
AP[®] Comparative Government and Politics

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary Set 2

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Free-Response Question 2

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Question 2: Quantitative Analysis**5 points**

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- A** Using the data in the graph, identify the country where the largest party held the lowest percentage of seats in 2016. **1 point**

Acceptable identification:

- Mexico

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- B** Using the data in the graph, describe a trend in the percentage of seats held by the largest party in Russia between 2011 and 2020. **1 point**

Examples of acceptable responses may include the following:

- Between 2011 and 2020, the largest party in Russia grew its proportion of legislative seats from around 55% to 75%.
- Between 2011 and 2020, the largest party in Russia increased its proportion of legislative seats.
- Between 2011 and 2015, the proportion of the largest party in Russia remained stable just above 50%.
- Between 2016 and 2020, the proportion of the largest party in Russia remained stable.

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- C** Describe dominant party systems. **1 point**

Examples of acceptable responses may include the following:

- Dominant party systems
 - allow multiple parties to compete but support one-party control of the government
 - have one major party that controls the government in a state
 - make it difficult for new parties to form to challenge the ruling party
 - often restrict opposition candidates' access to the media
 - can maintain control by limiting regional elections

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- D** Using the data in the in the graph, draw a conclusion that explains the change in the percentage of seats held by the largest party in Mexico between 2011 and 2020. **1 point**

Examples of acceptable responses may include the following:

- The reforms put into place in Mexico before 2011 have kept elections competitive and prevented any one political party in Mexico from dominating the lower house of the legislature.
 - With the greater popularity of other political parties/decrease in popularity of the PRI, people began supporting candidates from these other parties, leading to a decline in seats held by the largest party.
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- With the establishment of the National Electoral Institute (IFE), Mexico's elections have become more competitive, and its legislative branch is no longer controlled as much by just one political party.

E	Explain what the data illustrate about the relationship between the percentage of seats held by the largest party and the level of democratization in Nigeria.	1 point
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Examples of acceptable responses may include the following:

- While the data shows that one party has held around 60% of the seats in the lower house, Nigerian elections often have numerous political parties compete, reflecting its democratization process since 1999.
 - In Nigeria, the data shows that a single political party has held around 60% of the seats in the lower house of legislature, which indicates that it is still experiencing challenges related to democratization.
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Sample:

A. In 2016 the largest party held the lowest percentage of seats in Mexico.

B. Between 2011 and 2020 the percentage of seats held by the largest party in Russia increased. Up until 2015, the largest party in Russia had held only around 53% of seats in the lower house legislature, but in 2016 and after, the percentage increased to around 77%.

C. Dominant party systems are when one political party overwhelmingly controls the government. An example of this is in the Russian Federation. Today United Russia controls most of the legislature and even Vladimir Putin, the president, is of the United Russia Party. While other parties in Russia do exist, Yabloko for example, United Russia is by far the dominant party. Another example of a dominant party system is Mexico. Pre-2000, Mexican politics were dominated by the PRI party. It wasn't until the election of Vicente Fox, a member of PAN, in 2000 that the almost 70 year reign PRI being the dominant party ended.

D. The percentage of seats held by the largest party in Mexico has decreased from around 45% in 2011 to around 39% in 2020. This small percentage and decrease in percentage is due to Mexico's multiparty system. Although pre-2000 they were a single party dominant system under PRI, over the past 25 years they have become increasingly multiparty. Instead of just PRI dominating, now votes and seats are split between parties like PAN, MORENA, PRD, and PRI. As Mexico becomes even more multi-party the percentage seats held by the largest party in the Chamber of Deputies continues to decrease as shown in the graph, especially due to Mexico's mixed electoral system with proportional representation allowing for smaller parties to gain seats in the legislature.

E. As shown in the graph the percentage of seats held by the largest party in Nigeria is around 55%-60%. This makes sense because Nigeria, now in its 4th republic, maintains a system of plurality voting with single member districts in its legislature, this has led to generally a two party dominant system (PDP and APC). It is good that one single party does not maintain more than 60% of the seats in the House seeing as it is a two party dominant system. This is evidence of democratization present in the 4th republic of Nigeria, because not one single political party is dominant. This democratization is even further emphasized through peaceful transfers of power among presidents across both PDP and APC.

Sample:

- A) The country with the party with the lowest percentage of seats in 2016 was Mexico.
- B) The number of seats held by the largest party in Russia between 2011 and 2020 increased.
- C) A dominant party system is when a single party dominates a states political system. An example of this is the PPC in China.
- D) The change in the percentage of seats held by the largest party in Mexico between 2011 and 2020 was caused by the switch from a one party dominate system to free and competitive elections. Before 2001, the PRI controlled the Mexican government for many decades before political reforms were enacted which allowed less corruption. New parties began to form as elections became free and fair leading to the percentage of seats in the lower house to be more spread out and not mostly held by the dominant party.
- E) The relationship between the percentage of seats held by the largest party and the level of democratization in Nigeria is due to political instability and corruption. The percent of seats of the largest party is relatively large because of political instability in the country.

Sample:

A. The largest party that held the lowest percentage of seats in 2016 was Mexico's PRI party. In 2016 the newly formed party by Lopez-Obrador held the most seats over the PRI. B. Changes made upon Russia's constitution is a trend that effected the percentage of seats held by Russia's Nation between 2011 and 2020.

C. Dominant party systems are more likely to occur in government systems with proportional systems. This is because small parties are less likely to meet threshold standards.

D. Due to the fall of the PRI dominance in the lower house, and due to Mexico's mixed system its legislative and executive, there is more likely to be a representation for small parties allowing there to be more seats for different parties. That is why compared to the UK who only has a proportional system, there is more competitiveness.

E. Nigeria is a theocratic and an illiberal country. Although, it is a democracy, because of the fact that it still has a majority of religious influence in its democracy, levels of democratization in Nigeria seem to be very low. This can be seen due to the percentages of seats held throughout 2011 to 2020.

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 “Mexico” as the country with the lowest percentage of seats for the largest party in 2016.

Part B Score: 1

The response earned 1 point for describing the trend in percentage of seats held by the largest party in Russia between 2011 and 2020: “Between 2011 and 2020 the percentage of seats held by the largest party in Russia increased.”

Part C Score: 1

The response earned 1 point for describing a dominant party system as “when one political party overwhelming controls the government.”

Part D Score: 1

The response earned 1 point for drawing a conclusion about the change in percentage of seats held by Mexico’s largest party: “This small ... decrease in percentage is due to Mexico’s multiparty system” and “especially due to Mexico’s mixed electoral system.”

Part E Score: 1

The response earned 1 point for explaining what the data in the graph illustrate about the relationship between the percentage of seats held by the largest party and the level of democratization in Nigeria. The response states, “This is evidence of democratization present in the 4th republic of Nigeria, because not one single political party is dominant.”

Sample: 2B

Score: 3

Part A Score: 1

The response earned 1 point for identifying “Mexico” as the country with the lowest percentage of seats for the largest party in 2016.

Part B Score: 1

The response earned 1 point for correctly describing the trend in percentage of seats held by the largest party in Russia: “The number of seats held by the largest party in Russia between 2011 and 2020 increased.”

Question 2 (continued)**Part C Score: 0**

The response did not earn a point for describing a dominant party system. The response states, “A dominant party system is when a single party dominates a states political system,” which does not bring in enough new information that describes the concept.

Part D Score: 1

The response earned 1 point for drawing a conclusion about the change in percentage of seats held by Mexico’s largest party by stating, “Before 2001, the PRI controlled the Mexican government for many decades before political reforms where enacted which allowed less corruption. New parties began to form as elections became free and fair.”

Part E Score: 0

The response did not earn a point for explaining what the data in the graph illustrate about the relationship between percentage of seats held by the largest party and the level of democratization in Nigeria. The response states, “The relationship between the percentage of seats held by the largest party and the level of democratization in Nigeria is due to political instablity and corruption,” which does not explain the relationship between percentage of seats held by the largest party and democratization.

Sample: 2C**Score: 1****Part A Score: 1**

The response earned 1 point for identifying “Mexico” as the country with the lowest percentage of seats for the largest party in 2016.

Part B Score: 0

The response did not earn a point for describing the trend in percentage of seats held by the largest party in Russia because the response describes an event that occurred during that time but not a trend in the percentage of seats.

Part C Score: 0

The response did not earn a point for describing a dominant party system because the response incorrectly states, “Dominant party systems are more likely to occur in government systems with proportional systems. This is because small parties are less likely to meet threshold standards.”

Part D Score: 0

The response did not earn a point for drawing a conclusion about the change in percentage of seats held by Mexico’s largest party between 2011 and 2020. The response inaccurately states as a reason for the change over time that “Mexico’s mixed system its legislative and executive,” followed by “That is why compared to the UK who only has a proportional system, there is more competitiveness.”

Question 2 (continued)**Part E Score: 0**

The response did not earn a point for explaining what the data in the graph illustrate about the relationship between percentage of seats held by the largest party and the level of democratization in Nigeria. The response inaccurately states about the relationship that, “Although, it is a democracy, because of the fact that it still has a majority of religious influence in its democracy, levels of democratization in Nigeria seem to be very low.”