AP Comparative Politics Summer Reading 2026

"The 21st century has taught us that we cannot ignore the world around us. Happenings around the globe now directly impact our lives, and social studies teachers and students around the country face the challenge of interpreting complex, puzzling events. The AP Comparative course focuses on government and politics in other countries and provides a theoretical framework to compare political systems around the world." – Ethel Wood

Course Description: This is a one year course designed to give students an analytical perspective on global politics. Students will focus on the governments of the United States as well as the diverse political structures of the **United Kingdom, Russia, China, Mexico, Nigeria, and Iran.** Comparisons will be made in terms of power structures, political institutions, citizen participation, political and economic change, and public policy. Students will be exposed to different theoretical and practical frameworks that are the foundations for a variety of political systems.

Summer Assignment (Required):

In your textbook, *Comparative Government for the AP Course: Stories of the World* (Waples), read the first two chapters (pages 5-52). Complete the note sheets for each of the chapters and ***bring a printed copy of your notes to class on the first day.*** Note sheets are attached at the end of this assignment. ***You will be assessed on this material the first day of class!***

Summer Reading Opportunities (Optional):

During the summer pay close attention to events in the **United Kingdom, Russia, China, Mexico, Nigeria, and Iran**. This pre-reading will help form a strong foundation for the upcoming school year. The articles should provide you with information about the political, economic, and/or foreign policy issues confronting each nation. Articles may come from newspapers, periodicals, magazines, and/or the Internet. Possible sources include but are not limited to:

New York Times – http://www.nytimes.com/
BBC – www.news.bbc.co.uk
The Economist- http://www.economist.com/
Foreign Affairs Magazine https://www.foreignaffairs.com
The Wall Street Journal http://www.wsj.com/
The Guardian- http://www.theguardian.com/international

You may also enjoy the following titles, recommended from your Comparative Government teachers. They are all OPTIONAL.

Nigeria: *Americanah* by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie
Mexico: *American Dirt* by Jeanine Cummins
Iran: *Persepolis* by Marjane Satrapi; *Reading Lolita in Tehran* by Azar Nafisi
UK: *Say Nothing* by Patrick Radden Keefe
Russia: *Red Notice* by Bill Browder
China: *Land of Big Numbers* by Te-Ping Chen, *Red China Blues* by Jan Wong
General: *The Dictator's Learning Curve* by William Dobson

AP Comparative Government and Politics

Name _____ ue Date _____

Unit 1: Political Systems, Regimes, and Governments

Use the textbook to complete the following questions. Questions using task verbs require complete sentences. Questions without task verbs can be answered in bullet points.

Chapter 1 – Introduction to Comparative Politics (Pages 4-25)

Topic	Notes
Why Study AP Comparative Government and Politics?	Questions Facing Political Scientists Define Comparative Politics
Thinking Like a Political Scientist	Define Causation Define Correlation (Positive, Inverse) Define Empirical Statement Define Normative Statement Define Quantitative Data Define Qualitative Data Describe the difference between causation and correlation

Comparing Economic Development	How has the definition of **development** changed over time? Describe what the Human Development Index measures Define GDP Define GDP per capita How do the AP 6 compare with their GDP per capita? Define GDP Growth Rate Describe the advantages and disadvantages of the indicators used by political scientists in comparing countries
Comparing Political Development	Describe what Freedom House measures. Define democratic consolidation. Identify and describe the two types of corruption. Explain how corruption hinders democracy. Describe what the Corruptions Perceptions Index measures.

	Describe the differences between a strong state and a weak/failed state. Describe the measurement system of the Fragile States Index. Explain how at least one of the state-strengthening measures your textbook lists will help increase a state's stability

Chapter 2 – Political Systems (Pages 26-52)

Topic	Notes
The Man Behind Brexit	Describe the European Union (include its impact on a country's sovereignty). Describe the factors that led the UK to leave the EU Explain why Cummings used false claims as part of his efforts to leave the EU
States, Governments, Regimes, and Nations	Define State Describe the Four Characteristics of a State. 1. 2. 3. 4.

	Define Regime. Compare a regime change to a change in government. Define Nation Define Nationalism
Democracy & Authoritarianism	Compare a liberal democracy with an authoritarian regime. Describe how an Illiberal, flawed or hybrid democracies fall somewhere in the middle. Describe Rule of Law. Describe Rule by Law. Define Transparency. Describe how co-optation could lead to corruption. Describe Democratization Study Table 2.1 on page 35. In your opinion, if you are the leader of an authoritarian regime looking to begin the process of democratization, which is the most important change (elections, participation, franchise, etc) you would implement to begin this process. Why? Explain how democratic consolidation and democratic backsliding are different.

Sovereignty, Authority, and Power	Define Authority. Describe at least two sources of power. Define external sovereignty. Define internal sovereignty. Define coercion.
Legitimacy and Stability	Define legitimacy. Identify and describe sources of legitimacy for both democracies and authoritarian governments. Identify and describe examples of how countries can claim more than one source of legitimacy. Explain how countries maintain legitimacy. Describe what enhances stability.

Federal and Unitary States	Define Unitary Systems Define Federal Systems Explain why larger countries might adopt a federal form of government. What kind of legislature do federal forms of government typically have? Why? How are federal governments designed to protect minorities? What powers does the national government have vs. the states/provinces? Provide examples. Explain how subnational governments operate in a unitary system. What kind of legislature do unitary forms of government typically have? Why? Describe devolution in the UK with Scotland.