

Free Response Training

The Four Rs

The second part of the AP US Government test is a free response section. You will have 100 minutes to answer four free response questions. Follow these guidelines to boost your scoring potential on these questions, which comprise one-half of the exam!

Relax

You have twenty-five minutes for each question. You have plenty of time. Plan your answer for at least **five** minutes. This is **NOT** an essay! Take your time to work thoroughly and carefully.

Read

Read the question carefully. Look at the visual (*if there is one*) carefully. Don't panic! Read the question again. Do you understand all **parts** of the question? Highlight or circle the key words in each part of the question. Rewrite the question in your own words.

Key Words

Identify=List, Name, Describe

Describe=List, Name, Describe

Define=Write what the term means

Compare=Contrast, Evaluate, Weigh

Explain=Clarify, Connect, Link, Analyze, Give reasons

Discuss=Write about, Argue for, Dispute, Provide details

oRganize

Break the question down into parts (*a, b*). Highlight the **number** of facts required for each part (*identify 3 types*). Organize and write the facts in a chart before you write the answer. Answer everything!

wRite

Write your free response answer. Be **specific** and factual. Don't be wordy or flowery. Get to the point! Less **IS** more. Do **NOT** write an introduction or a conclusion. Think of an FRQ as short answer discussion. Use complete sentences and thoughts.



The Multiple-Choice Section

The first part of the AP US Government exam is the multiple-choice section. This section consists of 60 multiple choice questions that must be answered in 45 minutes. Each question has five answer choices. Some questions include charts, graphs, tables, and political cartoons. There is no guessing penalty this year! Below are test-taking strategies you will need to master to do well on course exams, and especially the AP exam.

Read the question carefully

Do not make the mistake of reading questions too quickly because of time pressures. By reading a question carefully, you may get an idea about the correct answer and may effectively eliminate several answers. Place emphasis on key words in the question to help with the remaining choices.

Eliminate wrong answers

You are allowed to write on the test booklet...DO IT!!! Draw a line through the responses that you know are wrong. This visual elimination will help you focus in on the remaining questions.

Avoid absolute responses

Be wary of answers that contain absolutes. These answers often include the words *always* or *never*. For example, the statement, "Voter turnout in presidential elections is always slightly above 50%," is incorrect because in the 1996 presidential election, turnout was a little below 50%.

Mark and skip tough questions

If you get hung up on a question, clearly mark it in the margin of the test book. You can return to that question later if you have time. Missing one tough question is much better than failing to answer several questions that you know for certain. Make sure to remember to skip that question on your answer sheet, too.

Except questions

In this type of question, all of the answers but one are correct. The best way to tackle this type of question is as true-false. This strategy will add to your confidence. Mark a T or F in the margin next to each possible answer. There should only be one false answer, and that is the one that you should select.

List and group questions

In this type of question you are presented with a list of potential correct answers that you must select from to choose the correct group of responses. By crossing out items on the list and then the answer group with the incorrect response in it, you can simplify the questions. For example:

According to the Constitution, as amended, which of the following is elected directly?

- I. The president & vice president
- II. Members of the House of Representatives
- III. Justices of the US Supreme Court
- IV. Senators

- (A) I and II
- (B) II and III
- (C) I, II, and III
- (D) I and IV
- (E) II and IV