



## **AP<sup>®</sup> GO/PO U.S. 2004 Sample Student Responses**

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~~Some~~ Third parties have had over the course of time an influence over politics. They show an alternative to the common majority powers that have always dominated our country. However they have also served as "spoils" or stumbling point for election years.

The Green Party candidate Ralph Nader ran in the 2000 election and was able to gather some of the percentage of voters. In the cartoon Randal states "End... throw away mentality!" But essentially we gave that voted for him through away their votes. Essentially Ralph Nader took votes away from ~~the~~ both of the majority candidates running to win the election. As he is planning to do for the 2004 election in which he has no possibility of winning.

The electoral college is a set of winner take all elections. No partial electorates are ~~an~~ or based on proportion. If a candidate wins the state majority vote ~~the~~ the candidate gets all of the electorates. Also bigger states consist of larger electorates to win. Unless a candidate has a large financial backing, minor parties can't run campaigns in larger states.

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as well as the Democratic or Republican parties  
can.

Third parties offer choice for individuals with  
different ideological beliefs. Also third parties  
offer different types of policy that can  
held by a majority that was not offered by  
other candidates. The green party has offered  
many domestic policy issues that have been  
implemented into society such as the clean rivers  
and lakes act, and now controversial clean air act.

The role of minority groups has an influence  
of campaigns and domestic policy. Although the  
role of the majority may control the playing  
field, issues that fit many people ~~interest~~ ~~are~~  
are expressed. Although a minor party may never  
win an election when it comes to the presidency,  
their view, opinions and issues will be brought  
up for the country to hear.

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In this political cartoon, minor parties are looked at as somewhat of a waste. The Green Party, a third party that is radically environmentalist, is represented by Ralph Nader, their Presidential candidate. He begs society not to throw all their garbage away while those who vote in favor of the Green Party are depicted as "throwing away" or wasting their vote. This cartoon represents, on a broader scale, the dominance of our two major parties and how voting for a third party is irrational because that candidate will never beat out candidates of ~~the~~ major parties.

The United States electoral system often inhibits minor-party candidates from winning elections. One good example of this lies in Presidential election & the system of an electoral college. In this system, candidates who win a majority of a state win all of that state's electoral votes and whoever wins a majority of the electoral college votes wins the election. However, third-party supporters tend to be diffused widely across the country therefore making it difficult for a third-party candidate to win a majority of any one state and, in turn, not winning any electoral votes. Another example of the electoral system hurting minor-party candidates is campaign financing

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issues. In today's elections, candidates need vast supplies of monetary support in order to sufficiently campaign for themselves and win. Major-parties who are heavily favored are far more readily endorsed & financially supported by PAC's, interest groups, labor unions and private donators. The insufficient funds of minor-parties leave them unable to keep up with the vigorous campaigning of the major-parties. ~~Also~~. Also, ~~the~~ legislation which provides government aid to candidates, such as a ~~the~~ Federal campaign matching law will double smaller donations given to a candidate who wins a certain percent of the primary vote. Such plans don't apply or rarely apply to minor-parties who seldom have ~~primary~~ primary elections & receive much less donations. Only when a minor-party candidate can find ways to support his or her own campaign will they win more portions of the vote. This ~~was~~ was seen in the 1992 Presidential election where the Independent, Ross Perot, used his own wealth and connections to adequately campaign and gained a fair amount of support.

Contributions of minor parties, although they rarely are advocated by our institutions, ~~can~~ can very easily occur if they gain enough influence. One possible scenario could be a candidate not getting

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the nomination from his/her party and deciding to run with another party or independently against their former party. This could very possibly split the votes of that party allowing the opposing major-party to win the election. Thus, this third-party candidate has stole the election from his or her former party without actually winning the election. Another instance of minor party influence could be it siding with one of the two major parties. This would bring that major party most of the formerly third-party votes allowing it to win the election. This could be the case this year as John Kerry, the Democratic candidate, is pursuing talks with Ralph Nader to form a coalition in order to get Republicans out of the White House.

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- a) The political cartoon above expresses the opinion that a vote for a third party is no good as throwing your vote in the trash can
- b) Two rules in the United States electoral system that act as obstacles to third parties are: the concept of winner-takes-all (Plurality System) and Federal Funding. Unlike Great Britain, the United States does not have a proportional election, but a Plurality System <sup>or single member district</sup>. This means that the winner of the plurality of votes ~~wins~~ wins as the single representative of his/her constituents. Therefore, unless a third party wins the ~~plurality~~ plurality, it ~~does not~~ <sup>does not acquire any</sup> seats, but even if it <sup>receives a substantial</sup> gains a percentage of the votes. The second obstacle is funding. In national elections, if a party achieves a certain <sup>to third parties in the electoral system of the United States!</sup> percentage of the votes, the party can receive Federal funding. The problem is that the percentage is so high, that it is rarely achieved by third parties. This gives a third party a disadvantage to the other ~~two~~ parties that seem to have endless funds.
- c) Despite the institutional obstacles of the third parties, <sup>they</sup> they do contribute to the political system in ~~being~~ being critics of the other two parties for their ill treatment of the environment, the cancer, or laying burdensome tax on the American people. Also, third parties raise certain issues ~~that~~ <sup>that</sup> draw the public's attention that perhaps the other two parties shy away from. For instance, in the 2000 campaign, Presidential hopeful Ralph Nader ran on an environmental platform and raised issues on global warming. He criticized the other parties on the tax policy on the environment