

Chapter 1: Understanding American Politics

TRUE/FALSE

1. America is an example of a direct democracy.

ANS: F DIF: Easy

REF: CH01 – Making Sense of American Government and Politics

OBJ: Describe the basic functions of government MSC: Applying

2. The main reasons we have government are to provide order and to promote the general welfare.

ANS: T DIF: Easy

REF: CH01 – Making Sense of American Government and Politics

OBJ: Describe the basic functions of government MSC: Remembering

3. Federalism refers to the division of power between Congress, the president, and the Supreme Court.

ANS: F DIF: Moderate

REF: CH01 – Making Sense of American Government and Politics

OBJ: Describe the basic functions of government MSC: Remembering

4. James Madison was concerned about the possibility that no faction would be able to gain a majority and thus the government would not function.

ANS: F DIF: Moderate

REF: CH01 – Making Sense of American Government and Politics

OBJ: Describe the basic functions of government MSC: Understanding

5. The free rider problem occurs because people can share in the benefits of a public good whether or not they helped provide it.

ANS: T DIF: Moderate

REF: CH01 – Making Sense of American Government and Politics

OBJ: Describe the basic functions of government MSC: Understanding

6. Politics occurs only in the context of government decision making.

ANS: F DIF: Easy REF: CH01 – What Is Politics?

OBJ: Define politics and identify three key ideas that help explain politics

MSC: Remembering

7. Politics rarely involves overt conflict.

ANS: F DIF: Moderate REF: CH01 – What Is Politics?

OBJ: Define politics and identify three key ideas that help explain politics

MSC: Understanding

8. A stealth democracy would exist if government were run like a business.

ANS: T DIF: Moderate REF: CH01 – What Is Politics?

OBJ: Define politics and identify three key ideas that help explain politics

MSC: Understanding

9. It is almost impossible for people to get everything they want from the political process.

ANS: T DIF: Difficult REF: CH01 – What Is Politics?

OBJ: Define politics and identify three key ideas that help explain politics

MSC: Applying

10. Politics is fundamentally all about election outcomes.

ANS: F DIF: Moderate REF: CH01 – What Is Politics?

OBJ: Define politics and identify three key ideas that help explain politics

MSC: Understanding

11. Compared to most European democracies, the United States has been relatively free of class-based politics because economics is not an important source of political conflict in America.

ANS: F DIF: Difficult REF: CH01 – Sources of Conflict in American Politics

OBJ: Identify major sources of conflict in American politics MSC: Understanding

12. Cultural issues include social spending on the poor and proper taxation levels.

ANS: F DIF: Moderate REF: CH01 – Sources of Conflict in American Politics

OBJ: Identify major sources of conflict in American politics MSC: Remembering

13. Race and gender are significant in American elections because they remain important sources of political disagreements and identity politics, which can influence individual voting behavior.

ANS: T DIF: Difficult REF: CH01 – Sources of Conflict in American Politics

OBJ: Identify major sources of conflict in American politics MSC: Understanding

14. To the framers of the Constitution, equality was the central principle of the new government.

ANS: F DIF: Difficult

REF: CH01 – Resolving Conflict: Democracy and American Political Values

OBJ: Explain how the American values of democracy, liberty, and equality work to resolve political conflict MSC: Understanding

MULTIPLE CHOICE

1. _____ said that life in the “state of nature” would be “solitary, poor, nasty, brutish, and short.”
- a. James Madison c. Thomas Hobbes
- b. George Washington d. King George III

ANS: C DIF: Moderate

REF: CH01 – Making Sense of American Government and Politics

OBJ: Describe the basic functions of government MSC: Remembering

2. James Madison assumed that people

- a. preferred anarchy over the creation of a government.
- b. were basically self-interested.
- c. were basically civic-oriented.
- d. preferred a monarchy over a republican form of government.

ANS: B

DIF: Moderate

REF: CH01 – Making Sense of American Government and Politics

OBJ: Describe the basic functions of government

MSC: Understanding

3. What did British philosopher Thomas Hobbes mean by the term “state of nature”?
- a. a belief that all people were basically good
 - b. a belief that the laws of nature gave kings the right to rule by divine right
 - c. life without any existing government
 - d. a world in which people lived in harmony

ANS: C

DIF: Moderate

REF: CH01 – Making Sense of American Government and Politics

OBJ: Describe the basic functions of government

MSC: Understanding

4. Collective action problems
- a. are very rare in modern society.
 - b. are very common in modern society.
 - c. are rare in the field of education.
 - d. only occur in modern dictatorships.

ANS: B

DIF: Difficult

REF: CH01 – Making Sense of American Government and Politics

OBJ: Describe the basic functions of government

MSC: Applying

5. For James Madison, the notion that government is necessary depended mainly on
- a. his belief that people are self-interested and could not be trusted to rule themselves.
 - b. his belief that direct democracy was the only legitimate way to make collective decisions.
 - c. his desire for the United States to serve as a functioning colony of Great Britain.
 - d. his view that people were willing to sacrifice freedoms to make democracy work.

ANS: A

DIF: Moderate

REF: CH01 – Making Sense of American Government and Politics

OBJ: Describe the basic functions of government

MSC: Understanding

6. If one group took power and established an official state religion, James Madison would likely describe the situation as
- a. a stage in the evolution of government.
 - b. unfortunate but inevitable and outside the scope of government to prevent.
 - c. the best possible outcome given the desires of a majority of the people.
 - d. an example of the tyranny of a faction imposing its will on the rest of the nation.

ANS: D

DIF: Difficult

REF: CH01 – Making Sense of American Government and Politics

OBJ: Describe the basic functions of government

MSC: Applying

7. The separation of powers refers to
- a. a division of authority within Congress, so that not all legislators do the same things.
 - b. the division of authority between the national and state governments.
 - c. providing each part of government with some power over the others.
 - d. dividing a government into different branches with distinct areas of authority.

ANS: D DIF: Moderate
REF: CH01 – Making Sense of American Government and Politics
OBJ: Describe the basic functions of government MSC: Remembering

8. The division of power between the national government and the state and local governments is called _____.
- a. constitutionalism
 - b. federalism
 - c. republicanism
 - d. pluralism

ANS: B DIF: Moderate
REF: CH01 – Making Sense of American Government and Politics
OBJ: Describe the basic functions of government MSC: Remembering

9. Which one of the following is an example of checks and balances?
- a. Federal judges can recuse themselves from participating in certain cases.
 - b. Congress holds the power of impeachment.
 - c. The president is the head of the entire federal bureaucracy.
 - d. Senators have the ability to filibuster a bill.

ANS: B DIF: Moderate
REF: CH01 – Making Sense of American Government and Politics
OBJ: Describe the basic functions of government MSC: Applying

10. When federal officials attempt to address a problem, such as assisting the poor, the sick, or the aged, they are acting
- a. under their constitutional power to provide order.
 - b. under their constitutional power to promote the general welfare.
 - c. through powers specified in the supremacy clause of the U.S. Constitution.
 - d. through powers specified in the Bill of Rights.

ANS: B DIF: Moderate
REF: CH01 – Making Sense of American Government and Politics
OBJ: Describe the basic functions of government MSC: Applying

11. Aristotle
- a. was an eminent British political philosopher who predated Thomas Hobbes.
 - b. more than 2,000 years ago developed a classification scheme for governments that still has utility.
 - c. was an early advocate of presidential systems of government with checks and balances.
 - d. believed in the necessity of overcoming the free rider problem.

ANS: B DIF: Moderate
REF: CH01 – Making Sense of American Government and Politics
OBJ: Describe the basic functions of government MSC: Remembering

12. If people decide there is a problem worth solving that requires the creation of a public good, government involvement is necessary because
- a. majority factions will try to ensure that the good works only for themselves.
 - b. it is difficult for individuals to provide common resources on their own.
 - c. of positive externalities that make the good otherwise undesirable.
 - d. citizens would be able to sue the government in federal court.

ANS: B DIF: Moderate
REF: CH01 – Making Sense of American Government and Politics
OBJ: Describe the basic functions of government MSC: Understanding

13. It may be easy for two neighbors to agree to drain a meadow, which they possess in common, to grow crops. However, when the meadow is much larger and reaches thousands of people, the solution is more difficult because
- decision making is nearly impossible with so many people.
 - factions would form that would ultimately destroy the meadow for everyone.
 - the problem of the tyranny of the majority would be impossible to control.
 - the people involved would suffer from the free rider problem.

ANS: D DIF: Difficult

REF: CH01 – Making Sense of American Government and Politics

OBJ: Describe the basic functions of government MSC: Applying

14. A free rider problem occurs when
- a public good is provided by government.
 - everyone fails to work toward a common goal.
 - the market provides a good by making it free of charge.
 - government officials offer bailouts to failing corporations that come at the expense of taxpayers.

ANS: B DIF: Difficult

REF: CH01 – Making Sense of American Government and Politics

OBJ: Describe the basic functions of government MSC: Understanding

15. Which one of the following is an example of a public good?
- the interstate highway system
 - a new business that creates jobs in a community
 - food produced by local farmers
 - volunteering time to a political campaign

ANS: A DIF: Moderate

REF: CH01 – Making Sense of American Government and Politics

OBJ: Describe the basic functions of government MSC: Applying

16. Politics
- is generally free of conflict.
 - is basically the same thing as government.
 - is the process that determines what government does.
 - does not affect most people on a daily basis.

ANS: C DIF: Moderate REF: CH01 – What Is Politics?

OBJ: Define politics and identify three key ideas that help explain politics

MSC: Remembering

17. Government
- only has an impact on public goods in American society.
 - is not involved in the protection of civil liberties.
 - is basically involved in all aspects of the daily lives of citizens.
 - is not typically involved in the regulation of human behavior.

ANS: C DIF: Moderate REF: CH01 – What Is Politics?

OBJ: Define politics and identify three key ideas that help explain politics

MSC: Understanding

18.



- Which one of the following is a key idea essential for understanding politics?
- a. Governing does not require compromise.
 - b. Conflict is a rare component in the political process.
 - c. Politics affects everyone in American society.
 - d. Rules and procedures generally do not matter that much in the political world.

ANS: C DIF: Moderate REF: CH01 – What Is Politics?
OBJ: Define politics and identify three key ideas that help explain politics
MSC: Understanding

19. **FIGURE**
1.1

**Government
in a Student’s
Daily Life**

- 7:30** Wake up in dorm funded by federal program.
- 8:00** Eat cereal regulated by Food and Drug Administration.
- 8:15** Get dressed in clothing subject to import tariffs and regulations.
- 8:30** Read weather reports that use data from the National Weather Service.
- 9:00** Check e-mail using Internet developed with federal funding.
- 10:00** Drive to school in car whose design is shaped by federal regulations.
- 10:30** Drive past post office, military recruitment office, and environmental cleanup site.
- 11:00** Attend lecture by professor whose research receives federal funding.
- 4:00** Ride home from school on federally subsidized mass transit.
- 7:30** Pay bursar bill using federally funded student loan.
- 8:00** Call friend on cellular network regulated by the Federal Communications Commission.
- 10:00** Watch TV program on station that has federal license.

A college student's life

- a. is typically not affected by federal regulators.
- b. is typically only affected by regulators at the local level.
- c. is affected profoundly by regulators at the federal level.
- d. is only regulated if she or he attends a public university or college.

ANS: C DIF: Moderate REF: CH01 – What Is Politics?

OBJ: Define politics and identify three key ideas that help explain politics

MSC: Applying

20. _____ are likely to disappear quickly from the political agenda, while _____ often take a long time to resolve.

- a. Conflictual issues; valence issues
- b. Social issues such as abortion; national issues
- c. Consensus issues; conflictual issues
- d. Campaign issues; state and local issues

ANS: C DIF: Moderate REF: CH01 – What Is Politics?

OBJ: Define politics and identify three key ideas that help explain politics

MSC: Remembering

21. Politicians who make bargains to resolve political conflict

- a. are typically the ones with the least political power.
- b. are usually trying to enact at least some policy change.
- c. are betraying their principles.
- d. are usually liked but not respected by their colleagues.

ANS: B DIF: Moderate REF: CH01 – What Is Politics?

OBJ: Define politics and identify three key ideas that help explain politics

MSC: Understanding

22. Abortion

- a. has been less controversial since *Roe v. Wade* was decided.
- b. is a policy issue that results in little consensus among the citizenry.
- c. has little to do with political ideology.
- d. policy typically results in a compromise that satisfies most people.

ANS: B DIF: Difficult REF: CH01 – What Is Politics?

OBJ: Define politics and identify three key ideas that help explain politics

MSC: Applying

23. Which one of the following is true about the 2008 elections?

- a. The Republican victories allowed them to control the health care debate in America.
- b. Barack Obama's reelection allowed him to overcome attempts to repeal the Affordable Care Act.
- c. The Republicans successfully rebuffed Democratic attempts to pass an economic stimulus package.
- d. The Democrats illustrated that political process matters in the aftermath of their victories over the Republicans.

ANS: D DIF: Difficult REF: CH01 – What Is Politics?

OBJ: Define politics and identify three key ideas that help explain politics

MSC: Remembering

24. Structural rules require that

- a. citizens vote in U.S. elections.
- b. that the president must be born a U.S. citizen.
- c. all federal regulations be approved by the Supreme Court.
- d. citizens can only influence public policy through the electoral process.

ANS: B DIF: Difficult REF: CH01 – What Is Politics?

OBJ: Define politics and identify three key ideas that help explain politics

MSC: Understanding

25. Rules and procedures are important to the political process because they
- a. influence who has the power to make choices at different points in time.
 - b. determine which interest groups are allowed to engage in lobbying.
 - c. provide a level playing field for everyone interested in politics.
 - d. allow the average citizen to become involved in governmental politics.

ANS: A DIF: Moderate REF: CH01 – What Is Politics?

OBJ: Define politics and identify three key ideas that help explain politics

MSC: Understanding

26. When it comes to political organization,
- a. college students are not very successful.
 - b. America does not have a free rider problem for the most part.
 - c. most people with common goals are likely to pool their resources and mobilize.
 - d. most Americans do not know key distinctions between the Republican and Democratic parties.

ANS: A DIF: Moderate REF: CH01 – What Is Politics?

OBJ: Define politics and identify three key ideas that help explain politics

MSC: Applying

27. The size of the federal government's most recent annual budget was
- a. just over \$100 billion.
 - b. nearly a half a trillion dollars.
 - c. almost \$1 trillion.
 - d. around \$4 trillion.

ANS: D DIF: Moderate REF: CH01 – What Is Politics?

OBJ: Define politics and identify three key ideas that help explain politics

MSC: Remembering

28. The federal government
- a. has more than 50 million employees.
 - b. affects the everyday lives of Americans in many different ways.
 - c. is expected to create more than 1 million pages of new regulations this year.
 - d. is expected to go bankrupt in the next few years.

ANS: B DIF: Moderate REF: CH01 – What Is Politics?

OBJ: Define politics and identify three key ideas that help explain politics

MSC: Understanding

29. The federal government consists of
- a. elected officials, party chairs, and lobbyists.
 - b. the president, members of Congress, the justices of the U.S. Supreme Court, and all citizens who vote in elections.
 - c. 10 million employees, including contractors and postal service workers.
 - d. registered members of a political party.

ANS: C DIF: Moderate REF: CH01 – What Is Politics?

OBJ: Define politics and identify three key ideas that help explain politics

MSC: Remembering

30. Which one of the following is part of the modern economic values of the United States?
- a. workplace democracy
 - b. economic individualism
 - c. economic equality
 - d. the greatest good for the greatest number

ANS: B DIF: Moderate REF: CH01 – Sources of Conflict in American Politics

OBJ: Identify major sources of conflict in American politics MSC: Remembering

31. Over time, the United States has experienced
- a. an increase in stratification by class.
 - b. a departure from free market principles in its overall economic philosophy.
 - c. a sharp increase in political corruption.
 - d. economic decline relative to Europe.

ANS: A DIF: Moderate REF: CH01 – Sources of Conflict in American Politics

OBJ: Identify major sources of conflict in American politics MSC: Understanding

32. Democrats and Republicans most strongly disagree about which area of economic policy?
- a. free trade
 - b. gold or silver standards for currency
 - c. redistributive tax policy
 - d. campaign finance reform

ANS: C DIF: Moderate REF: CH01 – Sources of Conflict in American Politics

OBJ: Identify major sources of conflict in American politics MSC: Understanding

33. Republicans are more likely than Democrats to favor
- a. regulation of business to promote worker safety.
 - b. regulation of business to promote product safety.
 - c. lower taxes and less spending on social policies.
 - d. higher taxes and less spending on social policies.

ANS: C DIF: Moderate REF: CH01 – Sources of Conflict in American Politics

OBJ: Identify major sources of conflict in American politics MSC: Remembering

34. Cultural and moral values garner attention because
- a. Democrats and Republicans largely agree on economic issues.
 - b. interest groups and activists attempt to keep cultural and moral issues at the top of the policy agenda.
 - c. recent presidential election outcomes, such as in 2008, were determined largely by cultural and moral issues.
 - d. cultural and moral issues are relatively new, only becoming important in the twenty-first century.

ANS: B DIF: Moderate REF: CH01 – Sources of Conflict in American Politics

OBJ: Identify major sources of conflict in American politics MSC: Understanding

35. Which one of the following is an important issue to values voters?
- the growing gap between the rich and the poor
 - the teaching of evolution in public schools
 - improving health care for seniors by strengthening Medicare
 - protecting collective bargaining rights for teachers, police, and firefighters

ANS: B DIF: Moderate REF: CH01 – Sources of Conflict in American Politics

OBJ: Identify major sources of conflict in American politics MSC: Applying

36. The melting pot approach to racial and ethnic relations holds that
- racial and ethnic groups should leave their customs behind when they immigrate to the United States.
 - cultural identities do not hold much political relevance in contemporary American politics.
 - the United States has a unique history of supporting the customs of ethnic and racial groups that immigrate to the United States.
 - the United States cannot really assimilate new ethnic and racial groups into its already complicated cultural mix.

ANS: A DIF: Moderate REF: CH01 – Sources of Conflict in American Politics

OBJ: Identify major sources of conflict in American politics MSC: Remembering

37. A person who agreed with the melting pot approach to racial and ethnic relations would be likely to support
- stricter rules for immigrants to be eligible to vote in U.S. elections.
 - English as the country's official language.
 - amnesty for illegal immigrants currently living in the United States.
 - bilingual public education.

ANS: B DIF: Moderate REF: CH01 – Sources of Conflict in American Politics

OBJ: Identify major sources of conflict in American politics MSC: Applying

38.

	Percent	
	2010	2000
White	72	69
Hispanic or Latino	13	12
Black or African American	12	12
Asian	5	4
Native Hawaiian or Other Pacific Islander	0.2	0.2
Two or more races	0.2	0.2

Which one of the following is true about demographics in the United States?

- About 80 percent of Americans are white.
- About 30 percent of Americans are Hispanic or Latino.
- About 13 percent of Americans are Asian.
- African Americans comprise about 12 percent of the population in America.

ANS: D DIF: Moderate REF: CH01 – Sources of Conflict in American Politics

OBJ: Identify major sources of conflict in American politics MSC: Applying

39. Which of these groups tends to vote for Republicans more often than for Democrats?

- a. Asian Americans
- b. Cuban Americans
- c. African-American men
- d. women

ANS: B DIF: Moderate REF: CH01 – Sources of Conflict in American Politics

OBJ: Identify major sources of conflict in American politics MSC: Remembering

40. A cohesive set of ideas and beliefs used for organizing the political world is a(n)

- a. partisan identity.
- b. ideology.
- c. cultural identity.
- d. progressive worldview.

ANS: B DIF: Moderate REF: CH01 – Sources of Conflict in American Politics

OBJ: Identify major sources of conflict in American politics MSC: Remembering

41. A libertarian is likely to favor

- a. greater regulation of business to protect workers.
- b. the legalization of marijuana.
- c. laws restricting or abolishing abortion.
- d. social programs to help the poor.

ANS: B DIF: Moderate REF: CH01 – Sources of Conflict in American Politics

OBJ: Identify major sources of conflict in American politics MSC: Applying

42. A conservative is likely to favor

- a. greater regulation of business to protect workers.
- b. the legalization of marijuana.
- c. laws restricting or abolishing abortion.
- d. social programs to help the poor.

ANS: C DIF: Moderate REF: CH01 – Sources of Conflict in American Politics

OBJ: Identify major sources of conflict in American politics MSC: Applying

43. Liberals tend to support which of the following views?

- a. Government involvement in social welfare should be limited.
- b. There should be greater government regulation of economic markets.
- c. Government should support the pro-life position on the abortion issue.
- d. Government should end all restrictions and regulations on trade with foreign nations.

ANS: B DIF: Difficult REF: CH01 – Sources of Conflict in American Politics

OBJ: Identify major sources of conflict in American politics MSC: Applying

44. Which of the following is true about presidential elections at the state level?

- a. Texas is a purely Republican state.
- b. There are not many Republican voters in the plains states.
- c. In all states, some people vote Democratic while others vote Republican.
- d. Massachusetts is a purely Democratic state.

ANS: C DIF: Moderate REF: CH01 – Sources of Conflict in American Politics
OBJ: Identify major sources of conflict in American politics MSC: Applying

45. How does equality contribute to resolving conflict in the political system?
- People respect the system more if they believe they are going to be treated equally.
 - By promising equal outcomes, politicians have ensured everyone is satisfied.
 - Conflict can only exist when people are being treated differently.
 - Multiculturalism reinforces equality of opportunity in America.

ANS: A DIF: Difficult
REF: CH01 – Resolving Conflict: Democracy and American Political Values
OBJ: Explain how the American values of democracy, liberty, and equality work to resolve political conflict MSC: Understanding

46. To the founders of the American republic,
- equality was the central principle of government.
 - commerce was the central principle of government.
 - liberty was the central principle of government.
 - all people should own the same amount of property.

ANS: C DIF: Difficult
REF: CH01 – Resolving Conflict: Democracy and American Political Values
OBJ: Explain how the American values of democracy, liberty, and equality work to resolve political conflict MSC: Understanding

47. Which one of the following statements is accurate?
- A state referendum is an example of direct democracy.
 - There are no examples of direct democracy in New England.
 - There is no conflict in authoritarian countries.
 - Democracy is the only way to resolve conflict in the world.

ANS: A DIF: Moderate
REF: CH01 – Resolving Conflict: Democracy and American Political Values
OBJ: Explain how the American values of democracy, liberty, and equality work to resolve political conflict MSC: Remembering

SHORT ANSWER

1. What two broad purposes are served by government?

ANS:

Governments exist to provide order and to promote general welfare. On one hand, as Thomas Hobbes contended a long time ago, without government there would be chaos and the state of nature would exist. On the other hand, government exists in order to make the lives of citizens better. There are some problems that individuals cannot address (that is, climate change, terrorist threats, and taking care of the sick). Government action is needed so that societal problems can be addressed.

DIF: Moderate REF: CH01 – Making Sense of American Government and Politics
OBJ: Describe the basic functions of government MSC: Understanding

2. What is the difference between separation of powers and federalism?

ANS:

The focus of separation of powers is strictly on the national government. The framers assigned law-making authority to Congress, law-enforcement authority to the president, and interpreting the meaning of the laws to the Supreme Court. Federalism is the constitutional division of power between the national government and the states. Local governments are appendages of the states legally, so they are not mentioned specifically in the Constitution although they obviously existed in 1787.

DIF: Moderate REF: CH01 – Making Sense of American Government and Politics
OBJ: Describe the basic functions of government MSC: Understanding

3. What is meant by a “stealth democracy?”

ANS:

According to political scientists John Hibbing and Elizabeth Theiss-Morse, a stealth democracy is a governmental structure where nondemocratic practices are routine, such as running government like a business or establishing public policy without a political debate. For those who yearn to avoid conflict in politics, these experts argue that it is impossible. The avoidance of conflict will not make fundamental disagreements between people disappear. In a democracy, people are free to express their opinions, which often clash with the opinions of other citizens. This type of conflict is actually preferred as, without it, government leaders would be free to establish policy as they wished, as chief executive officers routinely do in the private sector today. The presence of conflict is a healthy sign of democracy in action. The challenge, however, is to manage the conflict in question as reasonably as possible.

DIF: Moderate REF: CH01 – What Is Politics?
OBJ: Define politics and identify three key ideas that help explain politics
MSC: Understanding

4. Why is abortion a wedge issue in American politics?

ANS:

Abortion rights have been a controversial subject ever since *Roe v. Wade* was decided in 1973. Public opinion surveys reveal that Americans have a wide array of opinions on the subject. Without a national consensus, a high level of conflict persists regarding this issue. This is not surprising as the issue reflects intense differences of opinion that are deeply rooted in the politics of self-interest, ideology, and personal beliefs.

DIF: Moderate REF: CH01 – What Is Politics?
OBJ: Define politics and identify three key ideas that help explain politics
MSC: Applying

5. Why do structural rules matter in American politics?

ANS:

In politics, rules and procedures determine who has the power to make choices about government policy. For example, the Constitution requires that a president be a natural-born citizen. A bill has to pass in identical language in both chambers of Congress to become law. Federal regulations have a set of procedures in order to be created and implemented. Thus, rules have a significant impact on what can and cannot be created by way of public policy in the United States.

DIF: Moderate REF: CH01 – What Is Politics?
OBJ: Define politics and identify three key ideas that help explain politics

MSC: Applying

6.

Race	Percent
White	63
Hispanic or Latino	17
African American	12
Asian	5
Native American and/or identify as coming from two or more races	3

Provide a capsule summary of the U.S. population.

ANS:

In 2016, about 63 percent of Americans are white; about 17 percent are classified as Hispanic or Latino; about 12 percent are African American; about 5 percent are Asian; and about 3 percent are Native American and/or identify as coming from two or more races.

DIF: Moderate REF: CH01 – Sources of Conflict in American Politics

OBJ: Identify major sources of conflict in American politics MSC: Applying

7. What are the dominant beliefs of liberals, conservatives, and libertarians in the United States today?

ANS:

Liberals generally favor the promotion of social equality and support more government intervention in social programs, more market regulation, and government policies that promote tolerance. Conservatives generally espouse individual freedom and typically favor less government intervention in social programs and the domestic economy, and typically favor traditional social practices. Libertarians prefer very limited government. They believe government should exist to keep citizens safe and perform a few narrowly defined duties. Thus, libertarians are generally conservative on social, economic, and regulatory matters but generally liberal on issues involving personal liberty and privacy.

DIF: Moderate REF: CH01 – Sources of Conflict in American Politics

OBJ: Identify major sources of conflict in American politics MSC: Understanding

8. Why was liberty the central principle of the framers of the U.S. Constitution?

ANS:

Liberty was the central principle due to the context of the times. The framers believed that people should be free to express their political views. In so doing, the framers understood that conflict would be the norm in American politics. To James Madison, in particular, there was natural tension between liberty and conflict. He believed suppressing conflict by limiting freedom was unacceptable in a republican form of government.

DIF: Moderate REF: CH01 – Resolving Conflict: Democracy and American Political

Values

OBJ: Explain how the American values of democracy, liberty, and equality work to resolve political conflict MSC: Understanding

9. Is democracy the only way to resolve conflict in a society?

ANS:

Democracy is not the only way to resolve conflict in a given society. In contrast to most Americans, not all people in the world have a fundamental belief in democracy. Though citizens in a democracy may struggle to address conflictual issues, leaders in authoritarian regimes seek to suppress conflict through violence and by limiting freedom. To those who have a democratic ethos, a transparent debate about controversial matters is preferable to having no debate at all because freedom of speech and expression have been limited by those in power.

DIF: Moderate REF: CH01 – Resolving Conflict: Democracy and American Political Values

OBJ: Explain how the American values of democracy, liberty, and equality work to resolve political conflict MSC: Understanding

ESSAY

1. Identify and define the three pure types of government that were described by Aristotle.

ANS:

Aristotle distinguished between three types of government based on the number of rulers versus the number of people ruled. A monarchy is a rule by one. An aristocracy is rule by the few over the many. A polity is rule by many, such as the general population. Additional distinctions can be made within polities. A constitutional republic exists when power is allocated between and among the legislative, executive, and judicial branches of government. Presidential systems such as the one in the United States tend to embrace the notion of separation of powers. In parliamentary systems, however, the chief executive, or prime minister, is elected from the legislative branch of government, so there is typically more coordination between the two traditional branches.

DIF: Moderate REF: CH01 – Making Sense of American Government and Politics

OBJ: Describe the basic functions of government MSC: Understanding

2. James Madison wrote, “If men were angels, no government would be necessary. If angels were to govern men, neither external nor internal controls on government would be necessary.” Explain what this quote means. Do you believe it to be true? What kind of institutional controls did Madison put into the Constitution as a consequence of his beliefs, and are they effective?

ANS:

Responses will vary to some extent depending upon the student’s context. However, Madison perceived that most Americans were basically self-interested and was concerned that they would not put the interests of the nation as a whole ahead of their own individual or family self-interest. Thus, governments are necessary in order for leaders to create policies that promote the greater common good. Yet leaders in government are human just like common citizens, so he believed that they had to be held accountable for their actions as well. That is why the framers collectively embraced both the notion of separation of powers and checks and balances. Students can define both terms and provide concrete illustrations directly from the Constitution.

DIF: Difficult REF: CH01 – Making Sense of American Government and Politics

OBJ: Describe the basic functions of government MSC: Evaluating

3.



Select one of the following policy issues and discuss how the three key ideas are central to understanding this policy debate: health care, campaign finance reform, national debt, or abortion.

ANS:

The three key ideas are as follows: politics is conflictual, and conflict and compromise are natural components of politics; political process matters because the way political conflicts are resolved is important; and politics is everywhere as what happens in government affects citizens' lives in countless ways. Responses will vary to the latter question about selecting a specific policy debate depending, in part, on the values and beliefs of the student.

DIF: Moderate REF: CH01 – What Is Politics?

OBJ: Define politics and identify three key ideas that help explain politics

MSC: Applying

4. Explain how ideology affects American politics in a profound manner. Cite specific examples.

ANS:

Ideology is a cohesive set of ideas and beliefs that allow people to organize and evaluate their political world. In American politics, conservatives tend to prioritize individual freedom and generally support less federal intervention in the economy and lower levels of social spending. They generally favor more federal intervention in privacy matters (for example, abortion matters and same-sex marriage). Liberals tend to prioritize social equality and generally favor more federal intervention in the economy and higher levels of social spending. Conversely, liberals typically do not endorse any government intervention when it comes to privacy issues. Specific examples will likely vary by student and will be dependent, in part, on the values and the beliefs of the individual student.

DIF: Moderate REF: CH01 – Sources of Conflict in American Politics

OBJ: Identify major sources of conflict in American politics MSC: Applying

5. Identify and define the core American political values and explain how they are central to thinking about and understanding American politics.

ANS:

The three core political values in America are liberty, democracy, and equality. Liberty was the central principle for the framers of the Constitution. Fundamentally, the framers believed that citizens must have the freedom to express their political views, even if those beliefs are unpopular. Liberty entails political freedom, such as freedom of speech, press, assembly, and religion under the First Amendment. Democracy means government by the people. In the context of the United States, the framers created a republican form of government, or a representative democracy. Citizens elect leaders to govern on their behalf. Another core value is equality, which means equal protection under the laws, political equality that ensures each person gets exactly one vote, and equality of opportunity that gives all people a chance to realize their potential. Equality does not mean all people have material equality. These values are central to understanding American politics because Americans have collectively accepted these core beliefs.

DIF: Moderate REF: CH01 – Resolving Conflict: Democracy and American Political Values

OBJ: Explain how the American values of democracy, liberty, and equality work to resolve political conflict MSC: Understanding