
AP[®] Comparative Government and Politics

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary Set 2

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Free Response Question 4

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AP[®] COMPARATIVE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

2019 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 4

3 points

One point is earned for a correct explanation of a reason why both authoritarian states and democratic states use coercion domestically.

Acceptable explanations may include:

- To increase legitimacy by maintaining order
- To ensure compliance by enforcing laws
- To protect sovereignty or national security

One point is earned for EACH correct description of ways that democratic states are constrained in their use of coercion.

Acceptable descriptions may include:

- The need to maintain popular support
- The need to protect civil liberties
- The need to maintain transparency
- Effective checks and balances
- Independent judiciary
- Legislative oversight
- An independent press
- Free and fair elections
- Active civil society

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

A score of dash (—) is earned for a blank or off-task answer.

4. Explain one reason why both authoritarian states and democratic states use coercion domestically. Describe two ways that democratic states are constrained in their use of coercion.

Domestic coercion is used in democratic and authoritarian regimes as a mechanism to maintain order + stability throughout the country in order to strengthen sovereignty. By quelling civic unrest or ensuring cooperation with some law through the use of force, they are able to neutralize threatening acts that may promote instability or revolt. Liberal democracies are constrained in their use of coercion in the way that they are bound to respecting + upholding the civil liberties & rights of their people. Because of this, they are limited in their mechanisms of coercion as they lose legitimacy if they violate these rights. Moreover, democratic states are constrained as they are held responsible/accountable to their citizens & through democratic processes the states can lose power if they overstep in an unconstitutional manner through impeachment processes or elections. Because democracies are bound to their constitutions, their coercion is bound to the limits indicated in there.

4. Explain one reason why both authoritarian states and democratic states use coercion domestically. Describe two ways that democratic states are constrained in their use of coercion.

Democratic and authoritarian states use coercion to maintain power in government, through their party or their regime.

Democratic states' use of coercion is constrained through term limits, which conclude in free and fair elections—the public can vote out those they do not trust.

They are also constrained by a free ~~per~~ press—the media acts as a watchdog in reporting any corruption or coercion to the people.

4. Explain one reason why both authoritarian states and democratic states use coercion domestically. Describe two ways that democratic states are constrained in their use of coercion.

Authoritarian and democratic regimes use coercion to keep their sovereignty. Democracies ~~are~~ are constrained by people's voting abilities and the people's voices that can be heard in a democracy as well as checks and balances.

AP[®] COMPARATIVE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

2019 SCORING COMMENTARY

Question 4

Note: Student samples are quoted verbatim and may contain spelling and grammatical errors.

Overview

The intent of this question was to assess students' understanding of why states use coercion domestically and how democracies are constrained in their use of coercion. The skills tested were conceptual and analytical. Students had three specific tasks: to explain why both authoritarian and democratic states use coercion domestically and to describe two ways democratic states are constrained in their use of coercion.

Sample: 4A

Score: 3

The response earned 1 point for explaining that both authoritarian and democratic states use coercion domestically because “they are able to neutralize threatening acts that may promote instability or revolt.” The response demonstrates an understanding of how coercion enables the states to protect national security. Additional acceptable responses include maintaining legitimacy by maintaining order and ensuring compliance by enforcing laws.

The response earned 1 point for describing that democratic states are constrained in their use of coercion “in the way that they are bound to respecting + upholding the civil liberties & rights of their people.” The response demonstrates an understanding that democratic states are constrained in their use of coercion in order to protect civil liberties. Additional acceptable responses could have focused on how institutions, such as an independent judiciary or an independent media, can constrain the use of coercion by a democratic state.

The response earned 1 point for describing that democratic states are constrained in their use of coercion “as they are held responsible/accountable to their citizens.” The response demonstrates an understanding that democratic states are constrained in their use of coercion in order to maintain popular support. Additional acceptable responses include effective checks and balances and an active civil society, both of which constrain the use of coercion by a democratic state.

Sample: 4B

Score: 2

The response did not earn a point for explaining why both authoritarian and democratic states use coercion domestically. The statement “to maintain power in government, through their party or their regime” does not make clear why force is being used to help the state maintain power. An acceptable explanation is that both authoritarian and democratic states use coercion to maintain sovereignty and to protect territory. Another acceptable explanation is that both authoritarian and democratic states increase legitimacy by maintaining order, which implies the use of force.

The response earned 1 point for describing that democratic states are constrained in their use of coercion “through term limits, which conclude in free and fair elections.” The response demonstrates an understanding that democratic states are constrained in their use of coercion by a competitive electoral process. Additional acceptable responses could have focused on how the need to maintain popular support or protect transparency could constrain the use of coercion by a democratic state.

The response earned 1 point for describing that democratic states are constrained in their use of coercion “by a free press — the media acts as a watchdog in reporting any corruption or coercion to the people.” Additional acceptable responses include legislative oversight and an active civil society, both of which constrain the use of coercion by a democratic state.

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2019 SCORING COMMENTARY

Question 4 (continued)

Sample: 4C

Score: 1

The response earned 1 point for explaining that both authoritarian and democratic states use coercion domestically “to keep their sovereignty.” The response demonstrates an understanding of how coercion enables the states to maintain ultimate authority over their territory. Additional acceptable responses include maintaining legitimacy by maintaining order and ensuring compliance by enforcing laws.

The response did not earn a point for describing a way that democratic states are constrained in their use of coercion. The statement “by people’s voting abilities” does not describe the way that fair and free elections can be used to constrain the use of coercion in a democracy. An acceptable response could describe that democratic states are constrained in their use of coercion by the need to maintain popular support.

The response did not earn a point for describing a way that democratic states are constrained in their use of coercion. The statement “as well as checks and balances” does not describe the way that one branch of government can constrain the use of coercion by another branch in a democracy. Acceptable responses include an independent judiciary and civil liberties, both of which constrain the use of coercion.