

**UNIT 4 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.

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1. Linkage institutions—such as political parties, the media, and interest groups—connect citizens to the government and play significant roles in the electoral process.
    - (a) Describe one important function of political parties as a linkage institution in elections.
    - (b) Describe the influence of the media on the electoral process in each of the following roles.
      - Gatekeeping/agenda setting
      - Scorekeeping/horse race journalism
    - (c) Describe two strategies interest groups use to influence the electoral process.
    - (d) Explain how, according to critics, interest groups may limit representative democracy.
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**AP UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS**  
**UNIT 4 SCORING GUIDELINES**  
**Question 1 (2016)**

**6 POINTS**

**Part (a): 1 point**

One point is earned for a description of an important function of political parties as a linkage institution in elections. Correct descriptions may include:

- Nominating/running/recruiting candidates for elected office
- Providing voter cues/information about policy choices, etc.
- Fundraising
- Providing distinct political choices to voters

**Part (b): 2 points**

One point is earned for each of two descriptions of the media's influence on the electoral process in each of the following roles:

- Gatekeeping/Agenda setting: media determines which issues are perceived as relevant to voters
- Scorekeeping/Horse race journalism: who's winning rather than focusing on policy issues relevant to the voters

**Part (c): 2 points**

One point is earned for describing each of two strategies that interest groups use to influence the electoral process. Correct descriptions may include:

- Giving money
- Forming PACs
- Endorsing Candidates
- Grassroots canvassing
- GET out the vote (GOTV)
- Independent expenditures (ads)
- Issue advocacy
- Polling
- Lobbying (must be linked to the electoral process)

**Part (d): 1 point**

One point is earned for an explanation of how interest groups may limit representative democracy. Correct descriptions may include:

- Overrepresenting elites and their interests
- Favoring narrow issues over broad interests
- Providing biased information/distorting facts
- Hyperpluralism contributing to gridlock

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