

General Certificate of Education
June 2006
Advanced Level Examination



GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS
Unit 4 Comparative UK/USA Government

GOV4

Tuesday 27 June 2006 9.00 am to 10.30 am

For this paper you must have:

- an 8-page answer book

Time allowed: 1 hour 30 minutes

Instructions

- Use blue or black ink or ball-point pen.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book. The *Examining Body* for this paper is AQA. The *Paper Reference* is GOV4.
- Answer **Question 1** and **one** other question.
- Do all rough work in the answer book. Cross through any work you do not want marked.

Information

- The maximum mark for this paper is 80.
- The marks for questions (or part questions) are shown in brackets.
- You are reminded of the need for good English and clear presentation in your answers. All questions should be answered in continuous prose. Quality of Written Communication will be assessed in all answers.

Advice

- You are advised to read through the examination paper before you attempt the questions.
- You are advised to spend the same amount of time on each question.

Answer **Question 1** and **one** other question.

Each question carries 40 marks.

- 1 Study the extract below and answer parts (a) to (c) which follow.

The Role of the Cabinet in the UK and the US

The Cabinet is not mentioned in the US Constitution, although all Presidents have had one. However, the Cabinet has much lower status than in the UK. In the UK and the US there is much interest in who is appointed to the Cabinet, for the nature of the appointments gives some idea of the likely tone and style of the administration. In both countries, Cabinet membership is usually around 20. In both cases the heads of important government departments will be included. Prime Ministers and Presidents include who they wish, for Cabinets are their personal creation. Both, however, are subject to personal and political considerations in their choice of Cabinet members. Once they have been appointed to the Cabinet, British politicians often stay there even though they may be reshuffled. A few go on to be Prime Minister or Deputy Prime Minister. In the US, once Cabinet members have finished serving their President, they usually leave politics, often having made little impact on the public at large.

In the UK, the Cabinet is the main decision-making body. Even if the Prime Minister is very powerful, the role of the Cabinet is still a major one, although commentators debate the balance of power between the Prime Minister and his Cabinet colleagues. This is not the case in the US where the President may choose to ignore his Cabinet, whom he may see as simply spokespersons for their departments, and look elsewhere for policy advice, coordination and support.

In the UK, the doctrine of *collective responsibility* applies to Cabinet members, unlike the US where disagreements over policies are much more apparent between the different department heads and other members of the Cabinet. The British executive is to a much greater extent based on the idea of Cabinet government. In a parliamentary system there is not the same focus on the person who leads the team, although the exact relationship between the Prime Minister and their Cabinet colleagues is a variable factor.

Source: adapted from DUNCAN WATTS, *Understanding US/UK Government and Politics*,
Manchester University Press, 2003

- (a) Explain the term *collective responsibility* used in the extract. (8 marks)
- (b) Using the extract and your own knowledge, consider the factors taken into account by UK Prime Ministers and US Presidents when constructing their Cabinets. (12 marks)
- (c) ‘The Cabinet is the main decision-making body in the UK but not in the US.’ Discuss. (20 marks)

Answer **either** Question 2 **or** Question 3 **or** Question 4.

- 2 Compare the extent to which the constitutional principles of 'the separation of powers' and 'checks and balances' exist in the constitutions of both the UK and the US. (40 marks)
- 3 Evaluate the view that in the US congressional committees are too powerful and in the UK parliamentary committees are too weak. (40 marks)
- 4 'Judiciaries in liberal democracies can be distinguished by the presence or absence of the power of judicial review.'
Discuss with reference to the judiciaries of the US and the UK. (40 marks)

END OF QUESTIONS

There are no questions printed on this page