

# Instructional Strategies

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The AP Comparative Government and Politics course framework outlines the concepts and skills students must master in order to be successful on the AP Exam. In order to address those concepts and skills effectively, it helps to incorporate a variety of instructional approaches into daily lessons and activities. The following table presents strategies that can help students apply their understanding of course concepts.

Strategy	Definition	Purpose	Example
<b><i>Close Reading</i></b>	Students read, reread, and analyze small chunks of text word for word, sentence by sentence, and line by line.	Develops comprehensive understanding of text.	When students are reading secondary sources, such as a BBC article, have them highlight relevant country-specific words and passages that support the author's claim.
<b><i>Create Representations</i></b>	Students create tables, graphs, or other infographics to interpret text or data.	Helps students organize information using multiple ways to present data.	Give students a set of data, such as voting patterns by gender and ethnicity, and have them create a graph that best shows the data and the trends.
<b><i>Critique Reasoning</i></b>	Through collaborative discussion, students critique the arguments of others, questioning the author's perspective, evidence presented, and reasoning behind the argument.	Helps students learn from others as they make connections between concepts and learn to support their arguments with evidence and reasoning that make sense to peers.	Have students critique the argument for learning about Islam using "To the Youth in Europe and North America." Ask them to examine the author's perspective and the evidence and reasoning he uses to support his position.
<b><i>Debate</i></b>	Students present an informal or formal argument that defends a claim with reasons, while others defend different claims about the same topic or issue. The goal is to debate ideas without attacking the people who defend those ideas.	Gives students an opportunity to collect and orally present evidence supporting the arguments for or against a proposition or issue.	Have students debate whether policy making is more efficient in a presidential system or a parliamentary system, using evidence and reasoning to support their claims.

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<b><i>Debriefing</i></b>	Teachers facilitate a discussion that leads to consensus understanding or helps students identify the key conclusions or takeaways.	Helps students solidify and deepen understanding of content.	For complex issues such as civil society, lead students in a debrief to ensure understanding.
<b><i>Discussion Groups</i></b>	Students engage in an interactive small-group discussion, often with assigned roles (e.g., questioner, summarizer, facilitator, evidence keeper) to consider a topic, text, or question.	Helps students gain new understanding of or insight into a text or issue by listening to multiple perspectives.	Assign students to groups to discuss a learning objective, such as <i>Explain the importance of independent judiciaries relative to other political institutions</i> , with a view to helping them gain new understanding by hearing the views of their classmates.
<b><i>Fishbowl</i></b>	Some students form an inner circle and model appropriate discussion techniques while an outer circle of students listens, responds, and evaluates.	Provides students with an opportunity to engage in a formal discussion and to experience roles both as participant and active listener; students also have the responsibility of supporting their opinions and responses using specific textual evidence.	Have students discuss the arguments presented in country-specific secondary sources and how they relate across governments.
<b><i>Graphic Organizer</i></b>	Students use a visual representation for the organization of information.	Builds comprehension and facilitates discussion by representing information in visual form.	Ask students to use a graphic organizer to compare political beliefs, ideologies, principles, and models. Make sure students use the organizer thoughtfully and are not simply "filling in the blanks."
<b><i>Guided Discussion</i></b>	A guided discussion is an umbrella strategy that allows for the use of different techniques as you guide students through the lesson.	Helps students see the big picture and builds their confidence when dealing with difficult content or new skills.	Use brainstorming and quickwrite as strategies during a guided discussion to help students understand how political culture in a course country affects beliefs about social and economic equality.

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<b><i>Jigsaw</i></b>	Each student in a group reads a different text or a different passage from a single text, taking on the role of “expert” on what was read. Students share the information from that reading with students from other groups and then return to their original groups to share their new knowledge.	Helps students summarize and present information to others in a way that facilitates an understanding of a text (or multiple texts) or issue without having each student read the text in its entirety; by teaching others, they become experts.	Use this strategy to facilitate understanding of high-level readings, such as data analysis papers found on <a href="#">V-Dem</a> or Freedom House.
<b><i>Look for a Pattern</i></b>	Students evaluate data or create visual representations to find a trend.	Helps students identify patterns that may be used to draw conclusions.	Using a complex graph (with at least two data sets), such as one showing educational attainment and demographics in the six course countries, have students compare the data to find a trend and draw a conclusion.
<b><i>Making Connections</i></b>	Students are given a concept, term, or document and asked to write what they know about it. Then, students are paired and asked to determine, describe, and explain the connection between the two concepts.	Reinforces the fact that political concepts are often connected and provides the opportunity for students to make and explain connections between and among these concepts.	Write concepts related to one of the course big ideas on cards, place them in a box, and have students pick a card at random. Give students a few minutes to gather and recall information about the term, and then pair students and ask them to find the connection between their concepts. Finally, ask the pairs to write a brief explanation of how the concepts are related.
<b><i>Match Claims and Evidence</i></b>	Students are given sample claims (most of which can be improved on) to evaluate and revise. Then students match their revised claims with pieces of evidence that can be used to support the claims. Once claims and evidence are matched, students write a statement explaining how and why the evidence supports the claim.	Provides opportunities for students to edit existing claims and match those claims with evidence in preparation for writing their own argumentative essays.	In the early stages of practicing argumentation, ask small groups of students to write claims and supporting evidence statements based on a question structured in the same way as free-response question 4. Have groups trade claims and evidence, revise or modify the claims (if necessary), match the claims and evidence, and write statements explaining why the evidence supports the claim.

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<b>Quickwrite</b>	Students write for a short, specific amount of time about a designated topic.	Helps generate ideas in a short time.	As preparation for the free-response question for which students write an argument, have them write claims and explain evidence that supports their claims for various topics, such as the structure of government or political participation.
<b>Self/Peer Revision</b>	Students work alone or with a partner to examine a piece of writing for accuracy and clarity.	Provides students with an opportunity to edit a written text to ensure the correctness of identified components.	Have students perform self- and peer revisions of their practice argument essays so they have the opportunity to review their practice claims, supporting evidence, sourcing, analysis, and reasoning.
<b>Socratic Seminar</b>	This is a focused discussion tied to a topic, essential question, or selected text in which students ask questions of one another. The questions initiate a conversation that continues with a series of responses and additional questions.	Helps students arrive at a new understanding by asking questions that clarify; challenging assumptions; probing perspective and point of view; questioning facts, reasons, and evidence; or examining implications and outcomes.	Use an essential question from the start of a unit, such as <i>How does the perceived legitimacy of a government by its citizenry impact how other countries see it?</i> to initiate a discussion in which students can illustrate their understanding of the learning objectives and essential knowledge statements.
<b>Think-Pair-Share</b>	Students think through a question or issue alone, pair with a partner to share ideas, and then share results with the class.	Enables the development of initial ideas that are then tested with a partner in preparation for revising ideas and sharing them with a larger group.	To practice comparing executive leadership in course countries, ask students to consider structure, function, and change, and have them use think-pair-share to come up with similarities and differences.