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**General Certificate of Education**

**2016**

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# **Government and Politics**

Assessment Unit A2 1  
Comparative Government

**MV18**

**[AQ211]**

**THURSDAY 2 JUNE, AFTERNOON**

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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** plus your additional time allowance 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.

## Option A: Comparative Government: The Government and Politics of the UK and USA

### Section A: The US Constitution

Study the source below and answer the question that follows.

#### Source

“People who believe in the uniqueness of the American Constitution argue that the Framers achieved a remarkable balance between the conflicting demands on government. A century after the Constitution was written, Lord Bryce from Britain, wrote that it was ‘a mixture of definiteness in principle with elasticity of details’. According to this view, the Constitution, only about 7000 words long, combines fundamental principles, including the protection of the nation and the liberties of its people, without going into a great deal of detail as to how these are to be achieved.”

© Adapted from **US Government and Politics** by William Storey.  
Published by Edinburgh University Press Ltd, 2007.

- 1 With reference to the Source and any other relevant information you have studied, discuss the extent to which the principles that shaped the US Constitution are still relevant today. [30 marks]

## Section B: Government in the UK and USA

**Answer all four questions.**

- 2 Explain what is meant by the term “lame duck president”.  
Support your answer with a relevant example. [5 marks]
  
- 3 Explain how the President can overcome constitutional restraints. [10 marks]
  
- 4 Compare and contrast the scrutiny powers of the House of Commons and House of Representatives. [25 marks]

### 5 Either

- (a) “There are fewer differences today between the powers of the US President and the UK Prime Minister.”  
Evaluate this view. [30 marks]

**Or**

- (b) “Congress and Parliament have demonstrated a remarkable ability to resist executive control.”  
Evaluate this view. [30 marks]

## Option B: Comparative Government: The United Kingdom and Republic of Ireland

### Section A: The Irish Constitution

Study the source below and answer the question that follows.

#### Source

Substantial, even radical, change has occurred in the Republic of Ireland. Few, if any, a few short decades ago, would have envisaged how far-ranging the changes would take the nation. Social attitudes and the social structure have undergone a slow, uncertain and frequently painful reassessment. A few key referenda over the years mark the changes. For example, referenda in 1992 on the right to travel to have an abortion and on the right to information on abortion, were both passed and have introduced a new era in Ireland. Less than a decade earlier, in 1983, 67% had voted against any legalisation of abortion.

© Adapted from *Ireland and the Politics of Change* by William J. Crotty and David E. Schmitt. Published by Routledge, 1998.

- 1 With reference to the Source and any other relevant information you have studied, discuss the view that the Irish Constitution has kept pace with the changes in Irish social attitudes and social structure. [30 marks]

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

**Answer all four questions.**

- 2 Explain what is meant by the term “collective responsibility”. Support your answer with a relevant example. [5 marks]
  
- 3 Explain how the Dail can scrutinise the executive. [10 marks]
  
- 4 Compare and contrast the effectiveness of MPs and TDs as legislators. [25 marks]

### 5 Either

(a) “Unlike Ireland, the UK remains a political system in which two parties are dominant.” Evaluate this view. [30 marks]

**Or**

(b) “While British Prime Ministers have become more ‘presidential’, the ability of Taoisigh to dominate the Irish political system has been weakened.” Evaluate this view. [30 marks]

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**THIS IS THE END OF THE QUESTION PAPER**

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