

2023



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# AP<sup>®</sup> United States Government and Politics

## Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary Set 1

### **Inside:**

#### **Free-Response Question 4**

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

## Question 4: Argument Essay

6 points

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row A Claim/Thesis (0–1 points)	<b>0 points</b> Does not meet the criteria for one point.	<b>1 point</b> Responds to the prompt with a defensible claim or thesis that establishes a line of reasoning.
<b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b>		
<b>Responses that do not earn this point:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only restate the prompt.</li> <li>Do not make a claim that responds to the prompt.</li> </ul>		<b>Responses that earn this point:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respond to the prompt rather than restating or rephrasing the prompt and establish a line of reasoning.</li> <li>Provide a defensible claim or thesis that establishes a line of reasoning about whether the federal government or the states are more effective in ensuring educational opportunities for all students.</li> </ul>
<b>Examples that do not earn this point:</b>  <b>Restate the prompt</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“There is a debate about whether the federal or state governments should ensure educational equality.”</i></li> </ul> <b>Do not respond to the prompt</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“There are times when states do things that help their citizens out better than the national government.”</i></li> </ul>		<b>Examples that earn this point:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“The federal government is more effective at ensuring educational opportunities for all students because the federal government has more resources to address issues of inequality than do individual states.”</i></li> <li><i>“The federal government is more effective at ensuring educational opportunities for all students because it can create national policies that apply to all the states.”</i></li> <li><i>“State governments are more effective at ensuring educational opportunities for all students because states are closer to citizens and can develop solutions to fit the particular issues that affect the states.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Additional Notes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The claim or thesis must consist of one or more sentences that may be located anywhere in the response.</li> <li>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.</li> </ul>		

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria								
<p><b>Row B Evidence</b></p> <p><b>(0–3 points)</b></p>	<p><b>0 points</b> Does not meet the criteria for one point.</p>	<p><b>1 point</b> Provides one piece of evidence that is <u>relevant to the topic</u> of the prompt.</p>	<p><b>2 points</b> Uses <u>one</u> piece of specific and relevant evidence to <u>support the claim or thesis</u>.</p>	<p><b>3 points</b> Uses <u>two</u> pieces of specific and relevant evidence to <u>support the claim or thesis</u>.</p>					
<b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b>									
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td data-bbox="317 407 611 688"> <p><b>Responses that do not earn points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do not provide any accurate evidence.</li> <li>Provide evidence that is not relevant to the topic.</li> </ul> </td> <td data-bbox="611 407 963 688"> <p><b>Responses that earn 1 point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide one piece of evidence relevant to the topic of the prompt.</li> <li>May or may not have a claim or thesis.</li> </ul> </td> <td data-bbox="963 407 1417 688"> <p><b>Responses that earn 2 points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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, <b>or</b> from knowledge of course concepts.</li> </ul> </td> <td data-bbox="1417 407 1942 688"> <p><b>Responses that earn 3 points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide two pieces of specific and relevant evidence that support the claim or thesis. One of these pieces of evidence <b>must</b> 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.</li> </ul> </td> </tr> </table>					<p><b>Responses that do not earn points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do not provide any accurate evidence.</li> <li>Provide evidence that is not relevant to the topic.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Responses that earn 1 point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide one piece of evidence relevant to the topic of the prompt.</li> <li>May or may not have a claim or thesis.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Responses that earn 2 points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>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, <b>or</b> from knowledge of course concepts.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Responses that earn 3 points:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide two pieces of specific and relevant evidence that support the claim or thesis. One of these pieces of evidence <b>must</b> 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.</li> </ul>	
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<p><b>Additional Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To earn two or three points in Row B, the response must have a defensible claim or thesis (earned the point in Row A).</li> <li>To earn three points, the response must use one of the foundational documents listed in the prompt.</li> </ul>									

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
<b>Row C Reasoning</b>  <b>(0–1 points)</b>	<b>0 points</b> Does not meet the criteria for one point.	<b>1 point</b> Explains how or why the evidence supports the claim or thesis.
<b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b>		
<b>Responses that do not earn this point:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include evidence but offer no reasoning to connect the evidence to the claim or thesis.</li> <li>• Restate the prompt without explaining how the evidence supports the claim or thesis.</li> </ul>		<b>Responses that earn this point:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain the relationship between the evidence provided and the claim or thesis.</li> </ul>
		<b>Examples of reasoning that explain how the evidence supports the claim or thesis:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“If a law passed by a state yields excellent results, that policy can be adopted by other states that believe it will also work for them, and it can also be adopted by the federal government.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“The equal protection clause of the Fourteenth Amendment has been used as a basis for the federal government to pass laws such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964 which has been remarkably effective in addressing equality issues.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Additional Notes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 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).</li> <li>• The explanation of the relationship between one piece of evidence and the claim or thesis is sufficient to earn this point.</li> </ul>		

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
<p>Row D Responds to Alternate Perspectives  (0–1 points)</p>	<p><b>0 points</b> Does not meet the criteria for one point.</p>	<p><b>1 point</b> Responds to an opposing or alternate perspective using refutation, concession, or rebuttal.</p>
<b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b>		
<p><b>Responses that do not earn this point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Restate the opposite of the claim or thesis.</li> <li>May identify or describe an alternate perspective but do not refute, concede, or rebut that perspective.</li> <li>Refute a foundational document rather than an alternate perspective to the provided claim or thesis.</li> </ul>		<p><b>Responses that earn this point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Must describe an alternate perspective AND refute, concede, or rebut that perspective.</li> </ul>
<p><b>Examples of responses that do not earn the point:</b></p> <p><b>Restate the opposite of the claim or thesis</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“Some argue that states’ rights should take priority.”</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Describe an alternate perspective but do not refute, concede, or rebut that perspective</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“Some people say that the federal government is better at ensuring educational equality but that is just flat out wrong.”</i></li> </ul>		<p><b>Examples of acceptable responses to an alternate perspective may include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“Some might argue that the federal government is more effective because it has greater resources, but federal laws are ‘one size fits all’ and might not always address the specific needs of states and communities.”</i></li> <li><i>“While some argue that states are better suited to ensure educational equality because they are better equipped to meet local needs, state governments also have a long history of discrimination against minorities through Jim Crow laws and other segregationist policies, which requires the federal government to establish uniform policy to ensure equality in education across the states.”</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Additional Notes</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To earn this point, the response must have a defensible claim or thesis (earned the point in Row A).</li> <li>Responses that demonstrate an incorrect understanding of the alternate perspective do not earn this point.</li> </ul>		

● 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 federal government is more effective in ensuring educational opportunities for all students because they have the overall power to enforce our natural rights (Bill of Rights) ~~from~~ <sup>from</sup> the constitution, and the federal government holds more power over the states which would ~~make~~ <sup>ensure</sup> quicker more effective protection of educational opportunities. The 14<sup>th</sup> Amendment of the United States Constitution supports my claim because within the Amendment there is the Equal Protection and Equal Opportunity clauses. These ensure that one can't be discriminated by color, race, and religion, which would ensure that there would be equal educational opportunities since discrimination isn't an option. Since the federal government is in charge of enforcing the constitution as all of its amendments, it'd make sense to assume that the federal government would be more effective at establishing educational opportunities for all. The federal government's Judicial Branch further supports my claim because they're able to deem state laws or practices as unconstitutional. A prime example would be the Supreme Court ruling in Brown v. Board of Education. The Supreme Court was able to rule that segregation of schools and denying African American students enrollment into "white" schools is unconstitutional. So it's shown that the Judicial Branch, part of the federal government, can effectively overturn segregation in schools which resulted in equal educational opportunities for African Americans. Others may argue that states are more effective in ensuring educational opportunities for all because they're more involved locally and have their 10<sup>th</sup> amendment rights to make policies ensuring equal educational opportunities. But, my claim still reigns supreme because Congress (part of the federal government) could easily pass a legislation that would mandate a specific equal educational policy and that would take care of every state, not just one alone. Hence why ~~federal~~ the federal government is more effective in ensuring educational opportunities for all students.

Page 5

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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.

The federal Government are more effective in ensuring educational opportunities for all students because the federal government provides much more funds for those students in need than the states do. States provide a limitation to schools while federal governments make school fundings their top priorities. Federal governments also give students who are from different countries or different religions an opportunity to learn about American culture or even their own culture. The fourteenth Amendment protects these students from any discrimination that could happen inside of these schools.

In a scotus case *Brown v. The Educational School Board*, Brown had felt violated and discriminated because since he was a different skin color from everyone, he was not allowed to attend this school. He believed his fourteenth Amendment was being violated by the cause of discrimination. In this case, Brown had won ~~the~~ lawsuit to this ~~school~~ school. This shows how the federal government can provide funds to those in need for a lawsuit to a school where they have been discriminating.

In another scotus case *Wisconsin v.*

Page 5

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

Question 1

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Question 3

Question 4

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

Yoder, Yoder was trying to Preach their religion inside school grounds but that school did not allow that because they had thought it ~~was~~ was harmful to other students. Yoder fought that this should allow students to learn about their peers who are different from them. In this ~~case~~ case, Yoder won and lastly claimed they violated their first Amendment Clause. This Amendment allows them to preach their religion in any public space. This shows you how the federal government makes sure that these students know their rights when they step foot into those school grounds.

Although, those might argue the opposite and say that states play a more important role in public education. They either think that students would be much safer under the states because states withhold the constitution. Some may say that states side more in these scotus cases that involve violation or discrimination in school grounds. Even though I can agree to these statements, federal governments provide most of school funds than the states do which helps those students who are in poverty.

Page 6

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.

In conclusion, Federal Governments are a more viable source and efficient to schools than states are because they provide more opportunities to students in school. States have a limitation that they give to schools & students. Federal governments participate most in school fundings.

Page 7

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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.

~~The federal government~~ In the 20<sup>th</sup> century when civil rights issues were occurring, equal opportunities for education were questionable. But once corrected, federal and state governments never looked back. ~~Federal~~ The federal government plays a large role in greater effectiveness when ensuring educational opportunities for all students.

To start, throughout history, both equal opportunities for race, ~~age~~ and gender was not always existent. In order to provide equal opportunities, both the social and educational aspects need to be dealt with. A statement was used quite frequently when civil rights issues were taking place, "separate but equal" this meant certain races were given less opportunities for jobs, marriage, education, and more all due to the color of their skin. The races were separated and required to go to different schools. This does not ensure equal educational opportunities. Until that statement was ruled unconstitutional at the federal level. This allows for all races to attend and live as if the color of their skin does not determine their abilities in life. With this ruling, the federal government was efficient and effective when it came to equal opportunities.

At the same time, equal opportunities within

Page 7

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education was not always provided. ~~that~~ Until, some black students wanted to attend an all white school since "separate but equal" was no longer. With the help from the federal government and the ruling of the ~~the~~ fourteenth amendment of the United States Constitution, those students were able to attend the school. ~~Ensuring that~~ Ensuring that educational opportunities for all students was possible. With the federal government involved in the case of Brown vs. Board of education, any student can attend whichever school they are interested in. Brown vs. Board of education shifted the opportunities for equal education.

Others may say that the state government is the most effective in ensuring education opportunities for all students through the idea of public schools. This may be true but each state would not have been given that opportunity if it wasn't for the federal government declaring that anyone can attend whichever school ~~not~~ matter the race or gender of the person. The federal government has shown more effectiveness when ~~being~~ ensuring educational opportunities for all students.

All in all, each and every student is given the opportunity for equal education due to the federal government at its effectiveness. Both

Page 8

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## Question 4

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

### Overview

This Argument Essay question expected students to demonstrate an understanding of the concept of federalism and the role of the federal government and state governments in crafting policy to ensure educational opportunities for all students. Responses should have also demonstrated an understanding of foundational documents related to the concepts of policymaking, federalism, and equality (Article I of the United States Constitution, Fourteenth Amendment of the United States Constitution, Tenth Amendment of the United States Constitution), 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(s) and/or the course concepts; use reasoning to explain why the evidence provided supports the thesis; and respond to an alternative perspective using refutation, concession, or rebuttal. Students were also expected to write in the form of an argumentative essay, demonstrating each of the skills mentioned above.

### Sample: 4A

**Score: 6**

**Claim/Thesis: 1**

**Evidence: 3**

**Reasoning: 1**

**Alternative Perspectives: 1**

A. The response earned 1 point for the thesis. “The federal government is more effective in ensuring educational opportunities for all students because they have the overall power to enforce our natural rights (Bill of Rights) from the Constitution, and the federal government holds more power over the states which would ensure quicker more effective protection of educational opportunities” is a defensible claim and establishes a line of reasoning.

B. The response earned 3 points for evidence. The response earned 2 points for an accurate description of the Fourteenth Amendment, which is a foundational document, and supports the thesis: “within the Amendment there is the Equal Protection and Equal Opportunity clauses. These ensure that one can’t be discriminated by color, race, and religion.” The response earned 1 point for an accurate description of *Brown v. Board of Education*, which, supports the thesis.

C. The response earned 1 point for reasoning because it explains how the federal government is more effective in ensuring educational opportunities for all with *Brown v. Board of Education*: “the Judicial Branch ... can effectively overturn segregation in schools which resulted in equal educational opportunities for African Americans.”

D. The response earned 1 point for the alternative perspective by describing the alternative perspective that states are more effective “in ensuring educational opportunities for all because they’re more involved locally and have their 10th amendment rights” and providing a rebuttal

### Question 4 (continued)

supporting the original thesis: “Congress (part of the federal government) could easily pass a legislation that could mandate a specific equal educational policy.”

**Sample: 4B**

**Score: 3**

**Claim/Thesis: 1**

**Evidence: 2**

**Reasoning: 0**

**Alternative Perspectives: 0**

- A. The response earned 1 point for the thesis. “The federal government are more effective in ensuring educational opportunities for all students because the federal government provides much more funds for those students in need than the states do” is a defensible line of reasoning.
- B. The response earned 2 evidence points for an accurate description of *Brown v. Board of Education* with “Brown had felt violated and discriminated ... he was not allowed to attend this school. He believed his fourteenth Amendment was being violated by the cause of discrimination.” The response did not earn evidence points for *Wisconsin v. Yoder* because it is not relevant to the prompt as it is a civil liberties case.
- C. The response did not earn the reasoning point because it does not provide reasoning to support the claim/thesis.
- D. The response did not earn the alternative perspective point because it does not clearly present an alternative perspective to the claim/thesis.

**Sample: 4C**

**Score: 1**

**Claim/Thesis: 0**

**Evidence: 1**

**Reasoning: 0**

**Alternative Perspectives: 0**

- A. The response did not earn the thesis point. The response makes a claim: “The federal government plays a large role in greater effectiveness” but does not contain a defensible line of reasoning.
- B. The response earned 1 point for evidence with an accurate description of *Brown v Board of Education*, which, is a course concept relevant to the topic of the prompt. The response could not earn additional evidence points because the response does not have a defensible claim with a line of reasoning.
- C. The response does not have a claim or thesis and could not earn the reasoning point.
- D. The response does not have a claim or thesis and could not earn the alternative perspective point.