

**UNIT 2 AP<sup>®</sup> UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS**  
**FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS**

**UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS**

**SECTION II**

**Time – 25 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. Make certain to number each of your answers as the question is numbered below.

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3. Political institutions can present both obstacles and opportunities to racial minority groups in their efforts to gain political influence.
- (a) Identify one feature of one of the following and explain how that feature has presented obstacles to racial minority groups in their efforts to achieve political goals.
- Federalism
  - The United States political party system
  - The United States electoral system
- (b) Identify one feature of one of the following and explain how that feature might present opportunities to racial minority groups in their efforts to achieve political goals.
- Federalism
  - The United States political party system
  - The United States electoral system
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# AP UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

## UNIT 2 SCORING GUIDELINES

### Question 3 (2002)

#### 6 POINTS TOTAL

Part A: 1 point for identification of feature; 2 points for explanation of feature as an obstacle

Part B: 1 point for identification of feature; 2 points for explanation of feature as an opportunity

- 1-point explanation is a simple statement that indicates understanding that the identified feature is an obstacle/opportunity.
- 2-point explanation states “how” the identified feature is an obstacle/ opportunity, and is clearly linked to the feature identified.

#### **Notes:**

- May identify and explain the same of different feature in parts A and B.
- Identification specifically mentions a valid, relevant feature of a listed political institution.

#### **Part A: “Obstacles” may include:**

##### Federalism:

- enabled states to prevent minority group members from voting
- two-tier court system; state courts hostile, regional bias
- state control over voter registration and election
- state control over legislation (e.g., Jim Crow laws can be discussed, but must be placed in context of federalism for full credit)

##### United States political party system:

- taking minority votes for granted
- closed membership (e.g., “white” primary)
- less opportunity for representation of minority views
- lack of choice of candidates (only two)
- bias against third or minority parties
- lack of party discipline in enforcing adherence to policies favorable to minority groups

##### United States’ electoral system:

- winner take all/ plurality vote
- At-large vs. single- member districts
- Runoff elections

#### **Part B: “Opportunities” may include:**

##### Federalism:

- appeal to the federal government (e.g., judicial review)
- civil liberties under federal constitution that provide protection at the state level (incorporation of the Bill of Rights)
- geographic concentration allows for greater influence

##### United States political party system:

- become a valued constituency in one of the major parties
- proportional representation of delegates to the democratic party convention
- recruitment of minorities as party workers
- ideological slant of primary voters
- open membership

##### United States electoral system:

- voting blocs; being the margin of difference in a given election
- single-member districts
- greater number of seats
- voting system
- minority redistricting, gerrymandering