AP

AP® Comparative Government and Politics

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary Set 1

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Free-Response Question 2

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Question 2: Quantitative Analysis   5 points

A	Using the data in the graph, identify the country with the highest level of perceived corruption in 2015.	**1 point**

Acceptable identification:

- Nigeria

B	Using the data in the graph, describe a trend in China's score on the Corruption Perceptions Index between 2018 and 2021.	**1 point**

Examples of acceptable responses may include the following:

- China's score on the Corruption Perceptions Index increased between 2018 and 2021.
- Perceived corruption in China decreased during these years.
- China's score improved during this time period.
- China's score was relatively stable/showed a slight increase during this time period.

C	Describe political legitimacy.	**1 point**

Examples of acceptable responses may include the following:

- Political legitimacy refers to the people's belief in whether the government has the right to rule.
- Governments create or maintain political legitimacy through:
  - elections
  - governmental transparency
  - constitutional provisions
  - economic growth
  - tradition
  - charisma
  - religious heritage/organization
  - reduction of governmental corruption
  - governmental effectiveness
  - institutionalized laws
  - peaceful transfer of power
  - nationalism
  - ideology
  - dominant political party's endorsement
  - political efficacy
- Political legitimacy can increase the power of the regime.

| **D** | Using the data in the in the graph, draw a conclusion that explains the level of perceived corruption in the United Kingdom. | **1 point** |

Examples of acceptable responses may include the following:

- The UK has low levels of perceived corruption because
    - there are free and fair elections
    - the government has high transparency
    - it is a consolidated democracy
    - it has a long tradition of democratic practices
    - it has strong rule of law

| **E** | Explain what the data in the graph imply about the relationship between corruption and legitimacy in China. | **1 point** |

Examples of acceptable responses may include the following:

- Political legitimacy in China has increased because the government has tried to reduce corruption.
- In order to maintain legitimacy, the Chinese government has made efforts to reduce the public's perception of corruption.
- The data in the graph imply that the overall level of corruption in the government has little impact on the political legitimacy of the Chinese government, as it remains in power despite this score.
- There is little relationship between corruption and political legitimacy in China. This is because China has moderate levels of corruption, yet high levels of political legitimacy, indicating that political legitimacy comes from some other source.

Sample:

A. The country with the highest level of perceived corruption in 2015 was Nigeria, with the lowest score of the three presented.

B. Between 2018 and 2021, China saw a slight increase in their score on the Corruption Perceptions Index, nearly reaching a score of 50. This implies that the level of perceived corruption with the Chinese government has decreased throughout these years.

C. Political legitimacy is defined as the government's right to rule based on the perception of its citizens. It's whether a country's citizens approve of the government and its actions or not.

D. With the highest score on the graph, the United Kingdom has a low level of perceived corruption. This is due to its nature as a parliamentary nation, with equal representation throughout the country due to its multiparty system, as well as the ability to conduct a vote of no confidence to do away with an inadequate prime minister. Fair and competitive elections with minimal corruption in the state grant it the highest score on this graph.

E. The graph implies that the relationship between corruption and legitimacy in China are not necessarily correlated. The Chinese government enjoys a high approval rating due to the economic prosperity and strength that it has brought to the country as a result of its policies, and thus it has a high level of political legitimacy. Despite this, China's Corruption Perception Index Score remains relatively low, as it is an authoritarian nation with a strong centralized government that lacks free and competitive elections.

Sample:

A. Nigeria

B. According to the data from 2018-2021, China's percieved corruption score went up, indicating that the citizens percieved less corruption in this time frame

C. Political Legitimacy is the governments or regiemes ability to claim and maintain power in a country.

D. Since the UK is a consolidated democracy, scores will be higher since they are more open to public audits and reviews on corruption inside the government, increasing transparancy and limiting corruption.

E. The CCP has maintained legitimacy through military control and control over the people through authoritarian measures, not through transparancy and being held accountable to the people. This allows CCP members to have corrupt practices and remain unpunnished through the peoples lack of knowledge and the innability to act against these crimes.

Sample:

A. In 2015, the country with the highest level of perceived corruption was Nigeria.

B. Based on the graph, between 2018 and 2021 China's score on the Corruption Perceptions Index increased from 40 to about 45. This means that during that period of time the level of possible percieved corruption decreased and people actually had slightly more trust in their government.

C. Political legitimacy is what a nation does or has that proves they can be listened to and trusted by its people.

D. Based on the data in the graph, from 2014 to 2021 the level of perceived corruption in the United Kingdom has stayed relatively steady. In 2014 its score was just below 80, in 2017 it reached its peak slightly above 80, and then in 2021 it decreased to be just below 80 again. This shows that the UK has a lot of trust from its people, and over the years has maintained a low level of possible percieved corruption compared to China and Nigeria.

E. Based on the data in the graph, from 2014 to 2021 China has had an average score of 40 in the Corruption Perceptions Index. While not super high or extremly low, this score does suggests that the country has a higer level of perceived corruption than other countries such as the UK. This means that the people of China believe there is a good amount of corruption going on in the goverment. If people believe there to be corruption then that will result in less trust in the Government and lower obedience. Ultimately, a higher level of possible perceived corruption leads to weaker legitimacy in China because the people won't trust the government to correctly do its job and essentially won't want to adhere to the government's laws or policies.

Question 2

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

Overview

NEW for 2025: The question overviews can be found in the *Chief Reader Report on Student Responses* on AP Central.

Sample: 2A
Score: 5

Part A Score: 1
The response earned 1 point for identifying "Nigeria" as the country with the highest level of perceived corruption in 2015.

Part B Score: 1
The response earned 1 point for describing a trend in China's score on the Corruption Perceptions Index between 2018 and 2021 as "a slight increase in their score on the Corruption Perceptions Index."

Part C Score: 1
The response earned 1 point for describing political legitimacy as "the government's right to rule based on the perception of its citizens."

Part D Score: 1
The response earned 1 point for drawing a conclusion that explains the level of perceived corruption in the United Kingdom: "Fair and competitive elections with minimal corruption in the state grant [the United Kingdom] the highest score on this graph."

Part E Score: 1
The response earned 1 point for explaining what the data in the graph imply about the relationship between corruption and legitimacy in China. The response states that "corruption and legitimacy in China are not necessarily correlated. The Chinese government enjoys a high approval rating due to the economic prosperity and strength that it has brought to the country as a result of its policies, and thus it has a high level of political legitimacy. Despite this, China's Corruption Perception Index Score remains relatively low."

Question 2 (continued)

Sample: 2B
Score: 3

Part A Score: 1
The response earned 1 point for identifying "Nigeria" as the country with the highest level of perceived corruption in 2015.

Part B Score: 1
The response earned 1 point for describing an increasing trend in China's score on the Corruption Perceptions Index between 2018 and 2021: "According to the data from 2018–2021, China's percieved corruption score went up."

Part C Score: 0
The response did not earn a point for describing political legitimacy because the response refers to the government's ability to maintain power, rather than the people's belief that the government has the right to rule.

Part D Score: 1
The response earned 1 point for drawing a conclusion that explains the level of perceived corruption in the United Kingdom: "Since the UK is a consolidated democracy, scores will be higher."

Part E Score: 0
The response did not earn a point for explaining what the data in the graph imply about the relationship between corruption and political legitimacy in China. Although the response does refer to the military as a source of legitimacy in China, it does not provide a link between this source of legitimacy and perception of corruption.

Question 2 (continued)

Sample: 2C
Score: 2

Part A Score: 1
The response earned 1 point for identifying "Nigeria" as the country with the highest level of perceived corruption in 2015.

Part B Score: 1
The response earned 1 point for describing a rising trend in China's score on the Corruption Perceptions Index between 2018 and 2021: "Between 2018 and 2021 China's score on the Corruption Perceptions Index increased."

Part C Score: 0
The response did not earn a point for describing political legitimacy because it refers to government actions rather than the people's belief in the government's right to rule.

Part D Score: 0
The response did not earn a point for drawing a conclusion that explains the level of perceived corruption in the United Kingdom. The response describes changes in the United Kingdom's score rather than providing a reason that the United Kingdom has low levels of perceived corruption.

Part E Score: 0
The response did not earn a point for explaining what the data in the graph imply about the relationship between corruption and legitimacy in China. Although the response connects corruption and political legitimacy, it does not refer to an action taken by the Chinese government that would link higher corruption to lower legitimacy.