AQA

ASSESSMENT and
QUALIFICATIONS
ALLIANCE

General Certificate of Education

Government and Politics 5151/6151

GOV1 Electoral Systems and Voting Behaviour

Mark Scheme

2006 examination –January 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.

CRITERIA FOR MARKING AS/A2
GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

Introduction

The AQA's revised Government and Politics specification has been designed to be objectives-led in that questions are set which address the assessment objectives published in the specification. The assessment objectives for A Level and AS are the same, but the weightings are different at AS and A2. Details of the weightings are given in paragraphs 7.2 and 8.4 of the specification.

The schemes of marking reflect these objectives. The mark scheme which follows is of the *levels of response* type showing that candidates are expected to demonstrate their mastery of the skills required in the context of their knowledge and understanding of Government and Politics. Mark schemes provide the necessary framework for examiners but they cannot cover all eventualities. Candidates should be given credit for partially complete answers. Where appropriate, candidates should be given credit for referring to recent and contemporary developments in Government and Politics.

Consistency of marking is of the essence in all public examinations. It is therefore of vital importance that assistant examiners apply the marking scheme as directed by the Principal Examiner in order to facilitate comparability with the marking of other options.

Before scrutinising and applying the detail of the specific mark scheme which follows, assistant examiners are required to familiarise themselves with the general principles of the mark scheme as contained in the Assessment Matrix.

Using a levels of response mark scheme

Good examining is about the **consistent** application of judgement. Mark schemes provide a framework within which examiners exercise their judgement. This is especially so in subjects like Government and Politics which in part rely upon analysis, evaluation, argument and explanation. With this in mind, examiners should use the Assessment Matrix alongside the detailed mark scheme for each question. The Assessment Matrix provides a framework ensuring a consistent, generic source from which the detailed mark schemes are derived. This supporting framework ensures a consistent approach within which candidates' responses are marked according to the level of demand and context of each question.

Examiners should initially make a decision about which Level any given response should be placed in. Having determined the appropriate Level the examiners must then choose the precise mark to be given within that Level. In making a decision about a specific mark to award, it is vitally important to think first of the mid-range within the Level, where that Level covers more than two marks. Comparison with other candidates' responses to the same question might then suggest whether the middle mark is unduly generous or severe.

In making decisions away from the middle of the Level, examiners should ask themselves questions relating to candidate attainment, including the quality of language. The more positive the answers, the higher should be the mark awarded. We want to avoid "bunching" of marks. Levels mark schemes can produce regression to the mean, which should be avoided. A candidate's script should be considered by asking "Is it:

- precise in its use of factual information?
- appropriately detailed?
- factually accurate?
- appropriately balanced or markedly better in some areas than others?
- generally coherent in expression and cogent in development (as appropriate to the level awarded)?
- well presented as to general quality of language?"

The overall aim is to mark positively, giving credit for what candidates know, understand and can do.

AS GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS (GOV1, GOV2, GOV3)

GENERIC MARK SCHEME for part (a) questions (Total: 8 marks)

	Knowledge and Understanding: Recall, Select & Deploy	**Skills: Analysis & Evaluation**	**Communication**
	AO1	**AO2**	**AO3**
	Levels 3–4 **(3–4 marks)** The candidate successfully demonstrates accurate or generally accurate knowledge and understanding of political data, concept(s) or term(s). Where appropriate, the candidate is able to illustrate his/her answer with relevant evidence/example(s).	**Levels 3–4** **(2 marks)** The candidate provides an appropriate analysis of political data, concept(s) or term(s) showing an awareness of differing viewpoints where appropriate.	**Levels 3–4** **(2 marks)** The candidate communicates clearly and effectively using appropriate political vocabulary.
	Levels 1–2 **(1–2 marks)** The candidate demonstrates slight or basic knowledge and understanding of political data, concept(s) or term(s). The candidate may illustrate his/her answer with evidence/example(s) of limited relevance.	**Levels 1–2** **(1 mark)** The candidate provides a superficial or partial analysis of political data, concept(s) or term(s).	**Levels 1–2** **(1 mark)** The candidate communicates with limited clarity and effectiveness using a limited political vocabulary.

AS GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS (GOV1, GOV2, GOV3)

GENERIC MARK SCHEME for part (b) questions (Total: 22 marks)

	Knowledge and Understanding: Recall, Select & Deploy	**Skills: Analysis & Evaluation**	**Communication**
	AO1	**AO2**	**AO3**
	Level 4 (10–11 marks) The candidate successfully demonstrates accurate knowledge and understanding of political concepts/theories/institutions and processes and the relationship between them, producing an answer that deploys relevant knowledge and understanding to address the requirements of the question and that demonstrates significant contextual awareness. The candidate's answer includes relevant evidence and/or examples to substantiate and illustrate points made.	**Level 4 (7 marks)** The candidate evaluates political institutions, processes and behaviour, applying appropriate concepts and theories. The candidate provides analysis which displays sound awareness of differing viewpoints and a clear recognition of issues. Parallels and connections are identified, together with valid and precise comparisons. The answer includes relevant and convincing interpretations or explanations.	**Level 4 (4 marks)** The candidate communicates clear arguments and explanations using accurate political vocabulary. The candidate produces answers with a clear sense of direction leading towards a coherent conclusion.
	Level 3 (7–9 marks) The candidate demonstrates generally accurate knowledge and understanding of political concepts/theories/institutions and processes and the relationship between them, producing an answer that addresses the requirements of the question and demonstrates adequate contextual awareness. The answer provides evidence backed up by clear examples to illustrate points made.	**Level 3 (5–6 marks)** The candidate evaluates political institutions, processes and behaviour, applying some concepts or theories. The candidate provides clear arguments and explanations and demonstrates awareness of differing viewpoints and a recognition of issues. Parallels and connections are identified, together with some sound comparison.	**Level 3 (3 marks)** The candidate communicates arguments and explanations using some political vocabulary. A conclusion is linked to the preceding discussion.

GENERIC MARK SCHEME for part (b) questions (continued)

	Knowledge and Understanding: Recall, Select & Deploy	Skills: Analysis & Evaluation	Communication
	AO1	AO2	AO3
	Level 2 **(4–6 marks)** The candidate demonstrates basic knowledge and understanding of political concepts/theories/institutions and processes and some awareness of the relationship between them. He/she makes a limited attempt to address the requirements of the question. The candidate may demonstrate contextual awareness covering part of the question, and may produce limited evidence and/or few examples.	**Level 2** **(3–4 marks)** The candidate offers a simplistic evaluation of political institutions, processes and behaviour and begins to construct arguments which contain basic explanation. The candidate shows some awareness of differing viewpoints. There is recognition of basic parallels or simplistic comparisons.	**Level 2** **(2 marks)** The candidate attempts to develop an argument using basic political vocabulary. Where a conclusion is offered, its relationship to the preceding discussion may be modest or implicit.
	Level 1 **(1–3 marks)** The candidate demonstrates slight and/or incomplete knowledge and understanding of political concepts/theories/institutions and processes and limited awareness of the relationship between them. The candidate makes a very limited attempt to address the requirements of the question. Only superficial awareness of the context of the question is evident and the few examples cited are often inaccurately reported or inappropriately used.	**Level 1** **(1–2 marks)** The candidate makes a partial attempt to evaluate political institutions, processes and behaviour. Arguments offered are superficial. There is very limited awareness of parallels or comparisons.	**Level 1** **(1 mark)** The answer relies upon narrative which is not fully coherent and which is expressed without using political vocabulary. A conclusion is either not offered or it is not related to the preceding material.

1   **Total for this question: 30 marks**

(a)   Explain the term *class-based politics* used as the heading of the extract.   *(8 marks)*

Candidates should convey the general idea of politics being organised around class over and above
other variables. They may do this through the use of examples with, for example, trade unions
representing the working class and supporting Labour while employers, representing the middle class,
generally support the Conservatives. The idea that parties can represent class interests may be
mentioned in terms of, for example, Labour having pro-welfare policies or the Conservatives passing
anti-union legislation. There may also be references to collectivism/individualism which is contained
in the extract. Some may comment on the decline of class politics with the realignment of the parties
and the dealignment of voters. Others may mention the changing nature of class or the emergence of
'middle Britain' as an important class which is wooed by catch-all parties.

(b)   Analyse the principal characteristics of Britain's contemporary political culture.   *(22 marks)*

Candidates should explore the set of values, beliefs, attitudes and behaviours which exist in the British
political system in terms of elites/mass culture, various sub-cultures, or comment on its
homogeneity/diversity. There may be a focus on class, nationalist, ethnic, gender, generational,
urban/rural sub-cultures and values. There may be consideration of the impact of religion, such as
regarding Northern Ireland's politics or the emergence of Islamophobia. Some may analyse specific
beliefs and attitudes, such as deference, the right to own property, free speech, etc or the changing
nature of the political culture resulting from media, celebrity, or the by-product of other cultural
change. Others may see the political culture primarily in terms of the ideologies behind the old
postwar consensus and the post-Thatcherite consensus (pro-welfare, collectivism, pro-equality as
opposed to pro-enterprise, individualism, anti-dependency). There may be reference to the historical
context of Britain's decline as a world/imperial power, the consequences of links with the US or
moves to Europeanise British politics. This may also include mention of globalisation and the
declining significance of a country's political culture. The dynamic element may also be explored
through changing class patterns, changing gender roles, changing age structures, etc. Some may refer
specifically to the civic culture and comment on the changing nature of participation by the
individual. Examples may be drawn from a wide range of sources – urban/rural foxhunting;
undeferential media and changed attitudes towards the monarchy; decline of collectivism and trade
union membership, etc. There should be an attempt to dissect aspects of the political culture, with
evidence cited, and an attempt to justify content selected as being 'principal characteristics'.

2   **Total for this question: 30 marks**

(a)   Explain the term *tactical voting* used in the extract   *(8 marks)*

Answers should explain tactical voting in terms of voters casting their votes in ways which will not reflect their first preferred choices of candidates, but which take into account the candidates' relative levels of support in order to remove their least preferred candidates. Examples may be given in general terms, as in the extract, or a specific constituency campaign may be cited.

(b)   'Volatile and often unpredictable.'   To what extent is this an accurate description of contemporary voting behaviour?   *(22 marks)*

Candidates may refer to stimulus material to argue the case for volatility or stability. They might also refer to the nature of electoral swing in support of their arguments, citing recent general election results, such as 1997, and the decline in Conservative support after a lengthy period of ascendancy. There may be references to the timing of individuals' voting decisions, with some elections showing many late decisions; whereas decisions appeared to be made well in advance in 2001. Candidates may distinguish between stable core voters and volatile floating/switching voters. The decline in partisan attachment and class dealignment might be referred to in arguments concerning the nature of contemporary voting behaviour. Some might analyse voting behaviour in terms of the changing importance of primacy and recency factors. There may be references to electoral churn and the influence of movements of previous non-voters turned voters and previous voters turned non-voters in aggregate voting patterns. There may also be references to the evidence supplied by opinion polls to voters' preferences between elections or during campaigns, such as Conservative flat-lining in 2001. Unpredictability might be argued in terms of, for example, the large swing in 1997, specific by-election results, extreme parties in local government elections, voting in the context of local mayors (H'angus the monkey), or regional referendum results (decisive rejection in North East). Other examples might support arguments concerning predictable voting, such as the foregone result of 2001. There should be a conclusion on the nature of contemporary voting behaviour which draws upon the preceding arguments and evidence.

3   **Total for this question: 30 marks**

(a)   Explain the term *proportionality* used in the extract.   *(8 marks)*

Answers should make an appropriate reference to the relationship between votes cast and seats won. There may be supporting arguments that proportionality is not all-or-nothing, but on a scale with some electoral systems being more proportional than others. Majoritarian systems may be cited in the explanation along with specific examples. There may be brief references to the advantages and disadvantages of more/less proportionality.

(b)   Assess the disadvantages of the additional member system (AMS).   *(22 marks)*

Very occasionally, AMS is also referred to as Mixed Member Proportional (MMP) and the Jenkins Commission proposal of Alternative Vote Plus (AV Plus) is also a form of AMS. (Since Jenkins firmly rejected STV in preference for AV Plus, this may trigger brief references to the candidates' former answers.) In order to emphasise the disadvantages, some candidates will refer to the strengths of the AMS system in terms of proportionality, strong and stable government, and preservation of the constituency-MP links. Disadvantages may include the risk of AMS producing coalition governments with a disproportionate 'balance of power' being held by third or minority parties. Particularly well-informed candidates might refer to the experience of AMS in Germany where coalitions, but stable ones, have been commonplace or recent experience in New Zealand where the third placed New Zealand First Party wielded disproportionate power. More likely references will be to devolved election results and the formation of coalition 'governments' in both Scotland and Wales. The advantage of the split vote and the maintenance of the constituency-MP link may be challenged by the argument that AMS produces two classes of MP. Super-MPs are elected by the constituencies, whilst second class MPs are elected from the lists. Otherwise unelectable or previously failed MPs tend to placed on the list (Welsh example?) giving rise to constituency-MP/list-MP status divisions. Also, where First Past The Post (FPTP) is used within AMS, the disadvantages of the former remain. Finally, it might be argued that the party machines dominate the selection of list candidates and they are therefore less exposed to democratic selection than constituency candidates. However, open lists may allow for greater voter choice.

4 **Total for this question: 30 marks**

(a)   Explain the term *voter fatigue* used in the extract.   *(8 marks)*

The notion that voters can become fatigued, bored, apathetic, etc through too many demands from the ballot box. Candidates might point out that in the past the electorate voted at two levels only – local government elections and parliamentary elections. Now there are additional elections at devolved and EU level with some additional at local government level for directly elected mayors and in London for the Assembly. Added to this have been numerous referendums which established these new representative institutions. Other candidates might link voter fatigue with aspects of 'hapathy' – the idea that a relatively contented electorate are no longer moved to vote over the redistributions of wealth.

(b)   Assess the effectiveness of the measures designed to increase participation, such as electoral reform and greater use of referendums.   *(22 marks)*

Candidates may consider that voting is the main form of political participation for most of the electorate and that electoral reform and referendums are important in this context. Greater proportionality in electoral systems will encourage participation by those with minority views who are relatively ineffective under first-past-the-post. The example of the Liberal Democrats being under-rewarded by seats in Parliament given their share of the popular vote might be cited. Giving all votes similar weight might encourage participation by supporters of previously fringe/minority parties. Referendums may also be portrayed as enhancing participation with the continued European Community membership, devolution, Good Friday Agreement mentioned as examples. Despite such measures, turnout rates have been generally lower than in general elections. Elections to the European Parliament are generally low (24% in 1999) with turnout in directly-elected mayor local referendums generally being in the low 30% area, with that in Lewisham being at 18%. Ensuing discussion might explore differential turnouts, with plausible explanation, for 79% turnout in 2001 for the 64+ age range but only 38% for 18-24 year olds or 72% in Winchester and 34% in Liverpool Riverside. Another approach might challenge the test for electoral reform for assemblies which have limited legislative powers or challenge the test for referendums held only on narrow constitutional issues. Further discussion might explore whether turnout in all elections rests on modernising voting methods, citing all-postal elections held on an experimental basis or the referendum for North East regional assembly. There may also be references to Citizenship education and compulsory voting. The strongest candidates conclude on whether the two observations are correct, linked in a cause and effect relationship, or simply 'independent' developments.