

2023

AP[®]



AP[®] United States Government and Politics

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary Set 1

Inside:

Free-Response Question 1

- Scoring Guidelines**
- Student Samples**
- Scoring Commentary**

© 2023 College Board. College Board, Advanced Placement, AP, AP Central, and the acorn logo are registered trademarks of College Board. Visit College Board on the web: collegeboard.org.

AP Central is the official online home for the AP Program: apcentral.collegeboard.org.

Question 1: Concept Application**3 points**

A. Describe the informal power used by the president in the scenario. **1 point**

Acceptable descriptions include:

- By giving this speech, President Kennedy used the power to persuade by directly communicating with the public and gain support for his agenda.
- The president used the bully pulpit when he gave his speech.

B. In the context of the scenario, explain how the power described in part A could have impacted Congressional oversight. **1 point**

Acceptable explanations include:

- The president’s speech could have encouraged voters to pressure Congress to oversee implementation of the president’s agenda, like holding a hearing on space exploration.
- By bringing more attention to his agenda, the president’s speech could have encouraged opponents in Congress to call for greater oversight of NASA’s activities.

C. Explain how NASA could have impacted the implementation of the president’s agenda described in the scenario. **1 point**

Acceptable explanations include:

- By using its discretionary authority, NASA could have chosen how to best carry out the mission to the moon.
- NASA could have used its rulemaking authority to create the regulations that the mission to the moon will follow.
- The bureaucracy could have used its discretionary and rulemaking authority to address President Kennedy’s policy agenda.

Total for question 1 3 points

Important: Completely fill in the circle that corresponds to the question you are answering on this page.

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.

John F. Kennedy made use of the bully pulpit (an informal presidential power) to call the public's attention to a specific key issue (in this case, the importance of space endeavors) by speaking directly to the public.

John F. Kennedy's use of the bully pulpit enables him (the president) to direct pressure from the public (who elect members of Congress) in order to achieve policy goals, as Congress would have to risk losing their seats should they fail to carry out the will of constituents (which has been shaped by the bully pulpit). Consequently, congressional oversight ~~could~~ ~~have~~ ~~expanded~~ ~~funding~~ ~~for~~ ~~NASA~~ ~~and~~ ~~to~~ ~~ensure~~ ~~that~~ ~~the~~ ~~agency~~ and requested ~~the~~ ~~NASA~~ congressional hearings at a sufficient rate so Congress is constantly updated about the progress that has been made on the Moon project, and is able to provide any resources NASA still requires (as Congress now has an interest in ensuring that the project is completed).

NASA (especially the workers who are not high-level bureaucrats) enjoys bureaucratic discretion over how policy is implemented as the top-down nature of bureaucracy makes it difficult for the president/high-level bureaucrats to ~~se~~ directly control the carrying out of orders by workers. Additionally, the expertise of engineers and technicians operating at the lowest level of bureaucracy is not possessed by those above them, leaving room for interpretation for workers to figure out ~~the~~ aspects of the ~~project~~ such as prototype-builds, technologies implemented, materials used, and tests required for the project (all of which the president didn't address).

Page 2

Use a pen with black or dark blue ink only. Do NOT write your name. Do NOT write outside the box.

Important: Completely fill in the circle that corresponds to the question you are answering on this page.

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.

(A) The informal power used by the president is ~~gathering~~ ~~the~~ ~~support~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~people~~ ~~by~~ ~~directly~~ ~~addressing~~ ~~them~~ in person or through media, otherwise known as the bully pulpit.

(B) It can impact congressional oversight because when a president uses the bully pulpit and gathers sufficient support for their agenda, congress may feel pressured to go along with and prevent taking an unpopular stance, increasing the power of the president.

(C) NASA could have impacted the implementation of the president's agenda because they have rule making authority. NASA can determine how long the project will take despite the president's agenda or if it can even take place.

Use a pen with black or dark blue ink only. Do NOT write your name. Do NOT write outside the box.

Important: Completely fill in the circle that corresponds to the question you are answering on this page.

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.

A) The informal power used by the president in the scenario is the bully pulpit. The bully pulpit refers to the president speaking to the public with the hopes of increasing public support.

B) The bully pulpit could have impacted congressional oversight by ~~increasing the~~ influencing public approval of the launch. This would affect congressional oversight because the ~~people~~ those in congress would feel more obligated to act as a delegate and would be more in favor of the launch because their people would be happy if the launch was passed.

C) NASA could have ~~impacted~~ impacted the implementation of the president's agenda described in the scenario because NASA has the bureaucratic discretion to implement the president's agenda.

Page 2

Use a pen with black or dark blue ink only. Do NOT write your name. Do NOT write outside the box.

Question 1

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

Overview

The Concept Application question expected students to apply course concepts in response to a provided real-world scenario. The focus of the scenario was a speech given by President John F. Kennedy intended to gain support for the mission to the moon as a matter of high priority for the United States. This scenario addresses several topics in the course and exam description from Unit 2 related to the Big Ideas of Constitutionalism (CON) and Competing Policy Making Interests (PMI). Ultimately, this question asked students to demonstrate an understanding of the various stages of the policymaking process and the different participants in that process or (those stages).

In the first part, students were expected to understand the informal power of the president to use persuasion, or the “bully pulpit,” to set an agenda. The focus of part A of the question was for students to use the information in the scenario to demonstrate that President Kennedy was setting an agenda by appealing to the public for support of the mission.

In part B the students were expected to connect the public pressure generated by Kennedy’s use of the bully pulpit to oversight actions by Congress. Students were expected in the context of the scenario to demonstrate an understanding that congressional oversight could be increased or decreased context of the scenario and to demonstrate that the oversight was over NASA and not the president.

In part C students were expected to demonstrate a clear understanding of how NASA could implement the agenda set by the president using its discretionary and/or rulemaking authority to carry out the proposed agenda to send a manned mission to the moon.

Sample: 1A

Score: 3

The response earned 1 point in part A because the response describes the use of the bully pulpit by John F. Kennedy “to call the public’s attention to a specific key issue.”

The response earned 1 point in part B with the explanation that “congressional oversight could have expanded funding for NASA and requested congressional hearings ... so Congress is constantly updated about the progress that has been made on the Moon project.”

The response earned 1 point in part C with an explanation of discretionary authority by the bureaucrats in NASA for “interpretation for workers to figure out aspects of the project such as prototype-builds ... required for the project.”

Sample: 1B

Score: 2

The response earned 1 point in part A by describing the bully pulpit for the purpose of “gathering the support of the people.”

Question 1 (continued)

The response did not earn a point in part B. The response describes the public pressure placed on Congress because of the president’s use of the bully pulpit, but the response does not explain how this leads to congressional oversight actions. The response also lacks a reference to the scenario.

The response earned 1 point in part C by explaining that Congress using its expertise and discretion to “determine how long the project will take ... or if it can take place” is part of rulemaking that will implement the president’s agenda in the context of the scenario.

Instructional note: The mention of rulemaking alone did not earn the point.

Sample: 1C

Score: 1

The response earned 1 point in part A for describing the president’s use of the bully pulpit in the “hopes of increasing public support.”

The response did not earn a point in part B because it does not describe an oversight action by Congress relevant to the scenario in the prompt. The explanation that “congress would feel more obligated to act as a delegate and would be more in favor of the launch” does not describe any action that reflects an increase or decrease in oversight.

The response did not earn a point in part C. While it correctly identifies bureaucratic discretion, it needs to describe how bureaucratic discretion is used to earn credit.