

Writing Effective Free Responses for *AP Government and Politics*

The *AP Government and Politics* exam and our unit tests have both multiple choice and free response questions. In order to be successful with the writing portion of these tests follow a few simple rules for AP Free Response writing.

1. Use key vocabulary from the prompt in the topic sentence of your free response.
2. Provide sufficient, accurate details to support the topic sentence.
3. Pay close attention to the verbs in the prompt when answering the question.
4. Write legibly for the reader, with correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation.

1. Use key vocabulary from the prompt in the topic sentence of your free response.

Prompt: *Explain the reasons the Founders added the Bill of Rights to the Constitution?*

Topic Sentence: *The Founders added the Bill of Rights to the US Constitution to protect individual rights from the power of the Federal Government.*

Practice:

Prompt: *Explain how a monarchy differs from a dictatorship?*

Topic sentence: _____

2. Provide sufficient, accurate details to support the topic sentence.

Anti-federalists would not sign the Constitution without assurances that the new national government would be limited in its scope and power. The Federalists agreed to the first 10 amendments to the Constitution, and once the Bill of Rights was added the states ratified the new Constitution.

Practice: Provide details for the topic sentence you wrote about the differences between monarchy and dictatorship.

3. Pay close attention to the verbs in the prompt when answering the question.

Define or identify = tell briefly what something is or means. Use a sentence or two.

Define democracy.

Democracy means rule by the people. It originated in the Greek city-states.

Practice: *Define Monarchy*

List = Make a list of examples.

List the Enlightenment ideas and thinkers that influenced the writing of the US Constitution.

- 1. The US Constitution was based on the Natural Rights Philosophy of John Locke, guaranteeing each citizen individual rights.*
- 2. The separation of powers written in our Constitution used the ideas of Montesquieu, who argued that political power should be divided between different branches of government to avoid despotism.*
- 3. The French Enlightenment thinker Voltaire wrote about freedom of speech and religion, found in the First Amendment of the US Constitution.*

Practice *List several examples of dictatorships.*

Explain, Analyze, Describe, Discuss = These verbs in a prompt mean the writer must make something clear by giving reasons or supporting examples. They indicate that the reader expects paragraphs and not simply sentences. Be sure that your examples are on topic and clearly support the topic sentence of your free response.

Practice *Write two free responses related to topics in chapters 1 and 2. Be sure to write legibly for the reader with correct grammar, spelling, and punctuation. Then have your partner score your free response by using the rubric for free response.*