

2021

AP®

 CollegeBoard

AP® Comparative Government and Politics

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

Set 1

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Free Response Question 1

- Scoring Guideline**
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Question 1: Conceptual Analysis**4 points**

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- (a) Define political legitimacy. **1 point**

Acceptable definitions include:

- Legitimacy is the citizens' belief that the government has the right to use power in the way that it does.
- Legitimacy exists when citizens accept that the government has the right or authority to rule.

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- (b) Describe a source of political legitimacy for a regime. **1 point**

Acceptable descriptions include:

- A constitution outlining the powers of government and the procedures that must be followed produces acceptance for the regime.
- The electoral process and its results are respected by the people, which produces acceptance for the regime.
- Tradition creates unity through appeal to common historical experiences that garners acceptance of the regime.
- Political stability provides predictability that helps to sustain acceptance of the regime by the people.
- Governmental effectiveness provides results that garner acceptance from the people.
- Economic growth provides results that garner acceptance from the people.
- Ideology provides unity through the appeal to a common belief system that garners acceptance from the people.
- Religion creates unity through the belief in a common faith and grants authority based on that faith.
- Nationalism creates a national identity that unifies the people and garners acceptance for the regime.

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- (c) Explain how a specific factor can undermine the political legitimacy of a regime. **1 point**

Acceptable explanations include:

- Corruption in the political system undermines political legitimacy for the regime because the process is distorted and does not operate as intended. It reduces trust in the system and leaders.
- A lack of free, fair, and competitive elections undermines political legitimacy for a regime because the results do not accurately reflect the will of the people.
- The alteration of previously-accepted rules and constitutional provisions to benefit current political leaders undermines political legitimacy because it changes the status quo.
- Social unrest undermines political legitimacy for the regime because it challenges the effectiveness and capacity of the regime.

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- A weak economy undermines political legitimacy for the regime because it does not provide the economic growth expected from the regime.

(d) Explain why authoritarian regimes seek legitimacy. **1 point**

Acceptable explanations include:

- Authoritarian regimes seek legitimacy in order to maintain political stability and resist pressures for regime change.
- Authoritarian regimes seek legitimacy in order to improve their image and gain international support.
- Authoritarian regimes seek legitimacy in order to maintain sovereignty without having to resort to coercion.
- Authoritarian regimes seek legitimacy because with less resistance from the people, it is easier/less costly for the regime to accomplish its goals.

Total for question 1 **4 points**

Sample 1A

Question 1 Question 2 Question 3 Question 4



Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

- (a) Political legitimacy is the belief by the citizens of a country that the government has the right to rule and use power in the way that they do.
- (b) A source of political legitimacy for a regime could be the country's constitution. Specific powers given to the government that are written in the Constitution give the idea that the powers being exercised by the government are constitutionally given, and therefore lead the people to believe that the government does have the right to use those powers how they are being used.
- (c) A specific factor that can undermine the political legitimacy of a regime is elections that are not free or fair. If the people of a country believe that the members of their government were not elected in a free or fair way, they may not believe that those government officials should actually be in office, exercising government power. Therefore, they would not believe that the government has a right to exercise government power, undermining the regime's political legitimacy.
- (d) Authoritarian regimes seek legitimacy in order to reduce opposition & dissent. If the people in a country believe that the government has the right to rule the way they do, they are much less likely to question the power, authority, and actions of an authoritarian government, therefore decreasing it making it easier for the government to maintain power & control in their country.



Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

1. (a) Political legitimacy is how legitimate a political party or group of people are. This is what gives power to a group of people and makes them hold the power they do. Because they are seen as legitimate, truly holding the power, they can rule the country as they please.

(b) A source of political legitimacy for a regime is religion. Religion is a source of political legitimacy as it can help elect people into office based on ideology. In a theocratic society, religion outweighs rule of law. Because of this, religion of a regime can be a major factor for their political legitimacy and make them either earn it or just be ~~born~~ in power.

(c) ~~(d)~~ Regime can seek political

(c) A factor that can undermine the political legitimacy of a regime is ~~civil group~~ revolutions and uprisings. Unrest itself can uproot the political legitimacy as it would cause the regime to look either weak or be overthrown. This cause legitimacy to be lost and totally undermine the political legitimacy of the regime.

(d) Authoritarian regime seek legitimacy in order to try and get the people on their side and gain power. By gaining this legitimacy, the authoritarian governments can hold more power and gain more trust from the people. This makes them less likely to be overthrown, as the people agree with them, giving the authoritarian government more power and control over the people.



Begin your response to each question at the top of a new page. Do not skip lines.

- a) political legitimacy is how trustworthy, reliable, and accountable the government is. If it follows the constitution and law, it goes off of how corrupt a country is. Legitimacy is used in each country and used out of each country when working with other countries.
- b.) fairness of elections is a form of legitimacy. or if the country follows their constitution that has been written.
- c.) If elections are rigged or if a country goes back on a deal that was made this can undermine legitimacy.
- d.) authoritarian regimes seek legitimacy because it gives them more power. other regimes will work with them and do trade which gives them more global power. also they want to be reelected and legitimacy helps the people "trust" them.

Question 1 **Conceptual Analysis**

Overview

The intent of this conceptual analysis question was to assess students' understanding of political legitimacy and how it is manifested in regimes. The concept application disciplinary skills tested were descriptive and explanatory. Students had four specific tasks: to define political legitimacy, to describe a source of political legitimacy for a regime, to explain how a specific factor can undermine the political legitimacy of a regime, and to explain why authoritarian regimes lack legitimacy.

Sample: 1A

Score: 4

The response earned 1 point in part (a) for defining political legitimacy as "the belief by the citizens of a country that the government has the right to rule and use power in the way that they do."

The response earned 1 point in part (b) for describing a source of political legitimacy for a regime as "the country's constitution. Specific powers given to the government that are written in the constitution give the idea that the powers being exercised by the government are constitutionally given."

The response earned 1 point in part (c) for explaining how a specific factor can undermine the political legitimacy of a regime by stating, "If the people of a country believe that the members of their government were not elected in a free or fair way, they may not believe that those government officials should actually be in office, exercising government power."

The response earned 1 point in part (d) for explaining that authoritarian regimes seek legitimacy "in order to reduce opposition & dissent. If the people in a country believe that the government has the right to rule the way they do, they are much less likely to question the power, authority, and actions of an authoritarian government, therefore making it easier for the regime to maintain power & control in their country."

Sample: 1B

Score: 3

The response did not earn a point in part (a) for defining political legitimacy. The definition does not include a specific reference to citizen acceptance of the government's right to rule.

The response earned 1 point in part (b) for describing a source of political legitimacy by stating, "Religion is a source of political legitimacy as it can help elect people into office based on ideology. In a theocratic society, religion outweighs rule of law."

The response earned 1 point in part (c) for explaining how a specific factor can undermine the political legitimacy of a regime by stating, "Unrest itself can uproot the political legitimacy as it would cause the regime to look either weak or be overthrown."

The response earned 1 point in part (d) for explaining why authoritarian regimes seek legitimacy by stating, "Authoritarian regime seek legitimacy in order to try and get the people on their side and gain power. ... This makes them less likely to be overthrown, as the people agree with them."

Question 1 (continued)

Sample: 1C

Score: 1

The response did not earn a point in part (a) for defining political legitimacy. The definition does not include a specific reference to citizen acceptance of the government's right to rule.

The response did not earn a point in part (b) for describing a source of political legitimacy for the regime. The description does not include a specific reference to a constitution outlining the powers of government.

The response did not earn a point in part (c) for explaining how a specific factor can undermine the political legitimacy of a regime. The explanation does not address how rigged elections can undermine legitimacy.

The response earned 1 point in part (d) for explaining that authoritarian regimes seek legitimacy "because it gives them more power. Other regimes will work with them and do trade which gives them more global power."