**Policy Roots and   
Explore the Data   
Revel-Only Bonus Questions**

** Questions**

1. How has the gap between the rich and the poor in the United States changed in the past 50 years?

Answer: The gap has widened markedly. While income has increased across the board, it has increased much more substantially for the rich.

Topic: The Constitutional Roots of Inequality

Learning Objective: 2.4 Categorize the issues at the Constitutional Convention and outline the resolutions reached on each type of issue.

Difficulty Level: Moderate

Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

2. How did the unity of the Democrats and that of the Republicans in each house change between the ratification of the Civil War amendments and that of the post–Civil War amendments?

Answer: The parties were much less unified by the time Congress voted on the post–Civil War amendments.

Topic: How Frequently Should We Amend the Constitution?

Learning Objective: 2.7 Explain how the Constitution can be formally amended and how it changes informally.

Difficulty Level: Moderate

Skill Level: Analyze It

3. An exploration of the data reveals that George W. Bush and Al Gore each won about the same percentage of the popular vote and the same percentage of votes in the Electoral College. Why, then, is so much more of these maps of the United States colored red for Republican rather than blue for Democrat?

Answer: George W. Bush did better in less-populated rural areas, while Al Gore did well in the densely populated urban areas.

Topic: The Election of 2000: Bush v. Gore

Learning Objective: 2.8 Assess whether the Constitution establishes a majoritarian democracy and how it limits the scope of government.

Difficulty Level: Difficult

Skill Level: Analyze It

4. How has federalism affected the standardized tests that schoolchildren must take?

a. Each state submits to the national government the content it deems important; the national government aggregates this information and creates a national standardized test.

b. Each state decides for itself whether or not to have standardized tests because public education is not an enumerated power given to Congress by the Constitution.

c. The national government determines the content of standardized tests, and each state must administer the test and report the results to the national government.

d. The national government mandates that schools administer standardized tests, but each state determines its own testing regime.

Answer: d

Topic: Diversity in Standardized Testing in Public Education Under Federalism

Learning Objective: 3.4 Characterize the shift from dual to cooperative federalism and the role of fiscal federalism in intergovernmental relations today.

Difficulty Level: Moderate

Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

5. Which of the following regions of the United States is most likely to administer the death penalty?

a. the Northeast

b. the Upper Midwest

c. the South

d. the West Coast and Pacific states

Answer: c

Topic: Should Whether You Live Depend on Where You Live?

Learning Objective: 3.5 Explain the consequences of federalism for diversity in public policies among the states.

Difficulty Level: Easy

Skill Level: Remember the Facts

6. To what extent do performing artists have the right to include lewd lyrics or actions in their performances?

a. Artists have the right to include lewd lyrics or actions in their performances, but that right can be limited by the bureaucracy when the performance is broadcast on radio or television.

b. Artists have the right to include lewd lyrics or actions in their performances, but that right can be limited by the bureaucracy when the performance is distasteful.

c. Artists have the right to include lewd lyrics or actions in their performances, but that right can be limited by Congress when the performance is distasteful.

d. Artists have the right to perform, but they do not have the right to include lewd lyrics or actions in their performances.

Answer: a

Topic: Deciphering the Meaning of Free Speech

Learning Objective: 4.3 Differentiate the rights of free expression protected by the First Amendment and determine the boundaries of those rights.

Difficulty Level: Moderate

Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

7. How does the racial composition of the population of people who are executed in the United States compare with the racial composition of the U.S. population?

a. Hispanics are overrepresented among those who are executed, but African Americans are not.

b. African Americans are overrepresented among those who are executed, but Hispanics are not.

c. Both Hispanics and African Americans are overrepresented among those who are executed.

d. The racial composition of the population of people who are executed is consistent with the racial composition of the U.S. population.

Answer: b

Topic: Is the Death Penalty Racially Biased?

Learning Objective: 4.6 Characterize defendants’ rights and identify issues that arise in their implementation.

Difficulty Level: Easy

Skill Level: Remember the Facts

8. How might protests against the police in U.S. cities, including Ferguson, Missouri, be a residual effect of the 1956 Interstate Highways Act?

Answer: The construction of the interstate highway system affected a disproportionate number of low-income, inner-city neighborhoods with large African American populations. These highways, which divided urban neighborhoods along class and racial lines, further isolated and segregated black communities and further entrenched poverty. These issues are at the heart of protests against the police in American cities.

Topic: Covert Racism and the Highway to Discrimination

Learning Objective: 5.7 Establish how civil rights policy advances democracy and increases the scope of government.

Difficulty Level: Difficult

Skill Level: Analyze It

9. What is the most common type of immigration to the United States?

a. employment sponsored

b. family sponsored

c. refugees

d. political asylum seekers

Answer: b

Topic: Should Immigration Be Based More on Skills Than Blood?

Learning Objective: 6.1 Identify demographic trends and their likely impact on American politics.

Difficulty Level: Easy

Skill Level: Remember the Facts

10. Describe the political feedback loop that helps to support Social Security.

Answer: Since the enactment of Social Security, organized interests, such as those who receive Social Security benefits, have emerged and grown around this program. These interests advocate for the continuation of Social Security, thus completing a feedback loop.

Topic: Social Security and Political Feedback Loops

Learning Objective: 6.1 Identify demographic trends and their likely impact on American politics.

Difficulty Level: Moderate

Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

11. How has the digital divide changed since 2000?

Answer: In 2000, about 20 percent of those without a high school degree used the Internet, while almost 80 of those with a bachelor’s degree used the Internet, making the digital divide nearly 60 percentage points. By 2016, the gap had shrunk to about 30 percentage points as everyone across education levels used the Internet more.

Topic: What Should Be Done About the Digital Divide?

Learning Objective: 7.1 Describe how American politicians choreograph their messages through the mass media.

Difficulty Level: Moderate

Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

12. In your opinion, is embedded journalism likely to enhance citizens’ understanding of war?

Answer: Answers will vary. Some may argue that embedded journalists provide the public with better access and a better perspective on a particular news story. Others may argue that embedded journalists simply offer the military another way to control a story.

Topic: Embedded Journalism

Learning Objective: 7.2 List the major criteria that determine which news stories receive the most media attention.

Difficulty Level: Difficult

Skill Level: Analyze It

13. How does the consumption of political information by younger Americans compare with that of Americans who are 30 years of age or older?

Answer: Younger Americans consume less political news and are more likely to rely on the Internet and social media for information about politics.

Topic: How News Consumption of Presidential Campaigns Differs by Age Group

Learning Objective: 7.3 Analyze the impact of the media on public opinion and political behavior.

Difficulty Level: Moderate

Skill Level: Analyze It

14. As suggested by the data, why are young Pennsylvanians less likely to vote than are young Michiganders?

Answer: Pennsylvania has a closed primary, which allows only Democrats and Republicans to vote. Michigan has an open primary, which allows Democrats and Republicans to vote but also welcomes independent and third-party voters. Since young people are more often independent voters, they have more opportunities to participate in elections in Michigan.

Topic: Should Political Parties Choose Their Nominees in Open or Closed Primaries?

Learning Objective: 8.3 Describe the structure of political parties at the national, state, and local level.

Difficulty Level: Difficult

Skill Level: Analyze It

15. How did Bernie Sanders shape the official platform of the 2016 Democratic Party?

Answer: Sanders appointed people to the party’s platform committee who shared his policy objectives. These committee members exerted influence on the process and won several concessions to include policies that Sanders favored.

Topic: Party Platforms

Learning Objective: 8.4 Evaluate how well political parties generally do in carrying out their promises.

Difficulty Level: Difficult

Skill Level: Analyze It

16. How might the McGovern–Fraser reforms following the 1968 Democratic National Convention have contributed to the election of Donald Trump in 2016?

Answer: The McGovern–Fraser reforms diminished the influence of political elites in the presidential nomination process by requiring the use of primaries and caucuses to select convention delegates. In 2016, it did not matter that Donald Trump lacked support from Republican elites as long as he kept winning Republican primaries and caucuses—which he did.

Topic: Trump Wins the Presidency

Learning Objective: None

Difficulty Level: Difficult

Skill Level: Analyze It

17. What knowledge does one gain through formal education that makes it easier to vote?

Answer: Answers will vary. The data presented here show that, through formal education, citizens learn about political ideologies and that Republicans are more conservative than Democrats. This knowledge makes it easier for citizens to decide who to vote for on Election Day. In addition, college students learn how to register for classes, a skill that makes it easier to register to vote.

Topic: Education Level as a Predictor of Voter Turnout

Learning Objective: 9.5 Identify the factors that influence whether people vote.

Difficulty Level: Moderate

Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

18. Was the state where you live a battleground state in 2016? How might this help to explain how much of a presence the presidential candidates had in your state during the 2016 presidential campaign?

Answer: Answers will vary. The battleground states were Nevada, Arizona, Colorado, Iowa, Wisconsin, Michigan, Ohio, Pennsylvania, New Hampshire, Maine, Virginia, North Carolina, Georgia, and Florida. These battleground states saw a greater presence from the presidential candidates than did non-battleground states.

Topic: Battleground States

Learning Objective: 9.7 Evaluate the fairness of the Electoral College system for choosing the president.

Difficulty Level: Moderate

Skill Level: Apply What You Know

19. Which U.S. House candidates did the political action committee representing Major League Baseball tend to give its money to between 2004 and 2014?

Answer: The Major League Baseball PAC gave money to candidates from both political parties, but it gave more of its money to whichever party was in power that year. When Republicans were in the majority (2004, 2006, 2012, and 2014), Republican candidates received more money. Democrats received more money in 2008 and 2012, when they were in power.

Topic: Principles of PAC Behavior: Major League Baseball: An Illustration

Learning Objective: 10.3 Analyze the methods and activities that interest groups use to influence political outcomes.

Difficulty Level: Moderate

Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

20. How have contributions to Democrats and Republican candidates by political action committees changed from 1999 to 2016?

Answer: PAC contributions to Republican candidates have doubled, from   
$95 million in 1999–2000 to $202 million in 2015–2016. PAC contributions to Democratic candidates have also increased, though not quite as dramatically: from $98 million to $149 million. For both parties, this is a sizeable increase.

Topic: Should PACs Be Eliminated?

Learning Objective: 10.3 Analyze the methods and activities that interest groups use to influence political outcomes.

Difficulty Level: Moderate

Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

21. What has contributed to AARP’s success in protecting Social Security?

a. There has been an increase in the number of workers paying Social Security taxes in proportion to the number of retirees receiving benefits.

b. AARP receives more than half of its income from the government and uses that money to lobby for continued Social Security benefits.

c. AARP is a small interest group whose membership has rather intense opinions.

d. It is easier to protect existing government benefits than it is to change benefits.

Answer: d

Topic: Social Security and the AARP

Learning Objective: 10.5 Evaluate how well James Madison’s ideas for controlling the influence of interest groups have worked in practice.

Difficulty Level: Difficult

Skill Level: Analyze It

22. Which of the following has contributed significantly to the recent increase in student debt?

a. Colleges cut administrative positions, resulting in students taking longer to graduate.

b. Congress expanded eligibility for federal student loans, resulting in more Americans attending college.

c. Deteriorating infrastructure has caused high dropout rates, resulting in large debt loads borne by dropouts with few marketable skills.

d. Students are taking out excessive loans for entertainment expenses or to pay off credit cards.

Answer: b

Topic: Student Debt in America

Learning Objective: None

Difficulty Level: Moderate

Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

23. How does the number of contested and open-seat elections vary according to whether a state has term limits?

Answer: States that have term limits are more likely to see contested elections in which there is a major party opponent. States with term limits are also more likely to see open-seat elections in which there is no incumbent running.

Topic: Should We Impose Term Limits on Members of Congress?

Learning Objective: 11.2: Identify the principal factors influencing the outcomes of congressional elections.

Difficulty Level: Moderate

Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

24. On what basis did the courts overturn Trump’s executive orders that banned some travel to the United States?

a. The executive orders violated the First Amendment’s establishment clause by singling out people based on religion.

b. The executive orders were unconstitutional on their face because the president does not have the power to make policies related to immigration.

c. The executive orders were unconstitutionally vague.

d. The executive orders hindered the ability of law enforcement to exercise a legitimate state interest.

Answer: a

Topic: Political Checks on Trump’s Immigration Ban

Learning Objective: 12.2 Evaluate the president’s constitutional powers and the expansion of presidential power.

Difficulty Level: Moderate

Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

25. What might explain Donald Trump’s high success rating in getting Congress to enact his legislative agenda?

Answer: Answers will vary. Some will argue that Trump is successful because Republicans controlled both house of Congress during his first two years in office.

Topic: Should We Increase the President’s Legislative Powers?

Learning Objective: 12.2 Evaluate the president’s constitutional powers and the expansion of presidential power.

Difficulty Level: Difficult

Skill Level: Apply What You Know

26. Why does Congress enact earmarks?

Answer: Earmarks are congressionally mandated spending projects. Legislators have an incentive to add earmarks to spending bills to bring federal projects and federal funds to their home districts. This helps members of Congress get reelected.

Topic: Earmarks and the Short-lived Line-item Veto

Learning Objective: 13.2 Analyze federal expenditures and the growth of the budget.

Difficulty Level: Difficult

Skill Level: Analyze It

27. In absolute dollars and as a percentage of gross domestic product, how large is the total external debt of the United States compared with that of other countries?

Answer: In absolute U.S. dollars, the U.S. debt is trillions of dollars larger than that of other countries. As a percentage of gross domestic product, U.S. debt is comparable to that of several other countries and considerably smaller than that of Japan.

Topic: Balancing the Budget: Top Countries by Total External Debt, 2014

Learning Objective: 13.3 Outline the budgetary process and explain the role that politics plays.

Difficulty Level: Moderate

Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

28. Which statement accurately describes how the value of federal contracts has changed since 2005?

a. Defense-related contracts have skyrocketed while non-defense related contracts have stayed about the same.

b. Both defense-related contracts and non-defense-related contracts have increased.

c. Total federal contracts have increased even though defense-related contracts have decreased.

d. Total federal contracts have decreased even though defense-related contracts have increased.

Answer: c

Topic: Should the Federal Bureaucracy Contract Out to Private Organizations?

Learning Objective: 14.3 Identify the factors that influence the effectiveness of bureaucratic implementation of public policy.

Difficulty Level: Moderate

Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

29. How is bureaucratic rulemaking about climate change different under Donald Trump than it was under Barack Obama?

Answer: Barack Obama directed the bureaucracy to address climate change; it did so by enacting the Clean Power Plan. Donald Trump and his appointee to head the Environmental Protection Agency have been scaling back regulations implemented under Obama and designed to address climate change.

Topic: Bureaucratic Rulemaking on Climate Change

Learning Objective: 14.4 Describe how bureaucracies regulate and assess deregulation and alternative approaches to regulation.

Difficulty Level: Difficult

Skill Level: Analyze It

30. George W. Bush nominated John Roberts to the Supreme Court and Barack Obama nominated Sonia Sotomayor. In hindsight, how satisfied are these former presidents likely to be with their picks?

Answer: Bush is likely disappointed in Roberts, who started out right of center but has become more centrist over time. Obama is likely pleased with Sotomayor, who started out left of center and has become more liberal over time.

Topic: The Changing Ideological Orientations of Supreme Court Justices

Learning Objective: 15.3 Explain the process by which judges and justices are nominated and confirmed.

Difficulty Level: Difficult

Skill Level: Apply What You Know

31. Which president was the first to have lasting success in limiting child labor?

Answer: Franklin D. Roosevelt

Topic: Protections for Child Labor

Learning Objective: 15.6 Trace the Supreme Court’s use of judicial review in major policy battles in various eras of American history.

Difficulty Level: Easy

Skill Level: Remember the Facts

32. Which statement best describes how family income changed from 2010 to 2013?

a. The income of nonwhites nearly caught up to the income of whites.

b. The young got richer, and the old got poorer.

c. The rich got richer, and the poor got poorer.

d. The rich got richer, and everyone else’s income level stayed the same.

Answer: d

Topic: The Continuing Rise of Income Inequality

Learning Objective: 16.3 Assess the extent of economic inequality in America and the role of government in lessening it.

Difficulty Level: Moderate

Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

33. Since 1968, what has happened to the nominal and inflation-adjusted minimum wage?

Answer: The nominal wage has increased, while the inflation-adjusted minimum wage has decreased.

Topic: Should Congress Increase the Minimum Wage?

Learning Objective: 16.3 Assess the extent of economic inequality in America and the role of government in lessening it.

Difficulty Level: Moderate

Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

34. What helps to explain why African American women are less likely to survive breast cancer?

a. African Americans are genetically predisposed to breast cancer.

b. African Americans have not had equitable access to health care.

c. African Americans are more susceptible to “white flight,” a known cancer-causing condition that hinders the regeneration of white blood cells.

d. African Americans are less likely to eat a balanced diet and to exercise.

Answer: b

Topic: Redlining and America’s Wealth Gap

Learning Objective: 16.3 Assess the extent of economic inequality in America and the role of government in lessening it.

Difficulty Level: Moderate

Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

35. How has government spending to protect threatened or endangered species changed since 1990?

Answer: Spending increased every year until 2013, when it decreased somewhat.

Topic: Spending to Preserve Threatened and Endangered Species

Learning Objective: 17.2 Analyze the conflicts between economic growth and environmental protection, and identify the major national environmental protection policies.

Difficulty Level: Moderate

Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

36. What contributed to the Flint water crisis?

a. lax bureaucratic oversight

b. corporate greed

c. water shortages

d. an exceptionally hot summer

Answer: a

Topic: Flint Water Crisis

Learning Objective: 17.4 Assess the role of democratic politics in making health care, environmental, and energy policy and the effect of these policies on the scope of government.

Difficulty Level: Moderate

Skill Level: Understand the Concepts

37. What explains the difference between U.S. support for Israel and U.S. support for the Palestinians?

Answer: The United States gives significantly more foreign aid to Israel than to Palestine because the U.S. public tends to side with Israel. In one poll, 62 percent of Americans were sympathetic toward the Israelis while only 16 percent were sympathetic toward the Palestinians. In addition, powerful interest groups lobby on behalf of Israel but not Palestine. The Israeli government also has a track record of military success in the region.

Topic: Aid to Israel

Learning Objective: 18.5 Analyze the evolving challenges for U.S. national security policy.

Difficulty Level: Difficult

Skill Level: Analyze It