



General Certificate of Education

Government and Politics 5151/6151

**GOV1 Electoral Systems and Voting
Behaviour**

Mark Scheme

2007 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.

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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
	<p>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).</p> <p>Where appropriate, the candidate is able to illustrate his/her answer with relevant evidence/example(s).</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>Levels 3–4 (2 marks) The candidate communicates clearly and effectively using appropriate political vocabulary.</p>
	<p>Levels 1–2 (1–2 marks) The candidate demonstrates slight or basic knowledge and understanding of political data, concept(s) or term(s).</p> <p>The candidate may illustrate his/her answer with evidence/example(s) of limited relevance.</p>	<p>Levels 1–2 (1 mark) The candidate provides a superficial or partial analysis of political data, concept(s) or term(s).</p>	<p>Levels 1–2 (1 mark) The candidate communicates with limited clarity and effectiveness using a limited political vocabulary.</p>

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
	<p>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.</p> <p>The candidate's answer includes relevant evidence and/or examples to substantiate and illustrate points made.</p>	<p>Level 4 (7 marks) The candidate evaluates political institutions, processes and behaviour, applying appropriate concepts and theories.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>
	<p>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.</p> <p>The answer provides evidence backed up by clear examples to illustrate points made.</p>	<p>Level 3 (5–6 marks) The candidate evaluates political institutions, processes and behaviour, applying some concepts or theories.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>Level 3 (3 marks) The candidate communicates arguments and explanations using some political vocabulary. A conclusion is linked to the preceding discussion.</p>

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

	Knowledge and Understanding: Recall, Select & Deploy	Skills: Analysis & Evaluation	Communication
	AO1	AO2	AO3
	<p>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.</p> <p>The candidate may demonstrate contextual awareness covering part of the question, and may produce limited evidence and/or few examples.</p>	<p>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.</p> <p>The candidate shows some awareness of differing viewpoints. There is recognition of basic parallels or simplistic comparisons.</p>	<p>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.</p>
	<p>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.</p> <p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>	<p>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.</p>

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

(a) Explain the term *campaign strategies* used in the passage. (8 marks)

Candidates are provided with the 'decapitation' example in the stimulus, which may be the only example cited in weaker responses. Better answers portray campaign strategies in terms of plans to appeal to and win the support of specific target voters by allocating resources appropriately. Examples might include, for example, the 2005 Conservative strategy of focusing on core issues of bogus asylum seekers and immigration and/or marginal rather than safe seats.

(b) Assess the importance of geographical factors when explaining contemporary patterns of voting behaviour in general elections. (22 marks)

The stimulus provides some contemporary information that might be incorporated into a more comprehensive response. Candidates comment on Labour support being strongest in Scotland, Wales and the North of England, with Conservatives ahead in the East and South. Some may note that in terms of the popular vote, the Conservatives narrowly 'won' England but lost the election because of the party's weakness in Scotland and Wales. The general pattern is explored through or explained by socio-economic factors concerning the electorate. Some may examine, for example, the links between voting and seats (Labour 26 800 votes for a seat; Tories 44 200 votes for a seat; LDs 96 500 votes for a seat) with the biggest constituencies in England, and this should not be seen as deviating from the set question if discussed in context. Another approach may be to consider voting behaviour in terms of turnout, with increases greater in the South than in the North. Such patterns may be explored further in socio-economic or social capital terms. The urban-suburban division might be considered together with the impact of ethnic minority voting, or a more general urban-rural split with the impact of possible cultural factors such as attitudes towards hunting. Other aspects, such as swing or the differing meaning of the general election in devolved Britain, may also be considered. The conclusion should include the required assessment.

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

(a) Briefly explain what is meant by the term *political culture* used in the extract. (8 marks)

Candidates define the term through reference to distinguishing political values, attitudes and behaviours. Influences on shaping political culture are wide-ranging from the political socialisation process to government conventions. There may be reference to the 'civic culture' or contested features such as deference, respect, class, gender, region or religion. The very best responses might refer to the existence of political sub-cultures, a globalised culture, or a mass culture. Some candidates may explore political culture through examining aspects of voting behaviour and this should be rewarded as appropriate.

(b) 'Gender, class and age'. Assess the relative influence of these factors on the involvement of individuals in politics. (22 marks)

Each factor has the possibility of being subject to limited historical treatment as part of the required assessment. The extract frames the idea of continuity and change. For example, the changing roles of women in politics from gaining the vote to entering Number Ten; the declining significance of social class as education levels rise (some help in the extract here) or the decline in class-membership organisations such as the trade unions; the rise of 'grey' politics as well as a greater ethnic mix which also can subsume other factors. Involvement in politics can be seen in terms of, for example, 'gladiators' and 'spectators'; the 'ladder of participation'; or in terms of pressure group involvement, new social movements or voting behaviour. Pre-packaged responses on the latter should receive limited credit. Candidates may answer in ways led by case-study and example citing, for example, participation by the young in the Anti-war Coalition or men in Fathers4Justice. Candidates should attempt the required assessment although it is acceptable for qualified conclusions to be offered. There should be an attempt to include all factors referred to in the set question, but there is no requirement for balanced consideration. A high level response may explore two factors in greater depth. Some candidates may treat the factors holistically and contrast their influence with other, eg, short-term factors.

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

(a) Explain the term *mandate* used in the extract.

(8 marks)

Responses should refer to the notion that victory in a general election gives the winning party authority to implement its manifesto pledges or campaign policies. The mandate is sometimes seen as a contract between the electorate and the government. Candidates might briefly discuss problems with the idea of the mandate – such as hung parliaments resulting in coalition ‘deals’, majority governments elected by a minority of voters or the reality of electors who support a party without agreeing to the entire manifesto.

(b) To what extent can referendums be more effective than general elections in giving the electorate opportunities to influence government?

(22 marks)

Candidates are asked to make evaluations and an assessment through applying their knowledge of referendums and general elections. It is possible that responses from some candidates are grounded in historical ‘fact’ (eg at the time of writing the UK has had only one national referendum on continued membership of the EEC) whilst others, led by the stimulus, might explore a more hypothetical situation. Arguments are wide-ranging and include issues such as the frequency of referendums, the nature of referendums as binding or advisory, the limited scope of referendum issues, the selective electorates involved, the level of turnout, indecisive results as a basis for policy, implications for parliamentary sovereignty, the frequency of general elections, the mandate, the level of popular support required for election to office and the implications of electing an MP for influencing government. Either within the development of the answer or in the conclusion, stronger candidates attempt the required comparison and assessment, although it may be couched in tentative terms. There may be some comparative politics included, which should receive credit if used appropriately regarding, for example, Switzerland’s use of the referendum or California’s experience with Propositions (13 being a case in point). Such examples may be drawn upon in support of the arguments, both of the historical and hypothetical slant.

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

(a) Explain the term *electoral bias* used in the passage.

(8 marks)

Candidates should be aware that electoral systems are not neutral technical devices that translate votes into seats in an impartial manner. At the general level they should be aware of the criteria favoured by majoritarian or proportional systems or at the specific level, aware of the partisan bias which might operate within an electoral system. The focus might be on, for example, fairness versus efficiency, partisan bias, or the position regarding small or third parties.

(b) 'Electoral reform is clearly more attractive to opposition parties than to the party of government.' Discuss.

(22 marks)

Candidates may develop the logic contained within the extract and argue that it is now the Conservatives rather than Labour that should be displaying a greater interest in electoral reform. The present first-past-the-post system had an inbuilt bias against the Conservative Party which seems unlikely to be remedied by Boundary Commissions tinkering. During the 1980s into the 1990s the system appeared biased against Labour with around 42 per cent of the popular vote providing the Conservative Party with large parliamentary majorities. There may be a reference to the work of the internal Labour Party Plant Commission and its recommendation of the supplementary vote. This interest in electoral reform was expressed in office with the establishment of the Jenkins Commission and its majority report which recommended AV+. The subsequent inaction on the general election reforms may be related to New Labour's landslide victories, especially in 1997 and 2001. However, stronger responses may challenge the thrust of the stimulus quote by arguing that Labour has converted the UK into a laboratory for electoral reform with new systems for elections to the European Parliament, the devolved bodies, the London elections as well as much more frequent usage of the referendum. Such experimentation might be seen as a forerunner to general election reform, or not. There is also likely to be consideration of the Liberal Democrats and their preference for STV, a system already in use in Northern Ireland. Strong responses will explore reasons why governments might benefit from reform and why oppositions might not. Appropriate allowance should be given to candidates who interpret the term 'opposition parties' as excluding the official Opposition.