

2023



AP[®] United States Government and Politics

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary Set 2

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Free-Response Question 1

- Scoring Guidelines**
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Question 1: Concept Application**3 points**

A. Describe the model of voting behavior that best reflects most voters' choice to recall the governor in the scenario. **1 point**

Acceptable descriptions include:

- Most voters used the retrospective model of voting behavior which considers Governor Davis's past performance when deciding how to vote.
- The model takes into account how voters tend to consider elected officials' past performance when deciding how to vote.

B. In the context of the scenario, explain how the media's role as a linkage institution might have affected the voting behavior described in part A. **1 point**

Acceptable explanations include:

The media's reporting on Governor Davis's performance and his responsibility for the bad economy might have persuaded others to vote to recall Davis.

C. Explain how the electoral process for removing Governor Davis is different from the process for removing a sitting president of the United States. **1 point**

Acceptable explanations include:

- In the scenario, a simple majority of voters is required to remove the governor. A sitting U.S. president is removed with a two-thirds majority in the U.S. Senate.
- In the scenario, the process of removing Governor Davis began when citizens initiated a recall by collecting signatures. To remove a sitting president, the House begins the impeachment process by filing formal charges, which must be approved by a majority of the House.
- The process to remove the governor in the scenario is controlled by voters, while the impeachment process to remove a sitting U.S. president is controlled by elected representatives.

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.

A) In this scenario, voters used retrospective voting to recall Governor Davis. By focusing on his past failures in budgeting & the energy crisis Republicans were able to garner support and recall Davis based on his record as an elected official; thus using the retrospective voting model.

B) As a linkage institution, the media drew attention to Davis' failings by giving the energy crisis widespread coverage on the news. They kept the people of California informed of the goings-on of their state's government. Furthermore Schwarzenegger's celebrity status drew national media attention giving him a platform to ~~spread~~ influence voters and spread his own narrative about his image as a self-made immigrant. By only covering Davis' failings and giving already popular Schwarzenegger time to speak on a popular late night TV program, the media likely negatively influenced public opinion towards Davis, causing voters to be more likely to recall him.

C) While California voters can vote to recall a sitting governor by initiating a petition, the average American citizen doesn't have that much influence in the removal of a sitting president. On the federal level, ~~specific~~ articles of impeachment must be passed in the House, and the president must then be removed by a 2/3 vote in the Senate. While a petition from constituents may influence a Congressperson to vote one way or the other, it does not have the power to initiate an impeachment in the same way that it can put a recall on the ballot in California. Furthermore, Americans cannot vote to impeach the President, Senators and Representatives hold that responsibility.

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.

Ⓐ The voting behavior described by the choice to recall governor Davis is retrospective. This is due to the governor's poor performance and so the people's choice to recall him was a reflection of that performance.

Ⓑ The media widely reported the shortcomings of the Gray administration, and since the people get their info about politics from the media, public opinion for the governor fell. People saw his shortcomings and used that as their basis to recall him.

Ⓒ Recall elections are only available within the states, not the national government. So the only ways to remove an incumbent president is through them losing their re-election, or impeachment, but the people have no say during their term, unlike state governors who can be recalled and removed during their term.

Page 2

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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 voters voted for Schwarzenegger based on his personal story and individual values. They didn't use party-line voting, but instead used their personal ideologies to pick a candidate.

B) The media broadcasting Schwarzenegger's ideas allowed for voters to see another side of the Republican candidate. Voters gained access to more information regarding the candidate's values, allowing them to use media as linkage into their own ideas.

C) The electoral process for removing Governor Davis happens through a recall election. Voters decide to remove or recall the Governor. The process for removing a president is different because it does not fall in the voters' hands. Instead, it is up to the House to bring up impeachment charges and the Senate to hold an impeachment trial.

Page 2

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Question 1

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

Overview

The Concept Application question required students to apply course concepts to a provided real-world scenario. The focus of the scenario was the recall election of California Governor Gray Davis. The scenario explains the steps in the recall process and, specifically, how Arnold Schwarzenegger was able to use his celebrity status to replace Davis in the recall election. It concludes by stating that in exit polls, people cited Davis’s “recent performance” as the basis for their vote. First, students needed to demonstrate an understanding of Civic Participation in a Representative Democracy (PRD) by describing the voting behavior that reflected most voters’ choice to recall the governor. This required students to understand how retrospective voting considers past actions. Students were required to use the scenario to describe the economic failings of Davis and the presence of an energy crisis as the motivation to remove the governor. Following this, students were asked to consider how the media’s coverage of Davis’s failures led the citizens of California to vote retrospectively and remove the governor from office.

Sample: 1A

Score: 3

The response earned 1 point in part A for correctly describing the retrospective model of voting by stating, “By focusing on his past failures in budgeting & the energy crisis, Republicans were able to garner support and recall Davis based on his record as an elected official.”

The response earned 1 point in part B for correctly explaining how the media’s role as a linkage institution may have affected voting behavior by stating, “By only covering Davis’ failings ... the media likely negatively influenced public opinion towards Davis, causing voters to be more likely to recall him.”

The response earned 1 point in part C for correctly contrasting the method for removing a governor by stating, “While California voters can vote to recall a sitting governor Americans cannot vote to impeach the President, Senators and Representatives hold that responsibility.” This shows the people have a role in removing a governor, but only elected representatives can remove the President.

Sample: 1B

Score: 2

The response earned 1 point in part A for correctly labeling the model of voting as retrospective voting and describing it by stating, “This is due to the governors poor performance and so the people choice to recall him was a reflection of that performance.”

The response earned 1 point in part B for explaining the media’s role as a linkage institution affecting voting behavior by stating, “The media widely reported the shortcomings of the Gray administration ... People saw his shortcomings and used that as their basis to recall him.”

The response did not earn a point in part C. While the response identifies impeachment and recall, it

Question 1 (continued)

does not provide the details and comparison necessary for explaining the differences between removing the president and a governor.

Sample: 1C

Score: 1

The response did not earn a point in part A because there is no description of the retrospective model of voting. The response only states, “The voters voted for Schwarzenegger based on his personal story and individual values.”

The response did not earn a point in part B because the response does not explain how the media’s coverage of Gray Davis’s shortcomings affected voting behavior to recall him. “Voters gained access to ... the candidates values” is factually incorrect.

The response earned 1 point in part C for correctly explaining how the electoral process for removing a governor is different than the process for removing the president. It states, “Voters decide to remove or recall the Govener” and “The process for removing a president ... is up to the House to bring up impeachment charges and the Senate to hold an impeachment trial.”