

**AP<sup>®</sup> UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS  
2016 SCORING GUIDELINES**

**Question 4**

**5 points**

**Part (a): 2 points**

One point is earned for each of two explanations of how each of the following constitutional features protected against the concentration of power in the national government:

- Checks and balances: By allowing each branch some power over the other branches the Constitution limits the possibility of one branch getting too powerful.
- Federalism: By dividing power between the national/federal and state governments, the Constitution ensured that the national government would not be too powerful.

**Part (b): 1 point**

One point is earned for an explanation of how one of the following features of the Constitution limited the people's ability to influence the national government:

- Electoral College: feature that reduces the influence of the popular vote for the president, thereby limiting the people's direct influence on the national government.
- Selection of senators before the Seventeenth Amendment: The selection of senators prior to the Seventeenth amendment limited the direct influence of the people because state legislatures selected senators rather than the people choosing senators through a popular election.

**Part (c): 1 point**

One point is earned for a description of a Constitutional amendment that increases suffrage

- Fifteenth Amendment (African American male suffrage )
- Nineteenth Amendment (women's suffrage)
- Twenty-third Amendment (D.C. resident suffrage)
- Twenty-fourth Amendment (eliminated the poll tax)
- Twenty-sixth Amendment (suffrage for citizens age 18 and older)

An amendment number is not needed to earn credit, but a description of how the amendment increased suffrage is needed to earn credit.

**Part (d): 1 point**

One point is earned for a description of the effect of one of the following laws on citizen participation in elections:

- Voting Rights Act (VRA): eliminated barriers to voting; increased, but did not grant minority participation.
- National Voting Rights Act (Motor Voter): allows individuals to register to vote when getting driver's license or at other government agencies, making it easier to register.

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.

~~15/11/16~~

4A 1 of 2

4. The Constitution limited the power of the national government and restricted popular control; however, citizen participation has changed over time.

✓ (a) Explain how each of the following constitutional features protects against the concentration of power in the national government.

- Checks and balances
- Federalism

✓ (b) Explain how one of the following features of the Constitution limited the people's ability to influence the national government.

- Electoral college *not direct*
- Selection of senators before the Seventeenth Amendment *States selected*

✓ Describe a constitutional amendment that increased suffrage.

✓ Describe the effect of one of the following laws on citizen participation in elections.

- Voting Rights Act of 1965 —
- National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (Motor Voter Act)

① Checks and balances protect against the concentration of power in the national government because they allow the three separated branches (legislative, executive, and judicial) to check each other's work and to have certain powers over each other to prevent any one branch from gaining too much power.

Federalism also protects against the concentration of power in the national government because it separates power between national government and state governments, allowing states to have some powers that the national government does not have, or to have shared powers.

(b) The electoral college limits the people's ability to influence the national government because it prevents the people from ~~and~~ having a direct vote for national officials, such as the President. ~~This~~ This feature was included in the Constitution to prevent majority control over the election and to prevent uneducated voters ~~from~~ from having too much influence on elections by creating a representative ~~system~~ election.

(c) One constitutional amendment that increased suffrage is the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment because it gave African-American men the right to vote; ~~and~~ ~~and~~ ~~and~~

(d) The Voting Rights Act of 1965 increased African-American citizen participation in elections because it got rid of voting requirements that disenfranchised African-Americans, such as literacy tests, poll tax, and Jim Crow laws,

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE.

4. The Constitution limited the power of the national government and restricted popular control; however, citizen participation has changed over time.
- (a) Explain how each of the following constitutional features protects against the concentration of power in the national government.
- Checks and balances
  - Federalism
- (b) Explain how one of the following features of the Constitution limited the people's ability to influence the national government.
- Electoral college
  - Selection of senators before the Seventeenth Amendment
- (c) Describe a constitutional amendment that increased suffrage.
- (d) Describe the effect of one of the following laws on citizen participation in elections.
- Voting Rights Act of 1965
  - National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (Motor Voter Act)

a. • Checks and balances protects against the concentration of power in the national government by ensuring that one branch of government doesn't have more power than the rest.

• Federalism protects against the concentration of power in the national government by giving reserved powers to states.

b. The ~~the~~ Electoral college limited the people's ability to influence the national government because the states votes are all or nothing for either the Democrat or Republican party which makes it impossible for third parties to win presidential elections.

c. A constitutional amendment that increased suffrage was the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment which gave women the right to vote.



## ADDITIONAL ANSWER PAGE FOR QUESTION 4

d. The National Voter Registration Act of 1993 increased citizen participation in elections because it made registering to vote easy and ~~convenient~~ convenient for most people. When the people are actually registered to vote they are most likely to go out ~~one~~ to the polls on election days.

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE.

4. The Constitution limited the power of the national government and restricted popular control; however, citizen participation has changed over time.
- (a) Explain how each of the following constitutional features protects against the concentration of power in the national government.
- Checks and balances
  - Federalism
- (b) Explain how one of the following features of the Constitution limited the people's ability to influence the national government.
- Electoral college
  - Selection of senators before the Seventeenth Amendment
- (c) Describe a constitutional amendment that increased suffrage.
- (d) Describe the effect of one of the following laws on citizen participation in elections.
- Voting Rights Act of 1965
  - National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (Motor Voter Act)

A) Checks and Balances ensures that no branch of government becomes too powerful and/or abusive. Federalism keeps power in both the ~~national~~ <sup>Federal</sup> and state governments. Power of the Federal governments ensures consistency throughout the nation, which keeps the country together. State governments can better suite to ~~the~~ citizens living in their state. Power in each is necessary but must be balanced.

ADDITIONAL ANSWER PAGE FOR QUESTION 4

4C

B) Most states have ~~an~~ a winner takes all system with the electoral college. This leaves Republicans in Blue States, and Democrats in Red States feeling like their voice is not heard and their vote does not matter.

Before the Seventeenth Amendment senators were not elected by the people. This did not allow for the citizens to be influential with the national Senate.

C) The Nineteenth Amendment (1920) allowed women to have the right to vote. Since females make up over half of the U.S. population, ~~that~~ ~~can~~ women having a voice in the polls greatly affects the political landscape.

~~The Voting Rights Act of 1965 set the voting age to 18. This kept~~  
~~state~~

D) National Voter Registration Act of 1993 requires voters to be registered through their respective state's Secretary of State. Registering to vote takes time and some people simply just do not register. If ~~you~~ someone is not registered they cannot vote.

GO ON TO THE NEXT PAGE.

# AP<sup>®</sup> UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

## 2016 SCORING COMMENTARY

### Question 4

#### Overview

This question examined the students' understanding about the fact that even though the Constitution limited the power of the national government and restricted popular control of government, citizen participation in government has changed over time. Part (a) asked students to explain how the Constitutional features of checks and balances and federalism provided limitations against the concentration of power in the national government. In part (b) students were asked to select either the Electoral College or the selection of senators before the Seventeenth Amendment and to explain how that Constitutional feature limited the people's ability to influence the national government. Part (c) asked students to describe a constitutional amendment that increased suffrage. Part (d) asked students to describe the effect of one of the following laws on citizen participation in elections: the Voting Rights Act of 1965 or the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 (Motor Voter Act).

#### Sample: 4A

##### Score: 5

In part (a) the response earned 1 point for explaining how checks and balances protected against the concentration of power in the national government: "because they allow the three separated branches (legislative, executive and judicial) to check each other's work and to have certain powers over each other to prevent any one branch from gaining too much power."

In part (a) the response earned 1 point for explaining how federalism protects against the concentration of power by stating that "it separates power between national government and state governments, allowing states to have some powers that the national government does not have."

In part (b) the response earned 1 point for explaining how one feature of the Constitution limited the ability of the people to influence the national government by stating, "The electoral college limits the people's ability to influence the national government because it prevents the people from having a direct vote for national officials, such as the President."

In part (c) the response earned 1 point for describing a Constitutional amendment that increased suffrage by stating that "the 15<sup>th</sup> amendment ... gave African-American men the right to vote."

In part (d) the response earned 1 point for describing the effect of the Voting Rights Act of 1965 and how it increased participation in elections by stating, "The Voting Rights Act of 1965 increased African-American citizen participation in elections because it got rid of voting requirements that disenfranchised African-Americans, such as literacy tests."

#### Sample: 4B

##### Score: 3

In part (a) the response did not earn a point for explaining how checks and balances protect against the concentration of power in the national government. "Checks and balances protects [sic] against the concentration of power in the national government by ensuring that one branch of government doesn't have more power than the rest" is not a sufficient explanation.

In part (a) the response earned 1 point for explaining how federalism protects against the concentration of power in the national government by stating, "Federalism protects against the concentration of power by giving reserved powers to states."



# AP<sup>®</sup> UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

## 2016 SCORING COMMENTARY

### Question 4 (continued)

In part (b) the response did not earn a point because it did not explain how the Electoral College limited the people's ability to influence the national government. "The Electoral College limited the people's ability to influence the national government because the state's votes are all or nothing for either the Democrat or Republican party which makes it impossible for the third parties to win presidential elections" is incorrect.

In part (c) the response earned 1 point for describing a Constitutional amendment that increased suffrage by stating, "A constitutional amendment that increased suffrage was the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment which gave women the right to vote."

In part (d) the response earned 1 point for describing the effect of the National Voter Registration Act of 1993 and how it increased participation in elections by stating, "The National Voter Registration Act of 1993 increased citizen participation in elections because it made registering to vote easy and convenient [*sic*] for most people."

#### **Sample: 4C** **Score: 2**

In part (a) the response did not earn a point for explaining how checks and balances protect against the concentration of power in the national government. "Checks and Balances ensures that no branch of government becomes to [*sic*] powerful and/or abusive" is not a sufficient explanation.

In part (a) the response did not earn a point for explaining how federalism protects against the concentration of power in the national government. "Federalism keeps power in both the federal and state governments. Power of the Federal governments ensures consistency throughout the nation, which keeps the country together. State governments can better suite [*sic*] to citizens living in their states. Power in each is necessary but must be balanced" is not a sufficient explanation.

In part (b) the response earned 1 point for explaining how one feature of the Constitution limited the ability of the people to influence the national government by stating, "Before the Seventeenth Amendment senators were not elected by the people. This did not allow for the citizens to be influential with the national Senate."

In part (c) the response earned 1 point for describing a constitutional amendment that increased suffrage by stating, "The Nineteenth Amendment (1920) allowed women to have the right to vote."

In part (d) the response did not earn a point for stating that the "National Voter Registration Act of 1993 requires voters to be registered through their respective state's secretary of state. Registering to vote takes time and some people simply just do not register. If someone is not registered they cannot vote." This is not a sufficient description of the NVRA.