
AP Comparative Government and Politics

Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

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AP[®] COMPARATIVE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

2018 SCORING GUIDELINES

Question 7

6 points

Part (a): 1 point

One point is earned for a correct description of one difference between a federal system and a unitary system.

An acceptable description includes:

- In a federal system power is shared between central and regional governments, while in a unitary system power resides in the central government.
- Regional governments have more authority in a federal system compared to a unitary system.

Part (b): 1 point

One point is earned for a correct explanation of why both Nigeria and Russia adopted a federal system.

Acceptable explanations include:

- Accommodation of ethnic or religious or regional diversity to allow for regional representation
- To account for regional differences or local preferences in large countries
- To grant autonomy to regions

Part (c): 2 points

One point is earned for EACH correct description of a disadvantage of federalism in Nigeria.

Acceptable descriptions include:

- Discourages national unity
- Exacerbates regionally-based ethnic differences
- Exacerbates regionally-based religious differences
- Increases regional conflict and instability
- Increases chances for corruption at the regional or local level

Part (d): 1 point

One point is earned for a correct description of an institutional change that has limited federalism in Russia since 2000.

Acceptable descriptions include:

- Cancellation of gubernatorial elections
- Creation of federal districts and presidential envoys
- Change in who is appointed to the Federation Council

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Question 7 (continued)

Part (e): 1 point

One point is earned for a correct explanation of why the Russian government has limited federalism since 2000.

Acceptable explanations include:

- Concentrate presidential powers
- Consolidate United Russia's powers
- Undermine regional opposition
- Curb secessionist tendencies
- Counter regionally orchestrated terrorism
- Increase national unity and national strength
- Reduce corruption at the regional or local level

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.

Country Context: We suggest that you spend approximately 40 minutes (20 minutes each) on questions 7 and 8.

7. Nigeria and Russia both have constitutionally established federal systems.
- Describe one difference between a federal system and a unitary system.
 - Explain one common reason why both Nigeria and Russia adopted a federal system.
 - Describe two disadvantages of federalism in Nigeria.
 - Describe one institutional change that has limited federalism in Russia since 2000.
 - Explain why the Russian government has limited federalism since 2000.

a.) In a federal system, power tends to be decentralized because power is shared between the ^{central} government and states while in a unitary system, power is centralized with power concentrated in the central government.

b.) Both Nigeria and Russia adopted a federal system because they are multiethnic countries. Multiethnic countries tend to adopt federal systems to accommodate the wants of the different groups in the country ~~to~~ as to prevent ~~the~~ uprisings and independent movements. Giving power to ~~regi~~ regions with different ethnicities makes them feel ~~want~~ like they belong in the and legitimized the government.

C.) Two disadvantages due to federalism in Nigeria are regionalism and prebendalism. With federalism, ^{areas} regions with different social cleavages become very regionalized increasing the likely hood for independence movements and dissatisfied factions. Among other groups, one example of this regionalism due to federalism is the rise of political parties targeted at only one ~~the~~ group leading to regional leaders and presidents who neglect promote policies for their region and neglect the other. ~~A~~ prebendalism arises as a result of federalism in Nigeria as leaders of different regions use their power to exploit the states resources for personal gain.

~~D.)~~

D.) One institutional change that has limited federalism in Russia since 2000 is the consolidation of multiple regions to 7 districts with governors appointed by Putin.

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Question 7 is reprinted for your convenience.

7. Nigeria and Russia both have constitutionally established federal systems.
- Describe one difference between a federal system and a unitary system.
 - Explain one common reason why both Nigeria and Russia adopted a federal system.
 - Describe two disadvantages of federalism in Nigeria.
 - Describe one institutional change that has limited federalism in Russia since 2000.
 - Explain why the Russian government has limited federalism since 2000.

e.) The Russian government has limited federalism to ~~crack down on~~ centralize the state and give more power to ~~the president~~ Putin. This was done to crack down on corruption in the regions and prevent the threat of nationalistic movements as employed by Chechnya's Chechnya before.

7B

Country Context: We suggest that you spend approximately 40 minutes (20 minutes each) on questions 7 and 8.

7. Nigeria and Russia both have constitutionally established federal systems.
 - a. Describe one difference between a federal system and a unitary system.
 - b. Explain one common reason why both Nigeria and Russia adopted a federal system.
 - c. Describe two disadvantages of federalism in Nigeria.
 - d. Describe one institutional change that has limited federalism in Russia since 2000.
 - e. Explain why the Russian government has limited federalism since 2000.

In a federal system, power is divided among the central and regional governments. In contrast, power is concentrated at the national level in a unitary system. Both Nigeria and Russia adopted a federal system because there are various groups within the states that come from different backgrounds. Federalism in Nigeria has only highlighted the already troubling ethnic conflicts. Federalism in Russia has been limited as a result of a change allowing the president to ~~appoint~~^{remove} the governor of ~~every~~ any regional body. The Russian government has limited federalism in order to concentrate more power in the office of the presidency.

7C1

Country Context: We suggest that you spend approximately 40 minutes (20 minutes each) on questions 7 and 8.

7. Nigeria and Russia both have constitutionally established federal systems.
- Describe one difference between a federal system and a unitary system.
 - Explain one common reason why both Nigeria and Russia adopted a federal system.
 - Describe two disadvantages of federalism in Nigeria.
 - Describe one institutional change that has limited federalism in Russia since 2000. *Putin*
 - Explain why the Russian government has limited federalism since 2000.

a) One difference between a federal system and a unitary system is a federal system has multiple levels of government who share power while a unitary government has only one branch with all control.

b) One common reason why both Nigeria and Russia adopted a federal system is due to the multiple ethnically or religiously different communities.

c) One disadvantage of federalism in Nigeria is ~~that~~ ^{not} due to the strong political and religious divide between the regions, there is ~~not~~ ^{not} much central control, and many legislators in the government are corrupt and have more interest in helping their ~~own~~ individual region or village than the entirety of Nigeria. Another disadvantage of federalism is that because of the lack of a strong central government, ~~no~~ groups

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like Boko Haram are harder to control and eradicate due to the lack of support and agreement.

d) One institutional change in Russia that has limited federalism since 2000 is the changing of the constitution to allow for the president to hold six year terms instead of the previous four. This gives the president more power, and limits the strength of the ~~executive~~ Duma.

e) Russia has limited federalism since 2000 because President Putin has an immense amount of power and the Prime Minister and the Duma work with him and allow him to do as he pleases, as Putin has been known to overcome ~~competitors~~ competitors sometimes through means of arresting or exiling them under minor or false charges.

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2018 SCORING COMMENTARY

Question 7

Overview

The intent of this question was to assess students' understanding of the differences between federal and unitary systems, the reasons why Nigeria and Russia adopted federal systems, the disadvantages of federalism in Nigeria, the institutional changes that have limited federalism in Russia since 2000, and the reasons why the Russian government has limited federalism since 2000. The skills tested were descriptive and explanatory. Students had five specific tasks: to describe one difference between a federal system and a unitary system, to explain why both Nigeria and Russia adopted a federal system, to describe two disadvantages of federalism in Nigeria, to describe an institutional change that has limited federalism in Russia since 2000, and to explain why the Russian government has limited federalism since 2000.

Sample: 7A

Score: 6

In part (a) the response earned 1 point for describing one difference between a federal system and a unitary system by stating, "Federal systems tend to be decentralized because power is shared between the central government and states while a unitary system is centralized with power concentrated in the central government." The response clearly describes a crucial difference in power sharing between the central and subnational governments in federal systems, which is absent in unitary systems that concentrate power in the central government. An additional acceptable response is a description of how regional governments have more authority in federal systems than in unitary systems.

In part (b) the response earned 1 point for explaining that both Nigeria and Russia adopted a federal system "because they are multiethnic countries. Multi ethnic countries tend to adopt federal systems to accommodate the wants of the different groups in the country." It further explains, "Giving power to regions with different ethnicities makes them feel like they belong." The response correctly explains how the accommodation of ethnic diversity to allow for regional representation drove Nigeria and Russia's common desire to adopt a federal system. Some additional acceptable explanations include the desire to account for regional differences or local preferences in these large countries and to grant autonomy to regions.

In part (c) the response earned 1 point for describing a first disadvantage of federalism in Nigeria by referring to how "areas with different social cleavages become very regionalized increasing the likelihood [*sic*] for independence movements." The response accurately describes how federalism in Nigeria increases regional conflict and instability. The response earned 1 point for describing a second disadvantage of federalism in Nigeria by stating that "prebendalism arises as a result of federalism in Nigeria as leaders of different regions use their power to exploit the states [*sic*] resources for personal gain." The response accurately describes how federalism in Nigeria increases chances of corruption at the regional or local level. Some additional acceptable descriptions of disadvantages of federalism in Nigeria include that federalism discourages national unity, exacerbates regionally based ethnic differences, and aggravates regionally based religious differences.

In part (d) the response earned 1 point for describing "the consolidation of multiple regions to 7 districts with governors appointed by Putin" as an institutional change that has limited federalism in Russia since 2000. The response successfully describes the creation of federal districts and presidential envoys. Some additional acceptable descriptions of institutional changes that have limited federalism in Russia since 2000 include the cancellation of gubernatorial elections and the change in who is appointed to the Federation Council.

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Question 7 (continued)

In part (e) the response earned 1 point for stating that the Russian government has limited federalism since 2000 “to crack down on corruption in the regions” as it successfully explains how the Russian government wanted to reduce corruption at the regional or local level. Some additional acceptable explanations of why the Russian government has limited federalism since 2000 include the inclination to concentrate presidential powers, undermine regional opposition, and increase national unity and national strength.

Sample: 7B

Score: 3

In part (a) the response earned 1 point for describing one difference between a federal system and a unitary system: “In a federal system, power is divided among the central and regional governments. In contrast, power is concentrated at the national level in a unitary system.” The response clearly describes a crucial difference in power sharing between the central and subnational governments in federal systems, which is absent in centralized unitary systems that concentrate power in the central government. An additional acceptable response is a description of how regional governments have more authority in federal systems than in unitary systems.

In part (b) the response did not earn a point for explaining that both Nigeria and Russia adopted a federal system “because there are various groups within the states that come from different backgrounds” because it does not explain how federal systems allow for regional representation to accommodate the interests of various groups. Some acceptable explanations include accommodating ethnic, religious, or regional diversity to allow for regional representation; accounting for regional differences or local preferences in these large countries; and granting autonomy to regions.

In part (c) the response did not earn a point for describing “Federalism in Nigeria has only highlighted the already troubling ethnic conflicts” as a first disadvantage of federalism in Nigeria because it does not specify how federalism exacerbates regionally based ethnic differences. The response did not earn a point for describing a second disadvantage of federalism in Nigeria because a second disadvantage is not addressed. Some acceptable descriptions of disadvantages of federalism in Nigeria include that federalism discourages national unity, exacerbates regionally based religious differences, and increases the chances for corruption at the regional or local level.

In part (d) the response earned 1 point for describing “a change allowing the president to remove the governor of any regional body” as an institutional change that has limited federalism in Russia since 2000. The response successfully describes the cancellation of gubernatorial elections as an institutional change that has limited federalism in Russia since 2000. Some additional acceptable descriptions of institutional changes that have limited federalism in Russia since 2000 include the creation of federal districts and presidential envoys and the change in who is appointed to the Federation Council.

In part (e) the response earned 1 point for explaining that the Russian government has limited federalism since 2000 “in order to concentrate more power in the office of the presidency.” The response successfully explains that a reason why the Russian government has limited federalism is to concentrate presidential powers. Some additional acceptable explanations of why the Russian government has limited federalism since 2000 include the inclination to consolidate United Russia’s powers, undermine regional opposition, and increase national unity and national strength.

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Question 7 (continued)

Sample: 7C

Score: 1

In part (a) the response did not earn a point for describing one difference between a federal system and a unitary system as “a federal system has multiple levels of government who share power, while a unitary government has only one branch with all control.” The response inaccurately describes as a difference that federal systems have multiple levels of government that share power, while unitary systems do not have any other levels of government; the description of unitary systems also confuses levels of government with branches. An acceptable response would be a description of power sharing between central and regional governments in federal systems, compared to how power is concentrated in the central government in unitary systems. An additional acceptable response is how regional governments have more authority in federal systems than in unitary systems.

In part (b) the response did not earn a point for explaining that both Nigeria and Russia adopted a federal system because of their “multiple ethnically or religiously different communities” as it does not explain how federal systems allow for regional representation to accommodate various groups. Some acceptable explanations include the desire to account for regional differences or local preferences in these large countries and the desire to grant autonomy to regions.

In part (c) the response earned 1 point for describing a first disadvantage of federalism in Nigeria by referring to how “many legislators in the government are corrupt and have more interest in helping their individual region or village than [sic] the entirety of Nigeria.” The response correctly describes how federalism discourages national unity. The response did not earn a point for describing a second disadvantage of federalism in Nigeria by stating that “because of the lack of a strong central government, groups like Boko Haram are harder to control and eradicate.” Federalism is not a primary factor in Nigeria’s struggle against Boko Haram. Some additional acceptable descriptions of disadvantages of federalism in Nigeria include that federalism exacerbates regionally based religious differences, increases regional conflict and instability, and increases the chances for corruption at the regional or local level.

In part (d) the response did not earn a point for describing “the changing of the constitution to allow the President to hold six year terms instead of the previous four” as an institutional change that has limited federalism in Russia since 2000 because presidential term limits are not an element of federalism. Some acceptable descriptions of institutional changes that have limited federalism in Russia since 2000 include the cancellation of gubernatorial elections, the creation of federal districts and presidential envoys, and the change in who is appointed to the Federation Council.

In part (e) the response did not earn a point for explaining why the Russian government has limited federalism since 2000 as “President Putin has an immense amount of power and the Prime Minister and the Duma work with him and allow him to do as he pleases, as Putin has been known to overcome competitors sometimes through means of arresting or exiling them under minor or false charges.” The response focuses on authoritarianism and does not correctly explain a reason why the Russian government has limited federalism. Some additional acceptable explanations of why the Russian government has limited federalism since 2000 include the inclination to concentrate presidential powers, consolidate United Russia’s powers, undermine regional opposition, and increase national unity and national strength.