



AP[®] Comparative Government and Politics

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary Set 1

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Free-Response Question 3

- ✓ Scoring Guidelines
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Question 3: Comparative Analysis**5 points****(A)** Describe the role of the head of government.**1 point****Acceptable descriptions include:**

- The head of government is responsible for formulating, implementing, and executing policies through a cabinet and or various government agencies.
- The head of government serves as the chief executive.
- The head of government oversees the civil service.
- The head of government serves as commander-in-chief.

(B) Describe the selection process for the head of government in two AP Comparative Government and Politics course countries.**2 points****Acceptable descriptions include the following (max one point per country):****China**

In China, the president nominates the premier of the NPC.

Iran

- In Iran, a presidential candidate is vetted by the Guardian Council and is directly elected by the people.
- In Iran, if no candidate for president gets a majority of the votes, there is a runoff election.

Mexico

- In Mexico, the president is selected by a direct election by the people.
- In Mexico, the president is selected by a plurality vote by the people.

Nigeria

- In Nigeria, the president is directly elected by the people.
- In Nigeria, a presidential candidate must have regional support throughout Nigeria to become president. A president must win at least 25% of the vote in two-thirds of Nigeria's states.

Russia

In Russia, the prime minister is appointed by the president with the consent of the State Duma.

United Kingdom

- In the United Kingdom, the prime minister is the head of government and is selected by the majority party or coalition.
- In the United Kingdom, the head of government is selected by the party and officially appointed by the monarch.

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- (C)** Explain the extent to which executive power is formally constrained in the two AP Comparative Government and Politics course countries described in (B). **2 points**

Acceptable explanations include the following (max one point per country):

China

In China, the Politburo Standing Committee is the actual center of power in the Chinese state and as a member of the Politburo, the executive has few constraints.

Iran

- In Iran, the supreme leader sets the political agenda, which can constrain the president because the president must work within the political agenda set by the supreme leader.
- In Iran, the president has term limits, which constrains the president and does not allow them to consolidate power or become a dictator.
- In Iran, the power of the executive is constrained by the Majles by being able to approve and remove ministers from office which limits the power of the executive.

Mexico

- In Mexico, the president may only serve one term, which limits the power of the president because it does not allow them to consolidate power or become a dictator.
- In Mexico, the president may be impeached by the legislative branch, which may constrain the president from engaging in policies that might challenge the legislature.
- In Mexico, the judicial branch can constrain executive power because it can declare acts by the executive as unconstitutional.

Nigeria

- In Nigeria, the president may only serve two terms, which constrains the president because it does not allow them to consolidate power or become a dictator.
- In Nigeria, the president may be impeached by the legislature, which may constrain the president from engaging in policies that might challenge the legislature.
- In Nigeria, the judicial branch can constrain executive power because it can declare acts by the executive as unconstitutional.

Russia

- In Russia, the legislature constrains the president by overriding a presidential veto, therefore the bill becomes a law without presidential approval.
- In Russia, the legislature is controlled by the dominant party of the executive, and thus power is not constrained.
- In Russia, the legislature has the power of impeachment and can vote to remove a president from power, thus constraining executive power.
- In Russia, the legislature has the power of a vote of no confidence and constrains the prime minister through a removal process.
- In Russia, the Duma has the power to approve the president's nominee for prime minister, but this rarely constrains the power of the executive because the president can dissolve the Duma if they do not approve of the nominee.
- In Russia, the Constitutional Court has the power of judicial review and can constrain the executive by declaring executive actions/decrees unconstitutional, although this rarely happens.

United Kingdom

- In the United Kingdom, a vote of no confidence can constrain the power of the executive because it requires the prime minister to have support of the House of Commons to remain in power.
- In the United Kingdom, the power of the executive is not constrained because the prime minister is a part of the legislative branch.

Total for question 3 5 points

● Important: Completely fill in the circle that corresponds to the question you are answering on this page.

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) The role of the head of government is to implement public policy in a country.

(B) In ~~Nigeria~~ Nigeria, the president is directly elected by the citizens. If the winning candidate does not receive at least 25% of the vote in at least 2/3 of the states, a runoff election is held between the top two candidates. In the UK, the Prime minister is chosen by the ruling party (or coalition of parties) in parliament. Citizens don't directly elect them because they only vote for parties, not individual candidates.

(C) In Nigeria, executive power is formally constrained in that there are term limits, meaning that after 2 4 year terms the ~~candidate~~^{President} can no longer run for office. This limits consolidation of power. The president may also be impeached if deemed by the courts. In the UK, the prime minister has no term limits. As long as their party stays in power and is satisfied with them, they will continue to be prime minister. However, at any moment if parliament is unhappy with the prime minister they may pass a vote of no confidence. This will take the prime minister out of power. Additionally, after each election if the ruling party changes so will the executive. In Nigeria, impeachment takes the executive out of power.

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Important: Completely fill in the circle that corresponds to the question you are answering on this page.

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.

A. Head of government oversees the Civil Service and domestic politics of a country. For instance, a head of government could lead a bureaucracy, or head the functions of government.
 B. In Mexico the President is the head of government. They are directly elected through a national vote and are required to win a plurality. In China, the Nigeria the President is the head of gov & must win at least 25% of the vote in $\frac{2}{3}$ of Nigeria's ^{regions} ~~states~~ ~~to order~~ as well as a ~~plurality~~ ^{plurality} from a direct election to become the President.

C. In Mexico the President is limited to a ~~single 6 year~~ ^{two 4-year} term & therefore is less able to become a dictator or seize too much power. This term limit constrains the President's power & helps maintain a balance b/w the branches of gov. In Nigeria, the President ~~is~~ requires legislative approval for their members of Cabinet, which gives the legislative branch some control over the President as the President must ~~pick~~ ^{get} an ~~approved~~ ^{approval} ~~for~~ cabinet members. Also MX's Pres term limit forces a President out of office but they can seize too much power and make themselves a dictator or overpower the Judiciary & legislative branches. While the executive is still the most powerful branch it does have some limitation. In Nigeria, the Pres is easily the most powerful & the ~~limit~~ ^{approval} of cabinet members does represent a check on the Pres by the legislative branch, but due to political corruption, the Pres is still very powerful in Nigeria. (also the Pres controls the bureaucracy, which is very corrupt)

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Question 1

Question 2

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Question 4



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

A. For instance, in the UK the prime minister leads parliament, which does the law-making & legislation for the Country, while the monarch is the head of state & represents the UK symbolically to foreign countries.

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Important: Completely fill in the circle that corresponds to the question you are answering on this page.

Question 1

Question 2

Question 3

Question 4

☐☐☒☐

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

- A) THE HEAD OF GOVERNMENT OVERSEES INTERNAL POLITICAL & ~~SECURITY~~ AFFAIRS AND IS INVOLVED WITH ~~THEIR~~ PROPOSALS AND FROM THE LEGISLATURE. MOST OFTEN, THE HEAD OF GOVERNMENT CAN ^{APPOINT} ~~APPOINT~~ SUPREME COURT JUDGES AND TAKES ON THE ROLE OF COMMANDER IN ~~CHIEF~~ CHIEF.
- B) IN MEXICO, THE HEAD OF GOVERNMENT IS THE PRESIDENT, WHO IS ^{SELECTED} ~~SELECTED~~ BY A ~~RATIONALIZED~~ NATIONAL ~~MAJORITY~~ PLURALITY VOTE. IN CONTRAST, IN THE UNITED KINGDOM, THE HEAD OF ~~GOVERNMENT~~ GOVERNMENT IS THE PRIME ~~MINISTER~~ MINISTER, WHO IS ^{SELECTED} ~~SELECTED~~ AS LEADER OF THE ~~WIDEST~~ LARGEST PARTY IN THE HOUSE OF COMMONS.
- C) IN MEXICO, ~~EXECUTIVE~~ EXECUTIVE POWER IS CONSTRAINED BY IMPEACHMENT AND TERM LIMITS (~~ONE~~ ONE TERM OF ~~SIX~~ SIX YEARS). HOWEVER, IN THE UNITED KINGDOM, EXECUTIVE ^{POWER} ~~POWER~~ IS ~~CONSTRAINED~~ ^{CONSTRAINED} BY A VOTE OF NO CONFIDENCE. IN BOTH ~~COUNTRIES~~ COUNTRIES, EXECUTIVE ^{POWER} ~~POWER~~ IS LIMITED BY JUDICIAL REVIEW AND THE HEAD OF GOVERNMENT IS HELD ^{ACCOUNTABLE} ~~ACCOUNTABLE~~ TO THE PEOPLE/CITIZENS AND RULE OF LAW.

Use a pen with black or dark blue ink only. Do NOT write your name. Do NOT write outside the box.

Question 3

Comparative Analysis

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

Overview

The intent of this question was to assess students' understanding of the concept of the executive branch in the countries being studied. This included assessing their ability to describe executive power, how the head of government is selected, and to explain to what extent executive power is formally constrained in the countries studied. The skills tested were descriptive and explanatory. Students first were expected to describe the main role (function) of the executive branch of government in most countries. Then they had to demonstrate their understanding of how the head of government is chosen by describing the selection process in two course countries. Finally, students needed to demonstrate their understanding of checks on executive power by explaining the extent to which executive power is formally constrained in each of the countries selected.

Sample: 3A

Score: 5

(A) The response earned 1 point for correctly describing the role of the head of state as “to implement public policy in a country.”

(B) The response earned 1 point for correctly describing the process of selection of head of government in Nigeria as “directly elected by the citizens.” The response could have also received the point for correctly describing the process as “if the winning candidate does not receive at least 25% of the votes in at least 2/3 of the states, a runoff election is held between the top two candidates.” The response earned 1 point for correctly describing the process of selection of head of government in the UK as “the Prime minister is chosen by the ruling party (or coalition of parties) in parliament.”

(C) The response earned 1 point for correctly explaining the extent to which the executive power is formally constrained in Nigeria as “there are term limits, meaning that after 2 4 year terms the president can no longer run for office. This limits consolidation of power.” The response also includes an incorrect explanation that attributes impeachment powers to the courts. The response earned 1 point for correctly explaining the extent to which the executive power is formally constrained in the UK as “if parliament is unhappy with the prime minister they may pass a vote of no confidence. This will take the prime minister out of power.”

Sample: 3B

Score: 4

(A) The response earned 1 point for describing that the head of government “oversees the Civil Service and domestic politics of a country.”

(B) The response earned 1 point for describing the selection process for the head of government in Mexico by stating, “They are directly elected through a national vote and are required to win a plurality.” The response earned 1 point for describing the selection process for the head of

Question 3 (continued)

government in Nigeria by stating, “In Nigeria, the President is the head of gov & must win at least 25% of the vote in 2/3 of Nigeria’s regions as well as a plurality from a direct election to become the President.”

(C) The response did not earn a point for Mexico for stating that the president “is limited to two 4-year term & therefore is less able to become a dictator or seize too much power.” The response did not earn the point because it is not an accurate description of the constraint on executive power. The response earned 1 point for Nigeria for correctly explaining the extent to which executive power is formally constrained by stating, “In Nigeria, the President requires legislative approval for their members of cabinet, which gives the legislative branch some control over the President.”

Sample: 3C

Score: 3

(A) The response earned 1 point for accurately describing that the head of government “takes on the role of commander in chief.”

(B) The response earned 1 point for correctly describing the selection process for the head of government of Mexico as the president is “selected by a national plurality vote.” The response earned 1 point for correctly describing the selection process for the head of government of the UK as the Prime Minister “is selected as leader of the largest party in the House of Commons.”

(C) The response did not earn a point for explaining to what extent the executive power is formally constrained in Mexico. The response identifies impeachment and term limits, but it does not explain how either constrains executive power. The response did not earn a point for explaining to what extent executive power is formally constrained in the UK. The response states that “executive power is constrained by a vote of no confidence,” but this does not explain how it constrains executive power.