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General Certificate of Education  
2011

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## Government and Politics

Assessment Unit A2 1

Comparative Government

[AQ211]

MONDAY 23 MAY, AFTERNOON

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### TIME

2 hours 15 minutes.

### 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 down the right-hand side of pages 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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## 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

#### **Why do proposals for Constitutional Amendments nearly always fail?**

Although over 10,000 amendments have been proposed in Congress since 1789, only 27 have become part of the Constitution. A determined minority – or networks of well organised pressure groups – can block a proposed amendment by lobbying the state legislatures. In 1971, Congress adopted the Equal Rights Amendment (ERA) which stated that “equality of rights shall not be denied by the United States on account of sex”. However, because of the co-ordinated opposition by the conservative right, the ERA failed to gain the backing of three-quarters of the states within the time period.

*Adapted from: © Politics Review by Edward Ashbee, page 32, published by Philip Allan Updates, April 2005*

- 1 With reference to the Source and any other information you have studied, assess the view that the difficulties in amending the Constitution have made it an obstacle to social and political progress in the USA.

[30]

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

**Answer all four questions.**

- 2 What is meant by the term “pork-barrel politics”? Support your answer with a relevant example. [5]
- 3 Explain the role of committees in the Senate. [10]
- 4 Compare and contrast the importance of the Cabinet in the USA and UK. [25]
- 5 **Either**
- (a) “Members of Parliament are more effective law-makers than Members of Congress.” Evaluate this view. [30]
- Or**
- (b) “For Members of Congress, representing their voters comes first. For MPs, representing their voters comes second or even third.” 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

Bunreacht na hÉireann was almost literally de Valera's constitution. He drafted it or supervised its drafting, clearing its principles with his government and taking advice from officials and others, including a number of the Catholic clergy. He personally piloted it through Dáil Éireann and presented it to the people in a radio broadcast. It does not follow, however, that it embodied his ideal vision of the Irish state. He recognised the constraints within which he had to operate in respect of links with the UK for security and economic reasons. He recognised also the problems he faced in seeking to include Northern Unionists in an all-Ireland state.

*Adapted from: Basil Chubb. The Government and Politics of Ireland. 3rd Edition. Longman. p42*

- 1 With reference to the Source and any other relevant material you have studied, discuss the view that the principles that shaped the 1937 constitution are still relevant today. [30]

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

**Answer all four questions.**

- 2 Explain what is meant by the term “Ministerial Responsibility.” Support your answer with a relevant example. [5]
- 3 Explain the role of committees in the Oireachtas. [10]
- 4 Compare and contrast the importance of the Cabinet in the UK and Republic of Ireland. [25]
- 5 **Either**
- (a) “For TDs, representing their voters comes first. For MPs, representing their voters comes second or even third.” Evaluate this view. [30]
- Or**
- (b) “TDs are more effective law-makers than MPs.” Evaluate this view. [30]

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

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