauge your progress and discover general weaknesses in particular sections. You should carefully study the reviews that cover the topics causing you difficulty, as this will build your skills in those areas. To get the most out of your studying time, we recommend that you follow the

Study Schedule which corresponds to the exam you are taking. It details how you can best budget your time. If you are taking both exams, do not try to study for each at the same time. Try alternating days by studying for the United States exam one day and the Comparative exam the next.

Test-Taking Tips Although you may be unfamiliar with tests such as the Advanced Placement exams, there are many ways to acquaint yourself with this type of examination and help alleviate your test-taking anxieties. Listed below are ways to help yourself become accustomed to the AP exam, some of which may also be applied to other standardized tests. Become comfortable with the format of the AP Examination in Government and Politics that you are taking. When you are practicing to take the exam(s), simulate the conditions under which you will be taking the actual test(s). You should practice under the same time constraints as well. Stay calm and pace yourself. After simulating the test only a couple of times, you will boost your chances of doing well, and you will be able to sit down for the actual test much more confidently. Know the directions and format for each section of the exam. Familiarizing yourself with the directions and format of the different test sections will not only save you time, but will also ensure that you are familiar enough with the AP exam to avoid nervousness (and the mistakes caused by being nervous). Work on the easier questions first. If you find yourself working too long on one question, make a mark next to it in your test booklet and continue. After you have answered all of the questions that you can, go back to the ones you have skipped. Use the process of elimination when you are unsure of an answer. If you can eliminate three of the answer choices, you have given yourself a fifty-fifty chance of getting the item correct since there will only be two choices left from which to make a guess. If you cannot eliminate at least three of the answer choices, you may choose not to guess, as you will be penalized one-quarter of a point for every incorrect answer. Questions not answered will not be counted. Be sure that you are marking your answer in the circle that corresponds to the number of the question in the test booklet. Since the multiple-choice section is graded by machine, marking the wrong answer will throw off your score.

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