



*Rewarding Learning*

**ADVANCED**  
**General Certificate of Education**  
**2012**

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## **Government and Politics**

Assessment Unit A2 1

Comparative Government

**[AQ211]**

**WEDNESDAY 16 MAY, MORNING**

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### **TIME**

2 hours 15 minutes, plus your additional time allowance.

### **INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES**

Write your Centre Number and Candidate Number on the Answer Booklet provided.

Choose **either Option A**: The United Kingdom and the United States of America **or Option B**: The United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland.

From your chosen option, study the source provided and answer questions **1 to 4** and either **5(a)** or **5(b)**.

## INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

The total mark for this paper is 100.

Quality of written communication will be assessed in questions **1, 3, 4** and **5**.

Figures in brackets printed at the end of each question indicate the marks awarded to each question or part question.

## ADVICE TO CANDIDATES

You are advised to take account of the marks for each question in allocating the available examination time. For your chosen option, you should spend approximately **40 minutes** in answering question **1** in Section A.

You are advised to study the source before attempting to answer this question and to refer to the source in your answer.

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**(Questions start overleaf)**

## Option A: The United Kingdom and the United States of America

### Section A: The US Constitution

Study the source below and answer the question that follows.

#### Source

“Members of Congress do not seem backward in **proposing** amendments; but they are backward in **supporting** amendments. In recent years over 150 amendments have been introduced annually. Only a few are ever given time by Congress for consideration. Two of the reasons for this are as follows. In the first place, all but a handful are proposed for purposes purely of publicity, to show constituents that certain members of Congress feel strongly on some matter or another. In the second place, there is consensus that a constitution is different from ordinary law and should only include the major principles upon which government is carried out.”

Adapted from: Robert Singh *Governing America: The Politics of a Divided Democracy*, Oxford University Press, 2003

- 1 With reference to the Source and any other relevant information you have studied, discuss the extent to which the American Constitution can be regarded as inflexible. [30]

## Section B: Government in the UK and the USA

Answer all four questions.

- 2 Explain what is meant by the term “Presidential veto”. Support your answer with a relevant example. [5]
  
- 3 Explain how members of Congress carry out their representative functions. [10]
  
- 4 Compare and contrast the effectiveness of committees in the US Congress and UK Parliament in scrutinising their executives. [25]
  
- 5 **Either**
  - (a) “American Presidents have much less control over the legislature than British Prime Ministers.” Evaluate this view. [30]

Or

- (b) “British Prime Ministers and US Presidents can now ignore their cabinets.” Evaluate this view. [30]

## Option B: The United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland

### Section A: The Irish Constitution

Study the source below and answer the question that follows.

#### Source

The immediate furore following the publication of the Ryan Report centred on the nature and extent of the appalling abuse of children carried out by religious orders. The children who became the victims in this disgraceful episode in Irish history were treated by the state as people without rights. How could the provisions of the constitution be ignored by those in authority? What is the point in having such grand statements such as Article 40 – “all citizens shall, as human persons, be held equal before the law”? The state was a willing participant in failing to protect its own citizens through neglect and wanton disregard of the constitution.

Adapted from: Centre for Criminal Justice and Human Rights blog  
[www.ucc.ie/law/blog](http://www.ucc.ie/law/blog)

- 1 With reference to the Source and any other relevant material you have studied, discuss the view that Bunreacht na hÉireann has protected the rights of all Irish citizens. [30]

## Section B: Government in the UK and the Republic of Ireland

**Answer all four questions.**

- 2 Explain what is meant by the term “vote of confidence”. Support your answer with a relevant example. [5]
  
- 3 Explain the powers of the Seanad within the Irish political system. [10]
  
- 4 Compare and contrast the factors influencing the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach in their choice of cabinet members. [25]
  
- 5 **Either**
  - (a) “It is more accurate to describe TDs than MPs as “lobby fodder.” Evaluate this view. [30]

**Or**

  - (b) “For TDs, their party is important. For MPs, it is absolutely vital.” Evaluate this view. [30]

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