

**UNIT 4 AP® 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.

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4. Interest groups seek to influence political processes in ways that benefit their members. In doing so, however, they may not act in the overall public interest.
- (a) Describe two techniques interest groups use to influence elections.
- (b) Explain how interest groups use each of the following to influence government decision making.
- Issue networks (also known as iron triangles)
  - Amicus curiae briefs
- (c) Explain how each of the following serves to limit interest group influence.
- The media
  - Pluralism
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**AP UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS  
UNIT 4 SCORING GUIDELINES**

**Question 4 (2012)**

**6 POINTS TOTAL**

**Part (a): 2 points**

One point is earned for each correct description of a technique used by interest groups to influence elections.

Techniques include:

- campaign contributions
- candidate ratings
- endorsements
- 501(c)4
- 527
- funneling volunteers to campaigns
- Get-out-to-vote efforts
- independent expenditures
- issue ads
- PACs
- providing information on issue and candidates

Notes: Must describe a technique, not merely identify it. No double dipping on PACs and Super PACs.

**Part (b): 2 points**

One point is earned for an acceptable explanation that demonstrates **how** interest groups use issue networks (iron triangles). One point is also earned for an acceptable explanation that demonstrates **how** interest groups use amicus briefs:

- Interest groups participate in issue networks by providing money, information, and resources in hopes of obtaining political support from Congress, the bureaucracy, or the White House.
- Interest groups use amicus briefs to inform the Court in hopes of influencing the acceptance of cases, Court reasoning, or decisions.

**Part (c): 2 points**

One point is earned for a correct explanation of **how** the media acts to limit interest group influence. An additional point is earned for a correct explanation of **how** pluralism acts to limit interest group influence:

- Media can act as a gatekeeper of information or a watchdog of interest group behavior.
- Pluralism limits interest group influence because of the competition among a vast number of groups.

A score of zero (0) is assigned to an answer that is completely off-task or is on-task but earns no points. A score of dash (—) is assigned to an answer that is blank.