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CLASS X · SOCIAL SCIENCE (087) · POLITICAL SCIENCE · CBSE BOARD EXAMINATION 2027

POLITICAL SCIENCE · CHAPTER 2

Federalism

Union
State
Local

Chapter Practice Booklet · Questions only

10 note blocks + three-lists table | 5 case studies | PYQs 2025–2026 | 62 practice questions | Model Answer Booklet

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STUDENT DETAILS

NAME _____

CLASS & SECTION _____

ROLL NO. _____

BOOKLET STARTED ON _____

CHAPTER TEST SCORE _____ / 20

1

READ THIS FIRST

Chapter Notes

The whole chapter in short-note form: what federalism is, how India is federal, how it works in practice, and decentralisation. Revise from here – you should not need the textbook again.

1 What is federalism?

- **Federalism** is a system of government in which power is **divided between a central authority and its constituent units**.
- Usually two levels: one for the **whole country** (subjects of common national interest) and one for **provinces or states** (day-to-day administration of their area). Both enjoy powers **independent** of each other.
- **Unitary system:** only one level, or sub-units **subordinate** to the centre, which can order them. In a federation the centre **cannot order** a state government; the state has its own powers and answers to its own people.
- **Belgium** moved from unitary to federal in **1993**; **Sri Lanka** remains, for all practical purposes, **unitary**.

2 Key features of federalism

1. Two or more **levels (tiers)** of government.
2. Different tiers govern the **same citizens**, but each has its own **jurisdiction** in legislation, taxation and administration.
3. The jurisdictions are specified in the **constitution**, so each tier's existence and authority are **constitutionally guaranteed**.
4. Fundamental provisions **cannot be changed by one level alone** – they need the consent of both.
5. **Courts** interpret the constitution and the powers of each level; the highest court is the **umpire** in disputes.
6. Sources of **revenue** for each level are clearly specified, ensuring **financial autonomy**.
7. Dual objective: **safeguard the unity** of the country and **accommodate regional diversity**.

Federalism needs **mutual trust** and an **agreement to live together** between the levels.

3 Coming together and holding together federations

	Coming together	Holding together
How formed	independent states **come together** on their own, pooling sovereignty to form a bigger unit	a large country **divides** its power between the national government and constituent states
Powers	units usually have **equal power** and are strong	centre tends to be **more powerful**; units may have **unequal powers**, some get special powers
Examples	**USA, Switzerland, Australia**	**India, Spain, Belgium**

4 What makes India a federal country

- The Constitution declares India a **Union of States**; it does not use the word 'federation', but the Union is based on federal principles.
- It originally had a **two-tier** system – the **Union** government and the **State** governments; a **third tier** of **Panchayats and Municipalities** was added later.
- There is a **three-fold distribution of legislative powers** (see the table below).
- **Residuary subjects** – those not in any list, such as **computer software** – are under the **Union**.

5 Unequal units, and how the arrangement is protected

- Not all states have identical powers. Some states such as **Assam, Nagaland, Arunachal Pradesh and Mizoram** enjoy **special provisions** (Article 371) because of their social and historical circumstances – mainly to protect the **land rights** of indigenous peoples, their **culture** and preference in government jobs.
- **Union Territories** – areas too small to be states and not merged with any state, e.g. **Chandigarh, Lakshadweep**, and Delhi as the capital. They do not have a state's powers; the **Central Government** has special powers in running them.

- The power-sharing arrangement **cannot be changed by Parliament alone**: a change must be passed by **both Houses with at least a two-thirds majority** and then ratified by the legislatures of **at least half of all States**.
- The **judiciary** (High Courts and Supreme Court) settles disputes about division of powers.
- Both Union and State governments can **raise money by levying taxes**.

6 How federalism is practised 1: linguistic states

- The real success of federalism comes from the **nature of democratic politics** in India.
- Creating **linguistic states** was the **first major test**. From 1947, boundaries of many old states were redrawn so that people speaking the **same language** lived in the same state.
- Some states were created on the basis of **culture, ethnicity or geography** – **Nagaland, Uttarakhand, Jharkhand**.
- Some leaders feared this would break the country, and the Centre resisted for a while; but experience showed it made the country **more united** and **administration easier**.

7 How federalism is practised 2: language policy

- The Constitution gave **no single language the status of national language**. **Hindi** is the **official language**, but it is the mother tongue of only about **40%** of Indians, so other languages are protected.
- Besides Hindi, **21 other** languages are **Scheduled Languages** (22 in all). Candidates for Central Government exams can write in any of them; states have their own official languages.
- English was to stop being used officially in **1965**; non-Hindi states, especially **Tamil Nadu** (where the movement turned violent), demanded it continue. The Centre agreed to use **English along with Hindi**.
- Promoting Hindi is official policy, but it is **not imposed** on states. This **flexibility** helped India avoid a **Sri Lanka-like** situation.

8 How federalism is practised 3: Centre–State relations

- How the arrangement works depends on how **ruling parties and leaders** follow it.
- For long, the **same party** ruled at the Centre and in most states, so states did not act as autonomous units. Where a **rival party** ruled a state, the Centre often **misused the Constitution to dismiss** the state government – against the spirit of federalism.
- **After 1990:** the rise of **regional parties** and the era of **coalition governments** at the Centre (national parties had to ally with regional parties) created a new culture of **power sharing and respect for state autonomy**.
- A **Supreme Court judgment** made it difficult for the Centre to dismiss state governments arbitrarily.
- So federal power sharing is **more effective today** than in the early years.

9 Decentralisation and the 1992 amendment

- **Decentralisation:** taking power from the Central and State governments and giving it to **local government**.
- **Why:** many problems are best settled **locally**; people know local problems and where to spend money; they can **participate directly**, which builds the habit of democratic participation; it realises **local self-government**.
- **Before 1992:** panchayats and municipalities existed but were **under state control**, elections were **irregular**, and they had **no powers or resources** of their own.

> **1992 amendment – the real step:** (1) **regular elections** to local bodies are compulsory; (2) **seats reserved** for SCs, STs and OBCs; (3) at least **one-third** of all positions reserved for **women**; (4) a **State Election Commission** in each state conducts panchayat and municipal elections; (5) state governments must **share some powers and revenue** with local bodies.

10 Panchayati Raj and urban local bodies

Body	Who / how
Gram panchayat	a village (or group of villages) council of ward members (**panch**) and a president (**sarpanch**), directly elected by all adults; the decision-making body of the village
Gram sabha	all **voters** of the village; meets at least **twice or thrice a year** to approve the

	panchayat's **budget** and review its work
Panchayat samiti (block / mandal)	a group of gram panchayats; members elected by all panchayat members of the area
Zilla parishad	all samitis of a district; most members elected, plus local **MPs and MLAs**; the **chairperson** is its political head
Municipality / municipal corporation	for towns / big cities; elected bodies; political head – **municipal chairperson / mayor**

- **Achievement:** the **largest experiment in democracy** in the world – lakhs of elected local representatives; it deepened democracy and raised **women's representation**.
- **Problems:** gram sabhas are **not held regularly**; most states have **not transferred significant powers or resources**; so the ideal of self-government is still far.
- **Porto Alegre (Brazil)** – an example of decentralisation with participation: residents meet in neighbourhood councils, like gram sabhas, and help **decide the city's budget**; thousands take part every year (board source, 2025).

The three lists

Classify-the-subject MCQs come from here

List	Who makes laws	Subjects (examples)
Union List	Union government only	defence, foreign affairs, banking, communications, currency – national importance, uniform policy
State List	State governments only	police, trade, commerce, agriculture, irrigation – state and local importance
Concurrent List	Both; Union law prevails if they conflict	education, forests, trade unions, marriage, adoption, succession
Residuary	Union government	subjects in no list, e.g. computer software

Key terms

1- and 2-mark answers

Federalism – power divided between a central authority and constituent units

Unitary system – one level of government, or sub-units subordinate to the centre

Jurisdiction – the area or subjects over which a government has legal authority

Coming together federation – independent states join to form a bigger unit – USA

Holding together federation – a large country divides power with its states – India

Union List – subjects of national importance; only the Union makes laws

Concurrent List – subjects of common interest; both make laws

Residuary subjects – subjects in no list; Union makes laws

Union Territory – area run by the Centre, e.g. Chandigarh, Lakshadweep

Scheduled Languages – 22 languages listed in the Constitution

Coalition government – government formed by an alliance of parties

Decentralisation – transfer of power from Centre and states to local government

Gram sabha – all voters of a village; approves the panchayat budget

State Election Commission – independent body that conducts local elections

Mayor – political head of a municipal corporation

Exam snapshot

What the board asks, and how to prepare

SYLLABUS 2026–27

- What is federalism; key features; coming together and holding together federations
- What makes India a federal country; three lists
- How federalism is practised: linguistic states, language policy, Centre–State relations
- Decentralisation in India; 1992 amendment; local government

BOARD WEIGHTAGE

20 / 80

Political Science is Section C (Q20–Q28). In both papers read in full for this section, the chapter gave **2–5 marks**: 2026 (32/1/1) – an **MCQ on the 1992 amendment** (Q23) and **two features of federalism** (Q24, 2 marks); 2025 (32/1/1) – a **matching MCQ** on federal and unitary countries and a **4-mark source** on decentralisation (Porto Alegre, Q35). Expect **3–5 marks**.

MOST ASKED IN BOARD PAPERS, 2025–2026 (2 PAPERS READ IN FULL)

How often	Topic / question type	Marks	Papers
★★★	Decentralisation; 1992 amendment; local government	1–4	2 of 2
★★★	Features of federalism; federal vs unitary	1–2	2 of 2
★★☆	Three lists; residuary subjects	1–3	NCERT core
★★☆	Coming together vs holding together	1–3	NCERT core
★★☆	Linguistic states, language policy, Centre–State relations	3–5	NCERT core

ANSWER-WRITING RULES FOR SOCIAL SCIENCE (CBSE 2026–27)

2 marks
Very short answer · up to 40 words · 2 clear points

3 marks
Short answer · up to 60 words · 3 points

4 marks
Case / source based · up to 100 words in all · answer from the source

5 marks
Long answer · up to 120 words · 5 points, with an intro line

Write in points, underline key words, and give one example or date wherever you can. Read every "OR" choice before you start, and attempt only one.

MISTAKES THAT COST MARKS

- Putting education in the State List – it is in the **Concurrent List**; police and agriculture are in the **State List**.
- Saying India is a coming-together federation – India is **holding together**; USA, Switzerland, Australia are **coming together**.
- Writing 'one-third seats for women in Parliament' for the 1992 amendment – it is in **local bodies**.
- Saying Hindi is the national language – India has **no national language**; Hindi is an **official language**.
- Mixing up gram sabha and gram panchayat: **gram sabha** = all voters; **gram panchayat** = elected council.
- Writing that Parliament alone can change the division of powers – it needs **two-thirds of both Houses + half the states**.

HOW TO USE THIS BOOKLET

1. **Day 1:** Read the Chapter Notes twice; learn the key terms.
2. **Next day:** Parts A and B. **Then:** Parts C and D – MUST DO questions first.
3. Check every answer against the **Model Answer Booklet**: same points, same keywords, within the word limit.
4. Write every mistake on the My Mistakes page and redo it after 3 days.

A

PART A · NCERT PRACTICE

Textbook Check

Every section of the chapter and every NCERT exercise idea, asked in new words. Model answers for all of these are in the Model Answer Booklet.

Federalism and its features

A1. What is federalism? How is it different from a unitary system? MUST DO [3]

A2. State any two features of federalism. MUST DO [2]

A3. Explain the role of courts and revenue in a federation. [2]

A4. What are the dual objectives of a federal system? [2]

A5. Distinguish between coming together and holding together federations. MUST DO [3]

India as a federation

A6. Describe the three-fold distribution of legislative powers in India. MUST DO [3]

A7. What are residuary subjects? Who makes laws on them? [2]

A8. "All states in the Indian Union do not have equal powers." Explain. [3]

A9. How is the federal arrangement protected in the Indian Constitution? MUST DO [3]

Federalism in practice

A10. How has the creation of linguistic states strengthened Indian federalism? MUST DO [3]

A11. Describe India's language policy. MUST DO [3]

A12. How did Centre–State relations change after 1990? MUST DO [3]

Decentralisation

A13. What is decentralisation? Why is it useful? MUST DO [3]

A14. State the main provisions of the 1992 constitutional amendment on local government. MUST DO [3]

A15. Distinguish between gram sabha and gram panchayat. MUST DO [2]

A16. Describe the structure of Panchayati Raj above the village level. [3]

A17. Name the urban local bodies and their political heads. [2]

A18. State three difficulties faced by local governments in India. [3]

B

PART B · SECTION C STYLE

Objective Practice

All the MCQ types used in the board paper: lists, matching countries, statements on the 1992 amendment and assertion–reason.

ASSERTION–REASON: HOW TO ANSWER

(a) Both A and R are true, and R is the correct explanation of A.
(b) Both A and R are true, but R is not the correct explanation of A.
(c) A is true, but R is false.
(d) A is false, but R is true.

Multiple choice

1 mark each

B1. Match the countries with the type of federation: [1]
(a) USA (b) India (c) Switzerland (d) Belgium
(i) coming together (ii) holding together

(a) a-i, b-ii, c-i, d-ii
(b) a-ii, b-i, c-i, d-ii
(c) a-i, b-ii, c-ii, d-i
(d) a-i, b-i, c-ii, d-ii

B2. Which of these is in the Concurrent List? [1]

(a) Defence **(b)** Education **(c)** Police **(d)** Banking

B3. Computer software is a: [1]

(a) Union List subject
(b) State List subject
(c) residuary subject
(d) Concurrent List subject

B4. Which country remains, for practical purposes, a unitary system? [1]

(a) Belgium **(b)** India **(c)** Switzerland **(d)** Sri Lanka

B5. Read the statements about the 1992 amendment: [1]
I. At least one-third of positions in local bodies are reserved for women.
II. Elections to local bodies are conducted by the Election Commission of India.
Choose the correct option.

(a) Only I is correct
(b) Only II is correct
(c) Both I and II are correct
(d) Neither I nor II is correct

B6. A change in the division of powers needs approval of two-thirds of both Houses and of the legislatures of at least: [1]

(a) one-third of the states
(b) half of all states
(c) two-thirds of the states
(d) all states

B7. Who makes laws on subjects in the State List? [1]

(a) Union government
(b) Both
(c) State governments
(d) Supreme Court

B8. How many languages are Scheduled Languages in the Constitution? [1]

(a) 14 **(b)** 18 **(c)** 21 **(d)** 22

B9. Which body approves the annual budget of the gram panchayat? [1]

(a) Gram sabha (b) Panchayat samiti
(c) Zilla parishad (d) State Election Commission

B10. The political head of a municipal corporation is the: [1]

(a) sarpanch (b) mayor (c) collector (d) chairperson

B11. Which state was NOT created mainly on the basis of language? [1]

(a) Andhra Pradesh (b) Tamil Nadu (c) Jharkhand (d) Kerala

B12. Which of these is a Union Territory? [1]

(a) Mizoram (b) Goa (c) Sikkim (d) Lakshadweep

B13. In a federation, disputes between levels of government are settled by: [1]

(a) the courts (b) the President
(c) the Prime Minister (d) the state assemblies

B14. Which change after 1990 strengthened federalism in India? [1]

(a) One-party rule at the Centre
(b) Rise of regional parties and coalition governments
(c) Abolition of the State List
(d) Imposition of Hindi

B15. *Picture described:* villagers sit under a tree with the sarpanch, raising hands to approve a list of works and costs for the year. This meeting is the: [1]

(a) zilla parishad (b) panchayat samiti
(c) gram sabha (d) municipal council

B16. Which is a coming together federation? [1]

(a) India (b) Spain (c) Belgium (d) Australia

Assertion–Reason

1 mark each

B17. ASSERTION–REASON [1]

Assertion (A): The Centre cannot order a state government in a federal system.
Reason (R): Each tier has its own jurisdiction guaranteed by the constitution.

B18. ASSERTION–REASON [1]

Assertion (A): The creation of linguistic states made India more united.
Reason (R): Some states were created on the basis of culture and geography.

B19. ASSERTION–REASON [1]

Assertion (A): Local governments in India now have enough powers and money.
Reason (R): The 1992 amendment made regular local elections compulsory.

B20. ASSERTION–REASON [1]

Assertion (A): Hindi was imposed on all states as the national language.
Reason (R): Hindi is the mother tongue of about 40% of Indians.

C

PART C · BOARD PATTERN

Board Pattern Practice

Written-answer questions grouped by topic. ★★★ = asked in both papers read · ★★ = NCERT core · ★ = supporting topic.

Features of federalism

★★★ both papers · 1–2 marks

C1. Explain any five key features of federalism. MUST DO [5]

C2. "India is a holding together federation." Justify. MUST DO [3]

Federalism in practice

★★☆ NCERT core · 3–5 marks

C3. How has federalism been made a success in India? Explain with five points. MUST DO [5]

C4. Compare India's language policy with Sri Lanka's. [3]

C5. How is power divided between the Union and the states in India? MUST DO [3]

Decentralisation and local government

★★★ both papers · 1–4 marks

C6. "The 1992 amendment was a major step towards decentralisation." Explain. MUST DO [5]

C7. Why is decentralisation useful in a large country like India? MUST DO [3]

C8. Assess the working of local government in India. [3]

C9. What lessons does Porto Alegre in Brazil offer to India's local government? [2]

D

PART D · CASE-BASED STYLE

Case-Based Questions

Each case carries 4 marks (1 + 1 + 2), as in Q28 of the board paper.

D1. Case-Based · The Budget under the Banyan Tree [4]

Every spring, the voters of Rampura gather under the banyan tree. The sarpanch reads out how last year's money was spent and proposes new works – a hand-pump, a school wall. After debate, the villagers raise hands to approve the plan. One-third of the panch seats are held by women.

(i) Name the body of all voters that meets here. [1]

(ii) What is the main function of this body? [1]

(iii) Name two provisions of the 1992 amendment seen or implied here. [2]

D2. Case-Based · A City That Plans Together [4]

In a large city in Brazil, residents of each neighbourhood meet in open councils. They list their needs, choose priorities, and send delegates to a city-wide body that shapes the municipal budget. Thousands take part each year.

(i) Name the idea of governance shown here. [1]

(ii) Which body in Indian villages is similar to these councils? [1]

(iii) Give two benefits of such participation. [2]

D3. Case-Based · Who Makes the Law? [4]

A state assembly passes a law on irrigation. Parliament passes a law on banking. Both pass laws on forests, and when they clash, the Union law is applied. A new subject, mobile apps, is not in any list, so Parliament makes the law.

(i) Which list has irrigation? [1]

(ii) What is the forest subject an example of? [1]

(iii) What are subjects like mobile apps called, and who makes laws on them? Why? [2]

D4. Case-Based · The Language Debate [4]

In 1965, students in a southern state burned effigies and marched against making one language the only official language of the Union. The government in Delhi decided to continue using English alongside it.

(i) Name the state where the protest turned violent. [1]

(ii) Which two languages were to be used for official purposes? [1]

(iii) How did this decision strengthen federalism? Two points. [2]

D5. Case-Based · Two Countries, Two Roads [4]

Country P was formed when thirteen independent colonies agreed to unite but kept strong powers. Country Q was one large country that chose to divide powers with its states after independence, keeping a strong centre.

(i) What type of federation is P? [1]

(ii) What type of federation is Q? [1]

(iii) State two differences between them. [2]

E

PART E · REAL BOARD QUESTIONS

Board PYQ Index

Real questions from recent Social Science board papers, by topic. Open the official paper and attempt the listed questions.

Frequency	Topic	Marks	Where asked (year: paper code, question number)	Practise here
★★★	**Decentralisation; 1992 amendment; local government**	1–4	**2026:** 32/1/1 Q23 (MCQ – local bodies, women's seats, SEC) · **2025:** 32/1/1 Q35 (source – Porto Alegre; local government in India)	A13–A18, B5, B9–B10, B15, B19, C6–C9, D1–D2
★★★	**Features of federalism; federal vs unitary**	1–2	**2026:** 32/1/1 Q24 (two features) · **2025:** 32/1/1 Q13 (match country with type of government)	A1–A5, B1, B4, B13, B16–B17, C1–C2, D5
★★☆	**Three lists; residuary subjects; unequal units**	1–3	Not asked in the papers read – NCERT core.	A6–A9, B2–B3, B6–B7, B12, C5, D3
★★☆	**Linguistic states, language policy, Centre–State relations**	3–5	Not asked in the papers read – NCERT core.	A10–A12, B8, B11, B14, B18, B20, C3–C4, D4

Papers read in full for Political Science (2): 2026 – 32/1/1 · 2025 – 32/1/1. (In the 2026 32/5/1 copy we used, only Q1–Q18 were verified, so its Political Science questions are not listed.) Download official papers from cbse.gov.in → Previous Year Question Papers.

PART F · YOUR RECORD

F My Mistakes

Write down each mistake from this chapter, including the Sunday Chapter Test.

Every wrong answer is a free lesson. Write it here, find the point you missed, and redo the question after three days.

Date	Part & Q No.	What went wrong	Correct point or fact	Redone ✓