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# AP<sup>®</sup> Comparative Government and Politics

## Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary Set 2

### **Inside:**

#### **Free Response Question 4**

- Scoring Guideline**
- Student Samples**
- Scoring Commentary**

## Question 4: Argument Essay

5 points

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
<b>Row A</b> <b>Claim/Thesis</b>  <b>(0–1 points)</b>	<b>0 points</b> Does not meet the criteria for one point.	<b>1 point</b> Responds to the prompt with a defensible claim or thesis that establishes a line of reasoning.
<b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b>		
<b>Responses that do not earn this point:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Only restate the prompt.</li> <li>Do not make a claim that responds to the prompt.</li> </ul>		<b>Responses that earn this point:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Respond to the prompt rather than restating or rephrasing the prompt and establish a line of reasoning.</li> <li>Provide a defensible claim or thesis that establishes a line of reasoning about whether executive term limits sustain political legitimacy using one or more of the provided course concepts: stability, accountability, or policy implementation.</li> </ul>
<b>Examples that do not earn this point:</b> <b>Restate the prompt</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“Executive term limits do not sustain political legitimacy.”</i></li> <li><i>“Executive terms limits are good for a country’s political legitimacy.”</i></li> </ul> <b>Do not respond to the prompt</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“Elections are important for a country’s political legitimacy.”</i></li> <li><i>“Executives must remain accountable to the public if they want to remain in office.”</i></li> </ul>		<b>Examples that earn this point:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“Executive term limits sustain political legitimacy as it creates stability in the electoral system as seen in the peaceful transfer from one government to the next.”</i></li> <li><i>“Executive term limits sustain political legitimacy as they create accountability of the executive through regular elections.”</i></li> <li><i>“Executive term limits sustain political legitimacy as they promote more of a focus on creating/implementing policy rather than election support.”</i></li> <li><i>“Executive term limits weaken political legitimacy by preventing citizens from re-electing an official and holding them accountable.”</i></li> <li><i>“Executive term limits weaken political legitimacy and stability by preventing good officials from being re-elected.”</i></li> <li><i>“Executive term limits can weaken political legitimacy, as policy implementation is not consistent over time.”</i></li> </ul>
<b>Additional Notes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The claim or thesis must consist of one or more sentences that may be located anywhere in the response.</li> <li>A claim or thesis that meets the criteria can be awarded the point whether or not the rest of the response successfully supports that line of reasoning.</li> </ul>		

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria		
<b>Row B Evidence</b>  <b>(0–2 points)</b>	<b>0 points</b> Does not meet the criteria for one point.	<b>1 point</b> Provides <u>one</u> piece of specific and relevant evidence from a course country relevant to one of the course concepts in the prompt.	<b>2 points</b> Provides <u>two</u> pieces of specific and relevant evidence from one or more course countries relevant to one or more of the course concepts in the prompt.
<b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b>			
<b>Responses that do not earn points:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Do not provide any accurate evidence.</li> <li>Provide evidence that is not relevant to the course concepts in the prompt.</li> </ul>		<b>Responses that earn 1 or 2 points:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Provide specific and relevant evidence from required course countries, relevant to the course concepts in the prompt.</li> </ul>	
<b>Examples that do not earn points:</b> <b>Provide evidence that is not specific</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“Mexico has no term limits which is why democracy has not been consolidated in the country.”</i></li> </ul> <b>Provide evidence that is not relevant to course concepts in the prompt</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“The United Kingdom holds elections every 5 years, and the elections act as term limits for prime ministers.”</i></li> </ul>		<b>Examples of acceptable specific and relevant evidence (one example is one piece of evidence):</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><i>“Mexico’s one six-year term limit, which provides a reliable expectation that elections will occur regularly.”</i></li> <li><i>“Nigeria, Iran, and Russia each have a limit of two-terms, which provides a reliable expectation that elections will occur regularly.”</i></li> <li><i>“Xi’s removal of term limits for president changes the expectation of regular transfer of power in China.”</i></li> <li><i>“Putin revised the executive term limits in Russia to have his term start over, decreasing his accountability to the people.”</i></li> <li><i>“Putin revised the executive term limits in Russia to have his term start over, creating more consistent policy implementation for Russia.”</i></li> <li><i>“In Iran, term limits are not effective because the Supreme Leader and Guardian Council have a say in the candidates for president.”</i></li> <li><i>“China has no executive term limits, so they are able to maintain consistent policy and stability.”</i></li> <li><i>“In Iran, the Supreme Leader has no term limits, and is seen as a stabilizing, religious leader for the theocratic country.”</i></li> <li><i>“UK has no term limits for prime minister, but regular elections are held to maintain accountability of the government to the people.”</i></li> </ul>	
<b>Additional Notes:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A response does not need to earn the point in Row A to earn points in Row B.</li> <li>A response does not need to explain the relationship between the evidence and the claim or thesis to earn points in Row B. (That explanation is evaluated in Row C.)</li> </ul>			

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria			
<p><b>Row C Reasoning</b></p> <p><b>(0–1 points)</b></p>	<p><b>0 points</b> Does not meet the criteria for one point.</p>	<p><b>1 point</b> Explains how or why the evidence supports the claim or thesis.</p>		
<b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b>				
<table border="1" style="width: 100%; border-collapse: collapse;"> <tr> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;"> <p><b>Responses that do not earn this point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include evidence but offer no reasoning to connect the evidence to the claim or thesis.</li> <li>• Restate the prompt without explaining how the evidence supports the claim or thesis.</li> </ul> <p><b>Examples that do not earn this point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“The Nigerian president can serve for a maximum of two terms.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“The Iranian executive may only serve 2 terms, which helps to sustain political legitimacy and stability.”</i></li> </ul> </td> <td style="width: 50%; padding: 5px;"> <p><b>Responses that earn this point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain the relationship between the evidence provided and the claim or thesis.</li> </ul> <p><b>Examples of reasoning that explain how evidence supports the claim or thesis:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“The presence of a viable expectation of leadership change through term limits promotes stability, enhancing legitimacy of the regime.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“Fixed term limits promote more efficient use of one’s governing time in crafting policy that will be implemented in a short amount of time with lasting effects, enhancing legitimacy of the regime.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“Since term limits allow executives to be in office for a certain amount of time, citizens are less able to hold their executives accountable when they make poor decisions or are corrupt. This undermines the regime’s legitimacy as voters can’t hold the executive accountable.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“Term limits do not sustain legitimacy, as countries that do not have term limits may have more consistent policies that can enhance legitimacy.”</i></li> </ul> </td> </tr> </table>			<p><b>Responses that do not earn this point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Include evidence but offer no reasoning to connect the evidence to the claim or thesis.</li> <li>• Restate the prompt without explaining how the evidence supports the claim or thesis.</li> </ul> <p><b>Examples that do not earn this point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“The Nigerian president can serve for a maximum of two terms.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“The Iranian executive may only serve 2 terms, which helps to sustain political legitimacy and stability.”</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Responses that earn this point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Explain the relationship between the evidence provided and the claim or thesis.</li> </ul> <p><b>Examples of reasoning that explain how evidence supports the claim or thesis:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“The presence of a viable expectation of leadership change through term limits promotes stability, enhancing legitimacy of the regime.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“Fixed term limits promote more efficient use of one’s governing time in crafting policy that will be implemented in a short amount of time with lasting effects, enhancing legitimacy of the regime.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“Since term limits allow executives to be in office for a certain amount of time, citizens are less able to hold their executives accountable when they make poor decisions or are corrupt. This undermines the regime’s legitimacy as voters can’t hold the executive accountable.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“Term limits do not sustain legitimacy, as countries that do not have term limits may have more consistent policies that can enhance legitimacy.”</i></li> </ul>
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<p><b>Additional Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To earn this point, the response must have a defensible claim or thesis (earned the point in Row A).</li> <li>• The explanation of the relationship between one piece of evidence and the claim or thesis is sufficient to earn this point.</li> </ul>				

Reporting Category	Scoring Criteria	
<p><b>Row D</b>  <b>Responds to Alternate Perspectives</b></p>	<p><b>0 points</b>                      Does not meet the criteria for one point.</p>	<p><b>1 point</b>                      Responds to an opposing or alternate perspective using refutation, concession, or rebuttal.</p>
<p><b>(0–1 points)</b></p>	<p><b>Decision Rules and Scoring Notes</b></p>	
	<p><b>Responses that do not earn this point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Restate the opposite of the claim or thesis.</li> <li>• May identify or describe an alternate perspective but do not refute, concede, or rebut that perspective.</li> </ul>	<p><b>Responses that earn this point:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Must describe an alternate perspective AND refute, concede, or rebut that perspective.</li> </ul>
	<p><b>Examples of responses that do not earn this point:</b></p> <p><b>Restate the opposite of the claim or thesis</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“Even with evidence to the contrary, many try to argue that term limits are not effective at creating political legitimacy for a country.”</i></li> </ul> <p><b>Describe an alternate perspective but do not refute, concede, or rebut that perspective</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“There are those who argue that regularly held, free and fair elections are the best source of political legitimacy for a country.”</i></li> </ul>	<p><b>Examples of acceptable responses to an alternate perspective may include:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>“While term limits could lead to instability due to inconsistency in policy from one leader to the next, the term limits are long enough to mitigate that threat to legitimacy.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“While term limits allow less time for executives to build and strengthen policies or establish expertise, the length of the terms are long enough to mitigate that threat to legitimacy.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“While term limits keep power from amassing with one individual over time, citizens are unable to vote a person out of office due to term limits, weakening accountability and legitimacy.”</i></li> <li>• <i>“While term limits may sustain legitimacy in the short term, there are other ways to sustain long term legitimacy that are more important than term limits, such as the success and continuity of economic and religious polices found in countries that do not have executive term limits.”</i></li> </ul>
<p><b>Additional Notes:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To earn this point, the response must have a defensible claim or thesis (earned the point in Row A).</li> <li>• Responses that demonstrate an incorrect understanding of the alternate perspective do not earn this point.</li> </ul>		

Question 1 Question 2 Question 3 Question 4

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

Across both liberal and illiberal regimes, the question of executive term limits is a bone of contention. The existence of executive term limits ~~causes~~ stirs debate on how it affects government effectiveness and accountability. ~~But~~ Although issues may arise over policy implementation, executive term limits are crucial in sustaining political legitimacy, as they foster stability and cement accountability ~~in~~ ~~states~~ in states.

Executive term limits ~~cause~~ build political legitimacy through creating stability in political processes and ~~the~~ representation. For example, in Nigeria, the executive term limit of two four-year terms is fundamental to Nigeria's stability. As a country of diverse ethnic and religious groups, the term limits allows for the rotation of executive representation, especially with the ~~the~~ informal rule of rotating demographics of presidents, or between ~~the~~ Northern Muslim candidates ~~and~~ and Southern Christian Candidates. The executive term limit allows for this rotation and the prevention of one executive staying in power <sup>and</sup> giving greater advantage and ~~power~~ political power ~~to~~ to one ethnic or religious group. ~~The~~ ~~through~~ These executive term limits promote stability within a diverse population, as each ethnic, ~~or~~ religious, or regional group gets a fair chance at representation and preventing one group's monopoly over politics which would cause <sup>social</sup> unrest and instability, threatening a state's legitimacy.

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.

Through enforcing accountability within the executive, executive term limits build political legitimacy. In Mexico, the executive term limits a president's tenure to one six year term, or the sexenio. The sexenio is important to the executive's accountability because it formally prevents the unbridled consolidation of political power characteristic of no-term, ~~or~~ presidencies, that can be corrupted and make a state illiberal. Having an executive term limit~~s~~ requires a president or chief executive to focus on policy action instead of a long, time-consuming consolidation of power. Thus, in this way, a president~~is~~ is held accountable to completing executive duties. Specifically, in Mexico, after the successive ~~rule~~ one party rule of the PRI, the ~~sexenio~~ sexenio has been critical in the democratic consolidation of Mexico. Under the 'perfect dictatorship' of the PRI and its successive leadership ~~appointments~~, or the ~~dedazo~~ ~~dedazo~~ civil liberties and political rights weren't protected and were often violated by the rule of the PRI. However, the sexenio, coupled with growing free and competitive elections, have ~~set~~ improved Mexico's legitimacy through solidifying the ~~executive~~ ~~president's~~ chief executive's accountability to liberties. ~~Through~~ Through executive term limits, the chief executive is less likely to have the time and ability to consolidate political power and build a cult of personality, preventing an illiberal ~~dictatorship~~ ~~and~~ and unchecked chief executive and promising accountability.

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.

However, one of the fallbacks of the executive term limits is the question of government effectiveness and policy implementation. Often, the policies implemented by the chief executive need to be seen through across many terms, and these policies can be reversed or interfered with by later executives of differing political ideologies. In this way, having no <sup>executive</sup> term limit is beneficial, as it can improve government effectiveness. For example, in China, ~~over~~ the decades under Deng Xiaoping's rule, there was a transformation of China to a socialist-market economy, marked by economic liberalization and growth. Due to his ability to carry out the entirety of his policies, China saw economic growth that politically legitimized the CCP's rule. Thus, government effectiveness and policy implementation considered, ~~the~~ executive term limits can hold ~~disadvantages~~ disadvantages to the progress of a state. However, the accountability and stability that executive term limits cultivate can strengthen political legitimacy of a state.

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.

Political legitimacy is ~~imperative~~ <sup>important</sup> to a ~~leader~~ leader's ability to create policies that are favored by their citizens. ~~Legitimacy~~ Political legitimacy is essentially an authority figures right to rule. Legitimacy can be traditional, charismatic, or legal. ~~Term Limits~~ Executive term limits sustain political legitimacy because they ensure diverse policies are implemented which helps maintain stability.

~~Mexico has had~~ Before the year 2000, Mexico had a long complicated political history of instability. However in the year 2000, Mexico's dominant party for decades was voted out of office in the election. The election of 2000 is known as a turning point in Mexico's political history because they experienced their first competitive election and a peaceful transition from the PAN to PRI party. Mexico has a six-year term limit called the "sexenio" which means a new election is held every ~~four~~ <sup>six</sup> years. Since 2000, Mexico has experienced a swing of power between ~~its~~ PRI and PAN. This has increased the diversity in their policy and therefore increased Legitimacy and stability.

The United Kingdom also has an executive term limit of 4-years. Every four years ~~it~~

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 new election is held for parliament and parliament elects the prime minister. This increases legitimacy because citizens believe that they have a say in who becomes prime minister. The power often swings so that the prime minister is from one of the two dominant political parties, either the conservative or labor party. This ensures that the policies implemented are diverse and in line with the people's wishes. Without an election every four years a prime minister would stay in power ~~forever~~ forever and implement ~~one~~ similar ~~ideology~~ ideology in his policies. This way you have different leaders, from different parties, ~~enacted~~ enacting ~~the~~ different policies. This proves that executive term limits ~~can~~ sustain political legitimacy which in turn creates diverse policy and ~~stability~~ stability.

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.

Term limits do in fact sustain political legitimacy through maintaining stability and enabling easy transitions of power.

## Question 4 Argument Essay

### Overview

The intent of this question was to assess students' understanding of term limits and their impact on legitimacy in regimes using one or more of the following course concepts: stability, accountability, or policy implementation. Students were expected to articulate a defensible claim/thesis and establish a line of reasoning using one or more of the concepts provided; support the thesis with relevant evidence from a course country; use reasoning to explain why the evidence provided supports the thesis; and respond to an alternative perspective using refutation, concession, or rebuttal. Students were expected to write an argumentative essay, demonstrating each of the skills mentioned above. In particular, students needed to be able to demonstrate their understanding of the relationship between executive term limits and legitimacy by indicating what the causal mechanism of that relationship is—using the course concepts to provide that connection. Students further needed to demonstrate their knowledge of the course countries by providing appropriate evidence from these countries involving the course concept or concepts the students used in their thesis. Students also needed to be able to demonstrate their understanding of how the evidence they described was linked to the relationship between term limits and legitimacy. Finally, students needed to demonstrate their understanding of alternative explanations by describing an alternative thesis but then explaining why that thesis is inadequate (or, if they chose to concede, by explaining why the alternative is actually better than their thesis).

### Sample: 4A

**Claim/Thesis Score: 1**

**Evidence Score: 2**

**Reasoning Score: 1**

**Alternative Perspectives Score: 1**

The response earned 1 point for responding to the prompt with a defensible claim or thesis that establishes a line of reasoning using one or more of the provided course concepts by stating that “executive term limits are crucial in sustaining political legitimacy, as they foster stability and cement accountability in states.”

The response earned 2 points for supporting the claim with two pieces of evidence from one or more of the course countries that are related to the topic and course concept in the prompt by stating that “in Nigeria, the executive term limit of two four-year terms is fundamental to Nigeria’s stability” and “In Mexico, the executive term limits a president’s tenure to one six year term ... The sexenio is important to the executive’s accountability because it formally prevents the unbridled consolidation of political power.”

The response earned 1 point for using reasoning to explain how or why one piece of evidence supports the claim by stating, “Through enforcing accountability within the executive, executive term limits build political legitimacy.”

The response earned 1 point for responding to an alternative perspective by stating that “one of the fallbacks of the executive term limits is the question of government effectiveness and policy implementation. Often, the policies implemented by the chief executive ... can be reversed or interfered with by later executives ... In this way, having no executive term limit ... can improve government effectiveness. ... However, the accountability and stability that executive term limits cultivate can strengthen political legitimacy of a state.”

### Question 4 (continued)

**Sample: 4B**

**Claim/Thesis Score: 1**

**Evidence Score: 1**

**Reasoning Score: 1**

**Alternative Perspectives Score: 0**

The response earned 1 point for responding to the prompt with a defensible claim or thesis that establishes a line of reasoning by stating, “Executive term limits sustain political legitimacy because they ensure diverse policies are implemented which helps maintain stability.”

The response earned 1 point for supporting the claim with one piece of evidence from one of the course countries that is related to the topic and course concept in the prompt by stating, “Mexico has a six-year term limit” and “a swing of power between PRI and PAN ... has increased the diversity in their policy.” The response did not earn a second point because the piece of evidence it provides about the United Kingdom is inaccurate.

The response earned 1 point for explaining how the evidence supports the thesis by stating about Mexico, “This has increased the diversity in their policy and therefore increased Legitimacy.”

The response did not earn a point for responding to an alternative perspective because an alternative perspective is not provided.

**Sample: 4C**

**Claim/Thesis Score: 1**

**Evidence Score: 0**

**Reasoning Score: 0**

**Alternative Perspectives Score: 0**

The response earned 1 point for responding to the prompt with a defensible claim or thesis that establishes a line of reasoning by stating, “Term limits ... sustain political legitimacy through maintaining stability and ... transitions of power.”

The response did not earn points for supporting the claim with two pieces of evidence from one or more of the course countries that are related to the topic and course concept in the prompt because no evidence is provided.

The response did not earn a point for explaining how the evidence supports the thesis because no evidence is provided.

The response did not earn a point for responding to an alternative perspective because no alternative perspective is provided.