

A.P. Comp. Gov. Thinkpiece Number One Seeing the World (100 pts.)

The basic tools of Comparative Government and Politics include historical case studies, geography, statistics, demographics, systems theory, and economic theory, among others. We also use the system of scientific analysis to create theories and generate support that can be supported through **falsification**. We've started looking at states in a number of ways: you were asked to work with others to come up with useful groupings or listings of states that help you see them in different ways and ask questions or highlight similarities and distinctions. Your first writing assignment calls on you to find a way to make sense of the world (or a portion of it) by coming up with groupings or rankings that help clarify similarities and differences among states, or that attempt to build a theory for linking or comparing various states. Follow the guidelines below in writing your paper.

- First, think of different ways that countries may be grouped ordered or ranked. Think about what assumptions you are making when you group states this way: what theory or hypothesis are you proposing about these states? You can come up with original ways of grouping countries, based on your ideas about how states could best be grouped to illustrate similarities and differences. Or, you could use rankings and groupings that have already been done – but you're going to have to justify the relevance and appropriateness of any such groupings.
- Second, think about the reasoning behind the groupings. You'll need to justify the way you've ordered the world: What makes it relevant? Why is it compelling?
- Finally, make sure that you understand any distortions or relevant shortcomings in the way you've ordered the world.

Follow these guidelines:

- Your world view should include at least 10 states (but you don't need to include all states – just a sampling in each group -- top/bottom 2 or 3 in each category; highest, middle, lowest 4 or 5 in a ranking, etc)
- One page that illustrates your ordering of the world
- One page, single-spaced (leave me 1 inch margins all around) for discussion and analysis
- Carefully edit for clarity, coherence, grammar
- your writing should be focused on relevant and compelling ideas (what is important not tangential);
- Waste no space on flowery or formulaic introductions;
- Ditto for conclusions;
- When in doubt, remember this: ENGAGE ME IMMEDIATELY with your thoughts;
- SNOT (show-not-tell): I want to know your thoughts and ideas not your process (e.g. "well, first I thought 'democracy is really cool,' but then I read this book by Kneecheeze and I thought to myself, 'Wow!'")