

# □ Answers and Explanations

## Multiple-Choice Questions

1. Which of the following is most likely to be able to effectively use the national media to set the policy agenda?
- (a) is incorrect because the Supreme Court does not use the media to set policy agenda.
- (b) is incorrect because Congress does not use the media to set policy agenda as effectively as the president.
- (c) is correct because most modern presidents have successfully used television to make direct appeals to the public. President Reagan, for example, used prime time television to make direct appeals to citizens to take grassroots action on a political issue. Other organizations such as Congress are more decentralized and therefore have a more difficult time collectively using the media.**
- (d) is incorrect because state legislators do not use the media to set policy agenda as effectively as the president.
- (e) is incorrect because governors do not use the media to set policy agenda as effectively as the president.

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2. Which of the following is the best example of a media event?
- (a) is incorrect because the State of the Union Address is not the best choice for the question.
- (b) is correct because media events are deliberately staged events by political figures to get attention. While the State of the Union gets broad media coverage, it is an event required by the U.S. Constitution and therefore is not the best example of a media event. Events that are not in a politician's control would not be good examples of media events, nor would events that do not get much media attention.**
- (c) is incorrect because an assassination attempt is not the best choice for the question.
- (d) is incorrect because signing bipartisan legislation is not the best choice for the question.
- (e) is incorrect because a private meeting with lawmakers to discuss an issue is not the best choice for the question.

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3. The Federal Communications Commission (FCC) is which of the following?
- (a) is an inaccurate description of the FCC.
  - (b) is an inaccurate description of the FCC.
  - (c) is an inaccurate description of the FCC.
  - (d) is correct because the Federal Communications Commission is an independent regulatory agency.**
  - (e) is an inaccurate description of the FCC.

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4. Which of the following is the best example of a trial balloon?
- (a) is correct because a trial balloon occurs when a political figure leaks information to the public to try to decide what the public would think if an event were to occur. Al Gore leaked his choice of Joe Lieberman as a running mate in order to see if the public approved of his choice—this type of event is referred to as a trial balloon.**
  - (b) is incorrect because this is not an example of a trial balloon.
  - (c) is incorrect because this is not an example of a trial balloon.
  - (d) is incorrect because this is not an example of a trial balloon.
  - (e) is incorrect because this is not an example of a trial balloon.

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5. All of the following can be accurately stated about sound bites EXCEPT
- (a) is incorrect because the selection is an accurate description of a sound bite.
  - (b) is incorrect because the selection is an accurate description of a sound bite.
  - (c) is incorrect because the selection is an accurate description of a sound bite.
  - (d) is correct because it is the exception to sound bites (sound bites do not provide much information to citizens about candidates).**
  - (e) is incorrect because the selection is an accurate description of a sound bite.

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6. What is the main focus of the media during a presidential campaign?
- (a) is incorrect because issues are not the main focus of the media during a presidential campaign.
- (b) is incorrect because background and qualifications are not the main focus of the media during a presidential campaign.
- (c) is correct because political races today are called candidate-centered because of the focus on candidate personality, rather than issues, background or qualifications.**
- (d) is incorrect because the platform of the party is not the main focus of the media during a presidential campaign.
- (e) is incorrect because accomplishments of the candidates are not the main focus of the media during a presidential campaign.

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7. Which of the following best describes the impact of the Internet on politics?
- (a) is incorrect because the Internet has not made citizens more informed.
- (b) is correct because the Internet has not made citizens more informed or changed their opinion, but has made information more widely available.**
- (c) is incorrect because the Internet has not made citizens more liberal.
- (d) is incorrect because the Internet has not made citizens more trusting of government.
- (e) is incorrect because the Internet has not lessened freedom of expression.

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8. Which of the following have been decreasing over the years?
- (a) is incorrect because news outlets are not decreasing.
- (b) is correct because presidents are holding fewer regularly scheduled press conferences.**
- (c) is incorrect because State of the Union Addresses are not decreasing.
- (d) is incorrect because media events are not decreasing.
- (e) is incorrect because trial balloons are not decreasing.

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9. Which of the following best describes newspaper coverage under yellow journalism?

(a) is incorrect because it is an inaccurate description of yellow journalism.

(b) is incorrect because it is an inaccurate description of yellow journalism.

(c) is incorrect because it is an inaccurate description of yellow journalism.

**(d) is correct because yellow journalism involved increasing newspaper sales by writing stories with sensationalized coverage and dubious accuracy.**

(e) is incorrect because it is an inaccurate description of yellow journalism.

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10. Which of the following best describes the correlation between the media and trust in government?

**(a) is correct because trust in government has declined as the availability of information about government has increased.**

(b) is incorrect because it is an inaccurate selection for the description of the relationship between media and trust in government.

(c) is incorrect because it is an inaccurate selection for the description of the relationship between media and trust in government.

(d) is incorrect because it is an inaccurate selection for the description of the relationship between media and trust in government.

(e) is incorrect because it is an inaccurate selection for the description of the relationship between media and trust in government.

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11. What is narrowcasting?

(a) is incorrect because the selection is an inaccurate definition of narrowcasting.

(b) is incorrect because the selection is an inaccurate definition of narrowcasting.

(c) is incorrect because the selection is an inaccurate definition of narrowcasting.

**(d) is correct because narrowcasting is media programming on cable TV or the Internet that is focused on a particular interest and aimed at a particular audience, in contrast to broadcasting.**

(e) is incorrect because the selection is an inaccurate definition of narrowcasting.

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12. Why do the media typically have little influence on public opinion?
- (a) is incorrect because media do not have to present both sides of an issue.
  - (b) is incorrect because the media are not necessarily owned by the same corporations that conduct public opinion polls.
  - (c) is incorrect because people do not ignore the media due to bias.
  - (d) is incorrect because public opinion is not static and unchanging.
  - (e) is correct because studies show that people tend to ignore media information that is inconsistent with their existing beliefs or personal experiences.**

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13. What is agenda setting?
- (a) is correct because agenda setting is the process of forming the list of issues to be addressed by the government.**
  - (b) is incorrect because it is an inaccurate definition of agenda setting.
  - (c) is incorrect because it is an inaccurate definition of agenda setting.
  - (d) is incorrect because it is an inaccurate definition of agenda setting.
  - (e) is incorrect because it is an inaccurate definition of agenda setting.

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14. The deepest bias among political journalists is
- (a) is correct because the media depend on an audience for success, and even survival. This compels them to seek out stories that will attract viewers or readers. While the dynamics of narrowcasting sometimes results in slanting a story ideologically to capture higher ratings, the primary driver is the audience.**
  - (b) is incorrect because it is an inaccurate selection for the prompt.
  - (c) is incorrect because it is an inaccurate selection for the prompt.
  - (d) is incorrect because it is an inaccurate selection for the prompt.
  - (e) is incorrect because it is an inaccurate selection for the prompt.

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15. All of the following are considered "mass media" EXCEPT
- (a) is incorrect because radio is an example of mass media.
  - (b) is incorrect because television is an example of mass media.
  - (c) is incorrect because newspapers are an example of mass media.
  - (d) is correct because a peer-reviewed journal is an academic journal specific to a particular discipline and does not receive mass circulation.**
  - (e) is incorrect because the Internet is an example of mass media.

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16. With the development of cable television came
- (a) is incorrect because it is an inaccurate response to the prompt.
  - (b) is incorrect because it is an inaccurate response to the prompt.
  - (c) is incorrect because it is an inaccurate response to the prompt.
  - (d) is incorrect because it is an inaccurate response to the prompt.
  - (e) is correct because the advent of cable television provided the opportunity for 24 hour a day news channels and programs.**

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17. Since the creation of broadcast media, the government has
- (a) is incorrect because the government does not fund media.
  - (b) is incorrect because the government does not strictly censor publishing.
  - (c) is incorrect because the government has not taken a "hands off" approach to media.
  - (d) is correct because, since its inception, the government has regulated broadcast media using the Federal Communications Commission.**
  - (e) is incorrect because the government does not strictly censor programming.

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18. This has grown into an unprecedented source of public information for the world.
- (a) is incorrect because CNN is an inaccurate answer to the question.
  - (b) is incorrect because MSNBC is an inaccurate answer to the question.

(c) is incorrect because PBS is an inaccurate answer to the question.

(d) is incorrect because BBC is an inaccurate answer to the question.

**(e) is correct because the Internet, since its creation, has become a massive source of public information around the world.**

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19. The relatively high cost of advertising using this medium accounts, in part, for the high cost.

(a) is incorrect because newspaper advertising is not as expensive as television.

(b) is incorrect because Internet advertising is not used to the same degree as television.

**(c) is correct because television advertising is an important part of political campaigns, and due to the expense of television advertising, the use of this medium has contributed to the high cost of campaigning.**

(d) is incorrect because radio advertising is not as expensive as television, nor is it used as extensively.

(e) is incorrect because blogs are not used extensively for campaigning.

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20. The mass media targets

(a) is incorrect because it is an inaccurate selection for the prompt.

**(b) is correct because the mass media, driven by ratings, selects programming in order to reach the largest audience possible.**

(c) is incorrect because it is an inaccurate selection for the prompt.

(d) is incorrect because it is an inaccurate selection for the prompt.

(e) is incorrect because it is an inaccurate selection for the prompt.

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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.*

1. The independent media in American politics can both hurt candidates' chances for getting elected to office as well as help candidates' chances at getting elected to office.
  - a. Identify and describe two ways the media may hurt the chances of a candidate for office.
    - The media may hurt candidates running for office through investigative journalism or allowing negative advertising to be run unopposed. Through investigative journalism, reporters will search for scandals and negative information about a candidate in order to receive higher ratings for their news programs. Such reporting can tarnish the reputation of a candidate and hurt his chances at being elected. Additionally, with the rise of the Internet, many scandals involving political figures have originated on websites only to later be picked up by the mainstream media. Negative advertisements may also be run against a candidate. Media outlets may choose to run such advertisements. Even though there is an expectation that the candidates have the right to respond, such negative advertisements often either drive down voter turnout or have a negative impact on the candidate.
  - b. Identify and describe two ways candidates can use the media to help their campaigns.
    - On the other hand, having access to the media greatly helps candidates. Candidates can stage media events, leak trial balloons, make direct appearances on television, go on debates, or use sound bites to promote their campaigns. Media events occur when a candidate for office stages an event to draw positive attention to him or herself, such as appearing at a school or charity event. This event is covered in the media as a news story and provides attention to the candidate without the candidate having to spend any money on the campaign. An example of a trial balloon would be when a candidate leaks information to a reporter hoping that the story will get into the mainstream media in order to gauge public opinion of a campaign event. For example, a presidential candidate may leak information about his choice for vice president and then take polls to see if this choice helps the campaign or not.



2. The mass media greatly impacts the course of a president's administration. Defend this statement by doing all of the following:
- a. Define three of the terms below.
    - press conferences
    - fireside chat
    - sound bites
    - media event
  - b. For each term you defined, explain its impact on the course of a presidential administration.
    - The First Amendment to the Constitution gives freedom to the press and allows media outlets to publish critical stories about the president of the United States. This freedom has an important impact on president because information both flattering and unflattering about the president is widely available in the United States. Presidents have access to the media and can use this power to improve their image. At the same time, the independent media is likely to publish stories that are negative in tone.
    - Press conferences are meetings held by the president with members of the press. They can have a negative impact on presidential approval. These meetings are not required by law or the Constitution, therefore presidents have some control over how many press conferences are held. Presidents can also ask their press secretary to hold the meetings for them. Press conferences are frequently confrontational in nature and can lead to discussions about scandals that have been published. For example, during Bill Clinton's presidency, he was directly asked about the Monica Lewinsky scandal in a press conference in spite of the fact that he had tried to turn the conversation to other topics. Because of the possibility of being questioned about scandals and unflattering events, modern presidents have tended not to hold press conferences.
    - The fireside chat began with FDR's presidency. These take place when presidents use the radio to communicate directly with citizens. They tend to have a positive impact on the president's term because there are no or few combative questions directed at the president. The president can set the tone of the talks and provide the

information that he wants. Such "chats" are frequently used to attempt to change public opinion. FDR used fireside chats to change public opinion to favor the country's entry into World War II.

- Sound bites are short video clips of approximately 10 seconds, and are frequently all that are shown of a president's speech on the news. These can have a positive or negative impact on the president, depending on how the statements are portrayed in the media. A president may choose a particular sound bite and repeat it in order to generate a high likelihood that it is on the news, but also the media may choose a sound bite that the president is unhappy about.