

Political Patterns and Processes

AP Human Geography ■ Unit 4

AP Human Geography



What we will cover

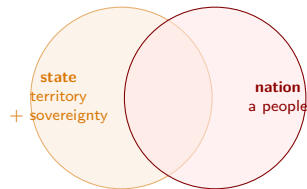
- 1 States & nations
- 2 Power & territoriality
- 3 Boundaries
- 4 Boundary function
- 5 Governance
- 6 Devolution & sovereignty

1

States and nations

States, nations, nation-states

- A **state** 国家 (政治) has territory + sovereignty; a **nation** 民族 is a people.
- A **nation-state** 民族国家 matches one nation to one state.
- A **stateless nation** 无国家民族 has identity but no state.



overlap = **nation-state**

one nation + one state = nation-state

Power and territoriality

- **Sovereignty** 主权: a state governs itself;
self-determination 自决: a people chooses.
- **Territoriality** 领域性: controlling an area to influence it.
- A **choke point** 咽喉要道 controls a vital route; the **EEZ** 专属经济区 extends 200 nm.



States claim sovereignty in a global order

Empire, and the geography of pressure points

colonialism 殖民主义 settling and controlling distant territory directly

imperialism 帝国主义 extending power over other territories, by settlement or by control

neocolonialism 新殖民主义 continued **economic** control after formal independence – through debt, trade terms and corporate ownership

choke points 咽喉要道 narrow passages a great deal of trade must pass: the Suez Canal, the Strait of Malacca, Hormuz

shatterbelts 破碎地带 regions caught between competing powers, so internal conflict is amplified from outside

Colonial boundaries drawn in Europe still explain conflicts today, because they cut through nations and joined rivals. That is the link the FRQ is looking for.

2

Boundaries

Defining boundaries

- **Antecedent** 先成边界 (before settlement),
subsequent 后成边界 (fits culture),
- **superimposed** 强加边界 (forced on), **relict** 残余边界 (no longer functions).
- Stages: defined, delimited, demarcated, administered.



Boundaries are drawn, marked, then enforced

Making a boundary takes three steps

definition 界定

agreeing the **wording** of the treaty – what the line is

delimitation 标定

drawing it on a **map**

demarcation 划界

marking it **on the ground** with fences, posts or walls – most boundaries are never demarcated

then administration 管理

who polices it, and how goods and people cross

at sea

UNCLOS 联合国海洋法公约 sets a 12 nautical-mile **territorial sea** and a 200-mile **exclusive economic zone 专属经济区 (EEZ)**

Most boundary disputes are failures at one named step – vague definition, a badly drawn map, or a line nobody ever marked. Say which.

Worked example – name that boundary

Classify each: (a) the 49th parallel, drawn across near-empty land; (b) Europe's line between Dutch- and French-speakers; (c) Africa's straight lines drawn in Berlin; (d) the old inner-German border, still visible in the landscape.

- (a) **antecedent** – drawn **before** settlement.
- (b) **subsequent** – it **followed** the culture.
- (c) **superimposed** – **forced** on from outside.
- (d) **relict** – gone, but still marked.

The label is about **timing**, not shape: what existed **first** – the line or the people? A straight line is not automatically superimposed.

The function of boundaries

- Boundaries organise voting; **redistricting** 重新划分选区 redraws districts.
- **Gerrymandering** 不公正划分选区 draws them unfairly.
- Disputes: definitional, locational, operational, allocational.

The function of boundaries, in detail

Compact



Elongated



Fragmented



Perforated



Prorupted



AP HuG · U4 · five shapes of states

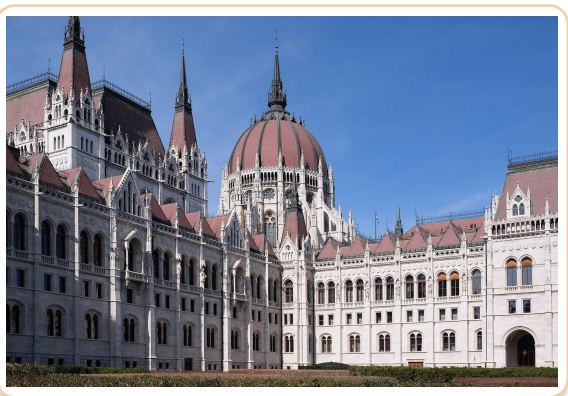
States take different shapes; each shape affects how easily the state can be governed

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Governance and change

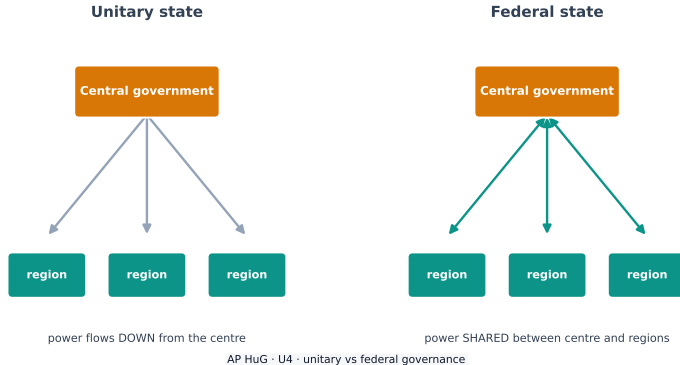
Forms of governance

- A **unitary state** 单一制国家 centralises power.
- A **federal state** 联邦制国家 shares power with strong regions.
- Federalism suits large, diverse countries.



Where power sits shapes the state

A unitary state keeps power central; a



A unitary state keeps power central; a federal state shares power with regional governments

Devolution and sovereignty

- **Devolution** 权力下放: power moves to regions (physical, ethnic, economic factors).
- **Supranational organizations** 超国家组织 (UN, EU) limit sovereignty from above.
- **Centripetal** 向心力 forces unify a state;
centrifugal 离心力 forces divide it.



Borders and regions test state power

What pulls sovereignty apart, from inside and outside

devolution 权力下放

a central government hands powers to a region – Scotland, Catalonia, Quebec

autonomy 自治

strong ethnic, linguistic or economic differences win a region self-rule, or fuel a movement for full independence

supranational organisations 超国家组织

the EU and UN take decisions members must follow – sovereignty given up in exchange for influence

globalisation 全球化

capital, corporations and the internet all cross borders a state cannot close

Devolution pulls power **down** to regions; supranationalism pushes it **up** to a larger body. The state is squeezed from both directions at once.

Three forces on the modern state

Ethnonationalism

Ethnonationalism claims that a nation defined by ethnicity should have its own state – the strongest centrifugal force in the unit.

Failed states

Failed states cannot provide security, services or law across their territory, so power devolves to militias and neighbours.

UNCLOS

The **UN Convention on the Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)** sets the territorial sea, the contiguous zone and the 200 nautical-mile exclusive economic zone – which is what makes small islands strategically valuable.

Supranationalism

Joining the EU or the WTO trades some sovereignty for market access and security – a centripetal force at one scale and a centrifugal one at another.

Sort every force by scale *and* direction: does it pull the state together or apart, and at which level?

Key points

State = territory+sovereignty;
nation = a people

Boundaries: antecedent / subsequent / superimposed / relict

Unitary centralises;
federal shares power

Centrifugal forces + devolution challenge sovereignty

Worked example – the command word is the question

“Define the concept of an independent state.” (real AP question)

“A sovereign country that governs itself and its own territory, is not controlled by any outside power, and is recognised by other states.”

Define wants a **short, precise meaning** – one clear sentence is enough. You do **not** need examples here; save those for “Describe” and “Explain”.

Introduction to Political Geography

Political geography 政治地理学 studies how humans divide and control space.

- A **state 国家** (country) is an area with defined **borders**, a permanent population, a government, and **sovereignty 主权** – full control over its own affairs.
- A **nation 民族** is a group of people with a shared culture and identity; a **nation-state 民族国家** is a state whose borders match one nation (Japan is close).
- A **multinational state 多民族国家** contains several nations; a **stateless nation 无国家民族** (like the Kurds) has no state of its own.

Centrifugal and Centripetal Forces



Cities concentrate political and economic power across territory

Exam tips

- Keep **state** (territory + sovereignty), **nation** (a people), and **nation-state** clearly separate.
- Classify a boundary by history (**antecedent** / **subsequent** / **superimposed** / **relict**) and by stage (defined to administered).
- Name the boundary-dispute type: **definitional**, **locational**, **operational**, or **allocational**.
- Compare **unitary** and **federal** governance, and link the choice to managing diversity.
- Explain instability through **centrifugal** and **centripetal** forces and **devolution**; use neutral examples.

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Recap

Unit 4 – key takeaways

1

Terms

state vs nation vs nation-state

2

Boundary

antecedent/subsequent/superimposed/relict

3

Dispute

definitional, locational,
operational, allocational

4

Stability

centrifugal vs centripetal;
devolution

Check yourself

- 1 What three things define an independent state?
- 2 Nation or state: a people sharing a culture?
- 3 What is devolution?
- 4 Superimposed or antecedent: a boundary drawn ignoring culture?

Answers 1. sovereignty, territory, recognition 2. a nation 3. power moving from central to regional government 4. superimposed