

2024



AP[®] United States Government and Politics

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary Set 1

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Free-Response Question 4

- Scoring Guidelines**
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Question 4: Argument Essay**6 points**

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
Row A Claim/Thesis (0–1 points)	0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.	1 point Responds to the prompt with a defensible claim or thesis that establishes a line of reasoning.
Decision Rules and Scoring Notes		
Responses that do not earn this point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Only restate the prompt. Do not make a claim that responds to the prompt. 		Responses that earn this point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Respond to the prompt rather than restating or rephrasing the prompt and establish a line of reasoning. Provide a defensible claim or thesis that establishes a line of reasoning regarding whether the president or Congress should have more power over domestic policy making.
Examples that do not earn this point: Restate the prompt <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“The president should have more power over domestic policy making.”</i> Do not respond to the prompt <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“Congress was stronger than the presidency in the nineteenth century.”</i> 		Examples that earn this point: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“The president should have more power because presidents are more effective leaders.”</i> <i>“Presidents should have more power over domestic policy making and they are better equipped for the role.”</i> <i>“Congress should have more power because its decisions reflect the will of the majority.”</i> <i>“Congress should have more power over domestic policy making since members are the directly elected representatives of the people.”</i>
Additional Notes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The claim or thesis must consist of one or more sentences that may be located anywhere in the response. A claim or thesis that meets the criteria can be awarded the point whether or not the rest of the response successfully supports that line of reasoning. 		

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria			
<p>Row B Evidence</p> <p>(0–3 points)</p>	<p>0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.</p>	<p>1 point Provides one piece of evidence that is <u>relevant to the topic</u> of the prompt.</p>	<p>2 points Uses <u>one</u> piece of specific and relevant evidence to <u>support the claim or thesis</u>. OR Provides two pieces of evidence that are relevant to the topic of the prompt.</p>	<p>3 points Uses <u>two</u> pieces of specific and relevant evidence to <u>support the claim or thesis</u>.</p>
Decision Rules and Scoring Notes				
<p>Responses that do not earn points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Do not provide any accurate evidence. Provide evidence that is not relevant to the topic. 	<p>Responses that earn 1 point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must provide one piece of evidence relevant to the topic of the prompt. This evidence can come from one of the foundational documents listed in the prompt, any other foundational document, or from knowledge of course concepts. 	<p>Responses that earn 2 points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide one piece of specific and relevant evidence that supports the claim or thesis. <p>OR</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must provide two pieces of evidence relevant to the topic of the prompt. This evidence can come from one of the foundational documents listed in the prompt, any other foundational document, or from knowledge of course concepts. 	<p>Responses that earn 3 points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Provide two pieces of specific and relevant evidence that support the claim or thesis. One of these pieces of evidence must come from a foundational document listed in the prompt. The other piece of evidence can come from a different foundational document or from knowledge of course concepts. 	
<p>Examples that do not earn points:</p> <p>Provide evidence that is not specific</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“Federalist No. 51 was written by James Madison.”</i> <p>Provide evidence that is not relevant to the topic of the prompt</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“The Articles of Confederation were adopted before the U.S. Constitution.”</i> 	<p>Examples of evidence that are relevant to the <u>topic</u> of the prompt:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“The president has the power to appoint cabinet officials who oversee the bureaucracy.”</i> <i>“The Congress has the power to determine the national budget.”</i> <i>“Federalist No. 51 discusses the need for a government that checks the ambition of individuals.”</i> <i>“Federalist No. 70 discusses the role of the executive.”</i> <i>“Article I lists the enumerated powers of Congress.”</i> <p>Examples of acceptable specific and relevant evidence that support the claim or thesis (one example is one piece of evidence):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“Presidents and Vice-Presidents are the only elected officials that represent all Americans.”</i> <i>“Through iron triangles, Congress can collaborate with the bureaucracy and interest groups.”</i> <i>“In Federalist No. 51, Madison writes that one branch cannot become too powerful.”</i> <i>“In Federalist No. 70, Hamilton writes that only a unified executive brings energy and safety to the nation.”</i> <i>“Article I of the Constitution gives Congress significant power over domestic policy making, including the power to pass laws and to approve the budget.”</i> 			
<p>Additional Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To earn one or two points in Row B, the response does not need to have earned the point for claim/thesis in Row A. To earn three points in Row B, the response must have a defensible claim/thesis (earned the point in Row A). To earn three points in Row B, the response must use one of the foundational documents listed in the prompt. 				

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
<p>Row C Reasoning</p> <p>(0–1 points)</p>	<p>0 points</p> <p>Does not meet the criteria for one point.</p>	<p>1 point</p> <p>Uses reasoning (classification, process, causation or comparison) to explain how or why the evidence supports an argument relevant to the prompt.</p>
Decision Rules and Scoring Notes		
<p>Responses that do not earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Include evidence but offer no reasoning to connect the evidence to the claim or thesis. • Restate the prompt without explaining how the evidence supports the claim or thesis. 		<p>Responses that earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Explain the relationship between the evidence provided and an argument. <p>Examples of reasoning that explains how the evidence supports the claim or thesis:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>“Informal powers give the president the ability to make policies quickly, so the president should have more power over domestic policy making.”</i> • <i>“The founders were concerned that, without a strong presidency, the national government would not be able to lead the nation during times of domestic crisis and disorder. This is why they wanted a strong executive.”</i> • <i>“Senate rules that require a supermajority ensure that the policymaking process produces some level of consensus, so Congress should have more power over domestic policy making.”</i> • <i>“Congress is the closest to the citizens, and a strong executive will interfere with the ability of Congress to establish policies that meet the needs of citizens.”</i>
<p>Additional Notes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To earn this point, the response must have provided at least one piece of specific and relevant evidence. • The explanation of the relationship between one piece of evidence and a well reasoned argument relevant to the prompt is sufficient to earn this point. 		

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
<p>Row D Responds to Alternate Perspectives</p>	<p>0 points Does not meet the criteria for one point.</p>	<p>1 point Responds to an opposing or alternate perspective using rebuttal or refutation.</p>
<p>(0–1 points)</p>	<p>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</p>	
	<p>Responses that do not earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Restate the opposite of the claim or thesis. May identify or describe an alternate perspective but do not rebut or refute that perspective. Rebut or refute a foundational document rather than an alternate perspective. 	<p>Responses that earn this point:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Must describe an alternate perspective AND rebut or refute that perspective.
	<p>Examples of responses that do not earn the point:</p> <p>Restate the opposite of the claim or thesis</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“Presidents should not have more power when it comes to domestic policy making.”</i> <p>Describe an alternate perspective but do not rebut or refute that perspective</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“On the other hand, some people might argue that presidents should have more power in domestic policymaking because they can make quick decisions.”</i> 	<p>Examples of acceptable responses to an alternate perspective may include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <i>“Representation is important, and while members of Congress represent districts and states, only the president represents all Americans.”</i> <i>“Some people might argue that Congress is better for domestic policy making because it better represents the people, but better representation could result in Congressional gridlock and slow down the policy making process.”</i> <i>“The president might make policy quicker, but Congress’s slower process is actually better because it allows for more voices to be heard.”</i> <i>“While some might argue it is better for the president to lead on domestic policy making because the president has direct access to the resources of the federal government, this ignores the fact that without proper checks, the presidency can use those resources to threaten liberty and states’ rights.”</i>
<p>Additional Notes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> To earn this point, the response must have a defensible claim or thesis (earned the point in Row A). Responses that demonstrate an incorrect understanding of the alternate perspective do not earn this point. 		

Important: Completely fill in the circle that corresponds to the question you are answering on this page.

Question 1 Question 2 Question 3 Question 4



Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

Congress should have more power over domestic policy making because Congress more accurately represents the people of the United States and ~~any~~ Congress cannot enforce policy in whatever manner they choose.

First, Congress should have more power over domestic policy because they cannot enforce policy in any manner. In Federalist 51, Madison discusses the advantages of the government structure in the new constitution. He discusses how one branch cannot accumulate too much power or become ~~the~~ corrupt as a result of the system of separation of powers and checks and balances. This is seen by the fact the executive branch has the power of the sword while the legislative branch has the power of the purse. Therefore, if Congress has more power over making domestic policy, if they make bad legislation, the president can choose to issue executive orders to enforce it in a milder way or the SCOTUS could decide on its constitutionality in a case. For example, in *U.S. v. Lopez*, the SCOTUS ruled that Congress cannot limit guns in school zones under the ~~commerce~~ commerce clause, therefore voiding bad legislation. This makes Congress a safer option for having power over domestic policy because they are very easily checked if they create bad policy.

Second, Congress should have more power over domestic policy making because it is a more accurate

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Question 1

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Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

representation of the U.S. people. In Brutus No. 1, Robert Yates discusses the antifederalist's fear of a government that becomes too tyrannical and limits the people's rights. While this could be possible if the executive branch is given more power it is not possible if the legislative branch has more power over policy making. While the president is one person who represents one demographic group and one viewpoint, there are 535 voting members in congress who come from different backgrounds. While congress is not completely an accurate representation of the U.S. people, it approaches being so more and more as more women and minorities are elected. The careful policy making process in congress, done by people from all different states and different demographic characteristics, allows for domestic policy to be crafted accurately to meet the needs and struggles of Americans. This prevents the tyrannical, right-limiting policy, that Yates expressed concern for in Brutus No. 1, because domestic policy is made by multiple representatives of the people, rather than one person. Therefore, congress should have more domestic policy making power than the president.

Some may argue that the president should have more power over policy making. This idea stems from the attitude of the singular - energetic - efficient executive seen in Federalist No. 70. However, this

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view point is wrong because fast paced policy making
~~that~~ capabilities that president must have to address
Foreign affairs could be detrimental if used to
carry out negative domestic policy making if the
president were to have more power over it.

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Question 1

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Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

Within the government Congress should have more influence and power when it comes to domestic policy making. As it was intended by the founding fathers. The biggest influence for this is in Article I of the US constitution. The first thing it says is that congress will make laws. The expressed powers of congress is to regulate things (like interstate commerce). If it's the first thing mentioned that means it was extremely important to the founding fathers. In addition the president can't propose bills. He needs a congressman to support ~~suppose bills to make~~ and sponsor to make the bill be presented on the floor. Another example of congress being more powerful than the president in law making, is that it has to go through the house and senate to be then sent to the president. The president has no say on what passes congress, and if it does it has to be pretty important.

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To reach the next step in becoming a law. Although the president has veto power, if the bill is strong enough to pass voting, then it can influence the people to put pressure on the president to sign it. In Federalist #51 the checks and balances placed on both the house, Senate, and the president play an important role on who is more influential. Additionally, the only way to get things passed is if both parties vote together. So if ~~both~~ ~~parties~~ congress is in gridlock, there is nothing the president can do to fix it. The only way policy making happens is if congress is in some sort of harmony. Even if the president can produce executive orders and use public influence, that isn't as strong as when a law gets passed. One example of who holds more power is if you look at lobbyist. All interest groups and lobbyist place their focus and pressure on congress.

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so if all intrest groups are looking to influence congress, it shows who holds the most power within Government domestic policy making.

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Important: Completely fill in the circle that corresponds to the question you are answering on this page.

Question 1

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Question 4

Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

The president should have more power over domestic policy making. Federalist No. 70 describes a strong and energetic president. Fed #70 describes how the president should act throughout his presidency. Fed #70 mentions that a quick, strong, and energetic president is ultimately what the country needs to operate effectively. Article I of the Constitution entails all of the duties of the president. The president is at the top of government, and therefore has a huge role in how the country operates. So, it makes sense that the president should have more power over domestic policy making. Some may claim that Congress should have more power over domestic policy making because there's more people in Congress instead of just a singular person having more power (POTUS). The opposing side may believe that ~~Congress~~ having more power could lead to tyranny.

↑ the president
This is false because that's where checks and balances come in to ensure that the president doesn't have too much power over domestic policy making.

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Question 4

Note: Student samples are quoted verbatim and may contain spelling and grammatical errors.

Overview

This Argument Essay question expected responses to demonstrate an understanding of the extent to which the legislative and executive branches exercise control of domestic policy-making. Responses should have also shown an understanding of foundational documents related to the concepts of the role of domestic policy-making between the president and Congress (Article I of the United States Constitution, *Federalist No. 51*, *Federalist No. 70*), while taking a position on the topic of the prompt.

Responses were expected to articulate a defensible claim/thesis and establish a line of reasoning; support the thesis with evidence from a foundational document(s) and/or the course concepts; use reasoning to explain why the evidence provided supports the thesis; and respond to an alternative perspective using refutation or rebuttal. Responses should have been written so that each of these skills are demonstrated.

Sample: 4A

Score: 6

Claim/Thesis: 1

Evidence: 3

Reasoning: 1

Alternative Perspectives: 1

A. The response earned 1 point for the thesis. The response makes the argument that “Congress should have more power over domestic policy making.” The argument is supported by the line of reasoning of “because Congress more accurately represents the people.”

B. The response earned 3 points for evidence. The response uses two pieces of specific and relevant evidence to support the claim or thesis. It earned 2 points for *Federalist No. 51* because it states, “In *Federalist 51*, Madison discusses ... how one branch cannot accumulate too much power.” This is a sufficient description of a required document from the list and supports the thesis with “This makes Congress a safer option for having power over domestic policy.” The response earned an additional evidence point for its description of *Brutus No. 1* because it states, “In *Brutus No. 1* ... antifederalist’s fear of a government that becomes too tyrannical ... is not possible if the legislative branch has more power over policy making.” This is use of a foundational document not included in the prompt’s list.

C. The response earned 1 point for reasoning. The response states “there are 535 voting members in Congress who come from different backgrounds ... allows for domestic policy to be catered accurately to meet the needs ... of Americans.” This sufficiently explains a relationship between evidence and the thesis.

D. The response earned 1 point for the alternative perspective. The response describes an alternative perspective by stating “Some may argue that the president should have more power over policy making. This idea stems from the attitude of the singular-energetic-efficient executive.” The response rebuts/refutes that perspective by arguing “However, this view point is wrong because fast

Question 4 (continued)

paced policy making ... could be detrimental if used to carry out negative domestic policy making.” This earned the alternative perspective point because it describes an alternative perspective and refutes that perspective.

Sample: 4B

Score: 4

Claim/Thesis: 1

Evidence: 3

Reasoning: 0

Alternative Perspectives: 0

A. The response earned 1 point for the thesis. The response makes the argument that “Congress should have more influence and power when it comes to domestic policy making.” The argument is supported by the line of reasoning of “it was intended by the founding fathers.”

B. The response earned 3 points for evidence. It earned 2 points for Article 1 because it states “Article 1 ... congress will make laws. The expressed powers of congress is to regulate things (like interstate commerce).” There is a sufficient description of a required document from the list, and it supports the thesis with “that means it was extremely important to the founding fathers.” The response earned an additional evidence point for its description of *Federalist No. 51* because it states, “In *Federalist #51* the checks and balances placed on both the house, senate, and the president play an important role.”

C. The response earned 0 points for reasoning. The response does not sufficiently explain how or why a piece of evidence supports an argument relevant to the prompt. The response states “All interest groups and lobbyists place their focus and pressure on congress. So if all interest groups are looking to influence congress, it shows who holds the most power within Government domestic policy making” but that does not explain why the evidence supports an argument relevant to the prompt.

D. The response earned 0 points for alternative perspective. The response provides an alternative perspective by stating “Even if the president can produce executive orders and use public influence” but the statement “that isn’t as strong as when a law gets passed” does not refute that perspective.

Sample: 4C

Score: 1

Claim/Thesis: 0

Evidence: 1

Reasoning: 0

Alternative Perspectives: 0

A. The response earned 0 points for the thesis. The response makes an argument by stating “The president should have more power over domestic policy making” but does not have a defensible line of reasoning.

Question 4 (continued)

B. The response earned 1 point for evidence. The response states “Federalist No. 70 describes a strong and energetic president.” This is a sufficient description of a required document from the list. Because the response did not earn the thesis point, this piece of evidence could not be used to score a second point. Further, the response did not earn a second evidence point for Article 1 because it states “Article I of the Constitution entails all the duties of the president.” This is not a sufficient use of evidence because it is inaccurate.

C. The response earned 0 points for reasoning. The response does not provide reasoning that explains how the evidence given in B supports an argument relevant to the prompt.

D. The response earned 0 points for alternate perspective. The response did not earn the thesis point and therefore cannot earn the alternative perspective point. While the response correctly identifies an alternative perspective when it states “Some may claim that Congress should have more power over domestic policy making because there’s more people in Congress instead of just a singular person having more power,” and correctly refutes this claim by stating “This is false because that’s where checks and balances come in to ensure that the president doesn’t have too much power,” this cannot earn the alternative perspective point because the response did not earn the thesis point.