

AP[®] Comparative Government and Politics

About the Advanced Placement Program[®] (AP[®])

The Advanced Placement Program[®] has enabled millions of students to take college-level courses and earn college credit, advanced placement, or both, while still in high school. AP Exams are given each year in May. Students who earn a qualifying score on an AP Exam are typically eligible, in college, to receive credit, placement into advanced courses, or both. Every aspect of AP course and exam development is the result of collaboration between AP teachers and college faculty. They work together to develop AP courses and exams, set scoring standards, and score the exams. College faculty review every AP teacher's course syllabus.

AP Government Program

The AP Program offers two government courses: AP U.S. Government and Politics and AP Comparative Government and Politics. Each course is designed to be equivalent to a one semester introductory college course. There is no prescribed sequence of study or course length. Both courses are designed to be half-year courses, although some high schools teach them as full-year courses. A school may offer one or both courses.

AP Comparative Government and Politics Course Overview

AP Comparative Government and Politics introduces students to the rich diversity of political life outside the United States. The course uses a comparative approach to examine the political structures; policies; and political, economic, and social challenges of six selected countries: China, Iran, Mexico, Nigeria, Russia, and the United Kingdom. Students compare the effectiveness of approaches to many global issues by examining how different governments solve similar problems. They will also engage in disciplinary practices that require them to read and interpret data, make comparisons and applications, and develop evidence-based arguments.

RECOMMENDED PREREQUISITES

There are no prerequisites for AP Comparative Government and Politics. Students should be able to read a college-level textbook and write grammatically correct, complete sentences.

AP Comparative Government and Politics Course Content

The course content is organized into five commonly taught units, which have been arranged in the following suggested, logical sequence:

- **Unit 1:** Political Systems, Regimes, and Governments

- **Unit 2:** Political Institutions
- **Unit 3:** Political Culture and Participation
- **Unit 4:** Party and Electoral Systems and Citizen Organizations
- **Unit 5:** Political and Economic Changes and Development

Each unit is broken down into teachable segments called topics.

In addition, the following big ideas serve as the foundation of the course, enabling students to create meaningful connections among concepts and develop deeper conceptual understanding:

- **Big Idea 1:** Power and Authority
- **Big Idea 2:** Legitimacy and Stability
- **Big Idea 3:** Democratization
- **Big Idea 4:** Internal/External Forces
- **Big Idea 5:** Methods of Political Analysis

Disciplinary Practices

The following disciplinary practices describe what skills students should develop during the course:

- Concept Application
 - ◆ Apply political concepts and processes in authentic contexts.
- Country Comparison
 - ◆ Compare political concepts and processes among the course countries (China, Iran, Mexico, Nigeria, Russia, and the United Kingdom).
- Data Analysis
 - ◆ Analyze and interpret quantitative data represented in tables, charts, graphs, maps, and infographics.
- Source Analysis
 - ◆ Read, analyze, and interpret text-based sources.
- Argumentation
 - ◆ Develop an argument in essay format.

AP Comparative Government and Politics Exam Structure

AP COMPARATIVE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS EXAM: 2 HOURS, 30 MINUTES

Assessment Overview

The AP Comparative Government and Politics Exam assesses student understanding of the disciplinary practices and learning objectives outlined in the course framework. The exam is 2 hours and 30 minutes long and includes 55 multiple-choice questions and 4 free-response questions.

Format of Assessment

Section I: Multiple-choice | 55 Questions | 60 Minutes | 50% of Exam Score

- Appear either as individual questions or in sets of 2–3 questions each.
- Include three sets of quantitative analysis questions, two sets of text-based analysis questions, and 40–44 individual questions.

Section II: Free-response | 4 Questions | 90 minutes | 50% of Exam Score

- Question 1 (Conceptual Analysis) assesses the ability to define or describe a political concept and explain and/or compare political systems, principles, institutions, processes, policies, and behaviors **(11% of Exam Score; 10 minutes)**.
- Question 2 (Quantitative Analysis) assesses the comprehension of quantitative data in the form of a table, graph, map, or infographic **(12.5% of Exam Score; 20 minutes)**.
- Question 3 (Comparative Analysis) assesses the ability to compare political concepts, systems, institutions, or policies in different countries **(12.5% of Exam Score; 20 minutes)**.
- Question 4 (Argument Essay) assesses the ability to articulate a thesis, provide supporting evidence, and respond to opposing perspectives **(14% of Exam Score; 40 minutes)**.

Exam Components

Sample Multiple-Choice Question

Which of the following best captures why Nigeria has experienced more coups than Mexico has since 1960?

- (A) Mexico's economy is more dependent upon the export of natural resources than Nigeria's economy is, so outside corporations and governments take a greater interest in Mexico's stability.
- (B) Nigeria features sharper ethnic and religious divides than Mexico does, provoking conflict between groups for control of the central government, which has permitted the military to intervene.
- (C) Nigeria's population is much larger than Mexico's population, providing more opportunities for conflict and a greater need for a powerful military.
- (D) Mexico's military has historically been a more powerful actor in domestic politics than Nigeria's military has, and it has used its influence to ensure stability.

Correct Answer: B

Sample Free-Response Question

Develop an argument as to whether democratic or authoritarian regimes are better at maintaining sovereignty in a country.

Use one or more of the following course concepts in your response:

- ◆ Power
- ◆ Authority
- ◆ Legitimacy

In your response, you should do the following:

- ◆ Respond to the prompt with a defensible claim or thesis that establishes a line of reasoning using one or more of the provided course concepts.
- ◆ Support your claim with at least TWO pieces of specific and relevant evidence from one or more course countries. The evidence should be relevant to one or more of the provided course concepts.
- ◆ Use reasoning to explain why your evidence supports your claim or thesis, using one or more of the provided course concepts.
- ◆ Respond to an opposing or alternate perspective, using refutation, concession, or rebuttal.