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**General Certificate of Education**

**2015**

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# Government and Politics

Assessment Unit A2 1  
Comparative Government



AQ211

**[AQ211]**

**TUESDAY 26 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.

## 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

The United States Constitution was drawn up in an age when the expectations of government were few; the United States was a new and weak state in the international system; loyalties were essentially local; there were no national parties. All this has changed.

Now that the United States is a superpower, it is essential that there should be a strong but fully accountable government. The key to this was the creation of a Separation of Powers. However, critics argue that this system of separated powers has increasingly led to gridlock in the US political system. It has produced government that is neither strong nor accountable.

© "Governing America; The Politics of a Divided Democracy", by Robert Singh, Oxford University Press, 2003.

- 1 With reference to the Source and any other relevant information you have studied, discuss the view that the US Constitution has created a strong but accountable government. [30]

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

**Answer all four questions.**

- 2 Explain what is meant by the term “limited government”. Support your answer with a relevant example. [5]
- 3 Explain the legislative role of Congressional Committees. [10]
- 4 Compare and contrast the effectiveness of the Senate and House of Lords in holding their respective executives to account. [25]
- 5 **Either**
- (a) “While British PMs have become more ‘presidential,’ the ability of Presidents to dominate the US political system has been weakened.” Evaluate this view. [30]
- Or**
- (b) “The House of Commons and the House of Representatives are increasingly dominated by their respective executives.” 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 Irish constitution is now past its sell-by date. Its key weakness is that it was written for another era. The Presidency and the Oireachtas have both become irrelevant. This has happened because governments naturally seek to monopolise power but also because of an electoral system that leads to a focus on local issues rather than national ones. The powerlessness of the Seanad is just one, among many, problems. Seeking to reform these issues bit-by-bit just won't work. Instead we need to do what de Valera did in 1937: tear it up and start again.

*Adapted from © "Why the Irish Constitution is now past its sell-by date", The Irish Independent www.independent.ie 12/12/12*

- 1 With reference to the Source and any other relevant material you have studied, discuss the view that Bunreacht na hEireann is now past its sell-by date. [30]

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

**Answer all four questions.**

- 2 Explain what is meant by the term “three line whip”. Support your answer with a relevant example. [5]
- 3 Explain the limitations on the Taoiseach in choosing members of the Cabinet. [10]
- 4 Compare and contrast the effectiveness of the Commons and Dail as scrutiny bodies. [25]
- 5 **Either**
- (a) “The first priority of both MPs and TDs is to represent their constituents.” Evaluate this view. [30]
- Or**
- (b) “Cabinet government continues to decline in both the UK and the Republic of Ireland.” Evaluate this view. [30]

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

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