

AP UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

MIDTERM EXAM: OVERVIEW & STUDYING TIPS

I. The Test

- a. Section I – Multiple Choice (50%); 50 questions, 60 minutes
- b. Section II – Free Response (50%); 3 questions, 60 minutes



120 Points Total

II. Breakdown by Content

1. Foundations of American Democracy

- a. Federalism
- b. Checks/Balances
- c. Separation of Powers
- d. Goals of the Framers
- e. Considerations that influenced the Framers
- f. Theories of democratic government

2. American Political Ideologies, Beliefs and Participation

- a. Basic political beliefs of individuals & political culture
- b. How people acquire political attitudes
- c. Factors resulting in political differences among individuals of different economic, ethnic and racial backgrounds
- d. Public Opinion
- e. Voting

3. Political Participation

- a. Political Parties
 - Goals
 - Functions
 - Organization
 - Development
 - Effects on process
- b. Elections
 - Nomination Campaign vs. General Election
 - Electoral College
 - Campaign Financing
- c. Interest Groups
 - Goals
 - Functions
 - tactics/strategies
 - effects on process (iron triangle)
- d. Mass Media
 - Purpose/function
 - impact on process (agenda setting)
 - roles

III. Tips/Hints/Suggestions

1. Test Anxiety

- a. Eliminate as many surprises as you can
- b. Keep breathing during the test
- c. Pace yourself.

2. Multiple Choice

- a. Read the questions carefully.
- b. All questions count the same, so answer those you know, skip others, then go back
- c. Eliminate answers that are obviously wrong by crossing them off.
- d. Knock out the answers that are almost right.
 - a. Half-right answers are 100 percent wrong!
- e. Test “all of the above,” if it is an option, first
- f. For NOT/EXCEPT questions, answer YES/NO for each choice
- g. For Roman Numeral questions, answer YES/NO for each choice
- h. Keep the big picture mind, the general concepts and ideas about government and politics
- i. Common sense can help
- j. Trust your instincts

3. Guessing

- a. Guessing after eliminating even one incorrect choice could improve your score
- b. When you can eliminate two/three choice
- c. If you HAVE TO guess

4. Free Response

- a. Choose the question you feel best about and do it first
- b. Start with pre-writing steps
 - Circle, box, underline, points
- c. Writing
 - Know your verbs → identify, define, describe, explain, etc.
- d. Assume the reader knows very little, so define terms, explain concepts, complete the circle
- e. Use appropriate terminology
- f. Examples help –Spare tires
- g. Write in clear, concise declarative sentences
- h. Remember questions are scored not graded!
- i. Response should be 1¼ - 1½ pages long