

AP US Government  
Sample FRQs for Midterm

**Concept Analysis Question**

The United States Constitution's ratification resulted from a political process that required compromise between the Federalists and Anti-Federalists. Many of the debates in government today continue to reflect the concerns of each perspective.

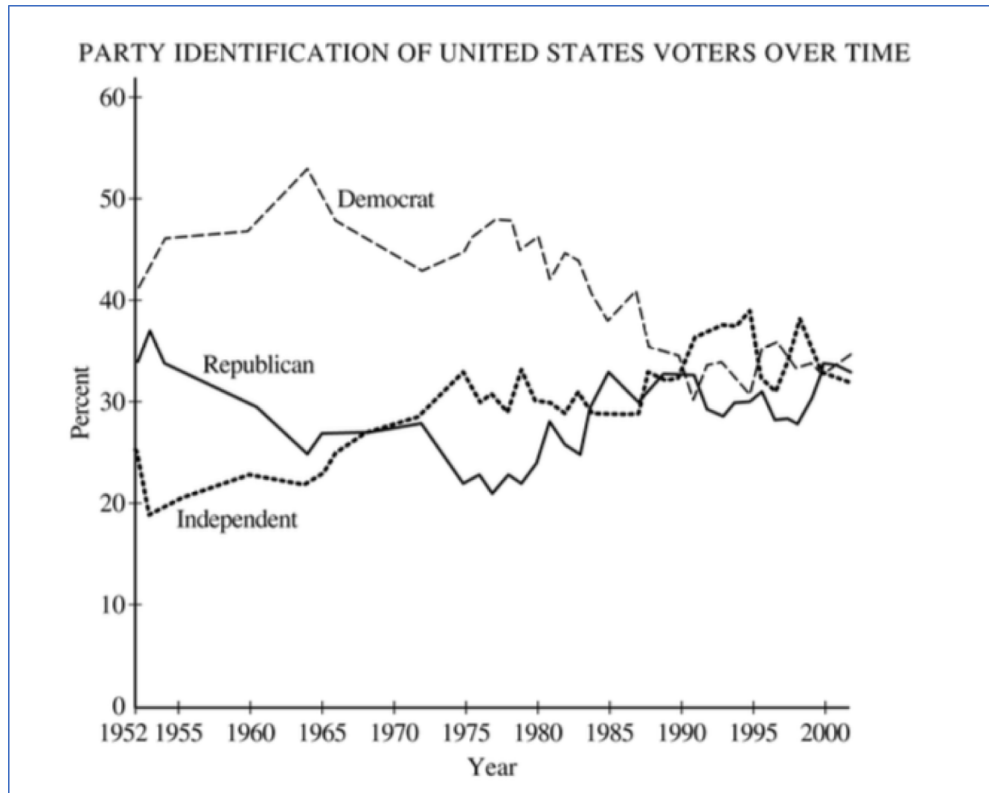
- (a) Compare the positions of Federalists and Anti-Federalists regarding the power of the national government.
- (b) Describe two features of the original Constitution that have led to a growth in the power of the national government.
- (c) Explain how each of the following additions to the Constitution addressed Anti-Federalist concerns.
  - First Amendment
  - Tenth Amendment

**Scoring the Concept Application Question**

A good response should:

- Describe a political institution, behavior, or process connected with the scenario (0–1 point)  
(Disciplinary Practice 1.a)
- Explain how the response in part (A) affects or is affected by a political process, government entity, or citizen behavior as related to the scenario (0–1 point) (Disciplinary Practice 1.d)
- Explain how the scenario relates to a political institution, behavior, or process in the course (0–1 point)  
(Disciplinary Practice 1.d)

## Quantitative Analysis Question



The graph above reflects changes in party identification over time. These changes have had substantial effects on electoral processes.

- Identify the dominant trend in the graph for independents.
- Explain two reasons why political parties have declined in importance.
- Explain two reasons why political parties are still an important part of the electoral process.

## Scoring the Quantitative Analysis Question

A good response should:

- Identify or describe the data in the quantitative visual (0–1 point) (Disciplinary Practice 3.a)
- Describe a pattern, trend, or similarity/difference as prompted in the question (0–1 point) (Disciplinary Practice 3.b) and draw a conclusion for that pattern, trend, or similarity/ difference (0–1 point) (Disciplinary Practice 3.c or 3.e)
- Explain how specific data in the quantitative visual demonstrates a principle in the prompt (0–1 point) (Disciplinary Practice 3.d)

## SCOTUS Comparison

Charles W. Baker and other Tennessee citizens alleged that a 1901 law designed to apportion the seats for the state's General Assembly was virtually ignored. Baker's suit detailed how Tennessee's reapportionment efforts ignored significant economic growth and population shifts within the state.

Did the Supreme Court have jurisdiction over questions of legislative apportionment?

In an opinion which explored the nature of "political questions" and the appropriateness of Court action in them, the Court held that there were no such questions to be answered in this case and that legislative apportionment was a justiciable issue. In his majority opinion, Justice Brennan provided past examples in which the Court had intervened to correct constitutional violations in matters pertaining to state administration and the officers through whom state affairs are conducted. Brennan concluded that the Fourteenth Amendment equal protection issues which Baker and others raised in this case merited judicial evaluation.

(A) Identify the constitutional issue that is common to both *Baker v. Carr* (1962) and *Shaw v. Reno* (1993).

(B) Based on the constitutional issue identified in part A, explain why the facts of *Shaw v. Reno* led to the same holding as in *Baker v. Carr*.

(C) What is the purpose of gerrymandering, and why is it illegal?

## Scoring the SCOTUS Comparison Question

A good response should:

- Identify a similarity or difference between the two Supreme Court cases, as specified in the question (0–1 point) (Disciplinary Practice 2.c)
- Provide prompted factual information from the specified required Supreme Court case (0-1 point) (Disciplinary Practice 2.a), and explain how or why that information from the specified required Supreme Court case is relevant to the non-required Supreme Court case described in the question (0–1 point) (Disciplinary Practice 2.c)
- Describe or explain an interaction between the holding in the non-required Supreme Court case and a relevant political institution, behavior, or process (0–1 point) (Disciplinary Practice 2.d)

## Argument Essay

Develop an argument that explains whether the expansion of rights in the United States has achieved Framers' intent for American democracy.

In your essay, you must:

- Articulate a defensible claim or thesis that responds to the prompt and establishes a line of reasoning.
- Support your claim with at least TWO pieces of accurate and relevant information:
  - At least ONE piece of evidence must be from one of the following foundational documents:
    - The Declaration of Independence
    - U.S. Constitution
    - Letter from Birmingham Jail
  - Use a second piece of evidence from another foundational document from the list or from your study of the electoral process.
- Use reasoning to explain why your evidence supports your claim/thesis
- Respond to an opposing or alternative perspective using refutation, concession, or rebuttal.

## Scoring the Argument Essay

A good response should:

- Articulate a defensible claim or thesis that responds to the question and establishes a line of reasoning (0–1 point) (Disciplinary Practice 5.a)
- Describe one piece of evidence that is accurately linked to the topic of the question (1 out of 3 points); use one piece of specific and relevant evidence to support the argument (2 out of 3 points); use two pieces of specific and relevant evidence to support the argument (3 out of 3 points) (Disciplinary Practice 5.b)
- Explain how or why the evidence supports the claim or thesis (0–1 point) (Disciplinary Practice 5.c)
- Respond to an opposing or alternate perspective using refutation, concession, or rebuttal that is consistent with the argument (0–1 point) (Disciplinary Practice 5.d)