

□ Answers and Explanations

Multiple-Choice Questions

1. Which of the following best illustrates elite theory?

(a) is incorrect because the AARP is an interest group and therefore does not fit the description of elite theory.

(b) is correct because the elite theory holds that a small group of wealthy and well-placed individuals dominate government decision making.

(c) is incorrect because contending interest groups do not fit the description of the elite theory.

(d) is incorrect because interest groups do not fit the description of the elite theory.

(e) is incorrect because Americans are not isolated from government by technology.

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2. All of the following are characteristic beliefs associated with American political culture EXCEPT

(a) is incorrect because liberty is one of the basic tenets of American political culture.

(b) is incorrect because equality of opportunity is one of the basic tenets of American political culture.

(c) is incorrect because individualism is one of the basic tenets of American political culture.

(d) is correct because Americans generally believe that a largely unregulated economy, similar to a laissez faire system, would be in the national interest.

(e) is incorrect because political equality is one of the basic tenets of American political culture.

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3. According to pluralist theorists, which of the following statements describe the American political system?

(a) is correct because elite theorists believe that the government is mainly controlled by an elite and wealthy minority, most of whom are involved in big business, while pluralists think political power is more generally distributed.

(b) is incorrect because statement III is reflective of the elite theory.

- (c) is incorrect because statement III is reflective of the elite theory.
- (d) is incorrect because statement IV is reflective of the elite theory.
- (e) is incorrect because statements III and IV are reflective of the elite theory.

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4. All of the following are examples of public policy EXCEPT

- (a) is incorrect because the president can issue an executive order relating to public policy.
- (b) is incorrect because Congress can write a law relating to public policy.
- (c) is incorrect because the Supreme Court can make rulings that affect public policy.
- (d) is incorrect because the Federal Trade Commission can write rules relating to public policy.

(e) is correct because the AARP is an interest group and therefore cannot make policies that would be binding on all citizens, but rather are limited to making rules that apply only to members of their organization on issues over which they have control.

Page reference: 20–23, AP Topics: Theories of a democratic government and public policy

5. Democratic theory includes which of the following?

- (a) is incorrect because “one-person, one-vote” is not necessarily a part of a democracy.
- (b) is incorrect because freedom of religion is not necessarily a part of a democracy.
- (c) is correct because a democracy is founded on the needs and wants of the people and the closest representation of the whole populace is the majority; therefore, in a theoretical democracy, decisions are made by majority rule.**
- (d) is incorrect because a bicameral Congress is not necessarily a part of a democracy.
- (e) is incorrect because a republican form of government is not necessarily a part of a democracy.

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6. Basic functions common to all national governments include all of the following EXCEPT

- (a) is incorrect because collecting taxes is a basic function of government.
- (b) is incorrect because maintaining a national defense is a basic function of government.

(c) is correct because while universal medical care might be desirable, and while all governments provide some social services, not all governments can afford universal coverage.

(d) is incorrect because preserving order is a basic function of government.

(e) is incorrect because socializing young citizens is a basic function of government.

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7. Members of single interest groups

(a) is incorrect because single interests are not related to marriage characteristics.

(b) is incorrect because single interests are not related to interest rates charged by credit cards.

(c) is incorrect because single interests are not related to discount rates of banks.

(d) is correct because single interest groups tend to be associated with hyperpluralism and because they are formed around one narrowly defined issue, they rarely engage in the compromises characteristic of pluralistic bargaining.

(e) is incorrect because single interests are not related to soft money.

Page reference: 18, AP Topics: Theories of a democratic government and interest groups

8. All of the following can create public policies EXCEPT

(a) is incorrect because Congress has the authority to produce public policies.

(b) is incorrect because the president has the authority to produce public policies.

(c) is correct because interest groups can affect public policies, but do not have the power or authority to create public policies.

(d) is incorrect because the courts have the authority to produce public policies.

(e) is incorrect because the bureaucracy has the authority to produce public policies.

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9. Which characteristic of American politics is concerned with the rights of the minority?

(a) is incorrect because the election process is based on majority rule.

(b) is incorrect because the congressional policymaking process is based on majority rule.

(c) is incorrect because interest group bargaining and compromising is not guaranteed to protect minority rights.

(d) is incorrect because the president responding to public opinion is based on majority rule.

(e) is correct because the Bill of Rights was added to the Constitution to protect the expression of unpopular ideas, among other things, and these rights are not dependent on majoritarian concerns, but are designed to protect the rights of the minority.

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10. Government has grown to be big and active because

(a) is correct; government is big and active because people expect government to take action, and once programs are enacted it is hard to scale them back.

(b) is incorrect because statement III is factually inaccurate.

(c) is incorrect because statements III and IV are factually inaccurate.

(d) is incorrect because statement III is factually inaccurate.

(e) is incorrect because statement IV is factually inaccurate.

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11. All of the following are core political ideas in the United States EXCEPT

(a) is incorrect because liberty is a core political idea in the United States.

(b) is incorrect because individualism is a core political idea in the United States.

(c) is correct because socialism is an economic system where there is government ownership and management of the economy and that is not a core political idea of the United States.

(d) is incorrect because self-government is a core political idea in the United States.

(e) is incorrect because equality is a core political idea in the United States.

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12. One effect of the American political system's use of checks and balances is

(a) is incorrect because the separation of the powers of the branches does not lead to fragmentation.

(b) is incorrect because separation of powers does not eliminate mistakes.

(c) is incorrect because separation of powers does not prevent abuse.

(d) is incorrect because separation of powers does not expedite decision making.

(e) is correct because even though checks and balances limit government's power by requiring each branch to obtain the consent of the others for its actions, it also results in severe fragmentation in the American political system.

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13. Which of the following is an output of the American political system?

(a) is incorrect because the judiciary appointment process is an input.

(b) is incorrect because a general election is an input.

(c) is correct because laws passed by Congress and decisions made by the President are products of the United States government and therefore fit the definition of an output.

(d) is incorrect because a primary election is an input.

(e) is incorrect because the executive bureaucracy is an input.

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14. All of the following statements concerning African Americans today are correct EXCEPT

(a) is correct because African Americans are not twice as likely to graduate from college as whites, but instead still lag behind whites in college graduation rates.

(b) is incorrect because African Americans are twice as likely as whites to live in poverty.

(c) is incorrect because African Americans are twice as likely as whites to be unable to find a job.

(d) is incorrect because African Americans are twice as likely as whites die in infancy.

(e) is incorrect because African Americans do have equal rights under the law.

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15. Which of the following statements provides the most accurate description of democracy as practiced in the United States?

(a) is incorrect because majority will does not always prevail.

(b) is incorrect because the will of the people is checked by law and the rights of the minority.

(c) is correct because democracy in the United States is a system of electing policymakers and of organizing government so that policy represents and responds to the public's preferences.

(d) is incorrect because the people do not govern by mandate.

(e) is incorrect because the people do not govern directly.

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16. The characteristics and beliefs of a particular people about government and politics is known as

(a) is incorrect because scientific socialism does not fit the definition provided.

(b) is correct because political culture is an overall set of values and beliefs widely shared within a society.

(c) is incorrect because elitism does not fit the definition provided.

(d) is incorrect because pluralism does not fit the definition provided.

(e) is incorrect because capitalism does not fit the definition provided.

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17. This natural rights' philosopher stated in a 17th century political document that all individuals have certain natural rights, including those of life, liberty, and property.

(a) is incorrect because Thomas Paine wrote *Common Sense*.

(b) is incorrect because Thomas Jefferson wrote the Declaration of Independence.

(c) is incorrect because Rousseau wrote *The Social Contract*.

(d) is correct because John Locke, in his *Second Treatise on Civil Government*, stated that all individuals had the natural rights of life, liberty, and property.

(e) is incorrect because James Madison wrote the Constitution.

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18. All of the following statements about majoritarianism in the United States are true EXCEPT

(a) is incorrect because it is a correct statement relating to majoritarianism.

(b) is incorrect because it is a correct statement relating to majoritarianism.

(c) is incorrect because it is a correct statement relating to majoritarianism.

(d) is correct because majoritarianism is the traditional political philosophy which asserts that the majority has the right to make the decisions in the government.

(e) is incorrect because it is a correct statement relating to majoritarianism.

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19. In which famous document did James Madison argue that government is most dangerous when a single group gains complete political control?
- (a) is incorrect because Thomas Paine wrote *Common Sense*.
- (b) is correct because James Madison, in *Federalist* No. 10, wrote his warning against factions and their influence in government.**
- (c) is incorrect because, even though James Madison contributed heavily to the Constitution, he did not include his warning against factions in that document.
- (d) is incorrect because the Preamble to the Declaration of Independence was written by Thomas Jefferson.
- (e) is incorrect because *The Wealth of Nations* was written by Adam Smith.

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20. All of the following are considered inputs into the American political system EXCEPT
- (a) is incorrect because the activities of interest groups are inputs.
- (b) is incorrect because the activities of political parties are inputs.
- (c) is correct because laws passed by Congress constitute an output, not an input.**
- (d) is incorrect because voting in elections is an input.
- (e) is incorrect because letters to representatives are inputs.

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Free-Response Questions

This rubric provides examples of many, but not all, of the possible correct responses to the free-response questions. Occasionally, there will be weaknesses pointed out in the suggested answer, providing students with examples of what to avoid.

1. There is a common set of values generally espoused by United States citizens—a political culture.
- a. Identify three elements of American political culture.
- Identification of any three of the following would earn credit.
 - Liberty

- Political equality
- Popular rule/populism
- Individualism
- Laissez-faire economics

b. Describe two of these elements.

- Liberty generally implies freedom, either from government or to engage in chosen activities or to abstain from certain activities.
- Political equality implies an equal chance to participate in politics if one chooses to do so.
- Popular rule/populism is an expression of popular sovereignty/majority rule/government “by the people.”
- Individualism is the general idea that persons should take responsibility for their own advancement and that rights inhere in persons, not groups.
- Laissez-faire economics espouses limited government in market activities.

c. Explain why citizens might espouse these values but object to specific applications.

- There is a well-known difference between diffuse and specific support for principles. Thus, individuals voice support for liberty but are quite willing to support regulation of behavior of which they disapprove. Likewise, they voice support for political participation—as long as the participation supports positions they support. The same caveat applies to popular rule. And, individuals often ignore the extent to which they benefit from collective actions. Similarly, advocates of “getting the government out of the marketplace” generally find it useful to have a stable monetary system, to have contracts enforced, to have law and order, to have their fellow citizens educated, to have their food free of adulteration, to have roads on which to drive, etc.—much of which is provided by government.

2. Government is a set of institutions by which people make collective decisions.

a. Identify three functions government serves.

- Identification of any three of the following would earn credit.
 - Dispensing justice

- Ensuring “domestic tranquility”/order
- Providing for national defense
- Promoting general welfare
- Providing “public goods”
- Political socialization
- Collecting taxes

b. Provide two explanations why people might choose to use government to pursue these functions.

- Having government perform any of these functions divides labor and allows the development of expertise. For example, instead of each person having to provide for personal safety or to dispense justice for crimes committed against them, we can call police, have prosecutors act, and have governments incarcerate. Thus, people may choose government because it allows them to simplify their lives.
- Second, engaging in collective action allows for the achievement of economies of scale. Thus, people might choose to have government build roads, for example, because it is cheaper for all concerned to do this collectively rather than individually.