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# AP Human Geography

## Sample Student Responses and Scoring Commentary

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# AP<sup>®</sup> HUMAN GEOGRAPHY SCORING GUIDELINES

## Question 3

**6 Points: (2 + 2 + 2)**

**A. Define unitary state and identify the country shown that fits the definition of a unitary state.**

2 points (1 definition + 1 identification)

• **Definition:**

- a country organized in such a way that most power is placed in a central government, or there is limited political power at subnational scales of governance

• **Identification:** Japan

**B. Explain ONE positive and ONE negative impact of a unitary system.**

2 points (1 positive + 1 negative)

Positive Impacts	Negative Impacts
<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Standardization of laws and their implementation across the country</li><li>2. Patriotism or pride in one's country is bolstered due to uniformity</li><li>3. Efficiencies are achieved through less duplication OR faster countrywide implementation of laws or governmental services across multiple scales</li><li>4. Fewer government or taxation agencies, or fewer scales of government or taxation</li><li>5. The potential for corruption of local government reduced</li><li>6. Creation of a national identity that reduces the potential for devolutionary processes</li></ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Centralization of power can lead to a disconnect with local areas, minority groups, regional political parties, or disparate regions</li><li>2. Marginalization of local cultures through standardization at a country level</li><li>3. Central government may not effectively provide services on a subnational scale</li><li>4. Decisions and policies of the central government could become dominated by interests of the politically or culturally dominant group</li><li>5. Central government bogged down by competing local problems OR slow response to local issues. (e.g., natural disasters, infrastructure, public services)</li></ol>
<p>The term centripetal force alone is not worthy of a point unless there is an explanation related to one of the positive impacts listed above.</p>	<p>The term centrifugal force alone is not worthy of a point unless there is an explanation related to one of the negative impacts listed above.</p>

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## Question 3 (continued)

### C. Identify and explain ONE reason why some countries are governed as federal states.

2 points (1 identification + 1 explanation)

<b>Identify</b>	<b>Explain</b>
1. Multiple nationalities, ethnicities, or cultures	a. Diverse states (e.g., politically, economically, regionally, culturally) devolve power in order to reduce separatist tendencies or to enhance loyalty to the country.
2. To address devolutionary forces arising from physical, economic, or political differences	b. Federal governments are able to maintain national cohesion by bridging physical or cultural barriers or providing means for resolving conflicts between subnational areas.
3. Larger countries, or territorial control over large or fragmented area	c. Large countries devolve power to subnational units in order to maintain legitimacy with local citizens, or allow subnational units to more effectively provide governmental services or address local issues.  d. As distance increases from a national capital, people tend to feel better served by decision-makers who are closer to home.

(A) A unitary state is a state that is not fragmented into different regions for the purpose of smaller governing power in different ~~fragments~~<sup>regions</sup>. For example, Japan is a unitary state because the country is not divided into provinces or regions. There is one central government in Japan that operates without smaller, federal governments in other areas. Power in unitary states is centralized whereas in a federal state, the power is more evenly distributed across the land.

(B) One positive impact that a unitary state has is that a unitary government acts as a centripetal force for the population. Everyone in the country is treated with the same rights and laws, and nobody will feel like they are treated differently by their government. Unitary states are a centripetal force because they unify the population under one central government. People living on opposite sides of the country share a lot of common ground because they still live under the same commanding power. One negative impact of a unitary ~~nation~~<sup>state</sup> is that different areas of the country might have varying languages, ethnicities, and religions. Everyone must adhere to the same laws even though these laws might not agree with their particular religion.

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or ethnicity. Some states are far too diverse to efficiently operate as a unitary state with one central government.

© Some countries are governed as a federal state because their population is diverse and requires different organization in areas with varying groups of people. This means that areas with one certain ethnicity needs their own local government to govern in ways that correlate to their particular lifestyles. Federal states allow for a diverse population to flourish in their own fragments of the state.

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A. A unitary state is a state with a strong central government. These governments have all the power and do not delegate power to other areas in the country. The country that fits this definition is Japan.

B. One positive impact is having uniformity throughout the country. With the central government in charge of everyone there is a sense of unity in the country. Nationalism can spread and everyone can come together. One negative impact is having unequal representation throughout the country if there are more than one ethnicities or religions. One group of people could feel unrepresented and start to rebel against the government. This can cause problems and weaken the country.

C. One reason why some countries are governed as federal states is for equal representation throughout the country. In multiethnic countries there can be disputes about the people picked to govern the country. In countries like the United

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ADDITIONAL ANSWER PAGE FOR QUESTION 3

States, the country is broken up into 50 states. Each state has some power and representatives in government positions. Each state can have a say in government policies.

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A unitary state is where the government has almost all the power in determining what happens in a country. The idea behind this is that everyone in the country is equal because the government takes most of a person's earnings and evenly distributes it to the areas it is needed. Japan is an example of a unitary state that is shown on the map. One positive impact of a unitary state is that it does a better job of making sure everyone is equal. The government decides where the money needs to go and this is supposed to create a stable society. A negative of a unitary state is that different areas of the country that may believe in different things or have different cultural beliefs have no say in what they want. If the government does not want them to have self-determination on an idea, then they won't. One reason that countries are governed as federal states is because unlike places such as Japan a majority of the population may not fall into the same culture. For example in the U.S. because of immigration, early settlement patterns, religion and other things New Mexico's population may support different ideas than Delaware. In a federal state they have the ability to pass certain laws they feel are needed to please the population. While the federal government may have the final say states have the right to change smaller things such as the age you are allowed to get your driver's license.

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## 2017 SCORING COMMENTARY

### Question 3

#### Overview

In unit IV, Political Organization of Space, “students learn about the nature and significance of the political organization of territory at different scales.” As a response to this question students were expected to know that “forms of governance include unitary (centralized government) and federal states.” (IV B) In addition, they were expected to know that “powers of the subdivisions of states vary according to the form of governance.” The Enduring Understanding to which this Essential Knowledge applies is that “spatial political patterns reflect ideas of territoriality and power at a variety of scales.” In other words every polity must make a decision about how power will be shared, or not shared, between a central (or national) government and a set of provincial (or subnational) governments, all of which are defined territorially.

Skills addressed in this question are (1) thinking comparatively (“compare and contrast forms of governance”), (2) applying the concept of scale (national vs. subnational), (3) thinking critically about positive and negative impacts of forms of governance (I B), and (4) using maps (I B). In the case of the last skill, it is important for students to know that maps have titles, in this case, the name of each country (Germany and Japan). All of these skills are related to a single meta-skill: “use spatial thinking to analyze the human organization of space.” (I C)

#### Sample: 3A

##### Score: 6

This response earned full credit and demonstrates a comprehensive understanding of both unitary and federal states. The response earned 1 definition point in part A for correctly defining a unitary state as one where there is little power given to subnational units. The response earned an additional point in part A for correctly identifying Japan as a unitary state. The response earned 1 point in part B for one positive impact of a unitary system for stating everyone in the country is served by the same rights and laws under the power of one central government. (B1 positive impact) The response earned an additional 1 point in part B for one negative impact of a unitary system for stating that even though different areas of the country may have varying languages, ethnicities, and religions, all must adhere to the same laws regardless of the law’s impact on these diverse religious or ethnic groups. (B1 negative impact) The response earned 1 point in part C for identifying one reason countries are governed as federal states is that there are diverse populations of multiple ethnicities. (C1 identify) The response earned an additional 1 point in part C for explaining federal states devolve power to subnational units to maintain legitimacy and respond to the needs of diverse populations at the local level. (Cc explain)

#### Sample: 3B

##### Score: 5

The response earned full credit in part A, full credit in part B, and partial credit in part C. The response earned 1 definition point in part A for correctly defining a unitary state as one with a strong central government, with little delegation of power to subnational units. The response earned an additional point in part A for correctly identifying Japan as a unitary state. The response earned 1 point in part B for one positive impact of a unitary system by stating the creation of a national identity via uniformity, and a sense of unity in the country causes everyone to come together. (B6 positive impact) The response earned an additional 1 point in part B for one negative impact of a unitary system for stating that unequal representation can lead to a disconnect where unrepresented groups rebel against the government. (B1 negative impact) The response earned 1 point in part C for identifying one reason countries are governed as a federal state is equal representation throughout multiethnic countries. (C1 identify)

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**Question 3 (continued)**

**Sample: 3C**

**Score: 4**

The response earned partial credit in part A, partial credit in part B, and full credit in part C. The response received partial credit in part A for identifying Japan but does not define a central government as a feature of a unitary state. The response earned 1 point in part B for one negative impact of a unitary system for stating that different areas of a country have differing cultural beliefs, which can lead to a disconnect between local areas and the central government. (B1 negative impact) The response earned 1 point in part C for identifying one reason countries are governed as federal states is the majority of the population may not be from the same culture. (C1 identify) The response earned an additional 1 point in part C for explaining federal states devolve power to subnational units, who pass laws based on local needs. (Cc explain)