

# AP Gov - Elections and Campaigns Practice Test (Sample)

## Study Guide



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**SAMPLE**

## **Questions**

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- 1. What describes a primary where anyone can vote to choose a presidential candidate?**
  - A. Closed primary**
  - B. Open primary**
  - C. Caucus**
  - D. Run-off primary**
  
- 2. What typically influences an individual's political opinions?**
  - A. Primary focus on economic factors only**
  - B. Family, education, and media**
  - C. Geographical location as the only factor**
  - D. Religious affiliations exclusively**
  
- 3. What does political polarization refer to?**
  - A. A widespread agreement on policies**
  - B. A growing divide in political views between parties**
  - C. A decrease in public interest in politics**
  - D. A shift towards centrist policies**
  
- 4. Which term refers to the overall impact of a candidate's success on their party during elections?**
  - A. Election power**
  - B. Coattails effect**
  - C. Dynamic support**
  - D. Party influence**
  
- 5. Which amendment provides for D.C. representation in the Electoral College?**
  - A. 16th Amendment**
  - B. 19th Amendment**
  - C. 23rd Amendment**
  - D. 26th Amendment**

**6. What day is known for many states conducting their primaries, leading candidates to drop out if they perform poorly?**

- A. Election Day**
- B. Super Tuesday**
- C. Primary Day**
- D. Candidate Evaluation Day**

**7. Which type of advocacy focuses on influencing issues rather than direct candidate support?**

- A. Express advocacy**
- B. Issue advocacy**
- C. Direct mailing**
- D. Political Action Committees**

**8. What is the term for when candidates benefit from media coverage without having to pay for it?**

- A. Paid media**
- B. Endorsement media**
- C. Free media or earned media**
- D. Social media influence**

**9. How do incumbents typically fare in elections?**

- A. They generally have a disadvantage due to scrutiny**
- B. They generally have an advantage due to name recognition and established networks**
- C. They are equally likely to win or lose**
- D. They often rely solely on campaign funding to win**

**10. What does disenfranchisement mean in a political context?**

- A. The process of increasing voter turnout**
- B. The removal of voting rights from individuals**
- C. The enhancement of voting technologies**
- D. The promotion of equitable voting practices**

## **Answers**

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- 1. B**
- 2. B**
- 3. B**
- 4. B**
- 5. C**
- 6. B**
- 7. B**
- 8. C**
- 9. B**
- 10. B**

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## **Explanations**

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**1. What describes a primary where anyone can vote to choose a presidential candidate?**

- A. Closed primary**
- B. Open primary**
- C. Caucus**
- D. Run-off primary**

An open primary is a type of primary election where any registered voter can participate in the selection of a party's candidate for the presidential election, regardless of party affiliation. This means that voters do not have to be members of a particular political party to vote in that party's primary. The accessibility of open primaries allows for a broader range of voter participation and can potentially lead to more moderate candidates being nominated, as they must appeal to a wider audience that includes independents and members of other parties. In contrast, a closed primary restricts participation to registered party members only, which means that only those who have declared their party affiliation can vote in that party's primary. This system is designed to ensure that only dedicated party members have a say in choosing their party's candidate. A caucus is a different approach where party members gather to discuss and vote on candidates rather than casting secret ballots. A run-off primary occurs when no candidate receives a majority, prompting a second election among the top candidates. Thus, the defining characteristic of an open primary is its inclusivity, making it the correct answer for the described primary where anyone can vote to choose a presidential candidate.

**2. What typically influences an individual's political opinions?**

- A. Primary focus on economic factors only**
- B. Family, education, and media**
- C. Geographical location as the only factor**
- D. Religious affiliations exclusively**

The correct answer highlights the multifaceted nature of political socialization, which encompasses a variety of influences that shape an individual's political opinions. Family, education, and media are key elements in this process. Family often serves as the primary source of early political socialization, as individuals are generally exposed to their parents' beliefs and values from a young age. This foundational influence can establish predispositions toward certain political ideologies and parties. Education plays a critical role as well, exposing individuals to differing viewpoints, civic education, and the skills necessary for critical thinking. Schools often encourage discussions around political topics and may provide a more structured understanding of governmental systems and democratic participation, further shaping political perspectives. Media, in its various forms—traditional outlets like newspapers and television, as well as social media—also plays a crucial role in informing individuals about political issues, candidates, and events. The content consumed through these channels can significantly impact public opinion and political knowledge. In contrast, focusing strictly on economic factors, geographical location, or religious affiliations as standalone influences would overlook the complex interplay of various social factors. Economic circumstances certainly affect political opinions, but they do not exist in isolation from family dynamics, educational background, or media influence. Similarly, while geographical location can play a

### 3. What does political polarization refer to?

- A. A widespread agreement on policies
- B. A growing divide in political views between parties**
- C. A decrease in public interest in politics
- D. A shift towards centrist policies

Political polarization refers to the growing divide in political views between different parties or ideological groups. This phenomenon occurs when individuals within a society or a political system become more extreme in their beliefs and more partisan in their alignments, leading to significant differences in opinions on major political issues. As a result of this polarization, there is often a decrease in compromise and an increase in political hostility among opposing groups, making it challenging to reach consensus on various policies. The term highlights not only the differences in beliefs and policies between political parties but also the emotional and social distances that can develop between supporters of different ideologies. This divide can have profound impacts on governance, public discourse, and the overall functioning of the political system.

### 4. Which term refers to the overall impact of a candidate's success on their party during elections?

- A. Election power
- B. Coattails effect**
- C. Dynamic support
- D. Party influence

The term that accurately describes the overall impact of a candidate's success on their party during elections is the coattails effect. This phenomenon occurs when a strong candidate effectively brings other members of their party into office through their popularity or electoral success. When voters show strong support for a particular candidate, they may also vote for other candidates from the same party on the ballot, thus enhancing their chances of winning. The coattails effect is particularly notable during presidential elections, where the popularity of the presidential nominee can lead to gains for congressional and local party candidates. This dynamic underscores the importance of having charismatic and well-supported candidates who can elevate the entire party's performance in elections, translating to increased representation and potential influence in government. Other terms, such as "election power," "dynamic support," and "party influence," do not specifically capture the idea of one candidate's success boosting others in the same party during elections. Instead, they may refer to broader concepts within political science that lack the specific causal relationship described by the coattails effect.

**5. Which amendment provides for D.C. representation in the Electoral College?**

- A. 16th Amendment**
- B. 19th Amendment**
- C. 23rd Amendment**
- D. 26th Amendment**

The 23rd Amendment to the United States Constitution is the amendment that provides for representation of Washington, D.C. in the Electoral College. Ratified in 1961, this amendment allows the District of Columbia to participate in presidential elections by granting it three electoral votes, equivalent to the number of electors that the least populous state has. This was a significant development because prior to the 23rd Amendment, residents of D.C. did not have a vote in presidential elections, despite being subject to federal laws and taxes. By allowing D.C. electoral votes, the amendment aimed to provide a voice to its residents in the presidential selection process, reflecting the democratic principle that those governed should have a say in their government. The other amendments listed do not address D.C. electoral representation. The 16th Amendment pertains to income tax, the 19th Amendment grants women the right to vote, and the 26th Amendment lowers the voting age to 18. Each of these amendments serves different purposes unrelated to the representation of Washington, D.C. in presidential elections, which is specifically addressed by the 23rd Amendment.

**6. What day is known for many states conducting their primaries, leading candidates to drop out if they perform poorly?**

- A. Election Day**
- B. Super Tuesday**
- C. Primary Day**
- D. Candidate Evaluation Day**

The day known for many states conducting their primaries, which can significantly affect candidates' campaigns and often lead to some candidates dropping out if they do not perform well, is Super Tuesday. On this day, a large number of states hold their primary elections simultaneously, creating a pivotal moment in the election cycle. The results from Super Tuesday can result in a clearer picture of which candidates have significant support and viability within their party. Candidates who perform poorly on this critical day may choose to withdraw from the race due to a lack of momentum or financial backing, as they may struggle to secure delegates for the nomination. This day is therefore crucial in shaping the trajectory of presidential primaries and often determines the leading candidates heading toward the national conventions.

**7. Which type of advocacy focuses on influencing issues rather than direct candidate support?**

- A. Express advocacy**
- B. Issue advocacy**
- C. Direct mailing**
- D. Political Action Committees**

The correct choice is issue advocacy, which specifically targets influencing public opinion and policy on certain issues rather than endorsing or supporting specific candidates. Issue advocacy involves campaigns or efforts that aim to raise awareness, educate the public, and mobilize supporters around particular topics, such as healthcare, environmental policy, or education reform. This type of advocacy can include advertisements, grassroots activism, and public relations campaigns focused on driving discussion and action regarding specific legislative matters or social issues without directly linking to a candidate's campaign. This approach is distinct from express advocacy, which explicitly supports or opposes particular candidates for office, making clear endorsements about who individuals should vote for. Additionally, direct mailing refers to a method of communication used by campaigns, interest groups, or organizations to relay information, findings, or requests directly to individuals or stakeholders, but it is not solely focused on influencing issues independently. Political Action Committees (PACs) involve fundraising and contributing to candidates' campaigns and therefore are more closely aligned with express advocacy rather than the broader influence of issues that issue advocacy embodies.

**8. What is the term for when candidates benefit from media coverage without having to pay for it?**

- A. Paid media**
- B. Endorsement media**
- C. Free media or earned media**
- D. Social media influence**

The term that describes the situation where candidates receive media coverage without having to pay for it is known as free media or earned media. This type of coverage can arise from news stories, press releases, and other forms of media attention that highlight a candidate's activities, policies, or campaign events. It is particularly valuable because it often comes with a degree of credibility that paid advertisements may lack, as it is seen as being conveyed by journalists rather than the candidates themselves. Free media plays a crucial role in increasing a candidate's visibility and can significantly influence public perception and voter behavior. Unlike paid media, which involves advertisements purchased by candidates to promote their campaigns, free media typically results from journalistic interest in a candidate's story or achievements. This aspect of the media landscape is important for candidates, especially in competitive elections, as it can amplify their message and reach broader audiences without the financial burden associated with traditional advertising.

## 9. How do incumbents typically fare in elections?

- A. They generally have a disadvantage due to scrutiny
- B. They generally have an advantage due to name recognition and established networks**
- C. They are equally likely to win or lose
- D. They often rely solely on campaign funding to win

Incumbents typically fare well in elections primarily because they benefit from name recognition and established networks within their constituencies. Having already held office, they are more familiar to voters, which can lead to a higher level of trust and support. Incumbents often have access to resources that enhance their campaign efforts, such as established campaign infrastructures, relationships with party organizations, and fundraising abilities. Additionally, incumbents can point to their record in office, showcasing their accomplishments and experience to voters. Furthermore, they tend to have better visibility in the community due to their ongoing presence in public life, which makes them more relatable to voters. This combination of factors creates a significant advantage over challengers, who may struggle to gain the same level of recognition or support, making it challenging for them to unseat an incumbent.

## 10. What does disenfranchisement mean in a political context?

- A. The process of increasing voter turnout
- B. The removal of voting rights from individuals**
- C. The enhancement of voting technologies
- D. The promotion of equitable voting practices

In a political context, disenfranchisement refers specifically to the removal of voting rights from individuals or groups. This can occur through various means, such as laws that impose restrictions on voting qualifications or practices that systematically exclude certain populations from participating in elections. Historical examples include literacy tests, poll taxes, and laws that prevent specific groups, such as felons or certain racial minorities, from voting. Understanding disenfranchisement is crucial as it highlights issues of access to the democratic process and the importance of protecting voting rights for all citizens. The other options pertain to enhancing participation and equity in the electoral process, but they do not accurately capture the meaning of disenfranchisement, which centers on the denial of the right to vote.