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# AP Comparative Government and Politics

## Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

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**Question 6**

**6 points**

**Part (a): 2 points**

One point is earned for EACH correct description of a function of a cabinet.

Correct identifications and descriptions may include:

- Advise the chief executive
- Manage bureaucracy or oversee implementation of policy
- Suggest or develop policies
- Represent the interests of their department or government
- Provide information for the public
- Implement policy
- Allow specialization in certain policy areas

**Part (b): 1 point**

One point is earned for correctly identifying parliament or legislature as the institution from which members of the cabinet are drawn.

**Part (c): 1 point**

One point is earned for correctly describing how a cabinet is formed in a parliamentary system.

Correct descriptions may include:

- The leader of the majority party selects cabinet members.
- Members of parliament vote for investiture or confirmation.
- The leader of the majority builds coalitions with smaller parties.

**Part (d): 1 point**

One point is earned for correctly explaining how the process of removing cabinet members differs in a parliamentary and presidential system.

Correct explanations may include:

- In a presidential system, the legislature removes cabinet members with a vote of impeachment; in a parliamentary system, the legislature removes cabinet members through a vote of no confidence.

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**Question 6 (continued)**

**Part (e): 1 point**

One point is earned for correctly explaining why policy making is more efficient in a parliamentary system than in a presidential system.

Correct explanations may include:

- Fusion of legislative and executive power.
- Parliamentary systems do not have divided government.
- Leadership is able to enforce stronger party discipline.

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.

Conceptual Analysis: We suggest that you spend approximately 30 minutes.

6. Cabinets are important institutions of the executive branch.

- (a) Describe two functions of a cabinet.
- (b) Identify the institution from which members of the cabinet are drawn in a parliamentary system.
- (c) Describe how a cabinet is formed in a parliamentary system.
- (d) Explain how the process of removing cabinet members differs in parliamentary and presidential systems.
- (e) Explain why policy making is more efficient in a parliamentary system than in a presidential system.

a. One important function of a cabinet is to advise the head of government on different legislation or potential policy to implement in the country. Another important role for members of the cabinet ~~is to be the head of various~~ is to be the head of various major programs in the executive branch. This can include ~~being in charge of~~ being in charge of national defense, the economy, the environment, etc.

b. In a parliamentary system of government, members of the cabinet are primarily selected using merit-based criteria or patron-client relations. ~~They~~ The actual members of the cabinet will have been members of Parliament that are selected to join the cabinet.

In Great Britain  
c. Members ~~of the~~ of the House of Commons elected to Parliament will be chosen by the Prime Minister to occupy a spot in the cabinet while holding on to their seat in the House of Commons. This cabinet will work alongside the Prime Minister to pass legislation and head other programs/projects in



Parliament, ~~by Parliament system.~~

d. In Parliamentary systems if a member of the cabinet is voted out of their seat in Parliament, then they will ~~not~~ not be a part of Parliament anymore and therefore not the cabinet. In Presidential systems, the President can appoint and remove members from their cabinet with approval from a legislative body like Congress. Also at the end of the Presidential term, the members of that administrative cabinet will almost surely not be a part of the next administration cabinet.

e. In a Parliamentary system of government, the head executive is part of Parliament so to pass legislation and different policies, Parliament also has to agree amongst themselves about legislation to pass. After Parliament votes on legislation, it can quickly become law. This is different from a Presidential system where there can be frequent clashes between the President and the legislative body over legislation and different policy matters.

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Conceptual Analysis: We suggest that you spend approximately 30 minutes on question 6.

6. Cabinets are important institutions of the executive branch.

- (a) Describe two functions of a cabinet.
- (b) Identify the institution from which members of the cabinet are drawn in a parliamentary system.
- (c) Describe how a cabinet is formed in a parliamentary system.
- (d) Explain how the process of removing cabinet members differs in parliamentary and presidential systems.
- (e) Explain why policy making is more efficient in a parliamentary system than in a presidential system.

Cabinets are important institutions of the executive branch. One function of the cabinet is to advise the Head of Government on what decisions to make regarding policy, and what the Head of Government should do when confronted with a problem. One other function of a cabinet is to be policy experts in certain areas of policy. This function serves to help the Head of Government stay informed on policy and problems in certain areas of policy.

In a parliamentary system, the cabinet members are members of the majority party, and are chosen by the Prime Minister to serve on the cabinet.

Removing a cabinet member in the Presidential system is far easier than removing one in a parliamentary system. In a Presidential system, all the President has to do is dismiss that cabinet member, and they're gone. In a parliamentary system, the cabinet member must be removed by a vote in the parliament rather than simply dismissed from their office.

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A cabinet is formed by the Head of Government who selects ~~members~~ ~~kn~~ people knowledgeable and qualified on a particular area of policy. These people the Head of Government picks may be confirmed by the legislature before they take office, but if they are approved, they are then cabinet members.

Policy making is more efficient in a Parliamentary system than in a Presidential system because the executive and legislative branches are combined in a parliamentary system, meaning policy can be negotiated and agreed upon more quickly and easily. In a Presidential system, the policy must first go through the legislative branch, be approved, and then make its way to the President to be either denied or passed, while in a Parliamentary system that can all happen in one place without moving the policy decision around too much.

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Conceptual Analysis: We suggest that you spend approximately 30 minutes on question 6.

6. Cabinets are important institutions of the executive branch.

- (a) Describe two functions of a cabinet.  
(b) Identify the institution from which members of the cabinet are drawn in a parliamentary system.  
(c) Describe how a cabinet is formed in a parliamentary system.  
(d) Explain how the process of removing cabinet members differs in parliamentary and presidential systems.  
(e) Explain why policy making is more efficient in a parliamentary system than in a presidential system.

- a) 1) They help agree on policy and laws  
2) They provide more than one opinion ~~therefore~~ not too much power is given to one person.  
b) The cabinet are drawn into the House of Commons.  
c) A cabinet is formed by members of Parliament being voted in by the party.  
d) Removing members of cabinet in a parliamentary system happens by a vote of no confidence while in a presidential system they are ~~are~~ removed by impeachment.  
e) Policies are made more efficiently in a parliamentary system compared to a presidential system as in a parliamentary system policies are made in one house (House of Commons) while in a presidential system the policies must be passed through congress for example.

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## 2017 SCORING COMMENTARY

### Question 6

#### Overview

The intent of this question was to assess students' understanding of the role of cabinets within the executive branch of government, the way cabinets are formed within parliamentary systems, and the important institutional differences between parliamentary and presidential systems. The skills tested were conceptual, descriptive, and explanatory. Students had six specific tasks: to describe two functions of a cabinet, to identify the institution from which members of the cabinet are drawn in a parliamentary system, to describe how a cabinet is formed in a parliamentary system, to explain how the process of removing cabinet members differs in parliamentary and presidential systems, and to explain why policy making is more efficient in a parliamentary system than in a presidential system.

#### Sample: 6A

##### Score: 5

The response earned 1 point for part (a) by correctly describing one function of a cabinet as “to advise the head of government.” The response earned 1 point for part (a) by correctly describing a second function of a cabinet as “to be the head of various groups/programs in the executive branch ... [and] being in charg *[sic]* of national defense, the economy, the environment, etc.” The response earned 1 point for part (b) by correctly identifying “Parliament” as the institution from which members of the cabinet are drawn in a parliamentary system. The response earned 1 point for part (c) by correctly describing that “members of ... House of Commons Parliament will be chosen by the Prime Minister to occupy a spot in the cabinet.” The response did not earn a point for part (d). The response earned 1 point for part (e) by correctly explaining that policy making is more efficient in a parliamentary system because “the head executive is Part of parliament” whereas, in a presidential system, “[t]here can be frequent clashing between the President and the legislative body over legislation.”

#### Sample: 6B

##### Score: 3

The response earned 1 point for part (a) by correctly describing one function of a cabinet as “to advise the Head of Government.” The response did not earn a point for describing a second function in part (a). The response did not earn a point for part (b). The response earned 1 point for part (c) by correctly describing that “the cabinet members ... are chosen by the Prime Minister to serve on the cabinet.” The response did not earn a point for part (d). The response earned 1 point for part (e) by correctly explaining that policy making is more efficient in a parliamentary system because “the executive and legislative branches are combined in a parliamentary system, meaning policy can be negotiated and agreed upon more quickly and easily.”

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**Sample: 6C**

**Score: 1**

The response did not earn either point for describing two functions of a cabinet in part (a). The response did not earn a point for part (b). The response did not earn a point for part (c). The response earned 1 point for part (d) by correctly explaining the difference as “[r]emoving members of cabinet in a parliamentary system happens by a vote of no confidence while in a presidential system they are removed by impeachment.” The response did not earn a point for part (e).