Chief Reader Report on Student Responses:

2022 AP® Comparative Government and Politics Set 2

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: Legislatures, parliamentary systems, presidential systems, efficiency
Max Score: 4
Mean Score: 1.32

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

The intent of this question was to assess students' ability to describe and explain. Students were expected to be able to describe one of the ways that a legislature can restrict the power of the executive. Then students needed to explain how a presidential system can be more inefficient than a parliamentary system and why the legislative process in a presidential system can be less efficient. Finally, students were expected to explain the relationship between legislative efficiency and 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?

Most responses accurately described the vote of no confidence as a mechanism to restrict the power of the executive, though some just identified the vote of no confidence without a description. Some students incorrectly described impeachments as a mechanism in parliamentary systems. Many students noted that the presidential veto makes presidential systems less efficient. Many students focused incorrectly on partisan polarization rather than on explaining checks and balances or divided government in presidential systems. In explaining the inefficiency of presidential systems compared to parliamentary systems, some responses stated that the executive and legislature in parliamentary systems work well together but then left out or incorrectly explained why the Prime Minister works efficiently with the legislative majority or coalition. Also, some responses fail to complete the comparison, explaining either the parliamentary or presidential system and providing no information on the other system or, alternatively, insufficiently stating that in the other system "it is the opposite."

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

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	Responses that Demonstrate Understanding
• Legislatures and executives work against each other due to high levels of partisanship.	• "Legislative and executive branches in presidential systems sometimes are dominated by opposing parties, leading to a slower or blocked legislative process."
• Presidential systems are more inefficient because the executive branch has more power and can veto legislation.	• "Presidential systems are inefficient because the legislative and executive branches can check each other, sometimes resulting in presidential vetoes that cancel out legislative work."

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?

Students have an incomplete understanding of political efficacy.

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:
  - AP Daily Videos for Topics 2.1–2.7 provide detailed information about political institutions and functions using specific examples from countries studied in AP Comparative Government and Politics.
  - Review Session 3 for both the 2021 and 2022 exams focuses on key concepts in Unit 2 about the executive and legislative systems in all six of the required countries, and it provides practice for the Conceptual Analysis FRQ 1.
- 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: Gender equity, particularly as it relates to population distributions
Max Score: 5
Mean Score: 2.92

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. In addition, the question was designed to assess students' ability to make connections between the concepts of gender equity, population distributions, and political policies in Nigeria and the United Kingdom. Students were presented with two separate population distribution charts from *Population Pyramids of the World* displaying data from the United Kingdom and Nigeria. The data, drawn from 2018, displayed total percent of the population in 5-year increments, as well as a breakdown of males vs. females within each age cohort. Students were expected to be able to correctly identify the age group in the United Kingdom with the largest percentage of females. Students were also expected to describe a difference in the population distribution in Nigeria and the United Kingdom. In the next two prompts, students were asked to apply the concept of gender equity to the chart and these countries. First, they were asked to describe how gender equity influences population distributions. Then, they were asked to draw a conclusion about gender equity in the population distributions, using the data from the graph (meaning they needed to reference one or both countries in their response). Finally, students were expected to explain a future political implication related to the population distributions shown (namely, the United Kingdom's aging population and Nigeria's very young population).

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?

On this question, the biggest challenge students had was with understanding the concept of gender equity. Often, responses emphasized the percent breakdown of males versus females, instead of referencing the treatment of the two genders. When doing this, responses generally approached the question one of two ways: some indicated that because the sexes had generally equal percentages of males vs. females, gender equality was high. Others cited very small percentage differences (for example, .4% fewer females vs. males in the Nigerian age cohort of 0–4 years old) in order to argue that there was gender inequality. The lack of understanding of this concept impacted parts (c) and (d) in particular.

Another challenge for students related to emphasizing a *political* implication in part (e). Responses that were on the right track but did not earn the point emphasized economic implications, but they did not tie these implications back to future political policies, concerns for the government, etc.

Overall, students did very well with country comparisons. Responses that did not earn points often correctly identified information for both countries, but did not use comparative language (more than, whereas, in contrast to, etc.) in their response.

One skill students struggled to demonstrate related to the directional nature of the phrasing of part (d): "describe how *gender equity* <u>influences</u> *population distributions*" (emphasis added). Incorrect responses often referenced China's one-child policy when answering this question, stating that when populations were skewed older, and parents needed a single child to take care of them, they preferred for that child to be

male. This was problematic for two reasons: first, it addressed how population distributions <u>influence</u> gender preference; second, it also did not display an understanding of the concept of gender equity.

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

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	Responses that Demonstrate Understanding
• "In Nigeria, population of both males and females decreases as age group increases. In the UK, after the age of around 75–79, there isn't much change in variability of age distributions."	• "Nigeria has a much larger percentage of the population in the younger generations, whereas the UK has a more even distribution of the population across all age groups."
• "Both the UK and Nigeria's population distribution is evenly split between genders. This means gender equity is prominent in both of these countries."	• "Nigeria has lower gender equity than does the UK, indicated by the differences in each country in the percent of population that is 0–14 years old."

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?

Students should be exposed to a variety of graphs and charts throughout the course. The population distribution chart is one that may have been unique to students, as it seemed as if many struggled to glean data from the chart in the way that was required by the question. It would also be helpful to explain to students what constitutes significant differences in percentages, as many students used very small numbers (.4%, for example) to argue that there were many more males in a country's age group than females. Had students known this, they may have realized that the chart should be used for a different purpose.

It is also important to explain the concept of gender equity, particularly as it relates to the AP Comparative Government and Politics course countries.

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.
- Resources related specifically to this prompt include:
  - AP Daily Video 1 for Topic 5.6 discusses issues related to gender equity using examples of countries studied in AP Comparative Government and Politics.
  - AP Daily Videos (1, 2, and 3) for Topic 5.8 address the causes of demographic change using course countries and provide opportunities to practice quantitative data analysis.

- Use the filtering function in the Question Bank to search for quantitative analysis questions that provide students opportunities to familiarize themselves with different types of graphs, tables, and other data visualizations and to practice interpreting the data to find answers to questions.
- The Unit 5: University Faculty Lecture with Mary Rose Kobal, "Looking at Political and Economic Change Through the Lens of Gender (In)Equality," explores how gender equality is central to democracy and how political science theories have traditionally ignored the (often unequal) gendered impact of political and economic development.

- 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.
- 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 and Social Cleavages
Max Score: 5
Mean Score: 1.82

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

The intent of this question was to assess students' understanding of the concept of a social cleavage and their ability to define, describe, and explain the impact of social cleavages in countries studied in the AP Comparative Government and Politics course. The skills tested were definitive, descriptive, and explanatory. Students first were expected to define social cleavage. They then had to demonstrate their understanding of social cleavages by describing two examples of social cleavages in two course countries. Finally, students needed to demonstrate their understanding of the relationship between social cleavages and political legitimacy by explaining how social cleavages in those two countries have impacted the political legitimacy of the state.

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 frequently exhibited skill in providing clear, accurate definitions of social cleavages, but others often struggled to distinguish the concept from political values, opinion/positions, partisan support, or other identifiers, such as support for Brexit and gender/class equality. Most students provided at least one correct example of a politically relevant cleavage from a course country and many provided two correct examples as required by the prompt; a significant number of responses, however, did not rise to the level of description and lacked information contextualized to the specific country under discussion. In some instances, descriptions were incomplete, providing only one side of the social cleavage, such as "a cleavage between the majority Han population & ethnic minorities." Many students had difficulty providing complete explanations that connected social cleavages to political legitimacy outcomes. A common response for part (c), for example, linked electoral rules to stronger political legitimacy in Nigeria, rather than showing how ethno-regional cleavages prompted the government response of new electoral rules that affected political 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
• "The divide over support for Brexit is a social cleavage."	• "Social cleavages divide populations based on inherent or fundamental characteristics, like race or ethnicity, socioeconomic class, or region."
• "One example of a social cleavage is the multiple ethnic and religious groups in Nigeria." • "Major cleavages in China include ethnic or religious minorities, like the Tibetans and Uighurs."	• "A key cleavage in Nigeria is between the Muslim-dominated North and the Christian-majority South."

• "Social cleavages in Mexico and Iran divide the rich and poor of society."	• "An example of a social cleavage in China is the division between the Han majority and minorities, such as the Tibetans and Uighurs." • "Social cleavages in Mexico divide the richer, industrialized North from the poorer, agrarian/rural South, while a major dividing line in Iranian society is between dominant Shi'a and minority Sunni, Jewish, and Christian groups."
• "The social cleavage stated above for China undermines the political legitimacy … This unfairness between rural and upper classes shows that government is illegitimate and the government doesn't treat its citizens fairly … [social cleavage for Iran] undermines the political legitimacy … The cleavage shows that the government is disorganized and is illegitimate." • "Social cleavages between the English, Welsh, and Scottish mean greater representation in the UK, thus strengthening political legitimacy in that country."	• "In Nigeria this social cleavage strengthens their legitimacy by having them implement laws to protect different races and make sure they are heard like with the law of presidential canadites [*sic*] having to have certain amounts of votes from every region." • "In the UK, the government's response to the regional cleavages has strengthened the states' political legitimacy. The state responded by devolving policymaking power to regional governments of Scotland, Wales, and Northern Ireland in response to public demand. The successful mitigation of conflict between cleavages along with recognition of public opinion increased the political legitimacy of the state by affirming the UK's capability to listen to and govern by citizen voices. This in turn increased the belief in the state to govern."

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:
  - AP Daily Videos for Topics 3.8 and 3.9 describe various social and political cleavages in the countries studied in AP Comparative Government and Politics, the challenges they present, and governmental responses to address them.
  - Exam Review Sessions 4 for both the 2022 and 2021 AP Exam look at key concepts from Unit 3, including social and political cleavages.
- 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: Regime change and popular support
Max Score: 5
Mean Score: 2.70

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

The intent of this question was to assess student's understanding of the sources of popular support for transitions to authoritarian regimes using one or more of the following course concepts: economic development, political stability, or civil society. 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 demonstrate their understanding of the relationship between popular support and authoritarian transitions by indicating the causal mechanisms, using the course concepts to establish the link. Students further needed to demonstrate their knowledge of the course countries by providing appropriate evidence from these countries that involve course 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 authoritarian transitions and popular support. Finally, students needed to demonstrate their understanding of alternative explanations by describing an alternative thesis and then either refuting that thesis, rebutting it, or conceding it.

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?

The different tasks within this question required students to demonstrate several higher-order thinking skills, applying their substantive knowledge about authoritarian regimes while using argumentation. This type of question required the content knowledge from the course to be integrated with the practice of providing a defensible thesis, providing specific and relevant evidence and reasoning, and responding to an alternative perspective. Most students were successful in providing a defensible thesis, and most were successful in providing one or two accurate and relevant pieces of evidence related to the prompt. Students generally demonstrated an understanding of authoritarian transitions, and most could derive a connection between authoritarianism and popular support. Students who provided a defensible thesis could usually provide at least one piece of supporting evidence. Somewhat fewer students provided reasoning to connect the evidence with the thesis, and relatively few successfully developed and negated an alternative hypothesis.

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

Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps	Responses that Demonstrate Understanding
• Not responding to the prompt or supporting the thesis	• "A regime change to authoritarianism would be supported by citizens because it leads to political stability and they would value the security and peace."

• Not describing an alternate perspective or not responding to it	• "Alternatively, citizens might support a change to authoritarianism if it came with the promise of political stability. However, authoritarian regimes cannot provide enduring economic development or space for civil society, meaning that protests will ensure [*sic*] and political instability will prevail in the long run."

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 reinforce the need to develop a thesis statement that connects the prompt with the listed course concepts.
- Teachers should reinforce the need to provide evidence relevant to the course concepts under discussion.
- Teachers should reinforce the need to provide a separate, coherent line of reasoning linking evidence to concept.
- Teachers should outline how to develop an alternative or opposing line of thought and, especially, how to write a rebuttal of, refutation of, or concession to that line of reasoning.

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:
  - AP Daily Video 3 for Topic 4.5 focuses on developing a strong thesis and rebuttal when writing FRQ4 argument essays, using the example of social movements and interest groups.
  - Exam Review Session 7 for both the 2021 and 2022 AP Exam discusses how to use evidence effectively in writing FRQ4 argument essays.
- 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
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