

Review of Important FRQ Tips

- Read the entire question before you begin to think about your answer. Read it twice and be sure you understand what it is all about.
- Label each part according to the question (a, b, c, etc.).
- Skip a space or two after each part of the answer: between each part (a, b, c, etc.) and between each identification (when asked for more than one).
- Provide an example when appropriate but only after you've defined, described, or explained.

Improving Your Explanations in FRQs

- Break down the question and “connect the dots.”

Example 1:

Describe ONE way in which interest groups support the fundamental goal of parties in the political process.

1

2

3

4

1 – “Describe” means more than “define” or “identify.” Elaborate in your response.

2 – Identify a way interest groups support the goal of parties.

3 – Show how interest groups are supporting parties.

4 – Identify the “fundamental goal of parties in the political process.” (winning elections)

Example 2:

Explain ONE criticism of interest groups that derives from their influence over the electoral process.

1

2

3

1 – “Explain” means you must show how or why something occurs.

2 – Identify a criticism of interest groups. Give it a name.

3 – Be sure that the criticism is related to interest groups’ influence over the electoral process (elections).

- Write in several short sentences. Do not try to say too much in one sentence.
- Avoid starting your sentences with the “wind up.”

Example 1:

Wind-up: *One way in which interest groups support the fundamental goal of parties in the political process is...*

Better: *Interest groups support parties by making campaign donations through PACs....*

Example 2:

Wind-up: *One criticism of interest groups that derives from their influence over the electoral process is...*

Better: *Interest groups make campaign contributions to candidates and parties. Interest groups are often criticized for these contributions because they seem to buy the groups undue influence over government officials....*

Describe ONE way in which interest groups support the fundamental goal of parties in the political process.

Interest groups support parties by making campaign contributions to parties and their candidates. The fundamental goal of political parties, of course, is to win elections. By making monetary contributions to parties, interest groups help the parties to run ads and hold rallies for their candidates. These activities can help the candidates of parties gain more votes and thus win elections.

Explain ONE criticism of interest groups that derives from their influence over the policy-making process.

Interest groups are often very ideological and support the more extreme positions on public policy issues. They are often criticized for holding views that are far to the left (or the right) of the more moderate American public. Because interest groups can influence policymakers through lobbying, their more extreme positions can sometimes be enacted into policy. This influence can be criticized when lawmakers enact policy that is more reflective of the views of powerful interest groups than the American public. For example, one of the nation's most powerful interest groups, the NRA, has been able to successfully lobby Congress to block recent attempts to restrict gun-ownership despite the fact that most Americans support some new gun-control measures.