
AP[®] Comparative Government and Politics

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary Set 2

Inside:

Free-Response Question 3

- ☒ **Scoring Guidelines**
- ☒ **Student Samples**
- ☒ **Scoring Commentary**

Question 3: Comparative Analysis**5 points**

A Describe civil society. **1 point****Examples of acceptable responses may include the following:**

- The collection of voluntary associations that are autonomous from the state
- The groups that operate independently of the state
- Composed of non-governmental organizations that citizens can join voluntarily

Scoring notes: Naming an example of a civil society organization alone is not enough to earn the point.

B Describe a role of civil society organizations in two different AP Comparative Government and Politics course countries. **2 points****Examples of acceptable responses may include the following:****China**

- Civil society groups in China monitor or lobby the government, exposing government corruption.
- Civil society groups in China represent the interests of members and can provide members with organizational experience.

Iran

- Civil society groups in Iran monitor or lobby the government, exposing government corruption.
- Civil society groups in Iran represent the interests of members and can provide members with organizational experience.

Mexico

- Civil society groups in Mexico monitor or lobby the government, exposing government corruption.
- Civil society groups in Mexico represent the interests of members and can provide members with organizational experience.

Nigeria

- Civil society groups in Nigeria monitor or lobby the government, exposing government corruption.
- Civil society groups in Nigeria represent the interests of members and can provide members with organizational experience.

Russia

- Civil society groups in Russia monitor or lobby the government, exposing government corruption.
- Civil society groups in Russia represent the interests of members and can provide members with organizational experience.

The United Kingdom

- Civil society groups in the United Kingdom monitor or lobby the government, exposing government corruption.

- Civil society groups in the United Kingdom represent the interests of members and can provide members with organizational experience.

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| C | Explain how regime type may affect civil society organizations in each of the two AP Comparative Government and Politics course countries described in Part (B). | 2 Points |
|----------|--|-----------------|

Examples of acceptable responses may include the following:

China

- As an authoritarian regime, China restricts civil society organizations through registration requirements and/or monitoring.
- As an authoritarian regime, civil society groups in China are highly restricted. The Chinese Communist Party uses the Great Firewall to make it difficult for groups to organize and communicate.
- China is an authoritarian regime, and civil society groups are often punished if they are pushing independent political participation perceived to threaten the authority of China's Communist Party.

Iran

- As an authoritarian regime, civil society groups in Iran are restricted through censorship, crackdowns, and/or monitoring.
- Iran is an authoritarian regime, and civil society groups are highly restricted. When civil society groups protest or challenge government policies, the government responds with arrests, legal punishments, and/or the use of brute repression.
- As an authoritarian regime, civil society groups in Iran are highly restricted. Iran has restricted independent media from publishing anti-religious material or information detrimental to the national interest.

Mexico

- As a democratic regime, Mexico gives civil society organizations specific protections of civil liberties that allow them to operate.
- Mexico is a democratic regime, and civil society groups that advocate for government changes have been allowed to operate. For example, the Zapatista movement was formed in response to socioeconomic inequality.

Nigeria

- Nigeria is a democratic state and has put protections in place that allow civil society organizations to freely operate.
- As a state that has been experiencing democratization, Nigeria has recognized that protections of civil society groups are important to this process and have allowed them to operate independently.
- As a democratic regime, civil society groups in Nigeria have been given protections. Groups (like Movement for the Emancipation of the Niger Delta (MEND) or the Movement for the Survival of the Ogoni People (MOSOP)) advocate for the rights of an ethnic minority or protest unjust policies related to oil in the Niger Delta region.

Russia

- As an authoritarian regime, civil society groups in Russia are restricted through censorship, crackdowns, and/or monitoring.
 - Russia is an authoritarian regime, and civil society groups are highly restricted. The Russian government's nationalization of most broadcast media places rigid controls on these civil society groups.
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- Russia is an illiberal democracy, and civil society groups in the country are highly restricted from operating independently. The government often punishes social or political participation perceived to threaten the authority of Putin’s United Russia party.

United Kingdom

- The United Kingdom is a democratic regime that has ensured that there are protections in place that allow civil society organizations to operate.
 - The United Kingdom is a liberal democracy, and the country’s judicial system includes specific protections for human rights and civil liberties, which encourages civil society by protecting these groups.
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Sample 3A, 1 of 1

Sample:

A. Civil society is participation of non government organizations (NGOs) and citizens in politics.

B. Civil society continues to grow in Iran despite the governments limitations on it. Iran had a huge social uprising after a stolen election called the green movement. Thousands of people took to the streets in Iran to protest the government. The government ended up cracking down hard on the movement, but this showed the participation of Iranians in government. In the UK civil society flourishes. Citizens are free to speak their minds and try to influence government. An example currently going on is the Scottish Independence movement. The Scottish are protesting and fighting for their independence without government influence. The movement remains strong and a hot topic in the UK.

C. Iran is a theocracy and has an authoritarian rule. Iran tries to restrict civil society in every way they can. In response to the Green Movement the government jailed hundreds of protesters. The government puts heavy restrictions on the media in the country as well. Authoritarian rule leads to limited civil society. On the other hand the UK is a true democracy. The UK allows civil society to flourish and does not unnecessarily crack down on protesters or the media. A true democracy allows civil society to grow and interact with politics.

Sample:

A) Civil society describes the network of personal rights organizations that exist within a country. Civil society organizations are made up of citizens advocating for greater freedoms in or rights in their specific country. When multiple of these exist and interact with the population of a country, it forms a civil society.

B) In China, certain civil society organizations work to advocate for greater religious freedom within the country. Because of restrictions placed on people by Chinese law, the population has formed civil society groups to advocate for the ability to practice their religion freely. In the United Kingdom, certain civil society organizations advocate for greater equality and representation for minorities and immigrants in the UK. An increase in immigration to the UK has been met with an increase in Xenophobia, which has been met in turn with the creation of civil society groups advocating for more protections for ethnic minority and immigrant groups.

C) In China, an authoritarian regime, civil society groups are often met with more force and push back from the government. The power of the Chinese Communist Party within the country allows the government to take whatever action it deems fit to push back against civil society groups advocating for policies they do not agree with. In the UK, a legitimate democracy, civil society groups face far less push back from the government. The government is able to maintain legitimacy by allowing for peaceful protests and advocacy for civil rights to occur, and thus the civil society groups face much less consequences for their actions than in China.

Sample:

A. Civil society is a group or organization that stands up for their own human rights and freedoms no matter what.

B. One role of a civil society organization in Russia is protesting the control that Putin has over small businesses and ownerships. Many people do not agree with the level of control that is held over them when trying to make a living, so many civil society organizations protest that. Another role held by a civil society organization in Iran is protesting the control over the media. For example, not having the freedom to post what they wish on social media and being punished for such actions.

C. Regime type may affect civil society organizations from Iran and Russia because if the regime type changes from authoritarian to democratic, it would shift the need to protest such laws and issues.

Question 3

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: 3A

Score: 5

Part A Score: 1

The response earned 1 point for correctly describing a civil society organization as “participation of non government organizations (NGOs) and citizens in politics.”

Part B Score: 2

The response earned 2 points for correctly describing a role of civil society organizations in two different AP Comparative Government and Politics course countries. The response earned 1 point for Iran by stating, “Iran had a huge social uprising after a stolen election called the green movement. Thousands of people took to the streets in Iran to protest the government.” The response earned 1 point for the United Kingdom by stating, “An example currently going on is the Scottish Independence movement. The Scottish are protesting and fighting for their independence.”

Part C Score: 2

The response earned 2 points for correctly explaining how regime type may affect civil society organizations. The response earned 1 point for Iran by stating, “Iran is ... an authoritarian rule ... In response to the Green Movement the government jailed hundreds of protesters ... Authoritarian rule leads to limited civil society.” The response earned 1 point for the United Kingdom by stating, “The UK allows civil society to flourish and does not unnecessarily crack down on protesters or the media. A true democracy allows civil society to grow and interact with politics.”

Sample: 3B

Score: 4

Part A Score: 0

The response did not earn a point for describing civil society. It attempts to describe civil society but does not mention the essential characteristic of civil society organizations, which is that they are independent from the state.

Part B Score: 2

The response earned 2 points for correctly describing the role of civil society organizations in two different AP Comparative Government and Politics course countries. The response earned 1 point for China by stating, “Because of restrictions placed on people by Chinese law ... certain civil society organizations work to advocate for greater religious freedom within the country.” The response earned 1 point for the United Kingdom by stating that, “civil society organizations advocate for greater equality and representation for minorities and immigrants in the UK.”

Question 3 (continued)**Part C Score: 2**

The response earned 2 points for correctly explaining how regime type may impact civil society organizations. The response earned 1 point for China by stating, “In China, an authoritarian regime, civil society groups are often met with more force and push back from the government. The power of the Chinese Communist Party within the country allows the government to take whatever action it deems fit to push back against civil society groups advocating for policies they do not agree.” The response earned 1 point for the United Kingdom by stating, “In the UK, a legitimate democracy, civil society groups face far less push back from the government ... The government is able to maintain legitimacy by allowing for peaceful protests and advocacy for civil rights to occur.”

Sample: 3C**Score: 2****Part A Score: 0**

The response did not earn a point for describing civil society. It attempts to describe civil society but does not mention the essential characteristic of civil society organizations, which is that they are independent from the state.

Part B Score: 2

The response earned 2 points for describing a role of civil society in two different AP Comparative Government and Politics course countries. The response earned 1 point for Russia by describing a role of civil society as “protesting the control that Putin has over small businesses and ownership.” The response earned 1 point for Iran by stating that in Iran, a role of civil society is “protesting the [government] control over the media.”

Part C Score: 0

The response did not earn any points for explaining how regime type affects civil society. The response attempts to explain why it would matter if a regime type changes; however, it does not explain how the type of regime allows or restricts civil society activities.