Chief Reader Report on Student Responses:

2022 AP® Comparative Government and Politics Set 1

Free-Response Questions

• Number of Students Scored	20,949		
• Number of Readers	89		
• Score Distribution	Exam Score	N	%At
	5	3,333	15.9
	4	5,081	24.3
	3	6,350	30.3
	2	3,493	16.7
	1	2,692	12.9
• Global Mean	3.14		

The following comments on the 2022 free-response questions for AP® Comparative Government and Politics were written by the Chief Reader, Eduardo Magalhaes III, Professor, Simpson College. They give an overview of each free-response question and of how students performed on the question, including typical student errors. General comments regarding the skills and content that students frequently have the most problems with are included. Some suggestions for improving student preparation in these areas are also provided. Teachers are encouraged to attend a College Board workshop to learn strategies for improving student performance in specific areas.

Question 1

Task: Describe and Explain
Topic: Socialist policies, political ideology, political culture and legitimacy
Max Score: 4
Mean Score: 1.44

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

The intent of this question was to assess students' ability to describe and explain. First, students were expected to be able to describe a socialist policy that governments use to address economic inequality. Students were then expected to be able to explain the difference between political ideology and political culture. Students then needed to be able to explain how socialist policies in general might affect economic development. Finally, students were expected to be able to explain how a government's implementation of a socialist policy might affect political legitimacy, for good or ill.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?

Most students were able to describe a socialist policy that governments use to address economic inequality. However, some students confused socialism with privatization and/or communism. Few students were able to explain the difference between political ideology and political culture. In most cases, this was because they did not define political culture correctly. Some students were able to explain how socialist policies might affect economic development. Where students failed to do so, it was typically because they did not explain the mechanism by which socialist policies affect economic development. Some students confused socialist policies with privatization and/or communist policies. More rarely, they failed to identify the effect upon development (such as helping or hindering it). Many students were able to explain how a government's implementation of a socialist policy might affect political legitimacy. Where students failed to do so, it was typically because they did not explain the mechanism by which socialist policies affect legitimacy.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	Responses that Demonstrate Understanding
• Responses conflated socialist policies with privatization and/or communist policies.	• "One socialist policy to address income inequality would be increasing taxes on upper-class citizens & putting it towards healthcare, education, housing, food & other social programs."
• Responses did not contain an accurate contrast between political ideology and political culture.	• "A political ideology is an individual or group's preferences about policies or the goals of government policy, whereas political culture is the common set of norms, values, and traditions about government shared by a whole society."

Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?

- Remind students not to describe a term by using the term itself. For example, avoid stating that "political culture is the widely shared cultural norms around politics."
- Remind students that successful explanations of cause and effect need to clearly identify the nature/direction of the effect. For example, "Socialist policies increase legitimacy because …"
- Remind students that successful explanations of cause and effect need to explain the mechanism by which the cause produces the effect, not just identify it. For example, "Socialist policies increase economic development because they reduce incentives" has identified incentives as the mechanism, but not explained it. "Socialist policies increase economic development because high taxes on wealth reduce the incentive for entrepreneurs to make investments" is a more complete explanation.

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

- The Course and Exam Description provides a section on "Developing the Disciplinary Practices" on pages 138–146. This section provides examples of questions and instructional strategies for incorporating the course skills into classroom instruction.
- Sign into AP Classroom to access AP Daily Videos and questions on the topics and skills addressed in this question. AP teachers can assign students short AP Daily Videos as homework, warm-ups, lectures, reviews, and more. AP teachers can also use the AP Question Bank in AP Classroom to enable students to practice and get feedback on formative topic questions and past AP Exam questions.
- AP Classroom also contains review videos for both the 2022 and 2021 AP Comparative Government and Politics Exam that have helpful information for students and that review key concepts, theories, and skills.
- Resources related specifically to this prompt include:

  o AP Daily Video for Topic 3.3 focuses on political ideology, looking closely at different examples, including socialism.
  o AP Daily Videos for Topics 1.8 and 1.9 discuss the concept of legitimacy and the impact of policy decisions on sustaining legitimacy in countries studied in AP Comparative Government and Politics.
  o AP Daily Videos (1 and 2) for Topic 5.6 explore the impact of social policies on income inequality.
  o Review Session 4: "Political Culture and Participation" addresses topics related to this prompt and offers practice on the quantitative analysis FRQ (available in 2022 Exam On-Demand Review in AP Classroom and via YouTube).

- Additional resources may be found on the AP Comparative Government and Politics Course page on AP Central at: https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-comparative-government-and-politics/classroom-resources?course=ap-comparative-government-and-politics
- The AP Comparative Government and Politics Online Teaching Community (OTC) is another great resource, which includes materials and resources posted not only by the College Board, but also by other teachers. The OTC Discussion Board is the place to ask questions, share resources, and exchange teaching ideas at: https://apcommunity.collegeboard.org/group/apgopo-comp/

Question 2

Task: Identify, Describe, Draw Conclusions, and Explain
Topic: Urbanization and demographic change
Max Score: 5
Mean Score: 2.90

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

The intent of this question was to assess students' ability to interpret, describe, compare, and draw conclusions from quantitative data presented in a population distribution chart. This question about urbanization assessed students' ability to identify a data point on a line graph and describe a trend. Students were then asked to describe how urbanization influences demographic trends in the United Kingdom. The question assessed students' ability to draw a conclusion about the principle cause of the gap in urbanization between China and Nigeria between 2000 and 2018. And finally, students were asked to explain how governments responded to the trend in urbanization illustrated in the data.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?

A large majority of students were able to identify China as the country with the lowest percent of a population living in an urban area in 1985. A large majority of students were able to describe the trend in the United Kingdom's percent of a population living in urban areas. Many students were able to describe how urbanization influences demographic change, although a substantial percentage of students had difficulty because they simply referred to urban areas, which is restating the language of the prompt. Most students had difficulty drawing an accurate conclusion about the principal cause of the gap in urbanization between China and Nigeria, and many students mentioned one country but not the other. Most students had difficulty explaining how governments responded to the overall trend in urbanization because they described causes of urbanization instead of responses to urbanization.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	*Responses that Demonstrate Understanding*
• Responses referred to total population rather than percent of population. For example, "China had the lowest population living in urban areas."	• "The country in 1985 that has the lowest percent of population living in urban areas was China."
• Responses misstatated the data. For example, "The percent of people in the UK living in urban areas rose from less than 80% in 2000 to over 90% in 2015."	• "The percent of people in the UK living in urban areas rose from less than 80% in 2000 to about 84% in 2015."

• Responses referred to urbanization without clearly stating its meaning. For example, "Urbanization is an increase in the number of people living in urban areas."	• "Urbanization is moving from rural areas to cities."
• Responses did not draw comparisons between Nigeria and China. For example, "The principle cause of the growing gap in urbanization between China and and Nigeria is that China adopted economic liberalization policies."	• "The principle cause of the growing gap in urbanization between China and Nigeria is that China's economic liberalization policies diversified its economy while Nigeria is a rentier state with a less diversified economy which means less revenue is available to urbanize."
• Responses explained a cause of the overall trend in urbanization rather than a government response. For example, "China responded to urbanization by creating SEZs."	• "China's government responded to the overall trend in urbanization by increasing spending on infrastructure."

Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?

- Give students plenty of opportunity to practice reading and analyzing line graphs, focusing on individual data points and trends.
- Remind students not to describe a term by using the term itself. For example, avoid stating that "urbanization is moving to an urban area."
- Remind students that when a prompt refers to two countries, students should address both countries in their response.

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

- The Course and Exam Description provides a section on "Developing the Disciplinary Practices" on pages 138–146. This section provides examples of questions and instructional strategies for incorporating the course skills into classroom instruction.
- Sign into AP Classroom to access AP Daily Videos and questions on the topics and skills addressed in this question. AP teachers can assign students short AP Daily Videos as homework, warm-ups, lectures, reviews, and more. AP teachers can also use the AP Question Bank in AP Classroom to enable students to practice and get feedback on formative topic questions and past AP Exam questions.
- AP Classroom also contains review videos for both the 2022 and 2021 AP Comparative Government and Politics Exam that have helpful information for students and that review key concepts, theories, and skills.
- Resources related specifically to this prompt include:

  o The AP Daily Videos (1, 2, and 3) for Topic 5.8 on AP Classroom demonstrate the use of data to explore causes and effects of demographic change, focusing on examples from countries studied in AP Comparative Government and Politics.
  o AP Daily Live Exam Review 6 reviews key concepts about political and economic change that are related to this prompt.

- Additional resources may be found on the AP Comparative Government and Politics Course Page on AP Central at: https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-comparative-government-and-politics/classroom-resources?course=ap-comparative-government-and-politics
- The AP Comparative Government and Politics Online Teaching Community (OTC) is another great resource, which includes materials and resources posted not only by the College Board, but also by other teachers. The OTC Discussion Board is the place to ask questions, share resources, and exchange teaching ideas at: https://apcommunity.collegeboard.org/group/apgopo-comp/

Question 3

Task: Describe and Explain
Topic: Political Party Systems
Max Score: 5
Mean Score: 1.90

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

The intent of this comparative analysis question was to assess students' understanding of the concept of political party systems and their ability to describe and explain the impact of political party systems in countries studied in the AP Comparative Government and Politics course. The skills tested were descriptive and explanatory. Students first were expected to define a political party system. Then they had to demonstrate their understanding of political party systems by describing two examples of different political party systems, each one within a different course country. Finally, students needed to demonstrate their understanding of how political party systems in each of those two countries shape political efficacy.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?

Students had difficulty defining political party systems as the number of political parties that are able to win elections and govern. While some students simply identified the major parties in a course country, most students were able to describe the specific type of political party system that has power in two different course countries as either a one-party, dominant party, two-party, or multi-party system. Although some students confused the term efficacy with efficiency, many students were able to explain that political party systems can either increase or decrease political efficacy, depending on the number of options for diverse interests to be represented.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	*Responses that Demonstrate Understanding*
• "Political party systems are diverse groups of people who want to influence the government." • "The UK has two major parties, Labour and Conservative."	• "A political party system describes the number of influential political parties who have won seats in the legislature." • "The UK has a 2-party system with the Labour and Conservative parties competing for leadership of the House of Commons."
• "Dominant party systems are more efficient because the major party can easily pass legislation without opposition."	• "The dominant party system in Russia decreases political efficacy because voters know that United Russia will always control the government, so they don't have a real choice."

Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?

Teachers should provide multiple opportunities for students to practice writing definitions of closely related terms. For example, in this question, students often described the goals of a political party instead of defining a political party system or they confused party systems with election systems and parliamentary/presidential systems. Students also frequently referenced efficiency instead of efficacy.

Teachers should have students practice distinguishing between task prompts. In this question, many students identified the major parties in the course countries but failed to describe the political party system as the number of parties represented in the government of that country. Students also described political efficacy but failed to effectively explain how the political party system increased or decreased political efficacy in a course country.

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

- The Course and Exam Description provides a section on "Developing the Disciplinary Practices" on pages 138–146. This section provides examples of questions and instructional strategies for incorporating the course skills into classroom instruction.
- Sign into AP Classroom to access AP Daily Videos and questions on the topics and skills addressed in this question. AP teachers can assign students short AP Daily Videos as homework, warm-ups, lectures, reviews, and more. AP teachers can also use the AP Question Bank in AP Classroom to enable students to practice and get feedback on formative topic questions and past AP Exam questions.
- AP Classroom also contains review videos for both the 2022 and 2021 AP Comparative Government and Politics Exam that have helpful information for students and that review key concepts, theories, and skills.
- Resources related specifically to this prompt include:
    - The AP Daily Videos (1, 2, and 3) for Topics 4.3 and 4.4 discuss the characteristics and functions of different party systems in the countries studied in AP Comparative Government and Politics.
    - The AP Daily Video for Topic 1.9 addresses the concept of efficacy and its relationship to political legitimacy.
    - AP Daily Live Exam Review Session 5 on AP Classroom reviews the key concepts in Unit 4, such as electoral systems, party systems, and pluralist and corporatist interests by practicing the comparison skills needed for FRQ 3.
- Additional resources may be found on the AP Comparative Government and Politics Course page on AP Central at: https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-comparative-government-and-politics/classroom-resources?course=ap-comparative-government-and-politics
- The AP Comparative Government and Politics Online Teaching Community (OTC) is another great resource, which includes materials and resources posted not only by the College Board, but also by other teachers. The OTC Discussion Board is the place to ask questions, share resources, and exchange teaching ideas at: https://apcommunity.collegeboard.org/group/apgopo-comp/

Question 4

Task: Argument
Topic: Direct elections/authority and stability of nondemocratic regimes
Max Score: 5
Mean Score: 3.02

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

The intent of this question was to assess student's understanding of whether direct elections strengthen the authority and stability of nondemocratic regimes using one or more of the following course concepts: competition, legitimacy, or political participation. Students were expected to argue whether having direct elections strengthens the authority and stability of nondemocratic regimes. In making this argument, students were expected to use one or more of the following concepts: legitimacy, political participation, or competition. Students were expected to be able to develop a thesis, marshal evidence, provide reasoning for why that evidence supported their thesis, and respond to an alternative perspective.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skills required on this question?

With respect to course content, the responses were successful. Specifically, students generally understood aspects of legitimacy and how it might be gained or lost. Students seemed to be able to provide a thesis and offer correct evidence to back it up.

What common student misconceptions or gaps in knowledge were seen in the responses to this question?

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	Responses that Demonstrate Understanding
• Listing the United Kingdom as an authoritarian regime	• "The authoritarian regime in Russia still relies on direct elections to provide legitimacy to the regime."
• Listing Nigeria's Fourth Republic as an authoritarian regime	• "As Nigeria has moved away from authoritarianism in the 4th Republic, it can allow direct elections without fear of destabilizing the regime."
• Stating generally that China has direct elections (true at the local level only)	• "Direct 'village or local' elections in China."
• Stating generally that Iran has direct elections	• "Direct elections for President and/or Majles in Iran."
• Stating that people vote for GC in Iran	• "Candidates for President and/or Majles are vetted by the Guardian Council."

Based on your experience at the AP® Reading with student responses, what advice would you offer teachers to help them improve the student performance on the exam?

- Make sure students understand the instructions given with the prompt to "respond to the prompt with a defensible claim or thesis that establishes a line of reasoning using one or more of the provided course concepts." It is important that students remember to use one or more concept in their thesis. If they are using more than one concept later in the essay all concepts referred to should be referenced in the thesis.
- The students do not need a long introduction that contextualizes the essay, just a succinct thesis statement.
- Advice on response structure:
  - Thesis: Make sure they understand that a thesis must have "stability and authority" + direction/action + one concept = Thesis
  - Reasoning: Must link back to the prompt and concept Evidence + concept + stability and authority = Reasoning
  - Alternative Responses: Focus on the concept of an alternative response "Others may argue …" + "But" + Rebuttal, Refutation, and/or Concession + Stability and/or Authority = Alternate Perspective
- Do not split the thesis or try to argue both sides.
- Teach students a "formula" for writing a thesis/claim that would earn a point.
  - On this question this formula might look something like below:
    - Process/action (direct elections)
    - Enter a direction such as increase/decrease, improve/make worse
    - Direct elections *and* 1 or more concept(s) from prompt (legitimacy, political participation, competition) linked to stability and authority (prompt) *because* (direction/action)
- Encourage students to take a few minutes to brainstorm what they know about each of the course countries in relationship to the prompt and concepts.
- Offer clear transitions between the different tasks—thesis/claim, evidence, reasoning, Alternative Perspective. The easiest way to do this is to use paragraphs for each task in the question.
- Practice, practice, practice. There should be at least one argumentative essay in each of the units/countries. Practice and feedback are key.
- Stress that this is a political science course, not a history course. Evidence should not go too far into the past.
- *Use the terms and verbiage in the prompt.* While synonyms are acceptable, they are more open to interpretation by individual readers, and this can have a negative effect on a student's score.
- With the reasoning point, make sure students are providing an explicit HOW or WHY their evidence supports their thesis.
- No hypotheticals for evidence.
- Evidence must come from one of the course countries. Generic responses, no matter how well written, will not earn credit unless there is a specific example from a course country.
- With the alternative perspective, students must provide a different perspective than the one in their thesis and must respond to that perspective.
  - The response should do one of the following:
    - Rebuttal—defend the student's own thesis
    - Refutation—criticize the alternate perspective
    - Concession—admit the alternate perspective is correct

What resources would you recommend to teachers to better prepare their students for the content and skill(s) required on this question?

- The Course and Exam Description provides a section on "Developing the Disciplinary Practices" on pages 138–146. This section provides examples of questions and instructional strategies for incorporating the course skills into classroom instruction.
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- AP Classroom also contains review videos for both the 2022 and 2021 AP Comparative Government and Politics Exam that have helpful information for students and that review key concepts, theories, and skills.
- Resources related specifically to this prompt include:
  - The AP Daily Videos (1, 2, and 3) for Topics 4.1 and 4.2 on AP Classroom discuss the electoral systems and election rules for countries studied in AP Comparative Government and Politics.
  - For students interested in electoral systems, election rules, and the use of gender quotas, see Professor Mark Jones's AP Daily's Faculty Guest Lecture (available on AP Classroom and YouTube).
  - AP Daily Live Exam Review 7 on AP Classroom provides helpful guidance in structuring and using evidence in the FRQ 4 argument essay.
- Additional resources may be found on the AP Comparative Government and Politics Course Page on AP Central at: https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/ap-comparative-government-and-politics/classroom-resources?course=ap-comparative-government-and-politics
- The AP Comparative Government and Politics Online Teaching Community (OTC) is another great resource, which includes materials and resources posted not only by the College Board, but also by other teachers. The OTC Discussion Board is the place to ask questions, share resources, and exchange teaching ideas at: https://apcommunity.collegeboard.org/group/apgopo-comp/