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# AP Comparative Government and Politics

## Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

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**AP<sup>®</sup> COMPARATIVE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS**  
**2017 SCORING GUIDELINES**

**Question 5**

**3 points**

One point is earned for correctly defining rule of law.

An acceptable definition may include:

- Everyone, including the leaders, is accountable to the law.
- The law is applied consistently or universally.

One point is earned for correctly describing an institutional arrangement that promotes the rule of law in democratic regimes.

Correct descriptions may include:

- Independent judiciary
- Separation of powers
- Checks and balances
- Impeachment by legislature
- Vote of no confidence by legislature

One point is earned for correctly explaining why authoritarian regimes resist the rule of law.

Correct explanations may include:

- Fear of accountability
- Fear of regime change
- Fear of losing office
- To punish opposition
- To engage in corruption
- To engage in patronage

A score of zero (0) is earned for an attempted answer that earns no points or for an off-task answer.

A score of dash (—) is earned for a blank.

5. Define the term "rule of law." Describe an institutional arrangement that promotes the rule of law in regimes. Explain why authoritarian regimes resist the rule of law.

5A

5. "Rule of law" refers to a system of government where all people, the government and the governed, are held to the same legal standards, norms, rules and constitution. An independent, separate judiciary promotes the rule of law in democratic regimes because it serves as a check on the power of the executive and the legislature and punishes or removes officials who break the law or violate the constitution. Authoritarian regimes resist the rule of law because authoritarian rulers fear that if the public learns of human rights violations, corruption or any illegal activity done by themselves, they will lose legitimacy and face mounting pressures to be removed.

5. Define the term "rule of law." Describe an institutional arrangement that promotes the rule of law regimes. Explain why authoritarian regimes resist the rule of law.

5B

The rule of law refers to the notion that governmental ~~officers and~~ office-holders and workers are subjected to, and must obey the same laws as citizens. In other words, they are not above the law. One institutional arrangement that promotes the rule of law are in democratic regimes are checks and balances. For example, ethics committees may be set up within the legislature to investigate the actions of its own members <sup>to make sure they are abiding by the law</sup> or the executive. Authoritarian regimes resist the rule of law because they want to maintain and consolidate power within the government. If officials were subjected to the same laws, they would not exercise ultimate power ~~been~~ and would be restricted by these laws. Rule of law does not allow for authoritarian regimes to exist successfully because it limits the power of the government.



5. Define the term "rule of law." Describe an institutional arrangement that promotes the rule of law regimes. Explain why authoritarian regimes resist the rule of law.

5C

Rule of law is a term that dictates that everyone must obey the law, and that no one is above it. The judicial branch of democratic regimes ensures that all rules and laws are enforced and brought down upon everyone equally. Authoritarian regimes resist against the rule of law because the head of state typically functions outside/above the government, and the rules they impose don't necessarily apply to them. They're above the laws.

# AP<sup>®</sup> COMPARATIVE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

## 2017 SCORING COMMENTARY

### Question 5

#### Overview

The intent of the question was to assess students' understanding of the concept "rule of law," how particular institutional arrangements promote the rule of law in democratic regimes, and why authoritarian regimes resist the rule of law. The skills tested were definitional, descriptive, and explanatory. Students had three specific tasks: to define the term "rule of law," to describe an institutional arrangement that promotes the rule of law in democratic regimes, and to explain why authoritarian regimes resist the rule of law.

#### Sample: 5A

##### Score: 3

The response earned 1 point for correctly defining the rule of law as a principle according to which "all people, the government and the governed, are held to the same legal standards." The response earned 1 point for correctly describing an "independent, separate judiciary" as an institutional arrangement that promotes the rule of law in democratic regimes. The response earned 1 point for correctly explaining that authoritarian regimes resist the rule of law because they "fear that if the public learns of human rights violations, corruption or any illegal activity ... they will ... face mounting pressures to be removed."

#### Sample: 5B

##### Score: 2

The response earned 1 point for correctly defining the rule of law as "the notion that governmental office-holders and workers are subjected to, and must obey the same laws as citizens." The response earned 1 point for correctly describing "checks and balances" as an institutional arrangement that promotes the rule of law in democratic regimes. The response did not earn a point for explaining why authoritarian regimes resist the rule of law.

#### Sample: 5C

##### Score: 1

The response earned 1 point for correctly defining the rule of law as a principle according to which "everyone must obey the law, and that no one is above it." The response did not earn a point for correctly describing an institutional arrangement that promotes the rule of law in democratic regimes. The response did not earn a point for explaining why authoritarian regimes resist the rule of law.