# The Simple AP® Human Geography Unit 4 Cheat Sheet



## 4.1 Introduction to Political Geography

### Core Terms

**State**: territory w/ a permanent population, set borders, a government & sovereignty.
**Nation**: a group of people who share culture, language or history & see themselves as one.
**Sovereignty**: a state's full control over its own territory, free from outside rule.

### State–Nation Combinations

| Type | Meaning | Example |
|---|---|---|
| Nation-state | 1 nation, 1 state | Japan |
| Multinational | Many nations | Russia |
| Multistate | 1 nation, 2+ states | Koreans |
| Stateless | No own state | Kurds |
| Autonomous | Self-rule inside | Nunavut |

**Kurds**: the largest stateless nation, split across Turkey, Iraq, Iran & Syria (~30 million).
**Nation-states are rare**: most states include minority groups w/ their own identities.
**Autonomous region**: area that governs itself inside a state (Nunavut in Canada, Hong Kong).

### Political Map Patterns

**Contested territory**: Taiwan, Kashmir & Western Sahara have disputed sovereignty.
**Microstates**: tiny states like Vatican City & Monaco still have full sovereignty over their land.

⚠ Nation = a PEOPLE; state = a TERRITORY w/ a government. Don't mix them up.

✓ FRQ: name the type, give an example (Kurds) & explain a consequence like separatism.

## 4.2–4.3 Political Processes & Power

### Colonialism & Imperialism

**Colonialism**: a state takes & settles distant land, imposing its government & culture.
**Imperialism**: controlling other lands by force or economic power, w/ or w/o settlers.
**Berlin Conference** (1884–85): Europeans split up Africa, ignoring ethnic groups → conflict.
**Sykes-Picot** (1916): Britain & France drew Middle East borders that split ethnic groups.

### Independence & After

**Decolonization**: after WWII, dozens of new states formed in Africa & Asia (India, 1947).
**Neocolonialism**: former colonizers keep economic power over states w/o ruling them.
**USSR collapse** (1991): broke into 15 independent states; Yugoslavia split violently.
**Self-determination**: the idea that nations should rule themselves; drove independence.

### Power & Territoriality

| Concept | Meaning |
|---|---|
| Territoriality | Control of space |
| Shatterbelt | Contested, unstable zone |
| Choke point | Narrow passage, e.g., Hormuz |
| Geopolitics | Space + power strategy |

**Territoriality**: people & states mark & control space (borders, flags, walls, checkpoints).
**Choke points**: narrow sea passages like the Strait of Hormuz give power over trade.

⚠ Colonial borders often ignored cultures; link them to later conflicts for causation points.

## 4.4 Defining Political Boundaries

### How Boundaries Are Made

**Steps**: defined (in a treaty) → delimited (on a map) → demarcated (marked on land).
**Administered**: the state enforces the border & controls who crosses it (border patrols).
**Consequent** lines follow cultural divides, such as the India–Pakistan border (1947).

### Genetic Boundary Types

| Type | Drawn | Example |
|---|---|---|
| Antecedent | Pre-settlement | US–Canada |
| Subsequent | Post-settlement | Europe |
| Consequent | Follows culture | India–Pak. |
| Superimposed | Imposed | Africa |
| Relic | Unused | Berlin Wall |

### Physical vs. Geometric

**Physical**: follows rivers, mountains or lakes (Rio Grande, Pyrenees); rivers can move.
**Geometric**: straight lines of latitude or longitude, like the US–Canada 49th parallel.
**Superimposed** lines split ethnic groups & joined rivals → later civil wars & refugees.
**Example**: the Berlin Conference split the Maasai people between Kenya & Tanzania.

⚠ A boundary can be 2 types at once: US–Canada is antecedent AND geometric.

✓ Straight lines in Africa → superimposed & geometric, drawn by colonizers.

## 4.5 The Function of Political Boundaries

### Boundary Disputes

| Dispute | Over | Example |
|---|---|---|
| Definitional | Treaty wording | Chile–Argentina |
| Locational | Where line is | Kashmir |
| Operational | Crossing rules | US–Mexico |
| Allocational | Resources | S. China Sea |

**Functions**: borders control trade, migration, security & who uses resources.
**Open vs. closed**: Schengen lets Europeans cross freely; the Korean DMZ is closed.

### Law of the Sea (UNCLOS)

| Zone | From coast | State rights |
|---|---|---|
| Territorial sea | 12 nm | Full sovereignty |
| Contiguous zone | 24 nm | Customs, law |
| EEZ | 200 nm | Fish, oil, gas |
| High seas | Beyond | Open to all |

**EEZ**: a state's right to fish & drill for oil & gas up to 200 nautical miles from its coast.
**Islands matter**: a tiny island can claim a big EEZ → disputes in the South China Sea.

### Other Shared Spaces

**Antarctica**: a 1959 treaty sets it aside for science; the Arctic is contested as ice melts.
**Water disputes**: shared rivers like the Nile cause allocational fights over new dams.

⚠ Allocational = fights over resources (oil, water); locational = where the line sits.

## 4.6 Internal Boundaries & Voting

### Redistricting

**Reapportionment**: House seats are re-divided among the states after each census.
**Redistricting**: redrawing district lines in a state so each has about equal population.
**Census**: the 10-year population count sets both reapportionment & redistricting.

### Gerrymandering

**Gerrymandering**: drawing district lines to help a party or group; districts get odd shapes.

| Tactic | How it works |
|---|---|
| Cracking | Spread voters thin |
| Packing | Cram voters in 1 district |
| Hijacking | Pit 2 incumbents together |
| Kidnapping | Move incumbent's base out |

**Effect**: a party can win more seats than its share of the vote, & fewer races are competitive.
**Majority-minority district**: drawn so a minority group is the majority of voters.
**Shaw v. Reno** (1993): districts drawn mostly by race can be challenged in court.

### Other Internal Boundaries

**Internal lines**: counties, cities & school districts shape services, taxes & identity.

⚠ Reapportionment = seats between states; redistricting = lines within one.

✓ District map? Spot cracking vs. packing & explain the effect on the number of seats won.

## 4.7 Forms of Governance

### Unitary vs. Federal

| | Unitary | Federal |
|---|---|---|
| Power | Central gov't | Shared w/ regions |
| Best for | Uniform culture | Large, diverse |
| Examples | France, Japan | US, India, Brazil |
| Risk | Ignores minorities | Regional rivalry |

**Unitary state**: the national government holds most power; regions follow its policies.
**Federal state**: power is shared between national & regional (state, province) governments.
**Why federal**: gives diverse regions a voice (Canada's Québec, India's states).
**Nigeria**: a federal system that tries to balance its Muslim north & Christian south.

### Shifting Power

**UK devolution**: Scotland, Wales & N. Ireland got their own parliaments in the late 1990s.
**Spain**: a unitary state w/ strong autonomous regions like Catalonia & the Basque Country.

### Scale of Governance

**Scales**: local → regional → national → supranational, each w/ its own decisions.
**Example**: US schools are run locally, funded by states & partly set by federal rules.

⚠ Federal ≠ democratic; unitary ≠ dictatorship. They describe how power is split.

✓ Explain WHY a state chose its form: large & diverse → federal; small & uniform → unitary.

## 4.8–4.9 Devolution & Sovereignty

### Devolutionary Factors

**Devolution**: power moves from the central government to regions or groups.

| Factor | Example |
|---|---|
| Ethnic/cultural | Catalonia, Québec |
| Economic | N. Italy's wealth |
| Physical distance | Corsica, Hawaii |
| Terrorism/violence | Basque ETA |
| Irredentism | Russia–Crimea |

**Irredentism**: claiming land in another state b/c people there share your culture.
**Balkanization**: a state breaks into smaller, often hostile states (former Yugoslavia, 1990s).

### Supranational Organizations

**Supranationalism**: 3+ states give up some sovereignty to work together on shared goals.
**Examples**: UN, EU (shared money & open borders), NATO (defense), AU, ASEAN.
**Brexit** (2020): the UK left the EU, pushing back against shared power over borders & trade.
**Trade-off**: members gain trade & security but give up some control over law & borders.

### Other Challenges

**Internet & social media**: spread ideas across borders & help groups organize.

⚠ Devolution splits power WITHIN a state; supranationalism shares it ABOVE.

## 4.10 Centrifugal & Centripetal Forces

### Forces Defined

**Centripetal**: forces that unite a state, like a shared language, flag, history & good roads.
**Centrifugal**: forces that divide a state, like ethnic conflict or uneven wealth between regions.

| Centripetal | Centrifugal |
|---|---|
| National anthem, flag | Ethnic separatism |
| Shared language | Rival languages |
| Good transport links | Isolated regions |
| Fair economic growth | Uneven development |

### Consequences

**Failed state**: the government can't control land or provide basic services (Somalia, Yemen).
**Ethnic nationalism**: can lead to new states (South Sudan) or genocide (Rwanda, 1994).
**Uneven development**: rich regions may push for more control (Catalonia, Northern Italy).
**Belgium**: Dutch-speaking Flanders & French-speaking Wallonia → federal reforms.
**Stronger unity**: centripetal forces helped post-apartheid South Africa hold together.

### Putting It Together

**Scale**: Catalan identity unites Catalonia but divides the state of Spain; always name the scale.

⚠ Always tie a force to a real state & explain the outcome; a list alone won't score.

✓ FRQ chain: centrifugal force → devolution → autonomy or independence. Show each step.