

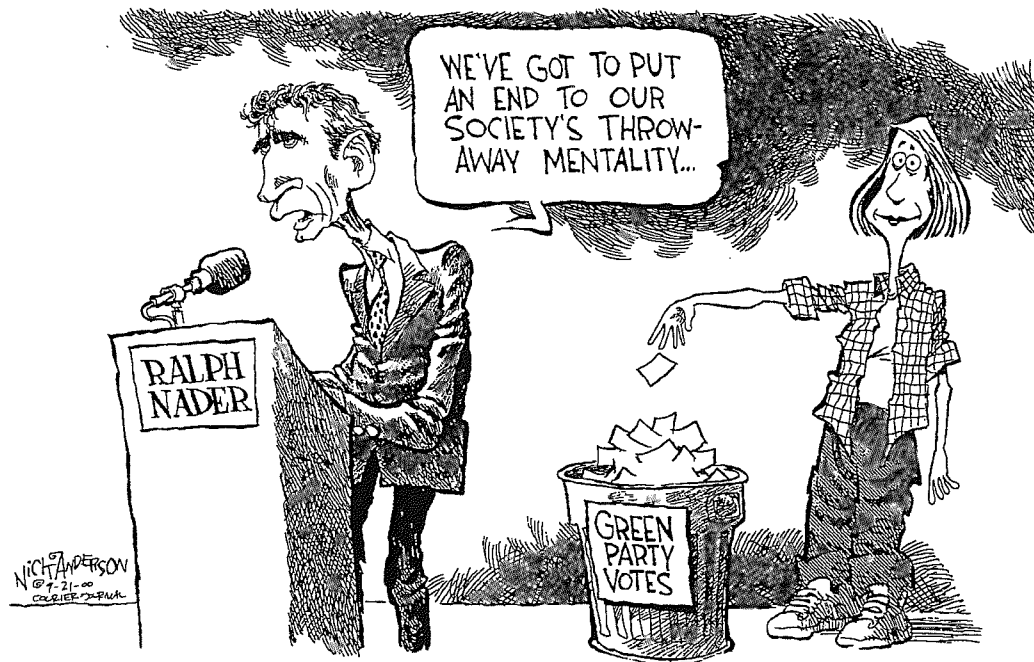
## Unit 2 Test • Potential Essay Questions

**Directions:** I will select one of these questions at random on the day of the test. Prepare by writing rough drafts of each using your textbook, notes, and some independent research and then go over them a couple times before the exam. Your essays will be written and graded according to AP rubric so use it as a formatting guide.

<b>Viewers' Ages and Frequency of Viewing of Network Nightly News: 1974 and 2002 Combined</b>		
1974	Frequently (%)	Rarely (%)
18–29	45	13
30–44	50	12
45–64	68	8
65 and older	71	5
2002	Frequently (%)	Rarely (%)
18–29	19	22
30–44	22	17
45–64	40	11
65 and older	53	8

Source: Martin Wattenberg, 2004. "The Changing Presidential Media Environment." *Presidential Studies Quarterly* 34(3):557–572. Originally taken from the 1974 National Election Study and the 2002 Pew Center Media Study.

1. One of the most important ways the news media influence politics is through agenda setting.
- (a) Define policy agenda.
  - (b) Explain how the national news media engage in agenda setting.
  - (c) Explain the primary reason the president tends to have an advantage over Congress in gaining media attention.
  - (d) Consider the table above.
    - Describe the difference in the viewing patterns of older and younger age-groups.
    - Describe the change from 1974 to 2002 in viewing habits that exists for all age categories.
  - (e) Given the information in the table, describe one implication for presidents in their use of the media to promote their political and policy objectives to the American public.



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2. Minor parties (third parties) have been a common feature of United States politics.
  - (a) Describe the point of view expressed about minor parties in the political cartoon above.
  - (b) Identify and explain how two rules of the United States electoral system act as obstacles to minor-party candidates winning elections.
  - (c) Minor parties make important contributions to the United States political system in spite of the institutional obstacles to their candidates' success. Describe two of these contributions.
  
3. While interest groups and political parties each play a significant role in the United States political system, they differ in their fundamental goals.
  - (a) Identify the fundamental goal of interest groups in the political process.
  - (b) Identify the fundamental goal of major political parties in the political process.
  - (c) Describe two different ways by which interest groups support the fundamental goal of political parties in the political process.
  - (d) For one of the forms of support you described in (c), explain two different ways in which that form of support helps interest groups to achieve their fundamental goal in the political process.
  
4. Individuals often form groups in order to promote their interests. The Constitution contains several provisions that protect the rights of individuals who try to promote their interests in a representative democracy.
  - (a) Explain two provisions in the Bill of Rights that protect individuals who try to influence politics.
  - (b) Interest groups engage in a variety of activities to affect public policy. Explain how each of the following is used by interest groups to exert influence over policy.
    - Grassroots mobilization
    - Lobbying of government institutions
    - Litigation
  - (c) Describe one specific federal governmental regulation of interest groups.