AP Human Geography
Unit 4: Political Patterns and Processes
UNIT PLAN

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UNIT SYNOPSIS

This unit addresses the political organization of the world. Building on knowledge of populations and cultural patterns learned in previous units, students examine the contemporary political map and the impact of territoriality on political power and on issues of identity for peoples. Students also look at the different types of political boundaries, how they function, and their scale, as they consider both internal and international boundaries. The interplay of political and cultural influences may cause tensions over boundaries to arise, such as sovereign states making claims on what other states consider to be international waters.

Students also examine forms of government and how forces such as devolution may alter the functioning of political units and cause changes to established political boundaries. Separatist and independence movements that challenge the sovereignty of political states may arise from economic and nationalistic forces, as seen in Scotland, Northern Ireland, and Spain. The influence of supranational organizations such as the United Nations or European Union and their role in global affairs presents another challenge to nationalist sovereignty. Student understanding of cultural patterns and processes helps inform their understanding of the consequences of centrifugal and centripetal forces.

Essential Questions

How do historical and current events influence political structures around the world?	How are balances of power reflected in political boundaries and government power structures?	How can political, economic, cultural, or technological changes challenge state sovereignty?

ENDURING UNDERSTANDINGS AND CONTENT STANDARDS

Below are the standards **taught** and **assessed** in this unit.

Topic, Enduring Understanding, Learning Objectives (*Students will be able to…*)
4.1 Introduction to Political Geography
• **PSO-4:** The political organization of space results from historical and current processes, events, and ideas.
o **PSO-4.A:** *For world political maps: a. define the different types of political entities; b. identify a contemporary example of political entities.*
4.2 Political Processes
• **PSO-4:** The political organization of space results from historical and current processes, events, and ideas.
o **PSO-4.B:** *Explain the processes that have shaped contemporary political geography.*
4.3 Political Power and Territoriality
• **PSO-4:** The political organization of space results from historical and current processes, events, and ideas.
o **PSO-4.C:** *Describe the concepts of political power and territoriality as used by geographers.*
4.4 Defining Political Boundaries
• **IMP-4:** Political boundaries and divisions of governance, between states and within them, reflect balances of power that have been negotiated or imposed.
o **IMP-4.A:** *Define types of political boundaries used by geographers.*
4.5 The Function of Political Boundaries
• **IMP-4:** Political boundaries and divisions of governance, between states and within them, reflect balances of power that have been negotiated or imposed.
o **IMP-4.B:** *Explain the nature and function of international and internal boundaries.*
4.6 Internal Boundaries
• **IMP-4:** Political boundaries and divisions of governance, between states and within them, reflect balances of power that have been negotiated or imposed.
o **IMP-4.B:** *Explain the nature and function of international and internal boundaries.*
4.7 Forms of Governance
• **IMP-4:** Political boundaries and divisions of governance, between states and within them, reflect balances of power that have been negotiated or imposed.
o **IMP-4.C:** *Define federal and unitary states.*
o **IMP-4.D:** *Explain how federal and unitary states affect spatial organization.*
4.8 Defining Devolutionary Factors
• **SPS-4:** Political, economic, cultural, or technological changes can challenge state sovereignty.
o **SPS-4.A:** *Define factors that lead to the devolution of states.*
4.9 Challenges to Sovereignty
• **SPS-4:** Political, economic, cultural, or technological changes can challenge state sovereignty.
o **SPS-4.B:** *Explain how political, economic, cultural, and technological changes challenge state sovereignty.*
4.10 Consequences of Centrifugal and Centripetal Forces
• **SPS-4:** Political, economic, cultural, or technological changes can challenge state sovereignty.
o **SPS-4.C:** *Explain how the concepts of centrifugal and centripetal forces apply at the state scale.*

STANDARDS CLARIFICATION

Standards Guidance for Instructional Managers

		STANDARDS CLARIFICATION		
Cycle	**Essential Questions**	**Priority Standards**	**What do students need to know?**	**How will students practice this content?**
Political Geography	How do borders influence politics? How does physical and human geography influence global politics?	The political organization of space results from historical and current processes, events, and ideas (**PSO-4**). Political boundaries and divisions of governance, between states and within them, reflect balances of power that have been negotiated or imposed (**IMP-4**).	Independent states are the primary building blocks of the world political map (**PSO-4.A.1**). Types of political entities include nations, nation-states, stateless nations, multinational states, multistate nations, and autonomous and semiautonomous regions, such as American Indian reservations (**PSO-4.A.2**). Colonialism, imperialism, independence movements, and devolution along national lines have influenced contemporary political boundaries (**PSO-4.B.2**).	**Students will practice by:** • Reading and analyzing case studies. • Analyzing maps, map scale, and spatial patterns. • Analyzing qualitative data.
Political Processes	How does gerrymandering influence politics? How does devolution influence nations?	Define factors that lead to the devolution of states (**SPS-4.A**). Explain how political, cultural and technological changes challenge state sovereignty (**SPS-4.B**).	Unitary states tend to have a more top-down, centralized form of governance, while federal states have more locally based, dispersed power centers (**IMP- 4.D.1**). Devolution occurs when states fragment into autonomous regions: subnational political-territorial units, such as those within Spain, Belgium, Canada, and Nigeria; or when states disintegrate, as happened in the Sudan and the former Soviet Union (**SPS-4.B.1**). Advances in communication technology have facilitated devolution, supranationalism and democratization (**SPS-4.B.2**). Global efforts to address transnational and environmental challenges and to create economies of scale, trade agreements, and military alliances help to further supranationalism (**SPS-4.B.3**).	**Students will practice by:** • Reading and analyzing case studies. • Analyzing maps, map scale, and spatial patterns. • Analyzing qualitative data.