

Name _____

Period _____



**AP American Government
BRIEF ESSAY**

DIRECTIONS: You have 10 minutes to completely answer the following question. It is suggested that you take time to plan and outline your answer to each of the issues raised in the question. Remember to use the correct vocabulary, specific examples, and factual evidence to support your position. You must use complete sentences, and have a thesis and conclusion!



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1. Minor political parties have been a common feature of United States politics.
 - a. Describe the point of view expressed about minor parties in the cartoon above.
 - b. Identify and explain how one aspect of the US electoral system acts as an obstacle to minor-party candidates winning elections.
 - c. Minor parties make important contributions to the US political system in spite of the institutional obstacles to their candidates' success. Describe two of these contributions.

READING THE RUBRIC

The single most important aspect of the essay portion of the AP exam is to READ the question. It is impossible for you to answer a question completely and comprehensively without first understanding exactly what is being asked.

Stay on task by writing a heading using the stem of the question, and refer back to that heading as you are writing.

Essay questions are divided into subsections; each subsection must be addressed as a separate bullet point or paragraph in your essay. It is a good idea to label each bullet point as you write with the appropriate letter heading from the question.

Build your rubric before you write! To estimate the point total each question will be assigned for grading purposes, simply instruct your students to underline the key words in each subsection. Words such as **define**, **describe**, **identify**, and **explain** each call for a separate response and each will probably be assigned a point in the final rubric. For example, a question which asks for two identifies, two explains, and two examples will very likely be scored on a 6 point basis

Check off the underlined key words in your exam booklets as you address each point during the progress of your essay. This way you will be sure to respond to all parts of the question.

Always remember that long, involved descriptions full of random facts about a specific institution or concept are neither encouraged nor rewarded in the grading process; you have to 'read for the rubric' in order to make sure both your information and presentation clearly and completely ANSWER the actual question that is being asked.

