



Advanced Subsidiary GCE

F852QP

GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

Unit F852: Contemporary Government of
the UK

Specimen Paper

Time: 1 hour 30 mins

Additional Materials: Answer Booklet (...pages)



INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

- Answer **both** questions from Section A and **one** question from Section B.
- You must use your own knowledge and the source material in your answer to Question 1.
- Write the numbers of the questions you answer on the front of your answer booklet.
- If you use additional sheets of paper, fasten these securely to your answer booklet.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

- The number of marks for each question is given in brackets [] at the end of each question or part question.
- The total number of marks for this paper is **100**.
- You will be awarded marks in questions 1 (b) and 2-6 for the quality of written communication including legibility, clarity of expression, structure, and presentation of ideas, spelling, punctuation and grammar.

ADVICE TO CANDIDATES

- Read each question carefully and make sure you know what you have to do before starting your answer.
- You are advised to spend 65 minutes on Section A and 25 minutes on Section B.

This document consists of **4** printed pages.

Section A

Answer **all** the questions in this section.

Sources for Question 1

Read **all** the sources below and use them when answering Question 1.

Source 1**House of Commons, 2005**

Membership	646
Average age	51
% of women	20
% from ethnic minority background	2.3
% independent school educated	34
% Oxford/Cambridge university educated	25

SOURCE 2**The organisation of Parliament**

One of the problems facing an MP who really wants to carry out his or her duties effectively is that the House of Commons is simply not well enough organized for its modern purposes. Its working hours are strange, procedures are regulated by ancient customs and select committees were never given sufficient power to do what they were supposed to do. The whips have a lot of influence and much seems to be unofficially decided "behind the Speaker's Chair". Backbench MPs have few powers and most of Parliament's time is controlled by the government. Parliament seems strangely reluctant to use its power to organise itself and give itself the proper means to fulfil its role.

Section A

Answer **all** the questions in this section.

- 1 (a) Using the sources and your own knowledge, explain what is meant by describing MPs as 'representatives'. [12]
- (b) Using the sources and your own knowledge, discuss the view that the House of Commons is an effective check on the government. [28]
- 2 Discuss the view that the cabinet is no longer an important part of the United Kingdom system of government. [30]

Section A Total: [70]

Section B

Answer **one** question in this section.

- 3 Discuss the importance of the constitutional changes which have occurred in the United Kingdom since 1997. [30]
- 4 Assess the impact of membership of the European Union on the United Kingdom government. [30]
- 5 Discuss the view that the rights and liberties of citizens in the United Kingdom are well protected. [30]

Section B Total: [30]

Paper Total: [100]

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GENERAL MARKING INSTRUCTIONS

When marking, examiners must use both this mark scheme and the Assessment Matrix (over page).

The Assessment Matrix

Broadly speaking, and depending on the question, examiners should look for:

- a balanced and well-focused answer;
- which correctly identifies a number and range of relevant and important factors;
- in detail;
- and communicates these clearly in a logical, fluent and coherent style;
- containing few, if any, errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling.

And credit answers which display knowledge and understanding of:

- current examples;
- political concepts, theories and language;
- other political systems including the EU;
- parallels, connections, similarities and differences.

The Mark Scheme

The mark scheme is indicative of the kinds of points likely to be raised by candidates in answering the questions, however, because of the nature of the subject, they cannot be regarded as definitive and the professional judgement and training of individual examiners will inevitably apply.

All substantive issues surrounding the paper will be settled at the standardisation meeting and through the arrangements made by OCR to ensure a consistent approach by all examiners. Examiners should contact the Principal Examiner if they have any concerns about the way an individual script should be marked.

Examiners must refer to the OCR booklet Instructions to Examiners issued in each examination session for details about administrative procedures.

The maximum mark for this paper is **100**.

AS GCE Assessment Matrix

There are **four** levels of assessment of all three AOs in the AS units. Level 4 is the highest level that can reasonably be expected from a candidate at the end of the first year of study of an Advanced GCE course.

Level	Assessment Objective 1	Assessment Objective 2	Assessment Objective 3
4	Thorough and accurate knowledge and clear and detailed understanding of relevant concepts, ideas and political systems. Where appropriate candidates will provide convincing comparisons between them.	High level of skill in the interpretation, analysis and evaluation of relevant political information (including where appropriate the identification of parallels, connections, similarities and differences with other political systems including the EU). Ability to recognise bias and faulty argument and to reason effectively towards an individual and informed conclusion.	Ability to correctly distinguish relevant and important factors and integrate these into a balanced, well focused argument. Ability to communicate this clearly and present it legibly and logically in fluent coherent style containing few, if any, errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling.
3	Good knowledge and understanding of relevant concepts, ideas and political systems. Where appropriate candidates will provide good comparisons between them.	Good level of skill in the interpretation, analysis and evaluation of the relevant political information (including where appropriate the identification of parallels, connections, similarities and differences with other political systems including the EU). Some attempt to recognise bias and faulty argument and to reason sensibly towards a sound conclusion.	Ability to identify the most important factors and present a relevant argument legibly and clearly if, at times, lacking incisiveness. There may be occasional errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling.
2	Limited knowledge and understanding of relevant concepts, ideas and political systems. Limited awareness of standard points of comparison.	Limited level of skill in the interpretation, analysis and evaluation of the relevant political information (including where appropriate the identification of parallels, connections, similarities and differences with other political systems including the EU). Limited attempt to explain a few of the more obvious points central to the question and to recognise and describe some differing viewpoints. Reasoning may be incomplete and while opinions may be offered, they are unlikely to be supported by argument.	Limited attempt to distinguish relevant material which is assembled into a limited argument with some sense of order and legibility. There may be some errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling.
1	Basic and generalised knowledge and understanding of relevant concepts, ideas and political systems. Such knowledge and understanding will be incomplete and/or of tenuous relevance and may contain significant errors. Basic awareness of standard points of comparison.	Basic skill in the interpretation, analysis and evaluation of some of the relevant political information (including where appropriate the identification of parallels, connections, similarities and differences with other political systems including the EU). Basic attempt to explain the simpler points central to the question and it is likely that only one viewpoint will be recognised. There will be little evidence of reasoning.	An attempt is made to shape an argument at a basic level which lacks coherence, legibility and direction, and is unselective. Contains intrusive errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling.

Section A		
Question Number	Answer	Max Mark
1(a)	<p>Using the sources and your own knowledge, explain what is meant by describing MPs as ‘representatives’.</p> <p><i>Specification: the Legislature: representation; the role and work of the opposition and backbenchers.</i></p> <p>AO1 [12]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates display knowledge and understanding of what is meant by describing MPs as ‘representative’ and some of different ways in which it is used: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ MPs are representatives in the sense that they are elected to represent a constituency; ○ MPs are representatives in the sense that most are elected because they belong to a particular political party; ○ but MPs are not representative in the sense of being typical; ○ And there is no legal duty upon them to ‘represent’ the views of their constituents or party. • If only one of ‘sources’ or ‘own knowledge’ is used, award up to a maximum of 8 marks. • Credit candidates who are able to use contemporary examples. 	[12]
1(b)	<p>Using the sources and your own knowledge, discuss the view that the House of Commons is an effective check on the government.</p> <p><i>Specification: the role and work of the Commons and Lords as regards legislation, scrutiny and representation.</i></p> <p>AO1 [12]; AO2 [12]; AO3 [4]</p> <p>AO1: Candidates display knowledge and understanding of the ways in which the Commons can check the government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ debate; ○ general and select committees; ○ questions; ○ approval of legislation; ○ votes of no confidence; ○ delay; ○ Ombudsman etc. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • If only one of ‘sources’ or ‘own knowledge’ is used, award up to a maximum of 8 marks. • Credit candidates who are able to use contemporary examples. 	

Section A		
Question Number	Answer	Max Mark
1(b) cont'd	<p>AO2: Candidates discuss the view that the Commons is an effective check on the government, they examine both sides of the argument, using the knowledge required for AO1.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arguments 'for' might include the range and value of the formal and informal mechanism available to the House – questions, debates, committees, discussions 'behind the Speaker's chair'. • Arguments 'against' might include the limits of specific checks and broader issues such as the impact of government majorities and party loyalty. • Reward focus and balance, but distinguish between description (AO1) and analysis (AO2). • Level 4 answers offer a discussion that is clearly focused on whether or not the Commons is an effective check on the government and there is some attempt at a balanced analysis. • Level 3 for candidates who adopt a clear for/against approach with at least an implicit answer. • Maximum bottom Level 3 for a totally one-sided (however good) approach. • Maximum Level 2 for candidates who provide answers which are short, poorly focused, lacking range and/or depth. • Credit candidates who are able to use contemporary examples. <p>AO3: With reference to the assessment matrix credit the ability to communicate legibly, fluently, coherently, using specialist vocabulary, taking into consideration spelling, punctuation and grammar.</p>	[28]

Section A		
Question Number	Answer	Max Mark
2	<p>Discuss the view that the cabinet is no longer an important part of the United Kingdom system of government.</p> <p><i>Specification: the Executive: the Cabinet.</i></p> <p>AO1 [12]; AO2 [12]; AO3 [6]</p> <p>AO1: Candidates display knowledge and understanding of the main roles of Cabinet including confirmation, coordination, arbitration, information, debate on government policy initiatives/general strategy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • And of its powers, both formal and informal; • And of the way in which prime ministers since Thatcher have used it; <p>Credit candidates who are able to use contemporary examples.</p> <p>AO2: Candidates discuss the view that the cabinet is no longer an important part of the UK system of government, they examine both sides of the argument, using the knowledge required for AO1.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Points 'for': the growth of the PM's power and office – which arguably started under Thatcher and the way in which she treated the Cabinet. The current view is that Blair treats the Cabinet with less obvious contempt – but power has shifted firmly to No10 and the Cabinet meets less and does less. • Cabinet Committees are still vital – if the PM wants them to be. • Candidates who argue the Cabinet is still important but now has a very different role as a coordinator, trying to get 'joined up' government, may be awarded 8 marks. • Reward focus and balance, but distinguish between description (AO1) and analysis (AO2). • Level 4 answers offer a discussion that is clearly focused on the importance of the cabinet and there is some attempt at a balanced analysis. • Level 3 for candidates who adopt a clear for/against approach with at least an implicit answer. • Maximum bottom Level 3 for a totally one-sided (however good) approach. • Maximum Level 2 for candidates who provide answers which are short, poorly focused, lacking range and/or depth. • Credit candidates who are able to use contemporary examples. <p>AO3: With reference to the assessment matrix credit the ability to communicate legibly, fluently, coherently, using specialist vocabulary, taking into consideration spelling, punctuation and grammar.</p>	[30]
Section A Total		[70]

Section B		
Question Number	Answer	Max Mark
3	<p>Discuss the importance of the constitutional changes which have occurred in the UK since 1997.</p> <p><i>Specification: the Constitution: key developments in the UK Constitution and constitutional reform.</i></p> <p>AO1 [12]; AO2 [12]; AO3 [6]</p> <p>AO1: Candidates display knowledge and understanding of the main constitutional changes to date, for example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Lords reform; ○ devolution; ○ changes to electoral systems in Scotland etc; ○ frequency of referendums; ○ Human Rights Act etc; ○ Mayor of London; ○ Constitutional Reform Act, 2005; ○ Lord Chancellor; ○ Freedom of Information Act. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates may widen out from these, and deal with the EU or changes to the role of prime minister and cabinet etc. • Candidates need only show an <i>awareness</i> of the range, not every single item, for Level 4. • It should be noted that this question does not lend itself to narrow interpretation given the vagueness of the Constitution. <p>AO2: Candidates discuss the importance of the constitutional changes since 1997 and examine both sides of the argument, using the knowledge required for AO1.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arguments against might include: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ their limited nature; ○ failure to carry out promises of 1997; ○ lack of much clear planning and overview; ○ backed off if controversy arose. • Arguments for might included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ they have done more than any other in modern times; ○ they were prepared to take on fundamental issues like the hereditary principle and the separation of powers; ○ UK has become much more democratic (referendums and electoral system change) and libertarian (the HR Act). • Reward focus and balance, but distinguish between description (AO1) and analysis (AO2). • Level 4 answers offer a discussion that is clearly focused on the importance of the constitutional changes and there is some attempt at a balanced analysis. • Level 3 for candidates who adopt a clear for/against approach with at least an implicit answer. • Maximum bottom Level 3 for a totally one-sided (however good) approach. • Maximum Level 2 for candidates who provide answers which are short, poorly focused, lacking range and/or depth. <p>Credit candidates who are able to use contemporary examples.</p>	

Section B		
Question Number	Answer	Max Mark
3 cont'd	AO3: With reference to the assessment matrix credit the ability to communicate legibly, fluently, coherently, using specialist vocabulary, taking into consideration spelling, punctuation and grammar.	[30]
4	<p>Assess the impact of membership of the EU on the UK government. <i>Specification: the European Union: the impact of membership of the EU on the British Government, politics and constitution.</i></p> <p>AO1 [12]; AO2 [12]; AO3 [6] AO1: Candidates display knowledge and understanding of impact of membership of the EU on the UK government, for example: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ impact on parliament – parliamentary sovereignty; ○ impact on the executive – policy-making/decision-making ○ impact on the judiciary – supremacy of EU law ○ Credit candidates who are able to use contemporary examples AO2: Candidates discuss the impact of membership of the EU on the UK government, using the knowledge required for AO1 and make a serious attempt to assess that impact e.g. major or minor. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Candidates show awareness that in some areas there is limited impact, and in others, decision-making has moved to Brussels (although the UK is part of that decision-making process). • They may also show awareness of how members can influence the decision-making process. • Reward focus and balance, but distinguish between description (AO1) and analysis (AO2). • Level 4 answers offer a reasoned assessment of the impact of the EU on UK government and there is some attempt at a balanced analysis. • Level 3 for candidates who adopt a descriptive approach with at least an implicit answer. • Maximum bottom Level 3 for a totally one-sided (however good) approach. • Maximum Level 2 for candidates who provide answers which are short, poorly focused, lacking range and/or depth. • Credit recent examples which illustrate the relationship and its impact, but do not reward ill-informed prejudice. AO3: With reference to the assessment matrix, credit the ability to communicate legibly, fluently, coherently, using specialist vocabulary, taking into consideration spelling, punctuation and grammar.</p>	[30]

Section B		
Question Number	Answer	Max Mark
5	<p>Discuss the view that the rights and liberties of citizens in the UK are well protected.</p> <p><i>Specification: Rights, liberties and duties in the UK: nature of rights and liberties in the UK; principal rights and duties of UK citizens; threats to these rights; Role and powers of the judiciary; powers of statutory interpretation; judicial review; constitutional review; Redress of grievance: Methods of obtaining redress, e.g. MP, councillor, ombudsmen, administrative tribunals, pressure groups, judicial review; relative effectiveness of those methods; The Commons and the Lords: role; legislative, scrutiny and representative functions.</i></p> <p>AO1 [12]; AO2 [12]; AO3 [6]</p> <p>AO1: Candidates display a knowledge and understanding of the rights and liberties of UK citizens, their nature and the ways in which they are protected. For example:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ 'rights' are entitlements; ○ there is no general statement of rights in the UK, (NB bills of rights), instead, citizens are free to do whatever is not forbidden; ○ rights are protected by legislation, parliament, the courts, both British and European, a free press, pressure groups etc. <p>• Credit candidates who are able to use contemporary examples</p> <p>AO2: Candidates discuss the view that the rights and liberties of citizens in the UK are well protected and examine both sides of the argument, using the knowledge required for AO1.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arguments 'for' might include the range of protections available and the value of individual protections • Arguments against might include the limits on individual protections and the absence of more effective protections for example, a written constitution or a bill of rights. • Reward focus and balance, but distinguish between description (AO1) and analysis (AO2). • Level 4 answers offer a discussion that is clearly focused on the extent to which the rights and liberties are protected and there is some attempt at a balanced analysis. • Level 3 for candidates who adopt a descriptive approach with at least an implicit answer. • Maximum bottom Level 3 for a totally one-sided (however good) approach. • Maximum Level 2 for candidates who provide answers which are short, poorly focused, lacking range and/or depth. • Credit candidates who are able to use contemporary examples. <p>AO3: Credit the ability to communicate legibly, fluently, coherently, AO3: With reference to the assessment matrix, credit the ability to communicate legibly, fluently, coherently, using specialist vocabulary, taking into consideration spelling, punctuation and grammar.</p>	[30]
Section B Total		[30]
Paper Total		[100]

Assessment Objectives Grid (includes QWC)

Question	AO1	AO2	AO3	Total
Section A				
1(a)	12	0	0	12
1(b)	12	12	4	28
2	12	12	6	30
Section B				
3/4/5	12	12	6	30
Totals	48	36	16	100

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