
AP[®] Comparative Government and Politics

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary Set 2

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AP[®] COMPARATIVE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

2019 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 2

3 points

One point is earned for correctly identifying one indicator of income inequality.

Acceptable indicators include:

- GINI index or GINI coefficient
- Wage or income gap, such as between men and women, between ethnic groups, or between quintiles

One point is earned for a correct description of a political consequence of income inequality.

Acceptable descriptions may include:

- Increased political conflict, such as polarization, instability, or unrest among the poor
- Increased protests by the poor or political mobilization of the poor
- Concentration of political power among wealthy citizens
- Decreased political efficacy among low-income citizens
- Decreased political trust or state legitimacy among low-income citizens

One point is earned for a correct description of a policy that governments use to reduce income inequality.

Acceptable descriptions may include:

- A tax system in which the rich pay higher rates than the poor
- Establishment of a minimum wage
- Transfer payments or subsidies to the poor
- Free or subsidized social services, such as education, health care, or housing
- Probusiness policies that reduce inequality, such as deregulation or privatization

A score of zero (0) is earned for an attempted answer that earns no points.

A score of dash (—) is earned for a blank or off-task answer.

2. Identify one indicator that measures income inequality. Describe one political consequence of income inequality. Describe a policy that governments use to reduce income inequality.

2) One indicator that measures income inequality is the Gini Index.

One political consequence of income inequality is ~~that~~ dissatisfaction among the lower-income classes. If these low-income classes and citizens are struggling under a current regime to support themselves and their families, this could lead to them expressing their concerns through protests and demonstrations, which might ultimately cause political instability.

A policy governments use to reduce income inequality is the policy of graduated income taxes. This policy essentially creates higher taxes on the income of the higher-income classes with lower income taxes on lower-income classes. Using a graduated income tax helps even the playing field slightly to attempt to prevent the widening of the income gap.

2. Identify one indicator that measures income inequality. Describe one political consequence of income inequality. Describe a policy that governments use to reduce income inequality.

One indicator of income inequality is the Gini Index. The Gini Index rates countries from a scale of 0.0 to 1.0, 0.0 being everyone has equal money/income and 1.0 being one person has all the money. One political consequence of income inequality is extreme poverty. Nigeria, which has a fairly high level of income inequality on the Gini Index, has millions of people in poverty with barely any regular food, shelter, and other basic necessities. On the other hand, the extremely rich individuals that hold most of the capital of the country live lavish lifestyles. High rates of poverty incurred by income inequality can result in low literacy rates (as families stop sending their kids to school and send them to jobs) and lower life expectancies. Governments, to stop this, often implement social welfare programs that provide health resources to improve quality of life and job training/help finding jobs for their poorest citizens so they have a steady source of income.

2. Identify one indicator that measures income inequality. Describe one political consequence of income inequality. Describe a policy that governments use to reduce income inequality.

One indicator that measures income inequality is ~~the Gini Index~~ ^{the Gini Index}. One political ~~consequence~~ ^{consequence} of income inequality ^{is} disapproval of the governing body by the less affluent group. One policy that governments use to reduce income inequality is liberalizing the economy and opening up state owned enterprises to private investors. Governments can also create new policies that are advantageous for the lower income population.

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2019 SCORING COMMENTARY

Question 2

Note: Student samples are quoted verbatim and may contain spelling and grammatical errors.

Overview

The intent of this question was to assess students' ability to recognize an indicator of income inequality, their understanding of the political consequences of income inequality, and their understanding of governments' attempts to reduce income inequality through public policy. The skills tested were descriptive. Students had three specific tasks: to identify an indicator of income inequality, to describe a political consequence of income inequality, and to describe a policy that governments use to reduce income inequality.

Sample: 2A

Score: 3

The response earned 1 point for identifying an indicator of income inequality as “the Gini Index.” An additional acceptable response is the wage or income gap, if the response indicates a comparison between different income groups.

The response earned 1 point for identifying a consequence of economic inequality: “If these low-income ... citizens are struggling under a current regime to support themselves and their families, this could lead to them expressing their concerns through protests and demonstrations, which might ultimately cause political instability.” Additional acceptable responses include that economic inequality can cause a concentration of political power in the wealthy, that it can cause a decline in political efficacy among poor citizens, and that it can cause a decrease in political trust or state legitimacy among poor citizens.

The response earned 1 point for describing a policy that governments use to reduce economic inequality as “graduated income taxes.” This policy essentially creates higher taxes on the income of the higher-income classes with lower income taxes on the lower-income classes.” Additional acceptable descriptions include providing social services that benefit the poor, establishing a minimum wage to increase the wages of the poor, and providing transfers or subsidies for the poor. Responses may also correctly describe probusiness policies, but they must make the connection to reducing income inequality.

Sample: 2B

Score: 2

The response earned 1 point for identifying an indicator of income inequality as “the Gini Index.” An additional acceptable response is the wage or income gap, if the response indicates a comparison between different income groups.

The response did not earn a point for describing a political consequence of economic inequality. The reference to “extreme poverty” describes a possible economic consequence of economic inequality, but it does not describe a political consequence. Acceptable responses include that economic inequality can cause a concentration of political power in the wealthy, that it can cause a decline in political efficacy among poor citizens, that it can lead to protests and demonstrations, and that it can cause a decrease in political trust or state legitimacy among poor citizens.

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Question 2 (continued)

The response earned 1 point for describing a policy that governments use to reduce income inequality as “Governments ... often implement social welfare programs that provide health resources to improve quality of life ... for their poorest citizens.” The response describes the policy so that it is clear why such a policy could be used to reduce income inequality. Additional acceptable descriptions include establishing a progressive tax system, establishing a minimum wage to increase the wages of the poor, and providing transfers or subsidies for the poor. Responses may also correctly describe probusiness policies, but they must make the connection to reducing income inequality.

Sample: 2C

Score: 1

The response earned 1 point for identifying an indicator of income inequality as “the Gini Index.” An additional acceptable response is the wage or income gap, if the response indicates a comparison between different income groups.

The response did not earn a point for correctly describing a political consequence of economic inequality. The response describes “disapproval of the governing body by the less affluent group,” but disapproval is vague and does not describe a political consequence. Acceptable responses include that economic inequality can cause a concentration of political power in the wealthy, that it can cause a decline in political efficacy among poor citizens, that it can lead to protests and demonstrations, and that it can cause a decrease in political trust or state legitimacy among poor citizens.

The response did not earn a point for correctly describing a policy that governments use to reduce income inequality. The response refers to privatization but does not indicate how privatization would reduce inequality. The reference to other policies that could be “advantageous to the lower income population” did not earn a point because it does not specify a policy. Acceptable descriptions include establishing a progressive tax system, providing social services that benefit the poor, establishing a minimum wage to increase the wages of the poor, and providing transfers or subsidies for the poor. Responses may also correctly describe probusiness policies, but they must make the connection to reducing income inequality.