

2024



AP[®] Comparative Government and Politics

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary Set 2

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Free-Response Question 3

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Question 3: Comparative Analysis**5 points**

(A) Define a unitary system. **1 point**

Acceptable definitions include:

- A unitary system concentrates power at the national level.
- Unitary systems centralize most power in a national government that decides how much power to give to subnational or regional governments.
- Unitary systems have most power concentrated in the central government with no guarantees of granting powers to subnational or regional governments.

(B) Describe the division of power between the national and regional governments in two different AP Comparative Government and Politics course countries. **2 points**

Acceptable descriptions include the following (max one point per country):**China**

- China is a unitary system, and subnational governments cannot make policies without CCP approval.

Iran

- Iran is a unitary system, and subnational governments cannot make policies without the approval of theocratic leaders.

Mexico

- Mexico is a federal system that decentralizes some power from the national level of government to regional states in order to grant a degree of local autonomy.

Nigeria

- Nigeria is a federal system that divides power among different levels of government with a degree of local autonomy, while also keeping powers for the national government.

Russia

- Despite being a federal system, power in Russia is highly concentrated at the national level.

The United Kingdom

- The United Kingdom is a unitary system, but the country's central government has devolved varying power to regional assemblies.

(C) Explain how the division of power between the national and regional governments addresses a challenge posed by a social cleavage in each of the two AP Comparative Government and Politics course countries described in part B. **2 points**

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

- China's national government maintains total sovereignty by not responding to challenges from minority groups seeking autonomy and representation.

Iran

- Iran’s unitary system allows the national government to create policies that lead to oppression of religious minorities and women.

Mexico

- Mexico’s federal system allows varying policies to be enacted in northern states and southern states, according to each region’s needs.
- Mexico allows regional governments to address challenges posed by cleavages because states are constitutionally empowered to adopt policies that meet the unique needs of the indigenous people.

Nigeria

- Nigeria allows state governments to create Sharia Law courts in northern Nigeria where large populations of Muslims live.
- Nigeria’s federal system allows states to meet the needs of the various ethnic groups.

Russia

- Russia’s national government has addressed the challenge posed by cleavages in Chechnya by installing a regional leader to suppress opposition to the national government’s agenda.

The United Kingdom

- The United Kingdom allowed a regional referendum on Scottish independence.

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) A unitary system is a system of government where there are no inherent powers reserved for lower forms of government ~~other~~ other than the central national government. However, power is often devolved from the central government to subnational governments to better localize policy and preserve legitimacy.

b) ~~The~~ In the United Kingdom (UK), the division of power is that of a unitary state. No powers are guaranteed for the subnational governments but some power is often devolved to regional governments. In Nigeria, the division of power is that of a federal system. Each subnational government in Nigeria has reserved power to make ~~these~~ their own policy, working in tandem with the national government.

c) In the UK ~~is a~~ ~~unitary system~~, a social cleavage ~~is~~ is the presence of Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Wales within the UK, despite a level of ~~divergent~~ divergent national identity and desire of those countries to have a level of control over their own policy. The UK's unitary system works to address this challenge by devolving power to these countries within the nation, allowing them to compromise and have some control over local policy while maintaining the central govts legitimacy within the regional governments. In Nigeria there is a social cleavage between the muslims and christians within the country. Nigeria's federal system works to address this cleavage by allowing the different Nigerian states to have inherent powers. Given that this social cleavage of religion is roughly divideb geographically,...

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

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 Unitary system is a system of government where all power rests at the national level, and regional sub-units do not have power guaranteed to them.

In Nigeria, the regional governments are granted a good amount of power in their federal system. This power enables them to more directly communicate with their constituent members. In contrast, the UK has a more centralized form of unitary governance where the central body has the most authority and regions are granted - not guaranteed - power.

In Nigeria, having a federal system helps to ameliorate tensions caused by the differences in religion across Nigeria. By giving local power to their regional governments, Nigeria allows a difference in governing structure for its Christian and Muslim areas, giving them more authority to govern as they see fit, eliminating potential stress caused by a super-imposed opposing religion structure. In contrast to that of Nigeria, the UK's unitary governance system helps to eliminate issues caused by social cleavages regarding class in the U.K. Income/wealth inequality is alleviated by a unifying central government that acts as a centrifugal force for the nation to unite around. Class divides are lessened in this central form because the proximity of leaders of all party / social movements are put in close proximity to each other, creating collaboration and reducing tension caused by geographic isolation.

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

A) A unitary system the power of government is centralized with little deviation.

B) In the United Kingdom the Prime Minister holds national power as he has majority in Parliament, however each district has its representative in each district for its regional government. Whereas in China the president has both national and regional government.

C) In the United Kingdom the division was addressed when Wales was granted its own recognition after resulting conflicts. The division of power allows for more autonomy and address of citizen wants.

In Mexico the dash of ethnic cleavages is addressed with its regional and national division, where the regional government is better at addressing the needs of its people vary in the North and South parts of the country.

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

This intent of this question was to assess students' understanding of the concepts of unitary and federal systems in the required course countries. This included assessing their ability to define a unitary system, describe the division of power between the national and regional governments in two course countries, and explain how the division of power between national and regional governments address challenges posed by social cleavages in the same two course countries. The skills tested were descriptive and explanatory.

Sample: 3A

Score: 5

(A) The response earned 1 point for defining a unitary system as “a system of government where there are no inherent powers reserved for lower forms of government other than the central national government.”

(B) The response earned 2 points for correctly describing the division of power between the national and regional governments in two different AP Comparative Government and Politics course countries. The response earned 1 point for the United Kingdom by stating, “In the United Kingdom (UK), the division of power is that of a unitary state. No powers are guaranteed for the subnational governments but some power is often devolved to regional governments.” The response earned 1 point for Nigeria by stating, “In Nigeria, the division of power is that of a federal system. Each subnational government in Nigeria has reserved power to make their own policy, working in tandem with the national government.”

(C) The response earned 2 points for correctly explaining how the division of powers between national and regional governments addresses a challenge posed by a social cleavage. The response earned 1 point for correctly explaining how the division of power between national and regional governments addresses a challenge posed by a social cleavage in the United Kingdom: “In the UK, a social cleavage is the presence of Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Wales within the UK ... The UK's unitary system works to address this challenge by devolving power to these countries within the nation, allowing them to compromise and have some control over local policy.” The response earned 1 point for explaining how the division of power between national and regional governments addresses a challenge posed by a social cleavage in Nigeria by stating, “In Nigeria there is a social cleavage between the Muslims and Christians within the country. Nigeria's federal system works to address this cleavage by allowing the different Nigerian states to have inherent powers ... states can make policy that fits their religion.”

Question 3 (continued)

Sample: 3B

Score: 4

(A) The response earned 1 point for defining a unitary system by stating “A unitary system is a system of governance where all power rests at the national level, and region sub-units do not have power garunteed to them.”

(B) The response earned 2 points for correctly describing the division of power between the national and regional governments in two different AP Comparative Government and Politics course countries. The response earned 1 point for describing the division of power between the national and regional governments in Nigeria by stating “In Nigeria, the regional governments are guaranteed a good amount of power in their federal system.” The response earned 1 point for describing the division of power between the national and regional governments in the United Kingdom by stating, “In contrast, the UK has a more centralized form of unitary governance where the central body has the most authority and regions are granted – not garunteed – power.”

(C) The response earned 1 point for explaining how the division of power between national and regional governments addresses a challenge posed by a social cleavage in Nigeria by stating, “In Nigeria, having a federal system helps to ameliorate tensions caused by the differences in religion across Nigeria. By giving codified power to their regional governments Nigeria allows a difference in governing structure for its Christian and Muslim areas.” The first sentence provides useful context on the division of power in Nigeria, but the point is earned with the second sentence. The response does not earn a point for explaining how the division of power between national and regional governments addresses a challenge posed by a social cleavage in the United Kingdom by incorrectly stating, “The UK’s unitarian governing system helps to eliminate issues caused by social cleavages regarding class in the U.K.. Income/wealth inequality is alleviated by a unifying central government that acts as a centripetal force for the nation to unite around.”

Sample: 3C

Score: 2

(A) The response earned 1 point for defining a unitary system by correctly stating, “A unitary system the power of government is centralized.”

(B) The response did not earn a point for correctly describing the division of power between the national and regional government in the United Kingdom by incorrectly stating, “In the United Kingdom the Prime Minister hold national power as he wins majority in Parliament, however each district has it representative in each district for it’s regional government.” This response does not describe division of power as being devolved to regional assemblies. The response did not earn a point for correctly describing the division of power between the national and regional government in China because it stated, “In China the presendent has both national and regional government.” The response needed to describe that in China subnational governments cannot make policies without CCP approval in order to earn the point.

Question 3 (continued)

(C) The response earned 1 point for explaining how the division of power between national and regional governments addresses a challenge posed by a social cleavage in the United Kingdom by stating, “In the United Kingdom the division was addressed when Wales was granted its own recognition ... The division of power allows for more autonomy and address of citizen wants.” The response did not earn a point for explaining how the division of power between national and regional governments addresses a challenge posed by a social cleavage for the second country. The response wrote about Mexico, which is a different country than that described in part (B), as required by the prompt.