Unit 4 Cheat Sheet: Political Patterns and Processes

AP® Human Geography · Unit 4 Review · Topics 4.1 to 4.10

> **The big idea:** One question runs through Unit 4: who controls this space, and how? It covers states and nations, boundaries, how governments organize power, and what holds a state together or pulls it apart. It is about 12 to 17 percent of the multiple-choice section, and FRQs ask you to explain effects on sovereignty or unity.
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> **How to use it:** Fill in the blank version from memory first, then check it here. Star anything you missed. Those are your review targets.

KEY TERMS

States, nations, and sovereignty (Topic 4.1)

State	A country: defined territory, permanent population, government, sovereignty.
Nation	A people who share a culture, a history, and a sense of a homeland.
Sovereignty	A state's right to rule itself, recognized by other states.
Nation-state	A state whose borders closely match one nation's homeland (Japan).
Multinational state	One state contains more than one nation (Belgium, Canada).
Multistate nation	One nation is spread across more than one state (Koreans).
Stateless nation	A nation with no state of its own (the Kurds, the Roma).
Autonomous region	Governs itself in some matters but stays part of a state (Navajo Nation).

How the political map was made (Topics 4.2 and 4.3)

Colonialism	Taking control of a territory, often settling it, to use its land and resources.
Self-determination	Nations' right to govern themselves; it drove decolonization after World War II.
Territoriality	People's cultural and economic tie to the land, and their effort to control it.
Neocolonialism	Influence over poorer countries through money, trade, and debt, not direct rule.
Shatterbelt	A divided region caught between rival powers (Cold War Eastern Europe).
Choke point	A narrow strait or canal ships must use; control is power (Strait of Malacca).

What boundaries do and UNCLOS sea zones (Topic 4.5)

Boundary steps	Defined in a treaty, delimited on a map, demarcated on land, then administered.
Territorial sea	0 to 12 nautical miles: full sovereignty; foreign ships may pass peacefully.
Contiguous zone	12 to 24 nautical miles: enforces laws on customs, tax, immigration, pollution.
Exclusive economic zone (EEZ)	12 to 200 nautical miles: coastal state controls fish, oil, gas, minerals.

Voting districts and governance (Topics 4.6 and 4.7)

Redistricting	Redrawing districts after each census so each has about equal population.
Gerrymandering	Redistricting done to give one party or group an advantage.
Packing	Crowding the other side's voters into a few districts, wasting their extra votes.
Cracking	Splitting the other side's voters across many districts so they lose in each.
Unitary state	Power at the center, top down; fits compact, one-culture states (France).
Federal state	Power shared with regions; suits large or diverse states (U.S., India, Nigeria).

Devolution: why states come apart (Topic 4.8)

Devolution	Transfer of power from the central government to regions (Scotland).
Physical geography (devolution factor)	Distance and water weaken control: fragmented Indonesia, elongated Chile.
Ethnic separatism	A nation in a state seeks self-rule or independence (Catalonia, Quebec).
Ethnic cleansing	Forcibly removing or killing an ethnic group to take an area (Yugoslavia).
Terrorism	Violence against civilians to pressure a government; it can weaken control.
Economic and social problems	Poor, neglected, or overtaxed regions push for more self-rule (Catalonia).
Irredentism	A state claims a neighbor's land where its ethnic group lives (Russia, Crimea).

Sovereignty and unity (Topics 4.9 and 4.10)

Supranationalism	States give up some control to a group for trade or security (UN, NATO, EU).
Centripetal force	Unites a state ("p" for peace): shared religion (Poland), symbols, roads.
Centrifugal force	Divides a state ("f" for fights): language divides (Belgium), wealth gaps (Italy).
Failed state	Its government can no longer control its territory or provide basic services.
Ethnonationalism	Intense ethnic pride that can exclude others; a centripetal outcome.

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SIX WAYS A BOUNDARY GETS DRAWN (TOPIC 4.4): ONE LINE CAN FIT MORE THAN ONE TYPE

BOUNDARY TYPE	WHAT IT IS	EXAMPLE
Antecedent	Drawn before many people lived there	Malaysia and Indonesia on Borneo
Subsequent	After settlement; shifts with the cultural landscape	China and Vietnam, adjusted over centuries
Consequent	A subsequent line drawn to separate cultural groups	India and Pakistan (1947), split by religious majority
Superimposed	Forced on by outside powers, ignoring local cultures	African borders after the Berlin Conference
Geometric	Straight lines, like latitude or longitude, not the land	Much of the U.S. and Canada border (49th parallel)
Relic	No longer works but still marks the landscape	The Berlin Wall's path, still marked in Berlin's streets

DON'T CONFUSE THESE

State vs. nation	A state is a country; a nation is a people. The Kurds are a nation, not a state.
Multinational state vs. multistate nation	One state holding many nations (Belgium) vs. one nation spread over many states (Koreans).
Antecedent vs. subsequent vs. superimposed	Drawn before settlement, drawn after settlement, or forced on by outsiders.
Territorial sea vs. EEZ	A state fully controls its first 12 nautical miles. In the EEZ (out to 200), only it has the right to fish, drill, or mine, but other countries' ships may pass. Beyond 200: high seas, open to all.
Redistricting vs. gerrymandering	Every U.S. state redistricts after the census; it is gerrymandering when lines are drawn to help one side. Packing crowds the other side's voters together; cracking spreads them thin.
Devolution vs. supranationalism	Both weaken national governments: power moves down to regions vs. up to groups of states.

EXAMPLES TO KNOW COLD

The Kurds	A stateless nation, mainly in Turkey, Iraq, Iran, and Syria: a people and a homeland, but no sovereign state. The Kurdistan Region of Iraq is autonomous.
Belgium	A multinational state: Dutch-speaking Flanders in the north, French-speaking Wallonia in the south. The language divide is a centrifugal force.
Berlin Conference (1884 to 1885)	European powers set rules for claiming Africa, with no African leaders present. The superimposed borders drawn afterward split the Maasai between Kenya and Tanzania.
Scotland and Catalonia	Devolution: Scotland has its own parliament. Catalonia adds an economic complaint to ethnic separatism: it sends more money to the capital than it gets back.
The EU and Brexit	Supranationalism: members share a single market and laws but give up some sovereignty. Sovereignty concerns were one reason the United Kingdom voted to leave; it left in 2020.

FRQ: HOW UNIT 4 SHOWS UP

PROMPT SAYS	WHAT TO DO
Identify	Name it. No explanation needed.
Define	Give the meaning of the term.
Describe	Give its key features or details.
Explain	Say how or why, and connect the cause to the result ("because," "which leads to").
Compare	Give a similarity or a difference between two things.
Explain the degree to which	Pick low, moderate, or high, then explain why.

Likely Unit 4 FRQ angles

- Define devolution, and give one real example.
- Describe one characteristic of an autonomous region or stateless nation.
- Describe one reason a country claims an EEZ.
- Explain how cultural differences act as a centrifugal force that drives devolution.
- Explain how joining a supranational group can limit a state's sovereignty.
- Explain the degree to which a factor, like resource control, pushes a region toward independence.

> **FRQ rules:** Term, example, effect: name the concept, give a real place as evidence, then explain the effect on sovereignty or unity. Write in complete sentences; if a part asks for one example, only your first is scored.

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