

UNIT TWO QUESTIONS

Liberal-Conservative Self-Identification – 1978-2002					
	1972	1980	1988	1996	2002
Liberal	18%	17%	17%	18%	23%
Moderate	27%	20%	22%	24%	22%
Conservative	26%	28%	32%	33%	34%
Don't Know, Haven't thought	28%	36%	30%	25%	22%

- The data in the table above supports which of the following conclusions?
 - The percentage of people that don't know/haven't thought about their ideological leanings declined steadily during the years from 1972 to 2002.
 - The percentage of people identifying themselves as conservatives has increased steadily during the years from 1972 to 2002.
 - Liberalism has not gained support among American citizens because conservatives have created a negative image of liberals.
 - Most people identified themselves as moderates during the years from 1972 to 2002.
 - Many people who once identified themselves as moderates now consider themselves to be conservatives.
- Overall, the political culture of the United States today can best be described as
 - consensual, but currently some deep rifts exist
 - consensual, with a broad base of agreement on which values and beliefs are most important
 - conflictual, with deep rifts and a wide variety of opinions on both goals and process
 - more conflictual than most other political cultures, but with a based of broad values that all agree upon
 - neither conflictual nor consensual, since the political culture is in between the two extremes

3. Which of the following American values emerged later than the others in the history of the country?
- (A) individualism
 - (B) equality of opportunity
 - (C) rule of law
 - (D) belief in government responsibility for the welfare of the people
 - (E) civic duty
4. Which older American value was reinforced most directly by the new value of capitalism as it emerged in the late 19th century?
- (A) democracy
 - (B) belief in government responsibility for the welfare of the people
 - (C) equality
 - (D) civic duty
 - (E) individualism
5. The “Second Bill of Rights” most directly reflects Franklin Roosevelt’s firm commitment to
- (A) capitalism
 - (B) “rugged individualism”
 - (C) rule of law
 - (D) economic security
 - (E) internationalism
6. Which of the following statements is NOT supported by the findings of most studies on political tolerance?
- (A) The overwhelming majority of Americans agree with First Amendment rights in the abstract.
 - (B) Americans are willing to allow many people with whom they disagree to do a great deal politically.
 - (C) Americans have become more tolerant over the last few decades.
 - (D) Most people dislike one or another group strongly enough to deny it certain political rights.
 - (E) Liberals are generally more tolerant of diverse political views than conservatives are.

7. Which of the following is the best explanation for why incumbent presidents have had a difficult time getting reelected in recent years?
- (A) An increasingly educated electorate
 - (B) A drop in levels of internal efficacy
 - (C) A drop in levels of external efficacy
 - (D) An increasing emphasis on the importance of international relations
 - (E) A decline in the intensity of the culture wars

Politics is too Complicated — 1956-2000							
	1956	1964	1972	1980	1988	1996	2000
Agree	64%	67%	74%	70%	70%	63%	60%
Disagree	36%	32%	26%	28%	21%	28%	32%
Neither*	-	-	-	-	8%	10%	7%
Don't know	0%	1%	0%	2%	0%	0%	0%

* Choice offered from 1988-2000 only

8. The data in the table above supports which of the following conclusions?
- (A) People mistrust government now more than they did in the 1950s.
 - (B) External efficacy remained roughly the same between 1956 and 2000.
 - (C) Internal efficacy remained roughly the same between 1956 and 2000.
 - (D) Both internal and external efficacy rose during the 1970s and 80s and declined again during the 1990s.
 - (E) Many respondents probably did not understand the question.
9. George Gallup is best known for his work as
- (A) an early evaluator of the core values for the American political culture
 - (B) a commentator on the current culture wars
 - (C) a pollster
 - (D) an advocate for the youth vote
 - (E) an organizer of early presidential debates
10. Which of the following types of polls is least likely to be accurate?
- (A) a national poll based on random sample
 - (B) a state-wide poll based on random sample
 - (C) a straw poll that asks television viewers to call their views in
 - (D) a poll conducted by an candidate for elected office
 - (E) a poll conducted by selecting respondents randomly from a phone book

Trust the Federal Government 1958-2000								
	1958	1964	1968	1972	1980	1988	1992	2000
None of the time	0%	0%	0%	1%	4%	2%	2%	1%
Some of the time	23%	22%	36%	44%	69%	56%	68%	55%
Most of the time	57%	62%	54%	48%	23%	36%	26%	40%
Just about always	16%	14%	7%	5%	2%	4%	3%	4%
Don't know, depends	4%	1%	2%	2%	2%	1%	1%	1%

11. The data in the table above supports which of the following conclusions?
- (A) The growth of the national media has caused a significant decline in trust in the federal government.
 - (B) Levels of trust in the federal government have changed very little since 1958.
 - (C) The main reason that levels of trust in the federal government have declined in recent years is an unusually large number of public scandals.
 - (D) Levels of trust in the federal government have declined significantly since 1958.
 - (E) Levels of trust in the federal government increased during the 1970s, but have decreased since then.
12. Which of the following is the best description of voting patterns of American women?
- (A) Women have consistently been more likely to support Democratic candidates than Republican candidates.
 - (B) Women have consistently been more likely to support Republican candidates than Republican candidates.
 - (C) Women were more likely to vote for Republicans from the 1920s till the 1960s, but have been more likely to support Democrats since then.
 - (D) Women are more affected than men are by candidates' stands on war and foreign policy.
 - (E) Women are likely to vote for women candidates for office whenever they have that choice.

13. Which of the following best describes political attitudes of fundamentalist Christians?
- (A) They generally have conservative attitudes, but those attitudes are stronger about social issues than about economic issues.
 - (B) They generally have liberal attitudes, but those attitudes are stronger about economic issues than social issues.
 - (C) They tend to be liberal on economic issues and conservative on social issues.
 - (D) They tend to be equally conservative on social and economic issues.
 - (E) Their attitudes are very similar to those of other Protestants.
14. Which of the following groups most consistently supports the Democratic Party?
- (A) Catholics
 - (B) Blacks
 - (C) Latinos
 - (D) Southerners
 - (E) Labor union members
15. The “Solid South” is a reference to the tendency of southern voters to
- (A) have very good voter turnouts on election day
 - (B) vote in recent elections for Democratic candidates on both state and national levels
 - (C) vote in recent elections for Republican candidates on both state and national levels
 - (D) vote for white, male, conservative candidates for public office
 - (E) consistently vote Democratic on both state and national levels until the 1950s
16. Which of the following states is most likely to support a Democratic presidential candidate?
- (A) California
 - (B) Florida
 - (C) Texas
 - (D) Ohio
 - (E) Virginia

17. Which of the following government policies is a liberal more likely to support than a conservative is?
- (A) faith-based initiatives
 - (B) privately funded health insurance
 - (C) tax cuts
 - (D) pro-active civil rights policies
 - (E) national laws restricting abortion practices
18. Which of the following factors is most difficult to correlate clearly to political opinion?
- (A) gender
 - (B) family
 - (C) social class
 - (D) race/ethnicity
 - (E) region
19. Which of the following is probably the best technique for a pollster to use to control the reluctance that most respondents have to admit a lack of knowledge on a topic?
- (A) ask only easy questions that the most ordinary people can readily understand
 - (B) be sure that the sample accurately reflects the population
 - (C) conduct in-depth interviews rather than questionnaires
 - (D) conduct a straw poll
 - (E) give "I don't know" or "I haven't thought about it" as an alternative answer
20. Which of the following is the best description of the effect that college education has on political attitudes?
- (A) College educated people almost always support the Democratic Party.
 - (B) College educated people almost always support the more intelligent candidate.
 - (C) People who graduate from colleges in the Midwest are usually more liberal than those that graduate from colleges in the Northeast.
 - (D) The Northeast usually votes Democratic because it has more college educated people than other regions have.
 - (E) College education often has a liberalizing effect on an individual's political attitudes.
21. In comparison to political participation by men, women tend to
- (A) vote in about the same proportions as men do
 - (B) be more likely to vote in mid-term (non-presidential) elections only
 - (C) contribute more money to political campaigns
 - (D) attend more political rallies
 - (E) be more likely to vote in all elections (local, state, and national)

22. Which of the following is NOT a reason commonly presented by political scientists to explain lower voter turnouts in the U.S. than in other democracies?
- (A) the larger numbers of offices to elect in the U.S.
 - (B) weekday, non-holiday voting in the U.S.
 - (C) weak political party effort in the U.S.
 - (D) the difficulty of voting caused by registration and absentee voting requirements
 - (E) lower participation rates among Americans for other types of political activities
23. Which of the following is the best description of historical trends in voting requirements in U.S. history?
- (A) Voting requirements in the U.S. are very similar to those that have always been in place.
 - (B) Voting requirements are much stricter today than they have ever been in U.S. history.
 - (C) Voting rights have been gradually expanded over time so that most adults 18 and over now can vote.
 - (D) Voting rights were allowed to only male property owners until the 20th century.
 - (E) Voting requirements were once exclusively granted by states; now all requirements are set by the federal government.
24. Which of the following is the best description of voter turnout in recent American presidential elections?
- (A) Voter turnout in the past few presidential elections has been at historical lows.
 - (B) Voter turnout in the past few presidential elections has been at historical highs.
 - (C) Voter turnout rates have remained at fairly consistent levels throughout the 20th and early 21st centuries.
 - (D) Voter turnout rates were a historic lows until the election of 2004, when voter rates increased significantly.
 - (E) Voter turnout rates have been relatively low, but not as low as they were in the 1950s and 1960s.
25. Which of the following forms of political participation did the National Election Studies find to be the highest in the election campaigns of 2000?
- (A) watching the campaign on television
 - (B) voting in the election
 - (C) trying to influence others how to vote
 - (D) putting a sticker on their car
 - (E) giving money to help a campaign

26. Which of the following is the best reason why voter registration processes are cumbersome in most states?
- (A) The states rely on voter registrations for a great deal of public revenue.
 - (B) Voter fraud has increased significantly in recent elections.
 - (C) Most requirements were put in place in reaction to voting abuses of the early 20th century.
 - (D) No federal laws have been passed that attempt to make the process any easier.
 - (E) Both major political parties support strict voter requirements because they don't want to see any shifts in voter preferences.
27. Which commonly accepted assumption about voting rates was seriously questioned by the election of 2004?
- (A) that an increase in voting rates would benefit the Democratic Party
 - (B) that changing the date of the election encourages people to vote
 - (C) that southerners vote in larger proportions than voters in other parts of the country
 - (D) that political parties are the most effective organizers of get-out-the-vote efforts
 - (E) that spending money on TV ads is an ineffective way to get people to go to the polls
28. "527s" became an important part of election campaigns in 2004 because they
- (A) allowed candidates to more easily accept government contributions to presidential campaigns
 - (B) financed massive get-out-the-vote campaigns for both presidential candidates
 - (C) encouraged third party candidates to compete successfully for seats in Congress
 - (D) helped to close the loopholes that allowed large amounts of "soft money" to be used for political purposes
 - (E) gave a great deal of money to the parties, who in turn contributed that money to candidates' individual campaigns
29. Which of the following countries generally has had the lowest voter turnouts in recent election years?
- (A) Britain
 - (B) Canada
 - (C) Italy
 - (D) Australia
 - (E) United States

30. Which of the following groups was the LAST to gain voting rights in the United States?

- (A) non-property owning males
- (B) immigrants who are not citizens
- (C) blacks
- (D) 18-21 year olds
- (E) women

UNIT TWO – ANSWERS

1. **(B)** – The chart reflects a trend that many political scientists have noticed over the past thirty years – a tendency for more Americans to identify themselves as “conservatives.” The trend is gradual but steady, moving from 26% in 1972 to 34% in 2002 that self-identified as conservatives. The other groupings – moderate and liberal – show no consistent pattern, although the 23% figure for liberals in 2002 is considerably larger than those for previous years. However, more time is needed to see if a real change in liberal self-identification is taking place.
2. **(A)** – Political scientists have long described the American political culture as consensual, pointing out that sharply divergent ideologies such as communism, socialism, and fascism have not taken hold here as they have in other modern democracies. However, in recent years some deep rifts have emerged in American political culture, causing “culture wars” that divide the population. On the one hand, some Americans believe that the United States is subject to relatively unchanging standards that are relatively clear – belief in God, laws of nature, and the United States in general as a force for good in the world. The opposite camp emphasize that legitimate alternatives to these standards do exist, and that the U.S. has at times had a negative – or at best neutral – effect on world affairs. Despite these differences, Americans still agree on basic political values such as equality of opportunity and liberty, and economic principles such as private property and free enterprise.
3. **(D)** – The general acceptance of government responsibility for the welfare of the people did not take hold until the 1930s, when the Great Depression convinced most people that government should take an active role in promoting the economic well-being of citizens. Before that time, most Americans believed that individuals were responsible for their own welfare, and government interference could indeed destroy people’s motivations to take care of themselves. Indeed, this point of view is still widely accepted, although most people today accept basic government programs, such as Social Security, Medicare, and Medicaid.
4. **(E)** – Capitalism reinforced the older emphasis on individualism. Just as early Americans had sought their fortune by claiming and farming new land by their own individual efforts, entrepreneurs of the late 19th century were flexing their muscles in the new industrial economy. Capitalism requires people to show independence and initiative and to compete with others for business, all activities that are promoted by a hearty dose of individual self-confidence.

5. (D) – The Second Bill of Rights affirms Roosevelt’s belief that all Americans have a right to economic security in the form of steady employment, housing, and food on the table. He saw economic security as fundamental a right as any of those guaranteed in the original Bill of Rights. Although most of his New Deal programs based on this belief were accepted by Americans then, today a strong strain of American political culture resists this guarantee, reflecting the persistence of the influence of “rugged individualism.” In some ways the contradictory values – government responsibility to protect economic security vs. individual responsibility – mirror the economic cycles of capitalism: the devastation of economic depressions/recessions vs. confidence in individual effort during good times.
6. (E) – Although liberals sometimes like to think of themselves as more tolerant than conservatives, the statistics do not bear them out. Instead, Americans in general are less tolerant of people whose views are very different from their own. In other words, liberals are not tolerant of views on the far right, such as those held by members of the Ku Klux Klan or the neo-Nazis. Likewise, conservatives are less tolerant of the views of Socialists and other ultra-liberal organizations.
7. (C) – Americans in recent years have doubted their government’s interest in popular input into government decisions. In other words, external efficacy – or the sense that government cares about and responds to public opinion – has declined. This drop has been paralleled by a tendency for more people to vote against incumbent presidents running for a second term. Examples of incumbents who lost elections are Gerald Ford in 1976, Jimmy Carter in 1980, and George H. Bush in 1992. Ronald Reagan, Bill Clinton and George W. Bush did win reelection in 1984, 1996, and 2004 respectively, but in previous eras, reelection was the norm, not the exception.
8. (C) – Internal efficacy is the confidence level that citizens have in their ability to understand and relate to government activities and decisions. The numbers are fairly consistent between 1956 and 2000, with about 2/3 of all respondents agreeing that politics is “too complicated.” Between 1972 and 1988, the numbers do increase, but they decline again in 1996 and 2000 to levels similar to the earlier statistics.
9. (C) – George Gallup began his work compiling political opinion polls in the 1930s. He conducted his first poll for his mother when she was running for political office. She was successful, and other politicians picked up his methods as useful tools for planning and executing political campaigns. Newspapers, magazines, and electronic media also saw poll-taking as a way to enhance their political reporting. Gallup continued to improve the science through the next decades, and established the Gallup Polls as a major authority in polling. Today the company is still run by his family members, and it often cooperates with media outlets (newspapers, broadcast companies) to produce polls on a broad variety of political topics.

10. **(C)** – A straw poll does not follow the basic rule of poll-taking – random sample. Instead, it only compiles the views of people who call in, a fact that almost certainly insures skewed results. People who call in often have special agendas, or at the very least are political activists who do not necessarily reflect the views of an entire population. Polls conducted by candidates for elected office are not necessarily less accurate than those sponsored by non-partisans. After all, candidates need to know where they stand in order to conduct effective campaigns. Polls conducted from phone books may not be the most accurate, but there is some adherence to random sample in their methods.
11. **(D)** – The table shows a clear trend toward decreasing trust of the federal government between 1958 and 2000. People who said that they trusted government “some of the time” increased from 23% to 55%, and those that responded “most of the time” fell from 57% to 40%. Additionally, the figure for “just about always” fell from 16% to 4%. The trend is often explained by the ill effects of the Vietnam War and Watergate during the late 1960s and early 70s. The lingering high levels of distrust may also be explained by the increasing influence of investigative reporting that has spotlighted political scandals in recent years.
12. **(C)** – The election of 1920 was the first time women voted on a nationwide-basis in American history. They supported Republican candidate Warren G. Harding, and maintained their tendency to be more likely than men to support conservative candidates until the 1960s. One explanation is that they saw the Republican Party as more likely than the Democrats to uphold the values of “hearth and home.” Starting about 1970, women moved steadily to the left, so that today, the trend is the opposite: they are more likely to vote Democratic than men are. One explanation is that the parties themselves have changed their stance, or at least that women see the Democratic Party as more supportive of views that they support.
13. **(A)** – Fundamentalist Christians generally have conservative attitudes, but they are more likely to emphasize social issues rather than economic issues. For example, fundamentalist organizations build their base around issues such as abortion, divorce, gay marriages, and stem cell research, not around jobs, Social Security, or the trade deficit. Although Protestants overall are more conservative than Catholics and Jews, fundamentalist Christians are significantly more conservative than Protestants overall, especially on social issues.

14. **(B)** – Black Americans remain the most loyal supporters of the Democratic Party, despite the conservative turn the country has taken in recent years. George W. Bush made significant inroads into Democratic support from both Catholics and Latinos during the election of 2004, although the majority of Latinos still voted Democratic in that election. Labor unions generally support Democratic candidates for office, but many of their members at least occasionally support Republicans. Southerners remain on the track they have been on since the 1960s, becoming more and more likely to vote for Republicans as the once “Solid South” continues to break its traditional support for Democrats.
15. **(E)** – Southern voters consistently supported the Democratic Party from the days of Reconstruction until the mid-1950s. During that time period, Republicans almost never were able to run successful candidates in the South. Some Democrats began to break rank in response to the party’s support of civil rights efforts starting in the 1950s, resulting in a splinter group known as the “Dixiecrats.” Since then, support has slowly but steadily shifted to the Republican Party, especially as older Democratic senators and representatives retire. In recent elections, their seats have usually been filled by Republicans. In presidential elections, only Democratic candidates from the South (Jimmy Carter from Georgia, and Bill Clinton from Arkansas) have had any success in carrying southern states.
16. **(A)** – California is a huge, diverse state with strong representation from both parties. In recent years, both Democrats and Republicans have held the governor’s position. However, California has almost always gone for the Democratic presidential candidate in recent elections, reflecting a broader tendency for states on either coast to vote Democratic. Florida and Ohio tend to be “toss up” states, although their demographics are very different. Florida has large numbers of Latinos, with some (such as the Cubans) tending to support the Republicans, and others supporting Democrats. The large number of retirees also tend to split their votes between the parties. Ohio has strong labor union support for the Democratic Party, but the state’s population also includes a number of socially conservative voters. Texas and Virginia usually support Republican candidates, with both showing a dwindling number of Democratic legislators and state officials.
17. **(D)** – Although both parties officially support civil rights policies, Democrats are generally more likely to encourage pro-active government policies. Republicans tend to restrict government’s role to that of providing equal opportunities, whereas Democrats are more likely to look at how equal the results are. Faith-based initiatives, privately funded (not national) health insurance, tax cuts, and national laws restricting abortion practices all reflect conservative positions on major issues.

18. (C) – Social class is a tricky factor to tie to political opinion because of the different elements that determine it: education, occupation, and income. Studies that focus on income usually show a strong positive correlation with conservatism. However, people with high income tend to support different political parties based on their occupations. For example, college professors and people in the entertainment industry tend to support liberal causes, but business owners and corporate officers usually vote for Republicans. College educated people are fairly evenly split between the parties, but voters with post-graduate educations tend to vote Democratic.
19. (E) – People are generally rather embarrassed to admit that they don't know anything about a topic they are asked about in an interview. Perhaps this tendency reflects the strong American political value of civic duty, or the feeling that they ought to know more about political issues than they do. The best control listed in the question is to give the respondent the choice of saying, "I don't know," or "I haven't thought about it." The choices indicate that other people might lack knowledge, too.
20. (E) – College educated people tend to split their votes fairly evenly between the political parties, but a good bit of evidence reflects a liberalizing effect of college education on an individual's political attitudes. Liberals and conservatives disagree on why this trend exists, with liberals generally believing that education causes students to "see the light," and conservatives putting the blame on the influence of liberal-leaning college professors.
21. (A) – Although women tend to support the Democratic Party in larger percentages than men do, most studies show that men and women vote in about equal proportions. No significant differences exist between the sexes in terms of attending political rallies or contributing to campaigns. Both men and women are more likely to vote in presidential elections than in local, state, or mid-term national elections.
22. (E) – Most studies show that even though Americans tend to vote in lower proportions than citizens in other democracies, their rates are generally higher in other forms of political participation, such as supporting protests, attending local meetings, or working for a party or candidate. On the other hand, experts often point to the large number of political offices, weekday voting, registration and absentee voting difficulties, and weak political party effort in the U.S. as reasons for low voter turnouts.

23. **(C)** – The history of voting requirements in the United States is marked by a clear trend toward more and more inclusiveness. At first, all voting requirements were left up to the states. Only free male property owners were allowed to vote until the states one by one began to drop property requirements during the first half of the 19th century. The national government weighed in for the first time on voting requirements with the 15th Amendment, passed after the Civil War and guaranteeing voting rights for former slaves. Another amendment (the 19th) allowed women to vote in 1919, and yet another (the 26th) extended the minimum age for voting from 21 to 18. Today states still have some say over voting rights. For example, states have different standards for reinstating voting for former felons. However, the vast majority of people over 18 in the United States are eligible to vote.
24. **(D)** – Voter turnout rates reached a long time low in the elections of 1996 and 2000, with only about half of all eligible voters actually voting. The trend was reversed, however, in 2004, when extraordinary efforts by political parties, candidate campaigns, and interest groups increased the voter turnout to about 60%. The highest turnouts in American history happened around the turn of the 20th century, when high voter fraud artificially elevated voter rates.
25. **(A)** – Of course, watching the campaign on television is not a particularly active way of participating in politics, but more people (84%) checked that choice than any other for the 2000 election surveys conducted by the National Election Studies. However, these percentages are based on what people report on the survey, and the answers are almost certainly affected by what people think they should have done. For example, more than 70% of the respondents said that they voted, but statistics show that only about half of them actually did.
26. **(C)** – State laws have a way of staying in place for so many years that few people can remember why they were passed in the first place. Voter registration requirements were put in place in most states about 100 years ago as progressive reforms to cut down on voter fraud. The number of votes had swelled as many people voted twice, and ballots were stuffed with the names of dead people. Most states required voters to register 30 days ahead of an election, with the hope that the fraud would stop.
27. **(A)** – Democrats have generally been more supportive of Motor Voter laws because they believed that easy voter registration would increase voting rates among the poor, minorities, and less educated, people that demographically tend to vote for the Democratic Party. However, in the dash for the presidency in 2004, both parties registered new voters in relatively equal amounts, and many of the first timers cast their votes for Republican George W. Bush. At least some of the change occurred because Democratic support slipped among its traditional voters, with many working class people voting Republican.

28. **(B)** – Both major political parties actively got out the vote in 2004, and they were aided by groups known as “527s” (for the part of the tax code that allows them to be tax-free). These groups financed massive get-out-the-vote campaigns for both presidential candidates. The “527s” formed around the restrictions on soft money imposed on political parties by the 2002 campaign finance reforms, and they raised an incredible amount of money. The first groups (such as “Moveon.org”) supported the Democrats, and the Republicans first responded by accusing them of improprieties, but later they formed their own groups (such as the “Swiftboat Veterans”) that played a major role in election campaign.
29. **(E)** – Despite the fact that voter rates improved significantly in the U.S. presidential election of 2004, the near 60% rate still fell short of those normally attained in Britain and Canada, usually between 70 and 80%. However, Italy and Australia outdo almost all other countries, getting about 90% of their voters out.
30. **(D)** – Requirements for property ownership were dropped by all the states by the time that Andrew Jackson was president (1830s); former slaves gained the right to vote in 1870; women’s suffrage was added as the 19th Amendment in 1919; and 18-21 year olds were added to the voting list by the 26th Amendment in 1971. Non-citizens still are not eligible to vote in U.S. elections.