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General Certificate of Education

2017

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# Government and Politics

Assessment Unit A2 1  
Comparative Government



AQ211

[AQ211]

THURSDAY 8 JUNE, 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: Comparative Government: The United Kingdom and the USA

### Section A: The US Constitution

Study the source below and answer the question that follows.

#### Source

While realising the likely need to amend the Constitution, the authors wanted to make doing so a difficult process. It was to be a two-stage process requiring super majorities of more than 50%, such as a two-thirds or a three-fifths majority. Stage 1 is the proposal and stage 2 the ratification. Constitutional amendments can be proposed either by Congress or by a national constitutional convention called by Congress at the request of two-thirds of the state legislatures.

© A2 US Government & Politics Textbook 3rd Edition by Anthony J Bennett.  
(ISBN: 9780340986608) Published by Philip Allan, 2009

- 1 With reference to the Source and any other relevant information you have studied, discuss the view that the US Constitution is inflexible.

[30]

**Section B: Government in the UK and 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 scrutinise the Executive. [10]
- 4 Compare and contrast how effectively Members of Parliament and Members of Congress carry out their representative role. [25]
- 5 **Either**
- (a) “Both American Presidents and UK Prime Ministers have a remarkable ability to ignore their cabinets.” Evaluate this view. [30]
- Or**
- (b) “Members of Congress may have more legislative freedom than their UK counterparts, but they fail to make use of it.” Evaluate this view. [30]

**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**

Before the 2011 election, the Labour Party said it favoured a referendum on same-sex marriage. Fine Gael's manifesto was silent on the issue. In the end, following Oireachtas approval, the government agreed to put it to a referendum. The significance is that married couples enjoy the constitutional protection given to the family in relation to taxation and social welfare but unmarried couples do not. If the referendum passes, Ireland will become the first country in the world to approve same-sex marriage in a national referendum.

© All you need to know about the marriage referendum by Ruadhán Mac Cormaic. Published by The Irish Times, 21 May 2015

- 1** With reference to the Source and any other relevant information you have studied, discuss the view that the Irish Constitution has changed to meet the needs of Ireland in the 21st century.

[30]

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

**Answer all four questions.**

- 2 Explain what is meant by the term “backbench revolt”. Support your answer with a relevant example. [5]
- 3 Explain the criticisms made of the Seanad. [10]
- 4 Compare and contrast the effectiveness of the Prime Minister and the Taoiseach in controlling their cabinets. [25]
- 5 **Either**
- (a) “The multi-party nature of the Dail makes it a less effective legislative body than the Commons.” Evaluate this view. [30]
- Or**
- (b) “The effective scrutiny of the executive that occurs in the UK Parliament is largely absent in the Republic of Ireland.” Evaluate this view. [30]

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

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