

**UNIT 6 AP® UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS  
FREE-RESPONSE QUESTIONS**

**UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS**

**SECTION II**

**Time – 25 minutes**

**Directions:** You have 25 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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1. The framers of the Constitution intended the Supreme Court to be politically insulated. Despite this intent, the Supreme Court is not completely insulated from political influences.
    - (a) Describe one constitutional provision that seeks to insulate the Supreme Court from public opinion.
    - (b) Identify a power exercised by the Supreme Court that acts a check on another branch of the federal government.
    - (c) Explain how each of the following can limit the independence of the Supreme Court.
      - Congress
      - The President
    - (d) Explain how the Supreme Court protects its political independence.
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## **QUESTION 1**

### **5 POINTS**

#### **Part (a): 1 point**

One point is earned for a description of a constitutional provision that seeks to insulate the Supreme Court from public opinion.

- Justices serve for life.
- Justices are appointed/not elected.
- Justices' salaries cannot be reduced.

#### **Part (b): 1 point**

One point is earned for identifying a power exercised by the Supreme Court that acts as a check on another branch of the federal government.

- Judicial review
- Power to declare governmental actions unconstitutional
- Power to overrule/uphold laws passed by Congress or actions taken by the president or bureaucracy

#### **Part (c): 2 points**

One point is earned for an explanation of how Congress can limit the Supreme Court's independence.

- Proposing constitutional amendments or passing legislation
- Impeaching justices
- Setting the operating budget of the Supreme Court
- Increasing or decreasing the number of justices
- Changing the appellate jurisdiction of the Supreme Court

One point is earned for an explanation of how the president can limit the Supreme Court's independence.

- Refusing to enforce judicial decisions
- Proposing legislation or issuing executive orders to limit the effect of Supreme Court decisions
- Making public statements/exerting pressure

#### **Part (d): 1 point**

One point is earned for explaining how the Supreme Court protects its political independence.

- Secret deliberations
- No public recordings
- Control of its docket
- Limited public statements/media appearances

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 assigned to an answer that is blank.