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AP[®]

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AP[®] United States Government and Politics

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary Set 1

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Question 4: Argument Essay

6 points

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row A Claim/Thesis (01 points)	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Responds to the prompt with a defensible claim or thesis that establishes a line of reasoning.
Decision Rules and Scoring Notes		
Responses that do not earn this point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only restate the prompt. Do not make a claim that responds to the prompt. 		Responses that earn this point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respond to the prompt rather than restating or rephrasing the prompt and establish a line of reasoning. Provide a defensible claim or thesis that establishes a line of reasoning about whether the federal government should be primarily responsible for managing environmental policy or if it should be the responsibility of the states.
Examples that do not earn this point: Restate the prompt <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“There is a debate about whether the national or state governments should take the lead in environmental policy.”</i> Do not respond to the prompt <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“There are times when states do things that help their citizens out better than the national government.”</i> 		Examples that earn this point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“State governments are better at making environmental policy because they are closer to the people.”</i> <i>“State governments can customize policy better because they act as laboratories of democracy.”</i> <i>“The federal government is better at making environmental policy because environment issues in one state can impact other states.”</i> <i>“The federal government is better at making environmental policy because policy needs to be the same nationwide.”</i> <i>“The federal government is better at making environmental policy because the federal government has more resources (financial or institution).”</i>
Additional Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The claim or thesis must consist of one or more sentences that may be located anywhere in the response. A claim or thesis that meets the criteria can be awarded the point whether or not the rest of the response successfully supports that line of reasoning. 		

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria			
<p>Row B Evidence</p> <p>(0-3 points)</p>	<p>0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.</p>	<p>1 point Provides one piece of evidence that is <u>relevant to the topic</u> of the prompt.</p>	<p>2 points Uses <u>one</u> piece of specific and relevant evidence to <u>support the claim or thesis</u>.</p>	<p>3 points Uses <u>two</u> pieces of specific and relevant evidence to <u>support the claim or thesis</u>.</p>
Decision Rules and Scoring Notes				
<p>Responses that do not earn points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not provide any accurate evidence. Provide evidence that is not relevant to the topic. 	<p>Responses that earn 1 point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide one piece of evidence relevant to the topic of the prompt. May or may not have a claim or thesis. 	<p>Responses that earn 2 points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide one piece of specific and relevant evidence that supports the claim or thesis. This evidence can come from one of the foundational documents listed in the prompt, any other foundational document, or from knowledge of course concepts. 	<p>Responses that earn 3 points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide two pieces of specific and relevant evidence that support the claim or thesis. One of these pieces of evidence must come from a foundational document listed in the prompt. The other piece of evidence can come from a different foundational document or from knowledge of course concepts. 	
<p>Examples that do not earn points:</p> <p>Provide evidence that is not specific</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“Parts of the Constitution support the idea of states taking the lead.”</i> <p>Provide evidence that is not relevant to the topic of the prompt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“The First Amendment gives protesters the right to speak out against bad environmental policy.”</i> 	<p>Examples of evidence that are relevant to the <u>topic</u> of the prompt:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Necessary and proper clause Laboratories of democracy Treaties Federalism Federal bureaucracy Resources Supremacy Clause 	<p>Examples of acceptable specific and relevant evidence that support the claim or thesis (one example is one piece of evidence):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“The federal government can make treaties on environmental issues.”</i> <i>“The necessary and proper clause allows the federal government to take action.”</i> <i>“The federal government has institutions resources for implementation.”</i> <i>“Policy diffusion/laboratories of democracy allow state innovation.”</i> <p>Examples of acceptable specific and relevant evidence from the foundational documents that support the claim or thesis (one example is one piece of evidence):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“Brutus I opposes giving the national government more power over the states.”</i> <i>“The Preamble to the Constitution’s clause ‘to promote general welfare’ connects to the necessity for government to address issues such as the environment.”</i> <i>“The Federalist 10 says that competing interests within a large republic require federal government to mediate between these interests.”</i> 		
<p>Additional Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To earn two or three points in Row B, the response must have a defensible claim or thesis (earned the point in Row A). To earn three points, the response must use one of the foundational documents listed in the prompt. 				

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row C Reasoning	<p>0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.</p>	<p>1 point Explains how or why the evidence supports the claim or thesis.</p>
(0-1 points)	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	<p>Responses that do not earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include evidence but offer no reasoning to connect the evidence to the claim or thesis. • Restate the prompt without explaining how the evidence supports the claim or thesis. 	<p>Responses that earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the relationship between the evidence provided and the claim or thesis. <p>Examples of reasoning that explains how the evidence supports the claim or thesis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Brutus I would support the idea that states should be in charge of environmental policy because too much federal power will curtail liberty/fail to address local concerns.”</i> • <i>“Because the environment is central to ‘promoting general welfare’ through the health and well-being of citizens, the federal government should address issues such as the environment.”</i> • <i>“Competing interests within a large republic require the federal government to mediate between these interests because this competition can result in improvement to policy overall.”</i> • <i>“The federal government can make treaties on environmental issues. As environment policy requires international cooperation, the federal government should have the authority over environmental policy.”</i> • <i>“The necessary and proper clause allows the federal government to take action, making policy uniform and expedient.”</i> • <i>“Policy diffusion/laboratories of democracy allow state innovation on the environment to spread to other states or the federal government.”</i> • <i>“The supremacy clause establishes that federal laws and treaties made in line with the Constitution constitute the ‘supreme law of the land’ and take priority over conflicting state laws.”</i>
	<p>Additional Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To earn this point, the response must have a defensible claim or thesis (earned the point in Row A) and support that argument with at least one piece of specific and relevant evidence (earned at least two points in Row B). • The explanation of the relationship between one piece of evidence and the claim or thesis is sufficient to earn this point. 	

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row D Responds to Alternate Perspectives	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Responds to an opposing or alternate perspective using refutation, concession, or rebuttal.
(0-1 points)	Decision Rules and Scoring Notes	
	Responses that do not earn this point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Restate the opposite of the claim or thesis. • May identify or describe an alternate perspective but do not refute, concede, or rebut that perspective. • Refute a foundational document rather than an alternate perspective to the provided claim or thesis. 	Responses that earn this point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Must describe an alternate perspective AND refute, concede, or rebut that perspective.
	Examples of responses that do not earn the point: Restate the opposite of the claim or thesis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Some argue that states should control environmental policy.”</i> Describe an alternate perspective but do not refute, concede, or rebut that perspective <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Some people say that the federal government is better in developing environmental policy.”</i> 	Examples of acceptable responses to an alternate perspective may include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Some people say that the federal government is better, but federal policies are ‘one size fits all’ and do not always meet local needs.”</i> • <i>“While some argue that states should control environmental policy, the federal government has better resources/mediates competition to improve policy/can interact with foreign nations on the issue.”</i>
Additional Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To earn this point, the response must have a defensible claim or thesis (earned the point in Row A). • Responses that demonstrate an incorrect understanding of the alternate perspective do not earn this point. 		



Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

In order to support ~~generations~~ the health, safety, and sustainability of the American people into the future, it is imperative that the federal government ^{is} held primarily responsible for managing environmental policy into the future. The expanded role of the government in supporting these regulations is supported by the ~~press~~ need for compromise and the presence of factions, as elaborated on in Federalist 10, and the elastic clause of Article I, Section 8, clause 18^{of the Constitution} supporting the involvement of the government in matters necessary and proper to its function of protecting the citizens from harm, especially in times of crisis.

Federalist 10, written by James Madison and published in 1788, expressed the inevitability of faction and stated even stated that faction is to man as air is to fire. This means that in a ~~republic~~ democratic republican form of government, like our own, there is always going to be a sense of pluralism where different groups will be competing for different sides and interests, even within the same issue. This is due to the unique circumstances that shape their experience and their needs. On a narrower scale, environmental regulations are so complex due to the presence of competing interests that Madison introduced in Federalist 10. Every state has different circumstances due to their unique structure—some rely on agriculture, ^{mining,} tourism, manufacturing, the list goes on. For this reason, each will have a different opinion ~~on~~ on federal regulations as they apply to their state. However, it is clear that a unified approach is necessary in order to maintain



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a sense of consistency in protecting All people and their planet and its resources, Federalist 10 introduces the necessity of a large republic in order to get all voices and points of view considered in legislation. By allowing the citizens of each state to elect leaders who will listen to their ~~states~~ needs within their own specific "faction"; not only will federal legislation compromise and be representative of all of them, but it will provide for the consistency that is required for issues of this size and value. The presence of factions, as Madison states, is essential to the functioning of a fair government that works for the people, and the variety of needs and opinions prevents any one interest from overshadowing another.

The Necessary and proper clause found in Article I, Section 8, clause 18¹ ^{of the US Constitution} mandates that Congress can expand its authority to outside of its enumerated powers so long as the expansion is essential to its function in the government. At this point in time, exhaustion of natural resources, over exploitation of the land, and pollution has brought the country and the world to a state of environmental crisis. If action is not taken, the lives, ~~and~~ health, and quality of life of all citizens will be jeopardized. Though the states can take action on their own, decentralized efforts ARE inconsistent efforts that do not take any powerful standing or hold states and their industries accountable. For this reason, the necessary and proper clause supports the expansion of power to the federal government so that it can enact environmental regulations that will protect the citizen's ^{unalienable} rights to life, liberty, and the



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pursuit of happiness as defined by the Declaration of Independence. The elastic clause has been used in a similar way during times of crisis, such as during the war on terrorism. This allowed the government to gain access to data and details of citizens as a part of the Patriot Act after 9/11. The environmental crisis is proving to show a similar sense of urgency, as it is impacting ecosystems around the country that may crumble food webs, endanger water supplies, ~~and~~ threaten food sources, threaten access to clean air, and even lead to ~~the submergence of~~ more extreme weather and the submergence of cities and homes under water due to global warming. The government has peaked interest in protecting life, health, and property, and the elastic clause supports the centralization of these efforts.

Some may argue that the expansion of the elastic clause in this manner is dangerous in that it may take away discretion from the states in making decisions in the context of its own needs (as alluded to in Brutus 1). They also may say that the presence of so many competing interests in the ^{central} ~~executive~~ ^{govt} in this issue is not conducive to an efficient and timely execution of power (also alluded to in Brutus 1). However, it is abundantly clear that ~~executive~~ the federal government has the resources and the platform to hear and understand all points of view before undergoing collective risk and reward analysis that pushes legislation into action. Many competing interests will hold Congress accountable for their decision not only as it

Question 1



Question 2



Question 3



Question 4



Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

relates to the environment, but as it relates to the resulting impacts on jobs, the economy, and other factors. This will allow for a more holistic review of the circumstances that lead to a compromise that is right for the American people at that time. That is the beauty of American democracy - the ~~for~~ people recognize their needs, ^{and} elect leaders to advocate for their needs, leading ~~for~~ to discussion and circumspection at a national level that standardizes an approach while also compromising. The urgency of environmental reform is quickly setting agendas beyond the boundaries of each state, so it is essential, for the good and protection of The People, that America takes a centralized approach to combatting these issues.



Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

The federal government should take the primary lead on environmental regulation because of funding, ~~The states do not have the~~ and a better delegation of resources. Every state will claim that they need all money in the world to fix their issues. As stated in Federalist 10 ~~the~~ ~~us~~ the US needs protection against tyranny. This setup the need for both the house and senate. Congress controls the finances of the US. As the federal gov ~~has~~ tackles environmental issues the funding and other bills have to be approved for them to work. This makes it so states can't just dump money into whatever project they want. (federal money). With the federal government in charge people can also vote for the policies they want. Although having the government in charge may slow things down / stop proceedings because somehow the environment is a political conversation. It still is needed to ~~regulate~~ regulate ~~where and how much~~ where and how much is spent. The federal government also has the power to provide money to companies that make environmental changes. An example of this is paying people and companies to use electric vehicles and also fed grants for electricity. And in extreme cases ~~the~~ the Fed government can provide relief bills that give us some of money to people / places in need.

Question 1 Question 2 Question 3 Question 4



Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

Although it may be slow and highly radical ~~and~~ the federal government can provide the funding, distribution of resources, and technology that the states need for their environmental issues.



Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

The Federal government should be primarily responsible for managing environmental policy. ~~or~~ I think that the Federal government should be responsible because they should be the ones to handle the big problems that address everyone. Environmental regulation is a big thing and should ~~be~~ consult everyone because it affects everyone. Some people might say that it should be the responsibility of the states because it only addresses some states not all states. We all live on 1 planet and we should do all that we can to protect it and fight against global warming together.

Question 4

Note: Student samples are quoted verbatim and may contain spelling and grammatical errors.

Overview

This question expected students to demonstrate an understanding of federalism and its impact on environmental policymaking, as well as an understanding of foundational documents (*Brutus 1*, *The Federalist 10*, and the Preamble of the United States Constitution) related to the concept of federalism all while taking a position on the topic of the prompt.

Students were expected to articulate a defensible claim/thesis and establish a line of reasoning, support the thesis with evidence from a foundational document or the course, use reasoning to explain why the evidence provided supports the thesis, and respond to an alternate perspective using refutation, concession, or rebuttal. Students were expected to write in the form of an argumentative essay, demonstrating each of the skills mentioned above.

Sample: 4A

Claim/Thesis: 1

Evidence: 3

Reasoning: 1

Alternative Perspectives: 1

A. The response earned the thesis point for taking a position: “it is imperative that the federal government is held primarily responsible for managing environmental policy” and by establishing a line of reasoning: “In order to support the health, safety, and sustainability of the American people in the future.”

B. The response earned 2 evidence points for accurately describing *Federalist 10* by stating, “Federalist 10 introduces the necessity of a large republic in order to get all voices and points of view considered in legislation.” These points were earned because the description supports the thesis that the federal government should be responsible for environmental policymaking. The response earned a third evidence point for providing a second piece of evidence that supports the thesis by accurately describing the Necessary and Proper Clause: “The Necessary and Proper clause ... mandates that Congress can expand its authority outside of its enumerated powers.”

C. The response earned the reasoning point for explaining how the evidence supports the thesis by stating that “it is clear that a unified approach is necessary in order to maintain a sense of consistency in protecting all people and their planet and its resources.”

D. The response earned the alternate perspective point by describing an alternative perspective: “Some may argue ... it may take away discretion from the states” and by rebutting the claim: “However, it is abundantly clear that the federal government has the resources and the platform.”

Sample: 4B

Claim/Thesis: 1

Evidence: 2

Reasoning: 1

Alternative Perspectives: 0

A. The response earned the thesis point for taking a position: “The federal government should take the

Question 4 (continued)

primarily lead on environmental regulation” and by establishing a line of reasoning: “because of funding, and a better delegation of resources.”

B. The response earned 2 evidence points for accurately describing resources by stating, “Congress controls the finances of the US.” These points were earned because the description supports the thesis that the federal government should have more responsibility on environmental policymaking. The response did not earn the third evidence point because it does not present a second piece of evidence that supports the thesis. Although *Federalist 10* is mentioned, it is used incorrectly.

C. The response earned the reasoning point by explaining how the evidence (resources) supports the thesis by stating, “As the federal gov tackles enviromental issues the funding and other bills have to be approved for them to work.”

D. The response did not earn the alternative perspective point because it does not describe an alternate perspective and respond with refutation, concession, or rebuttal.

Sample: 4C

Claim/Thesis: 1

Evidence: 0

Reasoning: 0

Alternative Perspectives: 0

A. The response earned the thesis point for taking a position: “the federal government should be primarily responsible” and by establishing a line of reasoning: “because they should be the ones to handle the big problems that address everyone.”

B. The response did not earn the evidence points because it does not provide correct evidence from one of the provided documents or course concepts.

C. The response did not earn the reasoning point because it does not provide any evidence that supports the thesis.

D. The response did not earn the alternative perspective point. Although the response attempts to introduce an opposing viewpoint, “Some people would say that it should be the responsibility of the states because it only addresses some states not all states,” this is not clear enough to describe an alternate perspective. While the response does respond to an alternate perspective, it could not earn a point for alternate perspective without first providing an accurate description.