

**UNIT 3 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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2. Public opinion polls are a way to link the public with elected officials. Members of Congress often use polls to understand the views of their constituents, but they must also pay attention to other political considerations.
- (a) Identify two characteristics of a valid, scientific, public opinion poll.
- (b) Explain why each of the following enhances the influence of public opinion on the voting decisions of members of Congress.
- Strong public opinion as expressed in polling results
  - Competitive re-elections
- (c) Explain why each of the following limits the influence of public opinion on the voting decisions of members of Congress.
- Legislators' voting records
  - Party leadership
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I told my wife that a husband is like a fine wine; he gets better with age. The next day, she locked me in the cellar.

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**AP UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS  
UNIT 3 SCORING GUIDELINES**

**Question 2 (2011)**

**6 POINTS POSSIBLE**

**Part (a): 2 points**

One point is earned for each correct identification of a characteristic of a valid, scientific public opinion poll.

Acceptable characteristics may include the following:

- Randomized sample
- Representative sample
- Question wording (unbiased, unambiguous)
- Large sample size/low margin of error

**Part (b): 2 points**

One point is earned for a correct explanation of why each of the following enhances the influence of public opinion on the voting decisions of members of Congress.

- Strong public opinion as expressed in polling results
  - Because of the desire to get reelected/electoral ambition
  - Because of the perceived obligation/duty to represent their constituents
- Competitive reelections
  - Because of the desire to get reelected

**Part (c): 2 points**

One point is earned for a correct explanation of why each of the following limits the influence of public opinion on the voting decisions of members of Congress.

- Legislators' voting records
  - To avoid being perceived as indecisive by voters/supporters
- Party leadership
  - To avoid the risk of losing party support
  - To gain party support

A score of zero (0) is assigned to an answer that is attempted but earns no points.

A score of dash (—) is assigned to an answer that is blank or off task.