

2017

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# AP United States Government and Politics

## Free-Response Questions

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FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS**

**UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS**

**SECTION II**

**Time—1 hour and 40 minutes**

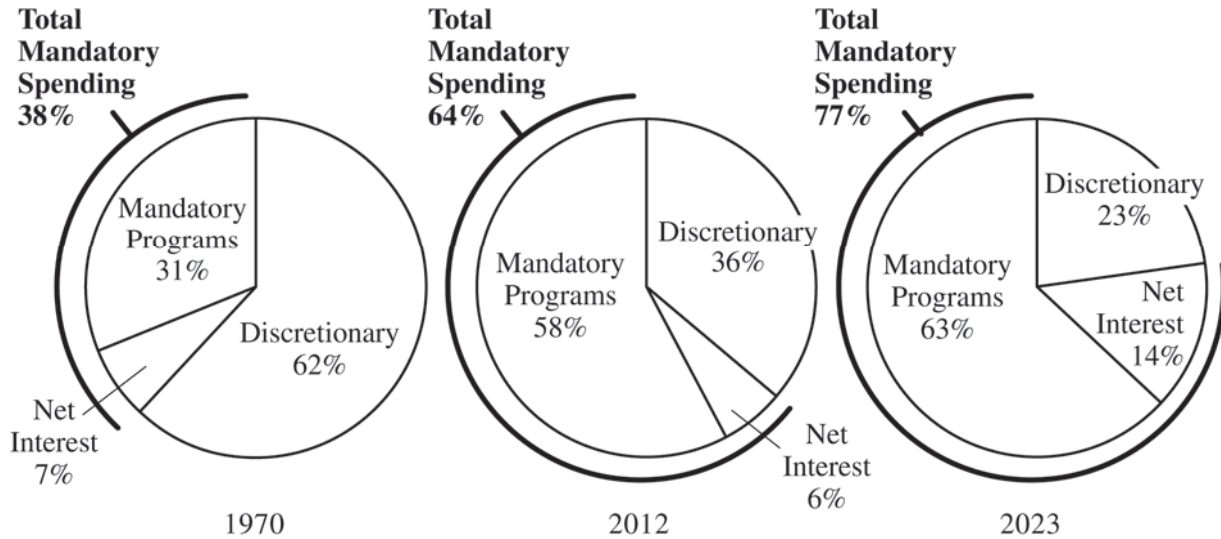
**Directions:** You have 100 minutes to answer all four of the following questions. Unless the directions indicate otherwise, respond to all parts of all four questions. It is suggested that you take a few minutes to plan and outline each answer. Spend approximately one-fourth of your time (25 minutes)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

1. The framers of the Constitution intended the Supreme Court to be politically insulated. Despite this intent, the Supreme Court is not completely insulated from political influences.
    - (a) Describe one constitutional provision that seeks to insulate the Supreme Court from public opinion.
    - (b) Identify a power exercised by the Supreme Court that acts as a check on another branch of the federal government.
    - (c) Explain how each of the following can limit the independence of the Supreme Court.
      - Congress
      - President
    - (d) Explain how the Supreme Court protects its political independence.
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2. Interest groups play an important role in the political process.
    - (a) Identify the primary goal of interest groups.
    - (b) Describe EACH of the following strategies used by interest groups.
      - Lobbying
      - Amicus curiae
    - (c) Explain how EACH of the following hinders the success of interest groups in obtaining their primary goal.
      - Separation of powers
      - Bureaucratic discretion
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COMPOSITION OF FEDERAL SPENDING, 1970, 2012, 2023 (PROJECTED)



Source: The Congressional Budget Office, *An Analysis of the President's 2014 Budget*, May 2013, and the Office of Management and Budget, *FY 2014 Budget, Historical Tables*, April 2013.

NOTE: Mandatory programs include Social Security, major federal health programs, other entitlement programs, and offsetting receipts.

3. Social Security, Medicaid, and Medicare are all mandatory spending programs, also known as entitlement programs.
  - (a) Identify a change in federal spending between 1970 and 2023 (projected) based on the chart above.
  - (b) Describe the difference between entitlement programs and discretionary programs.
  - (c) Describe one demographic trend that has contributed to changes in entitlement spending.
  - (d) Explain why changes in entitlement spending make balancing the federal budget difficult.
  - (e) Explain how deficit spending affects the projected trend in net interest.

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4. The balance of power between the United States national government and state governments is shaped by the Constitution and Supreme Court rulings.
- (a) Describe EACH of the following constitutional provisions.
- Supremacy clause
  - Tenth Amendment
- (b) Explain how ONE of the following court rulings changed the balance of power between the national government and state governments.
- *United States v. Lopez*
  - *Obergefell v. Hodges*
- (c) Describe TWO advantages of federalism for the creation of public policy in the United States.

**STOP**  
**END OF EXAM**