



**Chief Reader Report on Student Responses:
2024 AP[®] Comparative Government and Politics Set 2
Free-Response Questions**

• Number of Students Scored	25,436		
• Number of Readers	99		
• Score Distribution	Exam Score	N	%At
	5	4,081	16.0
	4	6,319	24.8
	3	8,156	32.1
	2	3,849	15.1
	1	3,031	11.9
• Global Mean	3.18		

The following comments on the 2024 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: Conceptual Analysis

Topic: Describing Social Movements and Explaining their Effects

Max Score: 4

Mean Score: 2.18

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

The intent of this question was to assess students' understanding of social movements and how they affect political and social change. First, students were expected to describe a social movement. In addition, students had to describe a difference between social movements and political parties. Students then needed to explain how social movements affect political change. Finally, students needed to explain why democratic regime might impose restrictions on a social movement.

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 could accurately describe the characteristics of a social movement, namely emphasizing the collective nature of their organization. Many also provided an example of a social movement. Students were able to describe a difference between a social movement and political party by providing parallel or opposite differences, such as political parties are formal organizations while social movements are informal organizations. Students had a difficult time explaining how social movements affect political change. While they acknowledged social movements can affect political change, students had a difficult time making the connection between the mechanisms and the outcome of that change. Students could accurately explain why democratic regimes might impose restrictions on a social movement.

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

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Responses did not emphasize the collective organization of social movements. For example, "A social movement is a group of individuals speaking freely, protesting, or fighting."	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "A group of individuals in society working together to promote political change."
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Responses did not provide enough specificity when describing a difference between social movements and political parties. For example, "Social movements are trying to get political change ... political parties are people who support the government."	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "Social movements are often informal, and in contrast, political parties are more formal and organized."

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responses did not fully explain how social movements can affect political change. For example, “Social movements are often related to government change and can influence the government.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “Social movement can affect political change through protests, which can put pressure on the government to implement policy change.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responses did not accurately explain why a democratic state might impose restrictions on a social movement. For example, “A democratic state will impose restrictions on social movements to avoid high levels of resentment towards the current regime.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “A democratic regime may impose restrictions on social movements to keep law and order, because social movements can create civil unrest leading to unlawful activity which undermines the stability of a nation.”

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?

It is important for students to practice defining and describing social movements and examining the causes, goals, and effects of multiple social movements in each course country. Teachers can also assist students by discussing the benefits and consequences of various methods used by social movements based upon different types of regimes. One suggestion is to have students participate in a jigsaw activity of working in small groups and assign them a course country and explore a few social movements that have taken place there in the last decade. Students could explain the causes and results of those social movements and lead a class discussion on potential errors the ruling government may have made or create a proposal for the government to peacefully implement to address the social movement.

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 the 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024 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 1 for Topic 4.5 reviews how social movements and interest groups create political change.
 - AP Daily Video 2 for Topic 4.5 describes the impact of social movements and interest groups in course countries.
 - AP Daily Video 3 for Topic 4.5 practices the skills of refutation, concession, and rebuttal in the context of social movements.
- Additional resources may be found on the AP Comparative Government and Politics Course on AP Central at: <https://apcentral.collegeboard.org/courses/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: Quantitative Analysis

Topic: Press freedom in relation to democratization

Max Score: 5

Mean Score: 3.95

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

The intent of this question was to assess students' ability to interpret, describe, explain, and draw conclusions from quantitative data on press freedom across the six AP countries presented in a table. The question was also designed to assess students' ability to make connections between trends in press freedom and the concept of democratization. Students were presented with a table displaying numbers indicating the Press Freedom Index levels for the six countries in 2013, 2018, and 2022. Students were expected to correctly identify the country with the lowest level of press freedom in 2018. Students were also expected to correctly describe a trend in press freedoms in Nigeria using the data. Students were then expected to correctly describe the concept of democratization. Then students were asked to draw a conclusion about democratization in Mexico using the data in the table. Finally, students were asked to explain how Iran's Press Freedom Index score relates to its regime type.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skill(s) required on this question?

Responses were most consistently successful with interpreting data in the table and describing a trend in the data. A majority of students were able to successfully describe the concept of democratization, although some responses lacked sufficient specificity in their descriptions to earn the point. While most students were able to draw a correct conclusion about democratization in Mexico based on the data in the table, many correctly identified a trend in of Mexico's press freedom score, but were not able to draw a conclusion about the nature and sources of that trend.

Students had the most difficulty explaining the relationship between Iran's press freedom score with their regime type. Some students successfully explained the relationship between press freedom and regime type in Iran, but many identified the correlation between the two concepts without explaining the relationship.

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

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Responses were too general and/or relied on the root word for their description. For example, "Democratization is a shift in regime to becoming more democratic."	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• "Democratization is a country's transition to relying on more democratic elements and becoming more of a democratic regime, usually granting more civil liberties and becoming more accountable to the people."

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> When asked to draw a conclusion about democratization in Mexico, responses identified a trend in the data but did not draw a conclusion from that trend. For example, “The data in the table shows press freedom is stalled in Mexico.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “From 2013 to 2022 Mexico experienced a net decrease in press freedoms which points to some backsliding in Mexico’s democratization.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Responses identified the correlation between low press freedom and regime type rather than explaining how the two are related. For example, “Iran’s low Press Freedom score relates to it being an authoritarian regime.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> “Iran’s low Press Freedom score relates to its authoritarian regime as authoritarian regimes do not protect civil liberties of their people like freedom of the press and restrict media that criticizes the government.”

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

Students performed well in interpreting the data presented in the chart, so instructors should continue to expose their students to a variety of charts throughout the course. Teachers could work to strengthen students’ interpretation of “patterns” in the data, as some students struggled to characterize a trend in the data.

For the quantitative analysis question, especially when the prompt requires a conclusion or explanation, teachers should emphasize that students must explicitly use the data given to illustrate and/or make a connection between the data and the concept.

Teachers should have students practice drawing conclusions based on quantitative data. While this can be done informally in small group discussion, it is important that students also have opportunities to write out their responses. One strategy is to have each group use a different data set in drawing their conclusion and then trade responses with a second group. Without seeing the original data, the second group should be able to briefly reconstruct the data trend and assess the accuracy of the other group’s conclusion.

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 the 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024 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 for Topic 3.7 review the concepts of civil liberties; press freedom, and how they relate to regime type.
 - AP Daily Video 3 for Topic 3.7 practices skills related to Disciplinary Practice 4 (source analysis) focusing on the topic of civil liberties and press freedom.
- 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>
- 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: Comparative Analysis

Topic: Division of power between national and regional governments

Max Score: 5

Mean Score: 2.93

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

This question’s intent was to assess students’ understanding of the concepts of unitary and federal systems in the 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.

How well did the responses address the course content related to this question? How well did the responses integrate the skill(s) required on this question?

Many of the students were able to correctly define a unitary system as a system of government where power is concentrated in the national government and can be devolved to regional governments. Many students were able to describe the division of power between national and regional governments in two course countries. Many students successfully explained how the division of government between the national and regional governments addressed a challenge posed by a social cleavage. Some students had difficulty accurately identifying a social cleavage, however, and were not able to explain how that social cleavage was addressed in the same two countries discussed in task B of the prompt.

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

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Responses referred to a unitary system as a system where all power is in the “federal” government.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “A unitary system is a system of government in which all formal power resides in the central government, with no constitutional authority given to state or local governments.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Responses applied the wrong division of power to a country. For example, “Iran utilizes a federal system.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Mexico uses a federal system of government in which power is shared between the national and state (local) government.”

<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responses did not accurately identify a social cleavage. For example, “the Iranian division of power addresses the North and South religious divide between the Christians and Muslims by allowing them individual courts and representation.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “In Nigeria there is a social cleavage between the Christians and Muslims in the country. Nigeria’s federal system works to address this cleavage by allowing the different Nigerian states to have inherent powers ... states can make policies that fits their religion.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Responses did not accurately connect a social cleavage with a division of power. For example, “Mexico’s division of power allows for representation of its various diverse groups.” 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • “The federal system in Mexico allows the government to respond to the cleavage between the North and the South. Federalism makes it possible to implement different policies in different regions.”

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

Teachers should provide multiple opportunities for students to practice writing about the distribution of power in each of the course countries. In particular, teachers should encourage students to think about why a course country would choose to distribute power in relation to the different type of cleavages present. One strategy would be to create a flowchart and have students identify the distribution of power, a list of social cleavages, and a way that the distribution of power is able to address the challenge posed by that cleavage. Diagramming or drawing flowcharts can help students see the connections between the distribution of power to help/hinder cleavages in the 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.
- AP Classroom also contains review videos for the 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024 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:
 - Topic 1.7 discusses federal and unitary systems of government. See AP Daily Videos for additional review of these topics.
 - Topics 3.8 and 3.9 focus on political and social cleavages and how such cleavages challenges in course countries. See AP Daily Videos for both Topics 3.8 and 3.9 to review these concepts and gain practice in applying required course 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>

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Question 4

Task: Argument

Topic: Parliamentary and presidential systems, constraints upon executive power

Max Score: 5

Mean Score: 2.39

What were the responses to this question expected to demonstrate?

The intent of this question was to assess students' understanding of parliamentary and presidential systems and their relative constraints on executive power, while using one or more of the course concepts of term limits, removal of the executive, and elections. Students were expected to write an argumentative essay, using each of the following skills: articulating a defensible thesis/claim; supporting their claim by providing two pieces of relevant evidence from a course country or countries; using reasoning to explain why the evidence provided supports the thesis; using concession, rebuttal, or refutation to respond to an alternative perspective. Specifically, students needed to offer a thesis demonstrating their understanding of presidential and parliamentary systems and their impacts on executive constraint, using one or more course concepts to establish the link between the executive structures and the concepts. Students needed to demonstrate their knowledge of the course countries by providing appropriate evidence from the countries that reflect the course concept/s students used in their thesis. Students also needed to demonstrate their understanding of how the evidence they described linked to the relationship between the type of system and constraints upon executive power. Finally, students needed to demonstrate their understanding of alternative explanations by describing an alternative thesis and then justifying their concession, rebuttal, or refutation.

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 critical thinking skills, applying their substantive knowledge about parliamentary and presidential systems while using argumentation. This type of question requires both content knowledge and skill in developing a thesis, providing specific and relevant evidence, explaining reasoning as to how the evidence supports the thesis, and articulating and responding to an alternative perspective. Most responses provided a defensible thesis. Many responses successfully described evidence relevant to the course concepts, especially with respect to term limits and removal mechanisms. Most students who correctly understood constraints on executive power were also able to use reasoning to connect accurate, specific evidence to the thesis. Some students attempted the alternate perspective; however, many of these were underdeveloped: describing an opposing point of view but not providing a substantive rebuttal, refutation, or concession.

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

<i>Common Misconceptions/Knowledge Gaps</i>	<i>Responses that Demonstrate Understanding</i>
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Responses that were not able to use reasoning to explain why the evidence supports the claim or thesis, using one or more of the provided course concepts.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Elections offer mandates for the president as a source of legitimacy and can therefore make it difficult to check executive power.”
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Responses that did not provide an alternative perspective to the thesis, or that provided the opposite of the thesis without explanation. For example, “Although I view the flexible election schedule as a check on executive power, some claim that it only increases executive power.”	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• “Some may argue that parliamentary systems more effectively check executive power because the parliament may remove the executive by a vote of no confidence at any time. The prime minister is not directly held accountable to the people like in a presidential system, meaning that he could expand his power without the consent of the people and remain in office without fear of not being re-elected by the people in the country.”

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 could provide frequent opportunities for students to define and explain key vocabulary terms, concepts, and principles, and discuss contemporary examples illustrating said vocabulary, concepts, and principles in the six course countries.

Teachers could help students identify relevant evidence, and practice using reasoning to connect that evidence to a thesis statement.

Teachers could outline how to develop an alternative or opposing line of thought, and how to write a rebuttal, refutation, or concession of that line of reasoning.

Teachers could review released scoring guides with students and allow students to see valid examples of high, medium, and low answers. Students can further practice by assessing released prompts to see what appropriate responses may look like

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 the 2021, 2022, 2023, and 2024 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:
 - Topics 2.1 and 2.2 focus on parliamentary and presidential systems of government. AP Daily videos for both topics 2.1 and 2.2 review key characteristics of each and compare these different political systems using course countries as case studies.
 - AP Daily: Live Review (Practice Sessions 7 and 8) are available through AP Classroom. These videos offer students advice and strategies to develop strong responses to FRQ4 on the AP Comparative Exam.
- 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>
- The AP Comparative Government and Politics Online Teaching Community (OTC) is another great resource 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>