



General Certificate of Education

General Studies 6761

Specification A

GSA6 **Society, Politics and the Economy**

Mark Scheme

2008 examination – June series

Mark schemes are prepared by the Principal Examiner and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation meeting attended by all examiners and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation meeting ensures that the mark scheme covers the candidates' responses to questions and that every examiner understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for the standardisation meeting each examiner analyses a number of candidates' scripts: alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed at the meeting and legislated for. If, after this meeting, examiners encounter unusual answers which have not been discussed at the meeting they are required to refer these to the Principal Examiner.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of candidates' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

Further copies of this Mark Scheme are available to download from the AQA Website: www.aqa.org.uk

Copyright © 2008 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

COPYRIGHT

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered centres for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to centres to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

Unit 6 (GSA6 Society, Politics and the Economy)

INTRODUCTION

The nationally agreed assessment objectives in the QCA Subject Criteria for General Studies are:

- AO1** Demonstrate relevant knowledge and understanding applied to a range of issues, using skills from different disciplines.
- AO2** Communicate clearly and accurately in a concise, logical and relevant way.
- AO3** Marshal evidence and draw conclusions; select, interpret, evaluate and integrate information, data, concepts and opinions.
- AO4** Demonstrate understanding of different types of knowledge and of the relationship between them, appreciating their limitations.

- The mark scheme will allocate a number or distribution of marks for some, or all, of the above objectives for each question according to the nature of the question and what it is intended to test.
- The mark scheme is based on *levels* which indicate different qualities that might be anticipated in the response of candidates. The levels take into account a candidate's knowledge, understanding, arguments, evaluation and communication skills as appropriate.
- *Indicative content* is provided as a guide for examiners. It is not intended to be exhaustive and **other valid points must be credited**. Candidates do not have to cover all points to reach the highest level.
- A response which bears no relevance to the question should be awarded no marks.

GENERAL MARK SCHEME FOR SECTION A

Level of response	Mark range	Criteria and descriptors: knowledge, understanding, argument, evaluation, communication
LEVEL 3	7 - 8 / (- 9)	A good to comprehensive response demonstrating overall grasp of the range and nature of issues; knowledge and understanding of key principles and evidence; interprets and illustrates arguments coherently and convincingly with fluency and accuracy.
LEVEL 2	4 - 6	A modest to quite good attempt showing some competence and grasp of the issues; some understanding and realisation of key principles; moderate arguments and exemplification; reasonable clarity and accuracy of expression.
LEVEL 1	1 - 3	A bare to limited response showing uncertain grasp, knowledge and understanding; lack of clarity of argument and little appropriate exemplification; weak expression.
LEVEL 0	0	No valid response or relevance to the question.

Distribution of marks across the questions and assessment objectives for Section A

Question Numbers	Q1	Q2	Q3	Q4	AO marks per unit
Assessment Objectives 1	1	1	1	1	4
Assessment Objectives 2	1	1	1	1	4
Assessment Objectives 3	4	2	3	2	11
Assessment Objectives 4	3	5	4	4	16
Total marks per Question	9	9	9	8	35

Note: It is the questions themselves which are designed to elicit the range of response appropriate to the assessment objectives for each question. Examiners are required to assign each of the candidates' responses to the most appropriate level according to **its overall quality**, then allocate a single mark within the level.

GSA UNIT 6 CASE STUDY SUMMARY OF EXTRACTS JUNE 2008

EXTRACT A

Figure 1 Changes since the 1970s

7 different examples are used covering educational achievement, % of men & women in employment, % of women professionals, % of men/women employed in public administration and distribution, the pay gap between men and women, % of working mothers with dependent children, % of women MPs in the Commons. In each case, between the 1970s and 2006, differences between men and women have been reduced suggesting clear progress towards greater equality.

Figure 2 Six thousand women missing from boardrooms, politics and courts

A different slant from *The Guardian* suggesting that, in certain areas of government, employment and culture, significant inequality still exists and that, on existing trends, it will take many decades to achieve equality.

Figure 3 GCE A Level results for all UK candidates, 2006

An example of how girls do better than boys in terms of GCE A level success, inviting comment on its significance.

Figure 4 Pay and income

Depending on how the figures for full- and part-time work are calculated the pay gap between men and women is quite pronounced although other evidence from Figure 4 shows how far it has decreased since 1975.

Figure 5 Public and political life

The representation of women in the Commons has increased significantly since 1974 but <20% of MPs are female (compared with 40% in the Scottish Parliament and 50% in The Welsh Assembly). There is a significantly high % of female MPs in the Labour Party compared with the Conservative Party. There are very few MPs from ethnic minorities and only 2 of those were women in 2005.

EXTRACT B All you need to succeed in our meritocracy is privilege

Claims that a new elite has emerged in recent years based not just on inequalities of wealth and income but also based on “ensuring an easy passage through life for its own children”. (Journalism is cited as a profession heavily dominated by those from fee-paying schools and degree educated, perhaps at Oxbridge.)

Merit is increasingly measured by A-level success based on a combination of good schooling and parenting. Many have been able to move up the social ladder because of the huge increase in white collar/professional jobs. Since 1980, income and wealth inequalities have increased and more schools in the independent sector have placed much more emphasis on academic ability and achievement.

Now, a new, competitive elite has emerged in a social climate that favours aspiration rather than social solidarity or obligation. Notions of equality of worth and opportunity are downplayed and those who lack privileges, money and esteem face the penalties of downward mobility.

EXTRACT C At last we oldies can assert our rights

The Employment Equality (Age) Regulations make it illegal for employers to discriminate against (potential) employees on grounds of age. Potentially, this can offer more respect to/opportunities for older workers (although this could equally apply for younger workers).

There is opposition from those (employers) who claim that the new regulations are confusing and “oppressive”, that it will be restrictive and damaging to businesses, although similar views were expressed when legislation was introduced to tackle racial and sexual discrimination. The author accepts that there might be some impact on profit margins of small businesses.

Changing an essentially ageist culture might be more difficult not least for women where, typically, increasing age is thought to diminish physical appeal. Similarly, we are accustomed to attaching a specific age to retirement. Eventually (say by 2015) demographics in the labour market (especially the declining proportion of under 24s) will act as a major catalyst for change.

EXTRACT D At the coalface, gender equality is not so simple

The European Commission used an International Women’s Day to set out 6 goals for “gender equality”. (Ending gender-based violence; elimination of gender stereotypes; promotion of equality outside the EU; economic independence; equal participation in decision-making and the reconciliation of work, private and family life.)

However, despite anti sex discrimination laws, inequality is reflected in, say, the 22% pay gap between men and women in the UK – a figure well above the EU average. Able women workers come up against less able men supporting non-working wives and it is not clear what proportion of the many women who work do so because they wish to or because they need to do so to help pay the mortgage.

The question of whether equal pay is even desirable remains unasked, perhaps because equal pay demands equal workers and, though the job description may be the same, performance is likely to be different. Ultimately, individuals want different things. Some women want income. Some seek an escape from “the soul-destroying dullness of toddlers”. Small children want to maximise contact with their mother and typical care/miss work stereotypes are likely to be maintained.

EXTRACT E Are all-women shortlists the best way to achieve equality in Parliament?

Women make up over half the population but < 20% of MPs in the House of Commons are female. Typically, the Conservative Party has a very low proportion of female MPs and David Cameron is seeking to ensure that more women are shortlisted/selected, particularly for ‘winnable’ seats.

Desirable though this might be, local Conservative associations wish to preserve as much autonomy of choice as possible and the Labour Party suffered chastening experiences when it sought to impose all-women shortlists (e.g. in Blaenau Gwent) so David Cameron has to avoid being over-prescriptive especially as a number of leading female Tories do not favour shortlists based on positive discrimination. (Liberal leader Sir Menzies Campbell faced similar opposition from his female MPs.)

It is often difficult (but by no means impossible – Labour minister Ruth Kelly has four young children) for female MPs to balance childcare with their work commitments so it is not always

easy to ensure that sufficient women want to put themselves forward for election to what remains as an essentially “masculine” environment. David Cameron’s compromise of equally gender-balanced shortlists might help to increase the number of successful female candidates for his party.

SECTION A**1 Using evidence from Extract A, assess the progress made towards gender equality by 2006.****(9 marks)**

There are five separate figures in Extract A, each providing data and comments which might be used to analyse the progress made towards equality since the 1970s to 2006. Whereas the detail can be used to illustrate arguments, answers reaching Level 3 will concentrate on an analysis of most of the main trends, leading to a conclusion. Level 1 and Level 2 answers might cover a narrower range of analysis or concentrate more on detail and description rather than the assessment required.

A candidate who uses Figure 1 only can score up to 3 marks

Indicative content

- The 7 examples from Figure 1 show a clear trend, since the 1970s, towards greater equality between men and women and often more success for women although it can be seen that a higher proportion of mothers with dependent children were working in 2006.
- Fig 2 data is carefully selected by *The Guardian* to show significant gender differences in areas such as representation of women in parliament, certain employment categories, business, media and culture. Achieving equality in these areas, at the current rate of progress, would take between 20-200 years.
- Fig 3 can be used in conjunction with Fig 1 both to show how girls have used equality of opportunity to better boys in examination performance and to invite consideration of remedial action to help boys.
- The pay gap between men and women still exists although the extent of the gap differs according to whether full-or part-time work is under consideration. Fig 4 also shows that, since the 1970s, the gender pay gap has narrowed, although note the different ways used to calculate this.
- Fig 5 can be used in conjunction with Fig 2. The proportion of women MPs in the Commons was significantly higher in 2006 than it was in 1974 but the Conservatives, in particular, have a poor record and there are few ethnic minority MPs. Representation of women in the English Parliament is significantly lower than in the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly.
- Much depends on how equality is defined and progress is measured. Relatively speaking, there is greater gender equality in 2006 than in the 1970s but this is only one form of equality based on limited data. It might be argued that, despite protective legislation since the 1970s, progress has been slow.

2 Using Extract B, and your own knowledge, discuss reasons why young people are more likely to achieve success because they are members of an elite. (9 marks)

Extract B provides several examples of how membership of an elite (a concept which would benefit from a brief definition) helps young people to achieve success. Candidates who can provide genuine analysis covering some of the factors listed below, complemented by their own knowledge, are likely to reach Level 3. Less analytical answers, using a narrower range, are likely to fall in Levels 1 and 2.

Indicative content

- Inequalities of income and wealth will always be important (B) – candidates may seek to use their own knowledge to develop this.
- Elites are better able to “ensure an easy passage through life for its own children” (B) – candidates may give examples from their own knowledge.
- Entry to some occupations (journalism is mentioned in B) is easier for members of an elite (B mentions educational requirements, family money to finance higher education and family connections).
- Increasing emphasis is placed on success in competitive exams, particularly A levels (B) – candidates may use their own knowledge to give examples. Often independent schools are more successful in securing higher A level grades for their students and Extract B also stresses the importance of Oxbridge degrees in securing future success.
- “Good parenting” helps to complement “good schooling” and raise personal esteem (B) – candidates may offer examples from their own knowledge. Those outside elites might not benefit from either because of the handicaps imposed by family poverty and the absence of aspiration.
- There are always exceptions to many of the assumptions underpinning Extract B. There are different forms of success and some young people may, in the narrower sense, achieve extremely good A levels, and enter Oxbridge with very few background advantages.

3 Using information from Extracts C and D examine how far the existence of anti-discrimination laws is likely to increase equal opportunities for older and for female workers.

(9 marks)

Extract C covers the position regarding what should be the improved position of older (and younger) workers while D deals with measures to tackle gender discrimination. Candidates who use some of the information from both extracts to provide a reasoned examination of why changes in the law might help, but not necessarily remove all barriers, are likely to reach Level 3. Narrower, perhaps more descriptive answers, are likely to fall in Levels 1 and 2.

Indicative content

- Employment Equality (Age) Regulations Act of 2006 now prohibits age discrimination by law. Most likely to have an impact on older and younger people in the workplace (C).
- In the workplace, “individuals may not be harassed and intimidated because of their age” (C).
- May produce greater ‘respect’ for the old, possibly allowing the young to “be movers and shakers to break through the barriers of envy” (C).
- There will be critics of the Act (on grounds of cost and extra work) (C). By inference some employers might seek to circumvent it.
- Ageism still exists (especially for women) and it may be difficult to shift entrenched values which may influence that and views on particular ages for retirement (C).
- Demographics may force the issue – by 2015 only 17% of the labour market will be aged 16-24 so that the best and most successful companies will be those which actually implement anti-discriminatory policies (C).
- EU seeking to reduce pay inequalities between men and women (pay gap is 22% in Britain and 15% across the EU) (D).
- In the search for economic independence, there is often a struggle between “bright, ambitious women and dull, fearful men” perhaps suggesting that a glass-ceiling still exists (D).
- Irrespective of what job descriptions say, performances vary between individuals making it very difficult to judge if there is, or is not, equal pay for equal work (D).
- Not clear what women want from work. Seems to be the assumption that the childcare function, when applicable, will fall to women – inference that their careers are much more likely to be interrupted than those of men (D).

4 Using evidence from Extract E, and your own knowledge, consider the extent to which all-women shortlists are the best way to increase the number of female MPs in the House of Commons.

(8 marks)

Extract E focuses specifically on the selection of women candidates and the representation of female MPs in the Commons. The extract indicates that all-women shortlists seem to have increased the representation females in the Commons but that they have their critics (not least among women). Candidates might be expected to use their own knowledge to produce a slightly wider context, perhaps indicating why relatively few women seek a career in politics. More analytical answers, based on clear knowledge and evidence, are likely to reach Level 3. Narrower, perhaps more descriptive answers, are likely to fall in Levels 1 and 2.

Indicative content

- Women make up more than half the population but <20% of MPs in the Commons are female (E).
- Labour was the first party to experiment with all-women shortlists (the author suggests that, occasionally, this might have been a way of keeping out certain troublesome males and/or in constituencies where they anticipated least resistance) until a successful anti-discriminatory legal challenge was mounted. The author argued that there is clear evidence that all-women shortlists helped women to be selected/elected in the Labour Party and to parliament generally (E).
- David Cameron is undecided partly because he wishes to leave some choice in shortlisting to local Conservative constituency associations (who might otherwise resent their reduced autonomy) and partly because of opposition from some leading women. Tories such as Ann Widdecombe who oppose such positive discrimination on principle (E).
- The Lib Dems are keen to increase their proportion of women MPs but Sir Menzies Campbell has also faced opposition on grounds of principle from women MPs in his party (E).
- Voluntary arrangements/pleading with local party members has been shown by experience not to work very effectively. Local associations like their independence and often prefer to choose locally-based candidates rather than national party nominations (OK).
- All-women shortlists are undemocratic and patronising. Women often feel they should be chosen on merit from open competition and men (some of whom may have harboured prejudices about the role of women in politics) might question the merits of MPs chosen from closed processes (OK).
- Many women politicians might wish to show that they have reached parliament by showing that they have been successful over all other candidates, irrespective of gender (OK).
- Concerns about the need for more independent-minded MPs rather than those chosen as candidates by senior party figures. Many of the Labour women MPs elected in 1997 were dubbed “Blair’s babes” (OK).
- A significant issue is the extent to which women actually want to put themselves forward as future MPs (OK). Even with more women in the Commons it is still an essentially masculine atmosphere (E) and women MPs with young children may find it difficult to balance work commitments with childcare (E).

(E) = Evidence from Extract E
(OK) = Own Knowledge

GENERAL MARK SCHEME FOR A2 ESSAYS

The essay questions in General Studies A are designed to test the four assessment objectives (see INTRODUCTION above) as follows:

AO1 – 6 marks AO2 – 5 marks AO3 – 7 marks AO4 – 7 marks **Total – 25 marks**

Each answer should be awarded two separate marks, comprising a mark out of 20 for content (Assessment Objectives 1, 3 and 4) and a mark out of 5 for communication (Assessment Objective 2).

The mark for content should be awarded on the basis of the overall level of the candidate's response in relation to the following general criteria and descriptors for each level.

Level of response	Mark range	Criteria and descriptors for Assessment Objectives 1, 3 and 4: knowledge, understanding, argument and illustration, evaluation.
LEVEL 4	16 – 20	Good response to the demands of the question: sound knowledge of material (AO1); clear understanding and appreciation of topic, nature of knowledge involved and related issues (AO4); valid arguments and appropriate illustrations, coherent conclusion (AO3).
LEVEL 3	11 – 15	Competent attempt at answering the question: relevant knowledge (AO1); reasonable understanding and appreciation of topic, nature of knowledge involved and related issues (AO4); some fair arguments and illustrations, attempt at a conclusion (AO3).
LEVEL 2	6 – 10	Limited response to the demands of the question: only basic knowledge (AO1); modest understanding and appreciation of topic, nature of knowledge involved and related issues (AO4); limited argument and illustration, weak conclusion (AO3).
LEVEL 1	1 – 5	Inadequate attempt to deal with the question: very limited knowledge (AO1); little understanding and appreciation of topic, nature of knowledge involved and related issues (AO4); little or no justification or illustration, inadequate overall grasp (AO3).
LEVEL 0	0	No response or relevance to the question.

The mark for communication (AO2) should be awarded using the following scale and criteria.

5 marks	Clear and effective organisation and structure, fluent and accurate expression, spelling, punctuation and grammar.
4 marks	Clear attempt at organisation and structure, generally fluent and accurate expression, spelling, punctuation and grammar.
3 marks	Some organisation and structure evident, variable fluency, occasional errors in expression, punctuation and grammar.
2 marks	Limited organisation and structure, little fluency, a number of errors in expression, spelling, punctuation and grammar.
1 mark	Lacking organisation, structure and fluency, frequent errors in expression, spelling, punctuation and grammar.
0 marks	No response.

- Note:**
- A brief and inadequate response (Level 1 for content) must be awarded not more than 2 marks for communication.
 - A limited response (Level 2 for content) should normally not be awarded more than 3 marks for communication.
 - Responses at Levels 3 and 4 for content may be awarded up to 5 marks for communication.

SECTION B

- 5 ‘The main barrier to greater equality in the United Kingdom is poverty. Other factors such as educational and employment opportunities are far less important.’ Discuss the arguments for and against this viewpoint.**

The viewpoint expressed is essentially one-dimensional – simple cause and effect when the situation is much more complex. Candidates might seek to explore different forms of equality, (that based on gender, race, sexual orientation and/or equality of opportunity etc.) and this is likely to influence their approach to the question.

There is no doubt that poverty (although this might be difficult to define) is likely to be an important barrier to greater equality but it is by no means the only one. Access to education, entrenched values and stereotypes or potentially inhibiting factors such as disability/age (even though the law should offer some protection in both cases) could easily be pursued. Similarly employment opportunities are important in terms of access to qualifications.

Indicative content

- Whether poverty is deemed to be relative or absolute, and no matter how it is measured, there are substantial inequalities based on wealth and income. The poor have far less choice in many aspects of their lives and may be caught in an environment where crime, vandalism, drugs etc are commonplace. Credit is more difficult to obtain, work (if available) may be poorly paid and social benefits are paid at a level which does little more than offer a subsistence existence. Inevitably, many will be caught in a cycle of deprivation. Consequently, these and other points/arguments can be developed to make a powerful case for the links between poverty (with its many ramifications) and barriers to equality. However, candidates aspiring to the highest mark levels need to take a wider view – one which might seek to encompass at least one of the following:
- No matter what is said about ‘choice’ in education, such choice may confer a greater (or lesser) measure of privilege which produces inequalities. In a society where jobs are based more and more on educational qualifications, schools in the independent sector tend to get better results than their counterparts in the non-independent sector. Independent schools may or may not have better teachers and facilities but they almost invariably have key advantages of being able to spend significantly more per pupil and much smaller classes.
- Employment opportunities come in many forms but, essentially, need to be viewed in career terms. The links with educational opportunities should soon become clear given the growing links to some form of academic success (through qualifications) and access to more skilled employment with greater prospects. Employment opportunities may be associated with personal horizons, aspirations, peer group influences etc. For some, there is almost a natural and inevitable progression towards higher education. Others may not even be pointed in that direction.
- Cultural factors, aligned with parental support/knowledge/influence can be potent forces. Parents can offer varying degrees of encouragement/support – as can home circumstances (spacious detached or cramped flat). For many there may well be limited environments, resignation and poverty of ambition. Other families may be far better placed to ‘play the system’ and to work it to maximum advantage for their children.

continues over page

- Progressive changes in the law should have helped to provide more equality of opportunity for groups traditionally discriminated against on grounds of gender, race, age, disability or sexual orientation. The law cannot be openly flouted or disregarded but it takes generations to change/modify/re-shape values, to counter stereotypes or to challenge prejudice successfully.

Conclusion

There is no doubt that poverty is certainly an important – and possibly the main – barrier to equality. However, in many respects, poverty, educational and employment opportunities are linked and the highest scoring answers are likely to recognise this.

6 'Equal access across the United Kingdom to cheap, reliable, and regular public transport ought to be a basic human right for citizens of all ages.'

Discuss the extent to which this is both a desirable and a realistic goal.

Equal access to public transport is not normally looked upon as a 'basic human right' in the way that various freedoms are and candidates might legitimately seek to argue this. Given the choice, those who can do so seek the flexibility and convenience of their own transport, mostly in the form of a car. Others (perhaps for environmental reasons, ease of commuting or inability to afford an alternative) use public transport.

The extent to which equal access to public transport may be deemed a basic human right may be difficult to establish but it is not far-fetched given the importance of even limited geographical mobility in modern society. Politically, public transport remains an important/sensitive issue not least as policy makers and voters argue over the extent to which it should be a *public* (often subsidised) or *private* (heavily influenced by market forces of supply and demand) service.

Indicative content

Desirable

- The advantages that personal transport confers are often taken for granted. Others may depend on public transport to give them more freedom, access to a wider range of facilities, increased mobility etc. The alternative might be loneliness, isolation, high living costs and deprivation.
- Certain groups depend more heavily on public transport – the young and the old, students, parents (usually mothers with young children) and the poor. In the interests of greater social justice, as much as possible should be done to improve provision. The over 60s qualify for free bus passes.
- Single-occupant cars can lead to considerable congestion and greater environmental damage. If more people are encouraged to use public transport – and many do not do so because it often isn't sufficiently cheap, reliable, and regular – there may be a considerable saving in terms of reduced congestion and environmental damage.

Realistic

- Given the geographical isolation of many communities the cost of improving transport would be prohibitive. Commercially, services would not be viable in view of the limited demand while public subsidies would be high.
- In broad terms, *public* transport is usually *privately* provided and the best provision is likely to come in the areas of highest population/demand where sufficient income will be generated to sustain profits (partly based on keeping costs down), some of which can be used to invest in higher quality services. Beyond subsidies/regulation, the role of government is limited.
- Conversely, much public transport, although privately owned, is subsidised from public funds. Subsidies could be increased but this would mean higher taxes – never a popular move irrespective of how much people say they wish to have better public transport.

7 'If anything symbolises inequality in the United Kingdom it is the continuing existence of the monarchy and aristocracy. They serve no purpose and need to be abolished in the interests of making the country more democratic.'

Analyse this statement, indicating to what extent you agree or disagree with it.

The question needs careful unpicking. Particularly in a wider context of the royal family and the aristocracy, both might be seen as symbols of inequality in terms of the wealth and privilege with which it might be associated.

The extent to which they serve “no purpose” and need to be abolished in the interests of democracy requires careful consideration. The monarch does perform a number of essentially symbolic functions and candidates might consider an alternative (say a president) although republics are clearly not free from political problems. The aristocracy might contribute to the national cultural heritage.

Superficially, the absence of a monarchy might appear to make the UK seem more democratic but candidates will need to make clear what they understand by ‘democratic’. In asking for reasons expressing agreement or disagreement with the statement it is likely that those reaching the highest levels will have considered some of the pros and cons involved in reaching a conclusion.

Indicative content

- In many respects the monarchy/aristocracy represents the apex of the social structure of the UK with its vast wealth, social isolation and privilege. (The context might be widened to include the royal family as well as the monarchy.) Supporters of the monarchy might dismiss this as ‘the politics of envy’.
- The monarchy represents an elite but even countries which profess to follow different principles of government tend to end up with an elite of one form or another.
- Candidates might reasonably be expected to explore the role of the monarch in more detail. The functions of the present monarch are essentially constitutional and symbolic. Though the present Queen signs all legislation it would be unthinkable that she did not, given the elected nature of parliament. However, many see the symbolism of the monarchy as being important in terms of having a non-political figure to represent the country and ties with the Commonwealth are still quite strong.
- Public perceptions of the monarchy are important. The present Queen is widely respected even if some may see the institution itself as anachronistic. Most countries tend to have a figurehead and, in the absence of a monarch, a president is the most likely alternative. The Queen is widely regarded as being ‘above politics’ and has worked closely with many prime ministers of different parties. Presidents are not usually dissociated from politics in the same way and the office does not necessarily confer overwhelming advantage over the monarchy.
- What are the essential instruments of democracy? Our representative democracy is based on elections held at regular intervals which offer some measure of choice and a process of secret voting. People are free to join political parties and/or pressure groups and have basic freedoms to make their views known. The abolition of the monarchy might, superficially, appear to add to democracy depending on how it was replaced. Popular democracy allowing for much wider participation would make effective government impossible.
- Removing a social stratum (the aristocracy) is a very fanciful idea. Revolution in the style of late 18th century France is not going to happen and, even in the absence of the aristocracy another group would emerge as a social elite.

8 'Political power and economic resources are distributed unequally throughout the world. It is in the interests of the More Economically Developed Countries for this to remain so.'

Analyse this assertion, indicating how far you feel it can be supported.

The words "power and resources" can be interpreted in a wide sense but the focus here is on political power and economic resource. There can be no doubt that power and resources are distributed unequally but the concept of power and the nature of resources both need amplification and further exploration.

In terms of self-interest, there is certainly both a political and economic case, especially from the perspective of many of those associated with MEDCs, that it is in the interests of countries with more power and resources to retain the status quo. From a different perspective, especially when wider considerations of social justice and obligation are taken into account, conclusions might be very different.

Indicative content

- Power may be seen in different dimensions, most probably political and economic. Political power might apply to relative positions on the world stage where attention might be paid to individual countries (such as USA) and how they seek to exercise power (most recently, perhaps, in Iraq).
- Economic power might be related to the distribution and control of scarce resources. This might involve individual countries (e.g. Russia's growing influence over world gas supplies) or economic power blocs such as the EU or OPEC's manipulation of oil production.
- LEDCs do not necessarily lack scarce resources (e.g. oil and Nigeria) but they do not always have the capacity to develop them fully. Obviously many LEDCs have large populations and low GDPs. Poverty, disease, political corruption and internal conflict (e.g. Darfur, Somalia, Democratic Republic of Congo) represent disadvantages which MEDCs do not have to face.
- China and India are interesting examples of countries in a highly transitional situation. Both are industrialising very rapidly and both have very rapid population growth. Politically, China is influential and the position of the state, even in a more market-orientated environment, remains strong.
- Governments of MEDCs strive to maintain the high living standards of their population, exploiting markets (while sometimes protecting their own) as fully as possible, often by exporting as widely as possible and importing correspondingly cheaply (to the disadvantage of LEDCs).
- Major political/economic blocs like G8 or major institutions like the IMF or the World Bank make important decisions relating to reducing the debts of poorer countries or influencing levels of international financial aid.
- If LEDCs do not develop their economies to some extent they will not have sufficient purchasing power to buy goods from MEDCs and there is a risk of political instability and its subsequent impact on world markets. Both economic and political checks and balances are often more sophisticated than they appear.
- A key issue is the extent to which individuals are motivated entirely by self-interest or the extent to which they expect their own politicians to act more altruistically towards those in LEDCs (perhaps through more generous foreign aid) or how far consumers are prepared to pay a little more for, say, Fair Trade products such as tea, coffee or fruit.
- Similarly, many are prepared to question the legitimacy of war when large countries disregard the sovereignty of smaller countries, particularly if occupation is protracted and costly both economically and in terms of loss of life.

Distribution of marks across questions and assessment objectives for Unit 6

Question Numbers		Section A				Section B	AO marks per Unit
		1	2	3	4	5-8	
Assessment Objectives	AO1	1	1	1	1	6	10
	AO2	1	1	1	1	5	9
	AO3	4	2	3	2	7	18
	AO4	3	5	4	4	7	23
Total marks per Question		9	9	9	8	25	60