



**General Certificate of Education**

**Government and Politics  
1151/2151**

**GOV3A     The Politics of the USA**

**Mark Scheme**

*2010 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**

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 Section 4.2 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 mark 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.

Generally speaking there is no unambiguously 'right' or 'wrong' answer to the B questions. Answers will be judged on factors such as quality of the argument, depth of knowledge and understanding, a synoptic grasp of the subject, appropriateness of the examples and internal logic of the discussion. Where candidates are presented with a proposition to be discussed they may support it, reject it, or adopt a balanced position.

There are no limits to the areas of knowledge that candidates may feel able bring to the discussion. Therefore the specification of requirements outlined in the mark schemes can only be indicative. Candidates are not expected to include all the material presented in order to access the full range of available marks. At the same time they may successfully include material from their particular studies which is not indicated in the scheme.

### **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.

**A2 GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS**  
**GENERIC MARK SCHEME for part (a) questions (Total: 10 marks)**

| <b>Knowledge and Understanding:<br/>Recall, Select &amp; Deploy</b>  | <b>Skills:<br/>Analysis &amp;<br/>Evaluation</b>  | <b>Communication</b>   |
|--|---|--|
| <b>AO1</b>   | <b>AO2</b>  | <b>AO3</b>   |
| <p><b>Level 4<br/>(4 marks)</b><br/>The candidate demonstrates a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of political concepts, institutions and processes. The candidate fully addresses the requirements of the question and provides developed and effective to comprehensive interpretation. The answer also provides clear to accurate evidence and, where appropriate, good to excellent examples to illustrate points made.</p> | <p><b>Level 4<br/>(4 marks)</b><br/>The candidate applies an excellent range of developed concepts and uses appropriate political theory to construct a clear and cogent explanation or argument.</p> | <p><b>Levels 3–4<br/>(2 marks)</b><br/>The candidate communicates clearly and effectively in a sustained and structured manner, using appropriate political vocabulary. There are few, if any, errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar and the response should be legible.<br/>The answer has a clear sense of direction, is focused on the question and, where appropriate, has a conclusion which flows from the discussion.</p>   |
| <p><b>Level 3<br/>(3 marks)</b><br/>The candidate demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of political concepts, institutions and processes. The candidate clearly addresses the requirements of the question and provides sound interpretation and contextual awareness. The answer includes good examples to illustrate points made.</p>   | <p><b>Level 3<br/>(3 marks)</b><br/>The candidate applies a good range of developed concepts and uses appropriate political theory to construct a clear and cogent explanation or argument.</p>       |  |
| <p><b>Level 2<br/>(2 marks)</b><br/>The candidate demonstrates limited knowledge and understanding of political concepts, institutions and processes. The candidate makes a limited attempt to address the requirements of the question and provides little to partial but reasonably effective interpretation. Answers offer limited evidence and few or inaccurate examples to illustrate points made.</p>                             | <p><b>Level 2<br/>(2 marks)</b><br/>The candidate applies a limited range of concepts and makes limited use of political theory or ideas in developing an explanation or argument.</p>                | <p><b>Levels 1–2<br/>(1 mark)</b><br/>The candidate communicates explanations or arguments with limited clarity and effectiveness, using limited political vocabulary. The answer may lack either a clear focus on the question or a sense of direction.<br/>There are frequent errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar and legibility may be a problem. A conclusion, where appropriate, may be offered but its relationship to the preceding discussion is modest or implicit.</p> |
| <p><b>Level 1<br/>(1 mark)</b><br/>The candidate demonstrates little knowledge and understanding of political concepts, institutions and processes. The candidate makes little attempt to address the requirements of the question and provides little interpretation. Answers offer little evidence and few or inaccurate examples to illustrate points.</p>  | <p><b>Level 1<br/>(1 mark)</b><br/>The candidate applies few concepts and makes little use of political theory or ideas in developing an explanation or argument.</p>                                 |  |
| <p><b>0 marks</b><br/>No relevant response.</p>  | <p><b>0 marks</b><br/>No relevant response.</p>   | <p><b>0 marks</b><br/>No relevant response.</p>  |

**A2 GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS  
GENERIC MARK SCHEME for part (b) questions (Total: 30 marks)**

| <b>Knowledge and Understanding:<br/>Recall, Select &amp; Deploy</b>  | <b>Skills:<br/>Analysis &amp; Evaluation</b>  | <b>Communication</b>  |
|--|---|---|
| <b>AO1</b>   | <b>AO2</b>  | <b>AO3</b>  |
| <p><b>Level 4<br/>(10–12 marks)</b></p> <p>The candidate demonstrates a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of political concepts/theories/institutions and processes and the relationships between them.</p> <p>A synoptic approach is fully developed, drawing appropriately on knowledge, perspectives and examples from a wide range of studies in government and politics. The answer fully addresses the requirements of the question and demonstrates excellent contextual awareness.</p> <p>The answer includes excellent examples to illustrate points made. The answer includes detailed and comprehensive interpretations or explanations as well as accurate evidence and relevant examples to illustrate points made.</p> | <p><b>Level 4<br/>(10–12 marks)</b></p> <p>The candidate displays excellent awareness of the implications and demands of the question. There is an excellent and sustained focus on the specific question asked. There is clear and full evaluation of political institutions, processes and behaviour which displays a sophisticated awareness of differing viewpoints and recognition of issues. Appropriate parallels and connections are clearly identified together with well-developed comparisons. A wide range of concepts is used and developed.</p> | <p><b>Level 4<br/>(6 marks)</b></p> <p>The candidate communicates structured and sustained arguments, explanations and conclusions with clarity. Excellent use is made of political vocabulary to construct cogent and coherent arguments and explanations.</p> <p>The response should be legible with few, if any, errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar. The answer has a clear sense of direction, culminating in a conclusion that flows from the preceding discussion.</p> |
| <p><b>Level 3<br/>(7–9 marks)</b></p> <p>The candidate demonstrates sound knowledge and understanding of political concepts/theories/institutions and processes and the relationships between them.</p> <p>A synoptic approach is well developed, using a range of knowledge, perspectives and examples gained elsewhere in the study of government and politics. The answer clearly addresses the requirements of the question and demonstrates sound contextual awareness.</p> <p>The answer includes developed and effective interpretations or explanations and also clear evidence and good examples to illustrate points made.</p>   | <p><b>Level 3<br/>(7–9 marks)</b></p> <p>The candidate displays sound awareness of the implications and demands of the question. There is a clear focus on the question. There is a sound evaluation of political institutions, processes and behaviour which displays good awareness of differing viewpoints and recognition of issues. There is good recognition of parallels and comparisons. Appropriate concepts are used and developed.</p>   | <p><b>Level 3<br/>(4–5 marks)</b></p> <p>The candidate communicates arguments, explanations and conclusions well. Good use is made of political vocabulary to construct clear arguments and explanations. The response should be legible but there may be occasional errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar. The candidate produces an answer with a conclusion linked to the preceding discussion.</p>  |

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

| <b>Knowledge and Understanding:<br/>Recall, Select &amp; Deploy</b>   | <b>Skills:<br/>Analysis &amp; Evaluation</b>   | <b>Communication</b>   |
|---|--|--|
| <b>AO1</b>  | <b>AO2</b>   | <b>AO3</b>   |
| <p><b>Level 2<br/>(4–6 marks)</b></p> <p>The candidate demonstrates outline knowledge and understanding of political concepts/theories/institutions and processes and some awareness of the relationships between them. The answer makes a limited attempt to address the question and demonstrates contextual awareness covering part of the question. An attempt to develop a synoptic approach is made using a limited range of knowledge, perspectives and examples gained more broadly in the study of government and politics. The answer includes a partial and reasonably effective attempt at interpretation or explanation with some examples to illustrate points made.</p>    | <p><b>Level 2<br/>(4–6 marks)</b></p> <p>The candidate displays little awareness of the implications and demands of the question, resulting in a restricted focus. There is a limited evaluation of political institutions, processes and behaviour which displays a partial awareness of differing viewpoints and issues.</p> <p>There is some recognition of basic parallels and comparisons. Arguments and explanations are undeveloped with a limited use of concepts.</p> | <p><b>Level 2<br/>(2–3 marks)</b></p> <p>The candidate communicates arguments and conclusions adequately with a limited use of political vocabulary. There are frequent errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar and legibility may be a problem. A conclusion is offered but its relationship to the preceding discussion may be modest or implicit.</p> |
| <p><b>Level 1<br/>(1–3 marks)</b></p> <p>The candidate demonstrates a slight and incomplete knowledge and understanding of political institutions and processes and a limited awareness of the relationships between them. A very limited attempt at synopticity is made, sometimes using superficial or inaccurate knowledge, perspectives and examples sited from elsewhere in their study of government and politics. There is little attempt to address the requirements of the question. There is only superficial awareness, if any, of the context of the question, with little interpretation and few, if any, examples, often inaccurately reported or inappropriately used.</p> | <p><b>Level 1<br/>(1–3 marks)</b></p> <p>The candidate displays little awareness of the implications and demands of the question and focus is lacking. Evaluation of political institutions, processes and behaviour is superficial.</p> <p>Analysis shows little awareness of differing viewpoints and issues. There is little, if any, recognition of parallels and comparisons. Arguments, explanations and use of concepts are superficial and naïve.</p>                  | <p><b>Level 1<br/>(1 mark)</b></p> <p>The answer relies upon narrative which is not fully coherent. There is little or no use of political vocabulary. Errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar may be intrusive and the response may not be legible. A conclusion, if present, is not adequately related to the preceding discussion.</p>                |
| <p><b>0 marks</b></p> <p>No relevant response.</p>  | <p><b>0 marks</b></p> <p>No relevant response.</p>   | <p><b>0 marks</b></p> <p>No relevant response.</p>   |

1

**Total for this question: 40 marks**

- (a) Explain the significance of the New Hampshire primary and the Iowa caucus in the presidential nomination process. (10 marks)

Despite the increasing importance of the ‘invisible’ primary, the Iowa caucus is the first caucus and therefore first voting in the presidential race. The eyes of the world are on Iowa as the first real test of public opinion on the candidates and so, even though it is a small unrepresentative state, it can:

- give ‘momentum’ perhaps to an ‘outsider’ candidate (as it did to Obama in 2008)
- gain name recognition to the candidate who wins because of media attention, which in turn may bring in more finance to the campaign war chest
- provide an upset for the winner of the ‘invisible’ primary (as for Hillary Clinton in 2008).

Similarly the NHP is the first vote of a presidential primary state and can do the same as above BUT the significance of NHP may be in decline as the winners here have NOT gone on to win the nomination in recent times (Bill Clinton, G W Bush and Obama all suffered defeats in NH), SO its significance may be questioned compared to the past.

However, the significance of both caucus and primary may also be related to the fact that other states have ‘front-loaded’ their primaries as a result of the media attention and momentum gained by candidates in these two small and very unrepresentative states in the nomination process. For high marks expect discussion of the above with evidence and examples presented from recent contests.

- (b) Evaluate the major criticisms of the Electoral College **and** give reasons for the lack of significant reform to its workings. (30 marks)

The question demands a critical assessment of the Electoral College which would also necessitate a clear explanation of the **workings** of the EC (and possibly **why** it was introduced by the Founding Fathers as a **device** for the election of the President in the 18<sup>th</sup> century). It is an INDIRECT way of electing the US President. There are several criticisms of the EC as it works today, including:

- the distortion of the popular vote through the winner-take-all simple plurality system used in 48 of the states (bar Maine and Nebraska) and in DC
- the possibility of the election of a President who wins the EC vote but fails to win the popular vote (as in 2000), with effects on mandates and legitimacy
- the effects on electoral campaigning with an over-concentration on key swing or battleground states (and key voters within them) such as Ohio or Florida and a neglect of states that candidates are either certain to win or certain to lose, with effects on turnout in ‘safe’ states
- the problem of the ‘faithless/rogue elector’
- effects on 3<sup>rd</sup> party candidates such as Perot in 1992, with 19% of the vote yet no EC votes because of his dispersed vote
- the over and under-representation of states, with examples/reasons.



These are all likely to be covered at the higher levels of response, with supporting evidence and examples given and correct figures (eg the 270 out of 538 votes needed to win and the EC representation of different states according to population).

The question calls for an evaluation of the EC system so it is up to candidates to also put forward a case FOR the EC, which would also be part of the analysis as to **why it has not been reformed**, which must be addressed by candidates in their response. Such a defence of the EC could include:

- its usual success in producing a President with a mandate supported by a majority of voters in the states (with evidence) and subsequent stability of the system
- the lack of acceptable alternatives to elect a President (who is the only nationally elected politician), eg direct popular vote
- its acceptability to the states in the US federal system and to the American people, who have not lobbied for any reform.

For high marks, candidates must address the reasons for the difficulty of any reform to the system:

- its constitutional status and the need for a constitutional amendment for any reform; this is highly unlikely given the need for 2/3 of Congress and 3/4 of the states themselves to agree
- states rights arguments and the lack of incentive to change the system that benefits BOTH small and large states because of under and over-representation
- as above, the lack of consensus on an acceptable alternative
- the provisions in place for any tied EC vote involving the choice being made by the House of Representatives.

At a lower level expect a simple (and not always accurate) description of the EC, with little attempt at a critical assessment, little evidence and few examples. At a higher level of response expect most of the above, with evidence and examples backing up the analysis and evaluation.

2

**Total for this question: 40 marks**

(a) Identify the main difficulties facing minor parties in the US electoral process. (10 marks)

The strength of the two parties and the weakness of minor parties has led to a duopoly where minor parties struggle to have any effect at all in US elections.

Candidates would be expected at the higher level of response to indicate several of these barriers to their effective participation and their lack of any real electoral success. It would be possible to refer to:

- the strength of party identification and alignment in the US to the two main parties
- their catch-all nature squeezing out the need for alternatives and the lack of ideological or issue space for these parties NOT covered by the two main ones
- the workings of the first-past-the-post winner-take-all system and the Electoral College which squeezes out minor parties with little concentrated support
- lack of finance (only 5% of vote in previous election brings federal funding), with consequent effects on campaigning
- difficulties of ballot access because of state and party rules
- evidence from specific examples of electoral candidates other than from the two main parties such as Perot in 1992 and 1996 or Nader in 2000 or 2004.

For higher marks expect an identification of at least three or four of these difficulties, with some supporting evidence and examples.

(b) 'The ideological identity of the Democratic Party is now clearly liberal, whilst that of the Republican Party is now clearly conservative.' To what extent do you agree with this statement? (30 marks)

In response to this question, candidates should show awareness and understanding of the ideological roots of both parties and their values and beliefs, which attract different kinds of voters. The Democratic Party is certainly a more liberal party and evidence should be presented of this such as:

- the fact that its economic values tend to be more activist, interventionist and regulatory, and supportive of federal government power
- it is more likely to introduce and support welfare/health programmes such as Medicare and Medicaid
- it is more supportive of group rights such as women's rights or civil rights and more supportive of minorities
- it has a more liberal social agenda, generally being more pro-choice on the issue of abortion, more supportive of gun controls, stem cell research, affirmative action and gay marriage
- it is more 'dovish' internationally.

However, at the higher levels of response candidates should note that even though the Democratic Party has lost its southern conservative wing (The 'Dixiecrats') as a result of its commitment to civil rights from the 1960s, and has also lost some of its more conservative

blue-collar voters to Reagan (the ‘Reagan Democrats’) and also to Bush, there are still internal divisions within the party over key issues and so it may not be as ‘clearly liberal’ as stated in the quote. Bill Clinton stated in 1996 that ‘the era of big government is over’ and even though there are many liberal democrats in the Congress, the party still has many conservative members who do not support all of the above ideological positions, especially some of those from the more conservative states, such as those still found in the South.

Similarly, the Republican Party is certainly the more conservative of the two parties and candidates at the higher levels of response should be able to give evidence of its conservative ideology such as:

- its more laissez-faire and less activist, interventionist approach to the economy, with a greater commitment to the free market and de-regulation
- a greater stress on individualism as far as welfare and health care are concerned
- less concern for minority group rights and less supportive of gay, women’s and civil rights. Tends to be pro-life, pro-gun and anti-affirmative action
- supportive of states’ rights
- more ‘hawkish’ internationally.

Although the Republican Party is a fiscally and socially conservative party, the reference to ‘clearly’ in the question must also be referred to for higher level marks. It must be stressed that the Republican Party since Reagan, and also the Republican ‘Contract with America’ in 1994, has been less divided internally on policy and ideology and there is much evidence to present for it being ‘clearly’ more conservative than before the 1980s. It has attracted the votes of the southern states (since Nixon’s ‘southern strategy’) and has often captured the votes of workers in the North (the Joe 6-packs) with its more conservative positions. It has lost much of its ‘moderate’ wing of ‘Rockefeller Republicans’ in the process, although some do remain in the Congress and in the country. Some Republicans such as Guillian and Schwarzenegger are liberal on social policy and are pro-choice, even though they are fiscal conservatives at the same time. The parties can still be seen as ‘big tents’ ideologically. Impact of the 2008 defeat of the Republican Party and its attempts to redefine itself are likely to be discussed at the higher levels of response.

To gain higher marks for this question, candidates must present arguments showing that the two parties cannot be easily categorised as totally ‘liberal’ or ‘conservative’ but should certainly present evidence of growing ideological cohesion in both parties in recent years (and give evidence for higher marks, such as electoral campaigns of candidates and positions on voting in the Congress).

**3****Total for this question: 40 marks**

(a) Explain the difference between aligned and de-aligned voters in the USA. (10 marks)

These psephological terms or concepts refer to voter partisanship (or lack of it). Aligned voters are those with a strong identification with a party, gained usually through family socialisation and generally related to a voter's economic position or region, race or religion. Aligned voters are the voters who can (in most circumstances) be relied on to vote for the party regardless of the circumstances and the candidates. They are sometimes referred to as the 'base' or 'core vote' of the party, hence terms such as 'energising the base'. The majority of voters have some kind of alignment to a party (although it can be very strong or very weak).

De-aligned voters, by contrast, are voters who lack a party identification and who are often referred to in the US as 'Independent voters' whose votes are 'up for grabs' and who cannot be relied on to always vote the same way at every election. They are crucial voters (up to a third of voters are so described) and candidates aim their campaigning at these voters in their attempt to win office.

(b) Assess the significance of race, gender and religion as factors influencing US voting behaviour. (30 marks)

There are numerous factors that influence the way that voters vote in the US, including long-term factors such as the ones identified in the question.

#### RACE:

- very high levels of support for the Democratic Party, usually above 90%
- reasons vary from the impact of the New Deal/Civil Rights legislation/Democratic ideology supporting minorities/poor. Black candidates such as Jesse Jackson, Barack Obama
- alienation from the Republican Party (even though the party of Lincoln) and its ideology/policies, eg anti-immigration stance (alienates Hispanic voters) perceived as 'white' party not in support of civil rights
- evidence of some change, eg higher Republican voting among Catholic racial minorities, religious voters, higher-income minorities attracted to the Republican Party for lots of reasons, eg their tax policies.

#### GENDER:

- more women than men support the Democratic Party and vice-versa for the Republican Party. All recent elections have shown a large 'gender gap' in voting statistics. Reasons include:
- women ('soccer moms', 'security moms' or 'hockey moms') attracted to parties and candidates for different reasons. More women support the Democrats as they are more pro-choice, anti-gun, less 'hawkish'. The Democratic Party also focus more on health and education issues which appear to attract women voters. Men are more likely to vote Republican for the opposite reasons.

RELIGION:

- the impact of religion on voter choice is much more important in the US than in most other democracies. (Religion may also be connected to race and ethnicity.)
- the Protestant, particularly the Evangelical, vote is more Republican (influenced by cable channels such as the Christian broadcasting network) as it is pro-life, pro-family values, etc
- the Catholic vote is more divided (see voting statistics) with many Catholics switching their vote in recent elections (eg 2004) on the abortion issue even though in the past the Catholic vote has been heavily Democrat because of minority status
- the Jewish vote has been heavily Democrat and important in key swing states such as Florida.

Candidates must focus on all these three social factors and assess their significance on voter choice. Good candidates may indicate the difficulty of separating out these social factors as voters will have all three characteristics (unless atheist) as they will interact. In order to access the higher marks candidates should analyse all three factors to a greater or lesser degree with **explanations** given for differences, and should include supporting evidence and examples from recent elections and voting studies. Sweeping assertions with no evidence presented should not be highly rewarded.

4

**Total for this question: 40 marks**

(a) Explain the term 'pluralist democracy' in the context of US politics. (10 marks)

The concept of pluralist democracy refers to the fact that the thousands of diverse views and interests that are found in the US are able to be organised in order to protect and defend those aims and interests and have them represented to the government, who will take those interests into account when making decisions on public policy. Pluralism represents a **positive** view of the actions of organised competing groups as intermediaries between the government and the governed. In a pluralist democracy all groups have the **potential** to influence decisions and the political system is **open** to all competing groups and power, therefore, is **dispersed**. However, a pluralist democracy does not mean that all groups have an equal influence on decision-making. Many would argue that the US is pluralist in the sense of the thousands of pressure groups that exist. However, many would argue (especially the elite theorists) that power is NOT dispersed in the US and some pressure groups are much more powerful than others (eg corporate lobbies) and that power is concentrated rather than dispersed.

(b) Discuss the factors that determine the success of US pressure groups in achieving their political objectives. (30 marks)

Candidates should present arguments and evidence showing that whether pressure groups are successful or not is dependent on a number of important variables, and that whilst some pressure groups are highly successful in achieving their objectives, others are not. There are several factors that candidates may analyse regarding success or failure of US pressure groups and their activities:

- their role in campaign finance and fund raising through PACs and their contributions to political candidates
- their 'access' to decision-makers (through the different access points of US government, eg the Executive, Congress, State legislatures, etc)
- their lobbying activities through lobbyists and their expertise and specialist knowledge that may gain them access, eg to the congressional committees, the 'revolving door' syndrome
- the strength of their membership/numbers who support their aims
- whether public opinion is on their side or not
- whether they are 'inside' or 'outside' decision-making (therefore have to use 'outside' methods such as demonstrations or direct action)
- which party controls government (or its parts) and whether the party supports their objectives or not
- whether they are able to form an 'iron triangle' within an 'issue network'
- whether they can provide successful 'amicus curiae' briefs to the Supreme Court.

At the highest levels of response expect reference to several of these arguments, with supporting evidence and examples from either powerful pressure groups whose methods have brought them success, such as the NRA in preventing gun control or the corporate lobbies who have achieved substantial tax breaks, or those who have NOT achieved success because of their lack of some of the above, such as the pro-life movement in overturning Roe v Wade or the more extremist fringe of US pressure groups, who have often resorted to violent methods which have been counter-productive.

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**ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVE GRID**

| <b>A2<br/>Assessment<br/>Objective</b> | <b>Marks<br/>allocated by<br/>Assessment<br/>Objective<br/>Part (a)<br/>question</b> | <b>Marks<br/>allocated by<br/>Assessment<br/>Objective<br/>Part (b)<br/>question</b> | <b>Total Marks by<br/>Assessment<br/>Objective</b> |
|--|--|--|--|
| <b>AO1</b>                             | 4  | 12   | 16   |
| <b>AO2</b>                             | 4  | 12   | 16   |
| <b>AO3</b>                             | 2  | 6  | 8  |
| <b>Total</b>                           | <b>10</b>  | <b>30</b>  | <b>40</b>  |