

Things we learned at the AP Reading - Helping your students write better FRQs

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Concept Application Free Response Question–2019

Exam

Since 2008 the Alliance Defending Freedom, a conservative Christian interest group, has promoted an annual event known as Pulpit Freedom Sunday. On these occasions, pastors are encouraged to challenge the provision of the tax law known as the Johnson Amendment, which prohibits political activity by certain nonprofit organizations, including religious organizations. While the Johnson Amendment does not restrict religious leaders from speaking out regarding social issues, it does prohibit them from contributing money to political campaigns or speaking out in favor or against candidates running for political office.

On Pulpit Freedom Sunday, as an act of civil disobedience, pastors and religious leaders preach openly about the moral qualifications of candidates seeking office.

After reading the scenario, please respond to A, B, and C below.

- A. Describe an action Congress could take to address the concerns of the interest group in the scenario.
- B. In the context of the scenario, explain how partisan divisions could prevent the action describe in part A.
- C. Explain why the Alliance Defending Freedom might argue that their constitutional rights are threatened by the Johnson Amendment

Teaching Tips for the Concept Application Question



Throughout the school year, you might:

- **PRACTICE!**
 - Use newspaper and periodical articles to expose your students to different political issues and scenarios.
 - Weekly current events assignments
 - Use scenarios in bell ringers, FRQs, and multiple choice exams
- Ensure that students understand the basic task verbs
 - Identify, Describe, Explain

Teaching Tips for the Concept Application Question



Student Writing Tips

- The key to student success on the concept application FRQ is that the student response should always be framed in the context of the scenario.
- Students have to do what the task asks them to do
 - Students often describe rather than explain

Teaching Tips for the Concept Application Question



Student Writing Tips

- Part A requires students to describe an action Congress could take. For example:
 - “Congress could pass a law that allowed religious leaders to speak freely about political candidates.”
- Part B requires students to explain how partisanship in Congress could prevent the action described in A. For example:
 - “Partisan division in Congress could prevent a law from being passed because Democrats and Republicans would not agree on the issue.”

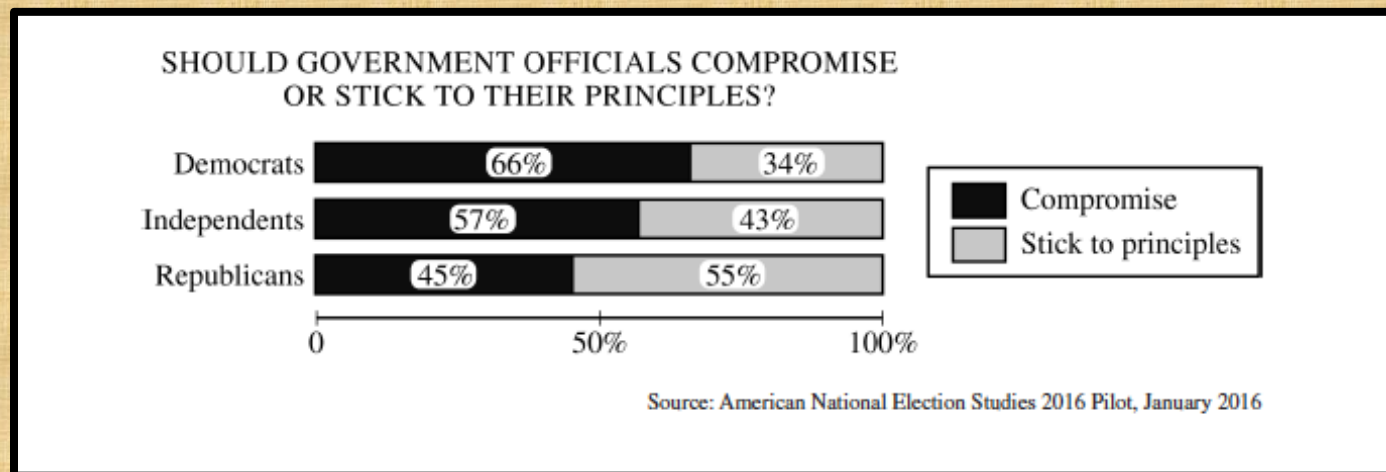
Teaching Tips for the Concept Application Question



Student Writing Tips

- Part C requires students to explain why the Alliance Defending Freedom might argue that its constitutional rights are limited by the Johnson Amendment. For example:
 - “The Alliance Defending Freedom could argue that the Johnson Amendment limits its rights because the First Amendment protects political speech.”

Quantitative Free Response Question–2019

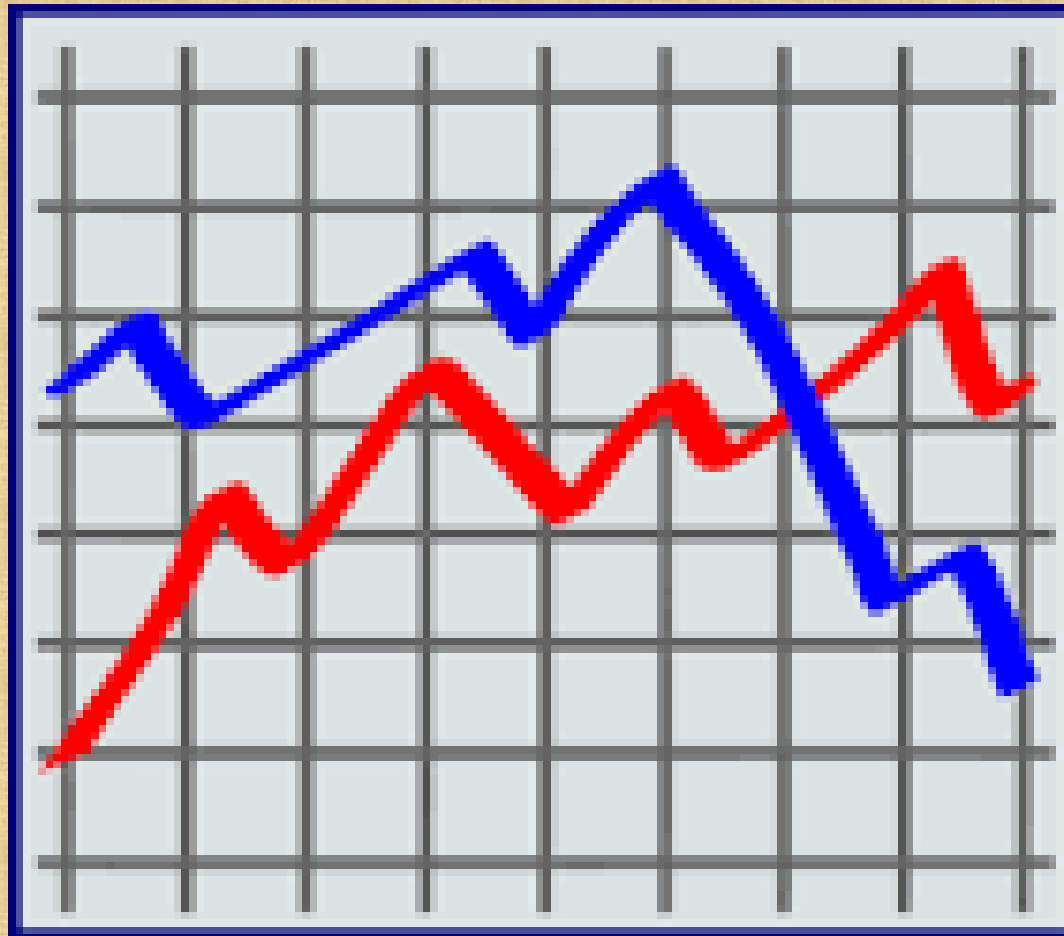


Use the bar graph to answer the following question.

- Identify the political affiliation of people who are most likely to believe elected officials should compromise.
- Describe the difference between Democrats and Republicans on their attitudes about whether government officials should stick to their principles, based on the data in the bar graph.
- Explain how the data in the bar graph could influence how a Republican candidate would shift his or her campaign positions after securing the Republican nomination for president.
- Explain how the data in the bar graph could affect policy making interactions between the president and Congress.

Teaching Tips for the Quantitative Analysis Question

- Part A requires students to read the stimulus provided and simply IDENTIFY a specific pattern/trend/idea in the stimulus



Teaching Tips for the Quantitative Analysis Question



- Part B requires students to read the stimulus provided and DESCRIBE a similarity OR difference shown in the stimulus
 - Students will likely be required to compare two or more ideas from the stimulus.
 - Students must address both topics/concepts mentioned in the task.
 - Students should use comparative language (more/less) in their answer.
 - The best comparisons are done in one sentence. For example:
 - “More Republicans, 55%, believe elected officials should stick to their principles than Democrats where only 34% believe officials should stick to their principles.”

Teaching Tips for the Quantitative Analysis Question

- Part C requires students to draw a conclusion about the data
 - Students will be asked to connect the data to a larger political concept from the framework. For example:
 - “The Republican nominee might be more open to compromise in order to attract independent voters in the general election. This is because 57% of Independents support compromise.”



Teaching Tips for the Quantitative Analysis Question



- Part D requires students to EXPLAIN how the government process/idea shown in the stimulus influences a larger governmental concept not inherent in the stimulus.
- Students need to answer *how* or *why* the data in the stimulus influences the larger political process. For example:
 - “If there is divided government (*a concept not inherent in the stimulus*), policy making interactions will be slow because Republican officials are less likely to compromise according to the data in the chart.

Teaching Tips for the Quantitative Analysis Question



Throughout the school year:

- Teach students how to read quantitative data. Look at titles, x- and y-axis, scale, and sources.
- Use data with your students as bell ringers, in FRQs, and in multiple choice exams.
- Require students to use data in current events presentations
- Ensure your students are familiar with stimuli that use two charts/graphs about an idea or are not traditional bar graphs/pie charts.

Teaching Tips for the Quantitative Analysis Question



Student Writing Tips:

- Students should focus on the idea/concept/actor in each task – be specific. Avoid vague pronouns like “it” or “they.”
- Students should use and define the terms from the stimulus and the task.
- Using specific data points from the stimulus can clarify a response.

SCOTUS Comparison Free Response Question–2019

In the 1950s, Pete Hernandez, a Mexican-American agricultural worker, was found guilty of murder and sentenced to life in prison by an all-white jury in Jackson County, Texas. Hernandez's defense claimed that people of Mexican ancestry had been discriminated against in Jackson County, Texas. They pointed to the fact that no person of Mexican ancestry had served on a jury in 25 years and that the Jackson County Courthouse itself practiced segregation in its facilities. The five jury commissioners, who selected the members of the grand jury, testified under oath that they selected jurors based only on their qualifications and did not consider race or national origin in their decisions.

In the ensuing case, *Hernandez v. Texas* (1954), the Supreme Court unanimously ruled in favor of Hernandez, deciding that evidence of discrimination against Mexican-Americans existed in Jackson County and that the Constitution prohibits such discrimination.

Based on the information above, respond to the following questions.

- A. Identify the clause in the Fourteenth Amendment that was used as the basis for the decision in both *Brown v. Board of Education* (1954) and *Hernandez v. Texas* (1954).
- B. Explain how the facts in both *Brown v. Board of Education* and *Hernandez v. Texas* led to a similar decision in both cases.
- C. Explain how an interest group could use the decision in *Hernandez v. Texas* to advance its agenda.

Teaching Tips for the SCOTUS Comparison Question

- Part A requires students to IDENTIFY a specific clause common to *both* cases.
 - Students have to be specific – for example there is no such thing as “freedom of religion.”
- Part B requires students to explain how the facts in each case led to a similar OR a different ruling.
 - Students should write a “fact sandwich”
 - Sentence one - state a similarity/difference between the two cases
 - Sentence two – describe facts from the required case as evidence
 - Sentence three – describe facts from the non-required case as evidence
 - Sentence four – end with a clear and direct statement that explains how/why the decisions were similar/different

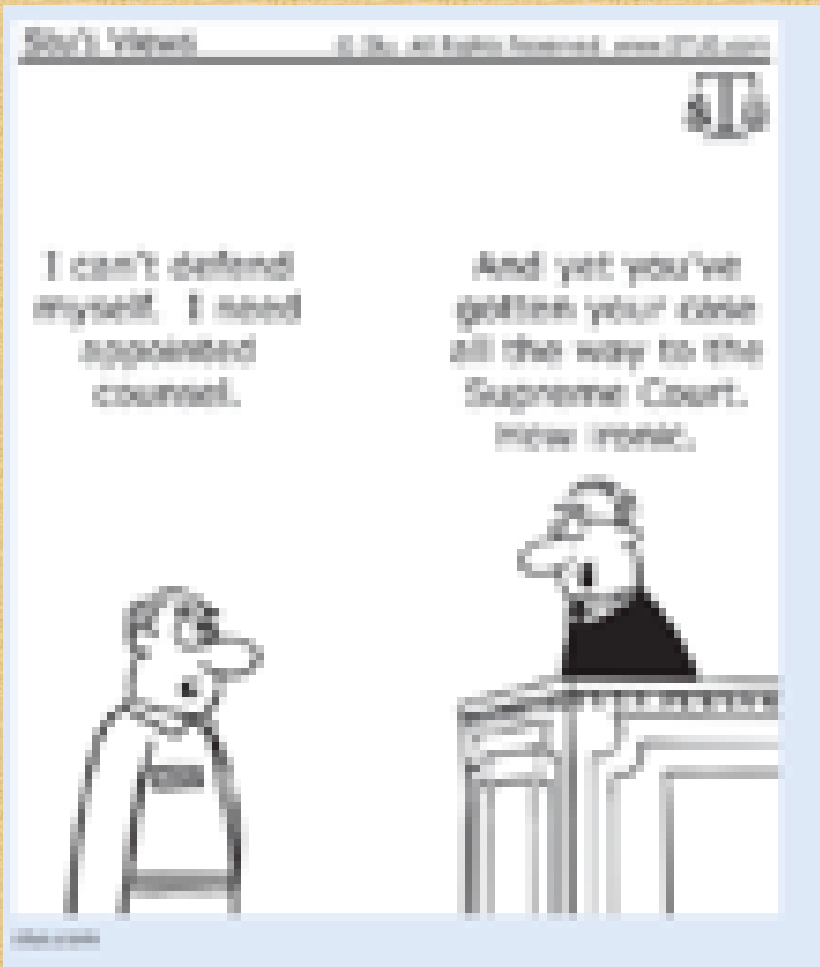


Teaching Tips for the SCOTUS Comparison Question

- For example:
 - “The cases both involved discrimination on the basis of race. In *Brown* the school district segregated African-American and white students from each other. In *Hernandez*, Jackson County kept Latinos off of juries. In both cases, the Supreme Court ruled the discrimination violated the Equal Protection Clause.”



Teaching Tips for the SCOTUS Comparison Question



- Part C requires the students to explain how a group (Congress, interest group, citizens) can use/influence the application of the decision.
 - Students should describe a clear strategy and target.
 - Students should describe a desired outcome.
 - For example:
 - “An interest group could file a lawsuit to end racial discrimination in other situations. Its goal would be to extend civil rights to other groups or in different situations.”

Teaching Tips for the SCOTUS Comparison Question



Throughout the school year:

- Have students make flash cards for amendments 1, 2, 4, 5, 6, 8, and 14.
 - On each flash card students should
 - Include the clauses in that amendment – BE SPECIFIC!
 - Identify the required SCOTUS case(s) that use that amendment in its decision.
- Have students make flash cards for each required SCOTUS case
 - Students should include the FACTS, QUESTION (ISSUE), DECISION, and RATIONALE (REASONING) on each flash card
- Have students write their own SCOTUS question and response.

Argumentative Free Response Question–2019

The United States Constitution establishes a federal system of government. Under federalism, policy making is shared between national and state governments. Over time, the power of the national government have increased relative to those of the state governments.

Develop an argument about whether the expanded powers of the national government benefits or hinders policy making.

Use at least one piece of evidence from one of the following foundational documents.

The Articles of Confederation

Brutus 1

The Federalist 10

In your essay, you must:

- ✓ Articulate a defensible claim or thesis that responds to the prompt and establishes a line of reasoning.
- ✓ Support your claim or thesis with at least TWO pieces of accurate and relevant evidence
 - One piece of evidence must come from one of the foundational documents listed above.
 - A second piece of evidence can come from any other foundational document not used as your first piece of evidence, or it may be from your knowledge of course concepts.
- ✓ Use reasoning to explain why your evidence supports your claim or thesis.
- ✓ Respond to an opposing or alternative perspective using refutation, concession, or rebuttal.

Teaching Tips for Argumentative Question



The claim/thesis has to to be arguable .

- Two elements
 - Take a position
 - Add a *BECAUSE* statement to establish a line of reasoning/argument.
- The claim/thesis does not have to be in the introduction BUT IT HELPS to do so.
 - You might not award a thesis point unless it appears in the introduction in order to reinforce this idea with your students.
 - For example:
 - “The growth of national power has benefitted policymaking because it has helped ensure all citizens are treated equally regardless of where they live.”

Teaching Tips for Argumentative question



Evidence

- Students should write two paragraphs – one for each piece of evidence.
 - Sentence one – state the claim
 - Sentence two – provide the evidence
 - Sentence three – explain how this evidence supports their claim/thesis

Reasoning

- Can be anywhere in response, but ideally should be part of the evidence

Refutation, Concession, Rebuttal (RCR)

- Describe (not identify) an alternative perspective.
- The *reasoning* has to be different than the reasoning/evidence previously used.

Teaching Tips for Argumentative Question



Throughout the school year:

- Provide multiple opportunities to read/use/discuss the foundational documents.
- Incorporate questions about the foundational documents in multiple choice exams.
- Remember that without a thesis, the best score a student can earn is 1 point-incorporate this into your scoring.
- Practice writing thesis statements and RCR frequently - This does not have to be part of an full argumentative free response question.

Thanks so much for your time!

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