
Student Responses

Sample: 4A

Due to the differences in backgrounds and beliefs, the founders of the United States shared often-conflicting views on the role of the federal government in the new representative democracy. However, it is clear that the main intent of the founders best aligns with the model of elite representative democracy. The rules crafted for appointed of Congress members and the president demonstrate an elitist model of democracy for the nation.

As layed out originally in the Constitution, members of the Senate were appointed by state legislatures and members of the House were elected by the people. The Constitution also intends for the Senate to be the "upper house" and the House of Representatives to be the "lower house." Members of the Senate have a higher minimum age than that of the House, allowing the Senate to be more mature. The Senate is also the chamber to which the power of advice and consent on presidential treaties and nominations is delegated to. The founders allowed the citizens to elect Representatives, but trusted the decisions of a few well educated state legislatures of those of the people in the state legislatures the power to appoint members of the "upper chamber."

The elitist model intentions of the founders are further seen in the electoral college system. In this system, the people are allowed the initial vote for president, or the "popular vote," which determines the composition of the electorate. However, the actual vote for president is left to a small number of individuals (electors) who cast the final ballots rather than just using the popular vote, mirroring the philosophies of the elite model.

Advocates of the participatory theory may argue that citizens have the power to participate by voting in elections in the United States. However, the founders designed a government which allowed for representation of

Note: Student responses have been typed for clarity.

Sample: 4A (cont.)

the people, while leaving the more complex and important decisions to a well-educated few, as demonstrated by the systems of election for both senators (as directed in the Constitution prior to the 17th Amendment) and the president. They were wary of the powers of the masses, and strived to ensure a representative democracy which served in the best interest of the people.

Sample: 4B

The model of representative democracy that best achieves the founders' intent for American democracy is the pluralist model. The pluralist model is made up of factions. It is the idea that there are many groups fighting for power, and no one group has too much power.

Federalist 10 states that factions are impossible to be without, and therefore a large republic needs to be created to ensure there is room for every faction. All the groups are balanced and make up the republic. For the United States to function, no one group can be too powerful. This is the way of the pluralist model and the Federalist 10 paper. In the United States there are many interest groups and parties who compete for power in the American political system. For example, no one party can be too powerful. If that were so, then all the desires of the American people would not be recognized. The groups cancel each other out. This is why the pluralist model is the best. Also, there are many factions because there are many bureaucracies. If one bureaucracy became too powerful, then the government would not work.

A counterargument is that the elitist model is the best. This is supported by the United States Constitution which gives the most power to property holding wealthy, white males. The elitist model is the idea that the few wealthy people or groups are in control in the United States. This does not best reflect the founders' intent because the founders wanted the people, the citizens, in the United States to be in control. This is not possible with the elitist theory because only the wealthy have any say in the government in the elitist model, not the citizens.

In conclusion, the pluralist model is the best reflection of the founders' intent. It is the best way for the people of America to have a say in the government, through factions that they can choose to take part in.

Sample: 4C

The model that best describes the American political system is the pluralist theory of representative democracy, where groups compete to make society better.

Federalist 10 shows that the founders wanted a pluralist democracy. Federalist 10 describes that factions are dangerous, but are inevitable. This is a prime example of how pluralism is the best representation of American Democracy because there are factions like political parties in the government, but they allow everyone's voice to be heard and through pluralism people compromise which makes everyone somewhat happy.

Another example is the Electoral College. This let different people choose who the president would be, and not the masses, so this shows the founders wanted a pluralist government too.

The people who opposed the Constitution were the Anti-Federalists. They wrote their own Anti-Federalist essays. Brutus I was a part of that. They feared that checks and balances would not prevent the President from having unlimited power like a King would.

Sample: 4D

The founders of the United States Constitution wanted to form an elite model of democracy. They wanted the power of the government to be held by a select few, and this is seen in the Constitution. The Constitution shows this because the founders required Senators be elected by state legislatures and not the people.

It can be concluded that America is a nation of elite few. Why would the rich powerful Founding Fathers want to give power to the people?

Sample: 4E

Participatory democracy best describes what the founders intent for running a stable government today by the people. Participatory democracy is when everyone participates in the voting process and has a say in their government.

The founders wanted a government run by the people, not hierarchies. When they were writing the Constitution, they said "all men are created equal."

In Federalist #10, the founders said that factions are inevitable and will form in American government. This shows that they wanted a participatory system.

Some people say that the American system is elitist because the founders did not let everyone vote, only rich white guys. While this was true initially, today women and minorities and 18-21 year olds can vote. This shows that participatory is better for describing what the founders wanted.

Sample: 4F

Founding documents such as the constitution show how American democracy was always intended to be elitist democracy. First of all, the Constitution was written by men who weren't even voted for to take part in the Constitutional Convention. Some were slave owners and all of them were rich white men.

Some might argue that a declaration of independence ensures a participatory democracy in which all people can take part in their government to ensure their right to the pursuit of happiness. If the Constitution, however didn't address black peoples' or women's rights, then many people were excluded from participating in their government. The exclusion of people means they cannot pursue happiness. If they really wanted that, it wouldn't have been included in the founding papers. It is clear the founders intentionally kept them out and were trying to keep their power. In doing so they created an elitist government.

Sample: 4G

Brutus 1 ensures a stable government run by the people because it does not agree with senators being able to serve for life because if they become corrupt or anything the people are not even given the opportunity to vote them out of office.

An argument that could be made by Federalist 51 is that interest groups are bad and inevitable is not a strong argument because the interest groups are who inform the people and they are made up of the public. The main reason Brutus 1 is the best argument is it wants the people to have the power it doesn't want the supreme court and government officials to remain with all the power for years at a time or even life, instead it wants the power to belong with the people.

Scores and Commentary

NOTE: Student samples are quoted verbatim and may contain grammatical errors.

Sample: 4A

SCORE: 6

Claim/Thesis

The response earned one point for articulating a thesis by stating, "Due to the differences in backgrounds and beliefs, the founders of the United States shared often-conflicting views on the role of the federal government in the new representative democracy. However, it is clear that the main intent of the founders best aligns with the model of elite representative democracy. The rules crafted for appointed of Congress members and the president demonstrate an elitist model of democracy for the nation."

Evidence

The response earned three points for supporting the claim with two pieces of accurate and relevant information by first stating, "As layed out originally in the Constitution, members of the Senate were appointed by state legislatures and members of the House were elected by the people. The Constitution also intends for the Senate to be the 'upper house' and the House of Representatives to be the 'lower house.' Members of the Senate have a higher minimum age than that of the House, allowing the Senate to be more mature. The Senate is also the chamber to which the power of advice and consent on presidential treaties and nominations is delegated to. The founders allowed the citizens to elect Representatives, but trusted the decisions of a few well educated state legislatures of those of the people in the state legislatures the power to appoint members of the 'upper chamber.'"

Secondly, the response stated, "The elitist model intentions of the founders are further seen in the electoral college system. In this system, the people are allowed the initial vote for president, or the 'popular vote,' which determines the composition of the electorate."

Reasoning

The response earned one point for using reasoning to explain why the evidence supported the claim by stating, "However, the actual vote for president is left to a small number of individuals (electors) who cast the final ballots rather than just using the popular vote, mirroring the philosophies of the elite model."

Responds to Alternative Perspectives

The response earned one point for responding to an opposing perspective using refutation by stating, "Advocates of the participatory theory may argue that citizens have the power to participate by voting in elections in the United States. However, the founders designed a government which allowed for representation of the people, while leaving the more complex and important decisions to a well-educated few, as demonstrated by the systems of election for both senators (as directed in the Constitution prior to the 17th Amendment) and the president. They were wary of the powers of the masses, and strived to ensure a representative democracy which served in the best interest of the people."

Sample: 4B**SCORE: 5**

Claim/Thesis

The response earned one point for articulating a thesis by stating, "The model of representative democracy that best achieves the founders' intent for American democracy is the pluralist model. The pluralist model is made up of factions. It is the idea that there are many groups fighting for power, and no one group has too much power."

Evidence

The response earned two points for supporting the claim with one piece of accurate and relevant information by stating, "Federalist 10 states that factions are impossible to be without, and therefore a large republic needs to be created to ensure there is room for every faction." The response did not earn a third point because the response did not provide relevant evidence from a second document or the electoral process to support the thesis.

Reasoning

The response earned one point for explaining why the evidence supported the claim, stating, "In the United States there are many interest groups and parties who compete for power in the American political system."

Responds to Alternative Perspectives

The response earned one point for responding to an opposing perspective using rebuttal by stating, "A counter argument is that the elitist model is the best. This is supported by the United States Constitution, which gives the most power to property holding, wealthy, white males. This does not best reflect the founders' intent because the founders wanted the people, the citizens, in the United States to be in control. This is not possible with the elitist theory because only the wealthy have any say in the government under the elitist model, not all citizens."

Sample: 4C**SCORE: 4**

Claim/Thesis

The response earned one point for articulating a thesis by stating, "The model that best describes the American political system is the pluralist theory of representative democracy, where groups compete to make society better."

Evidence

The response earned two points for supporting the claim with one piece of accurate and relevant information while discussing Federalist 10 and factions "like political parties in the government, but they allow everyone's voice to be heard..."

The response did not earn a third point for supporting the claim, because the response did not provide a second accurate piece of evidence. The response stated, "Another example is the Electoral College. This let different people choose who the president would be, and not the masses, so this shows the founders wanted a pluralist government too." The response did not accurately connect the Electoral College to pluralism.

Reasoning

The response earned one point for explaining why the evidence supported the claim, stating, "This is a prime example of how pluralism is the best representation of American Democracy because there are factions like political parties in the government, but they allow everyone's voice to be heard and through pluralism people compromise which makes everyone somewhat happy."

Responds to Alternative Perspectives

The response did not earn one point for providing an opposing perspective using refutation, concession, or rebuttal. The response stated, "The people who opposed the Constitution were the Anti-Federalists. They wrote their own Anti-Federalist essays. Brutus I was a part of that. They feared that checks and balances would not prevent the President from having unlimited power like a King would." The response did not accurately identify an argument in favor of one of the other models of representative democracy, and therefore cannot respond to it using refutation, concession, or rebuttal.

Sample: 4D

SCORE: 3

Claim/Thesis

The response earned one point for articulating a thesis by stating, "The founders of the United States Constitution wanted to form an elite model of democracy. They wanted the power of the government to be held by a select few, and this is seen in the Constitution."

Evidence

The response earned two points for supporting the claim with one piece of relevant evidence by stating, "The Constitution shows this because the founders required Senators be elected by state legislatures and not the people."

The response did not attempt to support the claim with a second piece of evidence.

Reasoning

The response did not attempt to use reasoning to explain why the evidence supports the claim or thesis.

Responds to Alternative Perspectives

The response did not respond to an opposing or alternative perspective using refutation, concession, and rebuttal. The response simply restated the claim that "It can be concluded that America is a nation of elite few."

Sample 4E

SCORE: 3

Claim/Thesis

The response earned one point for articulating a thesis by stating, "Participatory democracy best describes what the founders intent for running a stable government today by the people. Participatory democracy is when everyone participates in the voting process and has a say in their government."

Evidence

The response earned one point for providing a piece of evidence by stating, "In Federalist #10, the founders said that factions are inevitable and will form in American government. This shows that they wanted a participatory system." It does not earn a second point because this piece of evidence is not accurate and relevant for participatory democracy.

The response did not earn a third point for supporting the claim because the response about the Constitution is not accurate.

Reasoning

The response did not attempt to use reasoning to explain why the evidence supports the claim or thesis.

Responds to Alternative Perspectives

The response earned one point for responding to an opposing perspective using rebuttal by stating, "Some people say that the American system is elitist because the founders did not let everyone vote, only rich white guys. While this was true initially, today women and minorities and 18-21 year olds can vote. This shows that participatory is better for describing what the founders wanted."

Sample: 4F

SCORE: 2

Claim/Thesis

The response earned one point for articulating a thesis by stating, "The Founding documents such as the constitution show how American democracy was always intended to be elitist democracy."

Evidence

The response did not earn any points for providing accurate and relevant information.

Reasoning

The response did not have evidence so it did not earn one point for using reasoning to explain why the evidence supports the claim or thesis.

Responds to Alternative Perspectives

The response earned one point for responding to an alternative perspective by stating, "Some might argue that a declaration of independence ensures a participatory democracy in which all people can take part in their government to ensure their right to the pursuit of happiness. If the Constitution, however didn't address black peoples' or women's rights, then many people were excluded from participating in their government."

Sample: 4G**SCORE: 1**

Claim/Thesis

The response did not earn one point for articulating a claim or thesis. The response did not address the prompt; rather, the response explained why Brutus 1 is the best argument and supports the founders' intent for American democracy.

Evidence

The response earned one point for providing information relevant to the prompt by stating, "The main reason Brutus 1 is the best argument is it wants the people to have the power it doesn't want the supreme court and government officials to remain with all the power for years at a time or even life, instead it wants the power to belong with the people." This information is relevant to the prompt because it is an accurate description of Brutus 1. However, The response did not relate the information to a model of democracy, nor is there a thesis or claim. Thus, the response could not provide two pieces of accurate and relevant information to support a thesis or claim, so no additional points were earned.

Reasoning

The response did not earn one point for explaining why the evidence supported the claim because the response did not provide a thesis or claim.

Responds to Alternative Perspectives

The response did not earn one point for responding to an opposing perspective using refutation because the response did not reference a model of democracy, but rather attempted to rebut why Brutus I fit the founder's intent better than the Federalist 51. Additionally, the response incorrectly describes Federalist 51 by stating, "An argument that could be made by Federalist 51 is that interest groups are bad and inevitable," which is a description of Federalist 10.