

AP[®] UNITED STATES GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

2010 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 3

6 points

Part (a): 1 point

One point is earned for identifying one specific trend evident in the figure:

- Percentage of House seats for Democrats has trended down.
- Percentage of presidential electoral votes for Democrats has trended down.

Part (b): 2 points

One point is earned for each explanation of why, from 1948 to 2000, Southern voters elected Democratic candidates to Congress more frequently than they elected Democratic candidates to the presidency:

- Incumbency advantage — Even though Southern voters were voting for Republican presidential candidates, they continued to vote for incumbent Democratic congressional candidates because of the incumbency advantage.
- Gerrymandering — District lines created safe seats/majority–minority districts, which protected Democratic seats even though there were more Republican voters in statewide presidential elections.
- State versus national parties — Because national and state parties were largely independent of each other, to get votes Democratic congressional candidates responded to local interests, whereas Democratic presidential candidates responded to a national constituency.

Part (c): 3 points

One point is earned for each explanation of how, over the past few decades, party composition has changed with respect to three of the four groups:

- Catholics — They have become less reliable Democratic voters.
- Labor union members — They have become less reliable Democratic voters; have decreased in number and thus there are fewer Democratic supporters; have become a smaller percentage of the Democratic voting bloc.
- Women — They have become more reliable Democratic voters; have increased in number and thus there are more Democratic supporters; have become a larger percentage of the Democratic voting bloc.
- Social conservatives — They were previously nonexistent and have now crystallized to become more reliable Republican voters; previously found in the Democratic party and have moved to the Republican party.

A score of zero (0) is assigned to an answer that is attempted but earns no points.

A score of dash (—) is assigned to an answer that is blank or off task.

a) One specific trend evidenced by the graph is a general decline in the percentage of seats held by Democrats in the South for the United States House between the late 1950s and the early 2000s, a decrease of over 50%.

b). • Southern voters elected Democrats to Congress more frequently than to the presidency between 1948 and 2000 partly because of incumbency advantage. Members of Congress can be reelected indefinitely, which builds up name recognition within the state, legislative experience, and a résumé of accomplishments within Congress. A Democratic Congressperson who is an incumbent can therefore build trust within his or her state, which leads to reelection. Incumbents in Congress also have advantages in elections, such as the franking privilege. The presidency, however, has a two-term limit, and therefore Southern voters do not build the same trusting relationship with a Presidential candidate as with a congressional one.

• Differences between state and national parties also encourage Southern voters to choose Democratic congresspeople more frequently than Democratic presidents. Democratic candidates within state parties are more familiar with their constituents and their preferences and demands. Despite

being from a minority party, a Southern Democrat knows what is of local importance to southerners. National parties and candidates such as the President, on the other hand, must be concerned with the entire nation, including the north, which is where many Democrats reside. They often turn their attention to these ~~numerous~~ populous northern strongholds, as well as to their home states, many of which have been in the north. Southern voters are more likely to elect a Southern Democrat from a state party who is concerned with southern affairs than a national party's Democratic nominee whose attention is divided throughout the nation.

- c) • For many years following their initial advent to the US, Catholics were a socially persecuted group. Many belonged originally to the Democratic party. The first Catholic president, John F. Kennedy, was elected in 1960 as a Democratic nominee. However, many Catholics have due to their religion and its recent political positions become even more socially conservative and shifted more to the Republican party. They have reconciled their differences with radical fundamentalists and evangelicals, who have exerted massive recent control in the Republican party.
- Before political interest or involvement was common among women, they tended to align themselves with their husbands'

or families' political parties. However, since voting and participation has increased among women, more tend to belong to the Democratic Party. The Democrats offer greater freedoms to women as well as greater female ^{political} representation than the Republican Party. However, socially conservative and Republican women are not to be discounted, as was demonstrated by the sudden popularity of former vice presidential candidate Sarah Palin.

- Social conservatives used to belong in greater numbers to the Democratic Party than is currently the case, when politics were concentrated more on issues of economy or foreign policy, as one could hold socially conservative values yet politically liberal ones. However, over the past few decades the social conservatives have moved en masse and almost exclusively to the Republican Party, as it is of late much more concerned with social issues and has been overtaken by religious fanatics whose priorities are socially conservative.

~~a) In~~ In both presidential AND House elections, Democratic support has suffered a dramatic decrease since the 1950's (as ~~reported~~ ^{recorded} in 2006).

b) 1. The incumbency advantage is a huge deal when discussing Congressional elections — it has much less bearing in the presidency, because presidents are only limited to 2 terms (8 years), while Congress' term limit is infinite. The incumbency advantage takes a political party much further in Congress than in the White House. Democratic ~~support~~ incumbents will last longer in Congress.

2. Gerrymandering is an issue that applies specifically to state elections of the House of Representatives. If state legislators in the South were gerrymandering to bolster Democratic support in their states, (and thereby putting more Democratic ~~rep~~ representatives in Congress), that would have little bearing as to the outcome of their presidential election. The number of Republicans stays the same in

gentry mandating, it's just an issue of accurate representation.

1. As women receive larger roles in society, the democratic party has found itself with a major increase of female supporters. The democratic party has rearranged its policies in order to better appeal to this support, including the controversial right to abortion.

2. Labor Union members have clung on to the democratic party, with their increasing support of entitlement benefits, which would greatly assist the working class and their ease on getting the things they want. The democrats have adapted to this by making things like healthcare & work reform a top priority.

3. Social Conservatives make up a great deal of the republican party. As democrats became more liberal on things like gay rights and ~~healthcare~~ abortion, conservatives rely on the republican party to combat these social changes. The republican party is held accountable to the ultra-conservative views of the (mostly) white, middle class American,

Write in the box the number of the question you are answering on this page as it is designated in the exam.

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Who tend to focus on family issues and how America can best be kept traditional.

As shown by the dotted line that is decreasing as time passes it is evident that southern states are becoming increasingly ~~republican~~ republican controlled. The majority of southern state seats are now controlled by republicans. It went from nearly all of them being democratic to now just under 40%.

Incumbents usually have more ~~to~~ recognition than their opposers and also have much more access to the media and money, allowing democrats who were incumbents a very good chance of being re-elected. Members of the House who run for re-election usually win 90% of the time so there is often no opposition. Since the democrats were the majority for most of this time span they were the ones who got to draw the congressional district lines, often drawing them so that democrats were better represented ~~the republicans~~ than republicans and thus allowing most of the representatives to be democratic. Some states also differed in the way the parties ran elections. ~~Some~~ Most used primaries to get elected and there were other states who used caucuses. These would affect how each party fared and which one would win.

Because of the vast ~~decrease~~ decrease in the importance of religion as opposed with the past, Catholics tend to be very conservative. Because of this, the republican party tried to attract catholics and made them a big republican ally when election time comes.

The 19th amendment allowed women the right to vote so both parties now had to change its tactics to attract this new demographic. They had to involve themselves more with equality issues.

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2010 SCORING COMMENTARY

Question 3

Overview

The intent of this question was to evaluate two aspects of students' performance: their ability to read a figure and apply the information from the figure in a meaningful way to a substantive question, and their knowledge about how the compositions of the Democratic and Republican parties have changed in important ways over the last several decades. The questions asked students (1) to identify a trend based on information in a figure; (2) to explain two reasons why Southern voters from 1948 to 2000 were electing Democratic candidates to Congress more frequently than choosing Democratic candidates for the presidency; and (3) to explain two ways in which parties have changed in composition over the past few decades. This question required students to understand partisanship changes over time; incumbency advantage, gerrymandering, and differences between state and national parties; and how party composition changed with respect to Catholics, labor union members, women and social conservatives.

Sample: 3A

Score: 6

In part (a) the student earned 1 point for identifying a trend of “decline in the percentage of seats held by Democrats in the South for the United States House between the late 1950s and the early 2000s.”

In part (b) the student earned 1 point for explaining incumbency advantage and how it aids Democratic congressional incumbents more than Democratic presidential candidates. The student also earned 1 point for explaining how differences between state and national parties lead to more Southern Democratic congressional seats than Democratic presidential electors.

In part (c) the student earned 1 point for explaining that Catholics have “shifted more to the Republican party.” The student earned another point for explaining that in the past women commonly voted as their husbands did but that now “more tend to belong to the Democratic Party”. The student earned 1 additional point for explaining that social conservatives have “moved en masse ... to the Republican Party.”

Sample: 3B

Score: 3

In part (a) the student earned 1 point for identifying a trend of decreasing Democratic “support” since the 1950s.

In part (b) the student earned 1 point for explaining incumbency advantage and how it aids Democratic congressional incumbents more than Democratic presidential candidates. The student does not provide a logical explanation of how gerrymandering could create safe Democratic seats even though there were more Republican voters in statewide presidential elections and therefore did not earn the second point in this part.

In part (c) the student earned 1 point for explaining that “the [D]emocratic party has found itself with a major increase of female supporters.” The student's discussion of the current political affiliations of labor union members and social conservatives does not provide an explanation of how they have changed the composition of political parties and therefore earned no additional points.

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Question 3 (continued)

Sample: 3C

Score: 1

In part (a) the student earned 1 point for identifying a trend by stating that “as time passes it is evident that southern states are becoming increasingly [R]epublican controlled.”

In part (b) the student does not provide an explanation for how incumbency advantage aided Democratic congressional incumbents more than Democratic presidential candidates and therefore earned no point. The student describes gerrymandering but does not explain how it benefited Democratic congressional candidates more than Democratic presidential candidates and therefore earned no point.

In part (c) the student discusses Catholics and women but does not explain changes in party composition with respect to either of the groups and therefore earned no points.