



**General Certificate of Education  
June 2010**

**Government and Politics**

**GOV3A**

**The Politics of the USA**

**Unit 3A**

***Mark Scheme***

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.

At A2, generally speaking, there is no unambiguously 'right' or 'wrong' answer to the 30-mark 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 questions with a total of 10 marks**

<b>Knowledge and Understanding: Recall, Select &amp; Deploy</b>	<b>Skills: Analysis &amp; Evaluation</b>	<b>Communication</b>
<b>AO1</b>	<b>AO2</b>	<b>AO3</b>
<p><b>Level 4 (4 marks)</b> 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 (4 marks)</b> 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 (2 marks)</b> 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.</p>
<p><b>Level 3 (3 marks)</b> 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 (3 marks)</b> 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>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 2 (2 marks)</b> 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 (2 marks)</b> 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 (1 mark)</b> 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.</p>
<p><b>Level 1 (1 mark)</b> 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 (1 mark)</b> The candidate applies few concepts and makes little use of political theory or ideas in developing an explanation or argument.</p>	<p>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>0 marks</b> No relevant response.</p>	<p><b>0 marks</b> No relevant response.</p>	<p><b>0 marks</b> No relevant response.</p>

**A2 GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS****GENERIC MARK SCHEME for questions with a total of 30 marks**

<b>Knowledge and Understanding: Recall, Select &amp; Deploy</b>	<b>Skills: Analysis &amp; Evaluation</b>	<b>Communication</b>
<b>AO1</b>	<b>AO2</b>	<b>AO3</b>
<p><b>Level 4 (10–12 marks)</b> The candidate demonstrates a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of political concepts/theories/institutions and processes and the relationships between them. 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. 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 (10–12 marks)</b> 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 (6 marks)</b> 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. 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 (7–9 marks)</b> The candidate demonstrates sound knowledge and understanding of political concepts/theories/institutions and processes and the relationships between them. 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. 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 (7–9 marks)</b> 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 (4–5 marks)</b> 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 questions with a total of 30 marks (continued)**

<b>Knowledge and Understanding: Recall, Select &amp; Deploy</b>	<b>Skills: Analysis &amp; Evaluation</b>	<b>Communication</b>
<b>AO1</b>	<b>AO2</b>	<b>AO3</b>
<p><b>Level 2 (4–6 marks)</b> 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 (4–6 marks)</b> 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.  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 (2–3 marks)</b> 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 (1–3 marks)</b> 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 cited 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 (1–3 marks)</b> 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.  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 (1 mark)</b> The answer relies upon narrative that 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> No relevant response.</p>	<p><b>0 marks</b> No relevant response.</p>	<p><b>0 marks</b> No relevant response.</p>

**Topic 1 The Electoral Process and Direct Democracy****Total for this topic: 40 marks**

(01) Examine the significance of the televised debates in presidential election campaigns. (10 marks)

In terms of knowledge, students should be aware of the role of the televised ‘great debates’ in the presidential campaign (three between the two presidential candidates and one Vice-Presidential debate in 2008) in allowing the candidates to come together to debate and respond to the issues in the campaign, to show voters their presidential qualities and demonstrate differences in their ideologies. Many candidates will know that the first of the TV debates was in 1960 (although the origin of the debates between presidential candidates goes back to Lincoln/Douglas), where the media focus on candidates was first shown to be significant. It was in these debates that the telegenic Kennedy was deemed to have ‘won’ by the viewing audience, but the less telegenic Nixon was deemed to have ‘won’ by the listening audience, thus showing the importance of a candidate’s image in the campaign. It was because of this that the 1960 election became known as the first ‘media dominated election’. As the question asks for some analysis of ‘significance’ candidates may refer to:

- Their importance in testing the candidates’ mettle and how they respond to a questioning from specially selected voters or pundits in front of a *national* TV audience.
- They are part of the ‘unpaid’ media attention to the candidates’ views and positions on issues.
- They have the potential to ‘make’ or ‘break’ candidates.

But it is also alleged that the debates are neither ‘great’ nor are they ‘debates’ and have been criticised for:

- The emphasis on ‘style’ and image rather than policy ‘substance’.
- The fact that they are highly controlled by media advisers and dominated by sound bites.
- They can disadvantage incumbents who may have difficult records to defend.
- They can help candidates achieve a ‘bounce’ in the polls after a successful ‘debate’ (or the opposite).

It is argued that the debates are used to energise the voter base rather than change voting intentions, and they appear to have little significant impact on the result, as ‘winners’ in the debates often turn out to be ‘losers’ in the election (eg Gore in 2000 and Kerry in 2004). There should be examples of these in top-level answers.

(02) ‘The advantages of primary elections vastly outweigh their disadvantages in the selection of each party’s presidential nominee.’ Discuss. (30 marks)

Candidates are asked to make a judgement on whether primaries may be seen as having more advantages than disadvantages in the presidential nomination process so the question demands more than a simple list. At the lower levels of response, however, this may be what is given. It is expected that all candidates will indicate what primaries are and how they work, which is required knowledge. They may give descriptions of different kinds of primaries (open, closed, invisible, crossover) in their answers but this is not necessary for high marks for this question. Candidates should show knowledge of primaries as intra-party elections, used in the majority of states for voters to select the parties’ nominees. Primaries can have both advantages and disadvantages, for the candidates themselves and their parties and also for American democracy, and it is up to the students to evaluate these and come to a conclusion.



The advantages of primaries are likely to include several of the following:

- They are highly democratic devices compared to the earlier selection processes involving choices made by party bosses in 'smoke filled rooms'.
- They involve the voters themselves (especially open primaries) making their own choices as to their preferred candidate.
- They weed out unsuitable candidates for the presidency.
- They test the candidates' stamina on the long campaign trail and their fund-raising and oratorical skills.
- They show the parties who can win in different parts of the country in preparation for the national campaign.
- They give 'name recognition' and 'momentum' to the candidate, from the first primary in New Hampshire through 'Super Tuesday' down to the final primaries where a front runner is likely to have emerged because of 'front loading' of the primaries.

These advantages should be backed up with examples and evidence from recent primary contests in both parties.

The question asks whether these advantages are outweighed by the disadvantages of primaries and so a critical view of primaries is also expected. The disadvantages of primaries are likely to include several of the following at the higher level of response:

- Their length (especially if the 'invisible primary' is included).
- The effects on candidates, their families and their other jobs (such as Senator or Governor).
- The advantages they give to very well funded candidates (and can disadvantage good, but less well financed candidates).
- The media dominance in the primaries and the emphasis placed on image and 'style' rather than policy and substance.
- The 'horse race' 'beauty contest' nature of the primaries and the focus on the need to win rather than any display of presidential qualities.
- The focus on winning the primaries in the key states with large numbers of delegates.
- The detrimental effect on the parties as candidates attack one another and their views and policies so the party appears divided to the electorate.
- The low turnout that is often below 20%.
- The unrepresentative nature of the voters in the primaries that skews the voting to the left in the Democratic Party and to the right in the Republican Party.

It is up to the candidates to conclude their essays with a reasoned judgement as to whether the above disadvantages actually outweigh the undoubted democratic nature of primary elections in the selection of the parties' presidential nominee. It is essential for the higher level marks that this is addressed and that the analysis will be backed up by evidence from specific primary contests and candidates. It is likely that most candidates will draw their evidence from the 2008 Democratic and Republican primaries but evidence from earlier primary contests would also be rewarded if accurate and relevant.

**Topic 2 Political Parties****Total for this topic: 40 marks**

(03) Explain why minor parties can be seen as important rather than as unimportant in the US political process. (10 marks)

The usual description of minor parties in US politics is that they are insignificant and unimportant. This question invites candidates to consider their importance in the political process.

Although third parties cannot win seats (unless in exceptional circumstances, like the success of Bernie Sanders as an independent socialist in Vermont in both the House and Senate) or the presidency, this does not necessarily mean that they are without importance in US politics. Candidates attempting this question must give evidence of this possible importance (and should *not* be rewarded for arguing the opposite), for example in the following ways:

- They give a wider democratic choice to voters other than that given by the two main parties. They can act as ‘electoral outlets for dissatisfied voters’ and allow for a ‘protest vote’ to be made in elections.
- They raise issues onto the political agenda and gain publicity for views and policies that are often ignored by the two main parties (such as the environmental issues raised by Nader in 2000 and 2004) and may force the two parties to change their stance on this issue if popular (as Perot did with the budget deficit issue in 1992).
- They are perceived as being more concerned with political principles (such as the Libertarian Party) whereas the two main parties are more concerned with power.
- In exceptional circumstances the vote given to a minor party candidate *could* tie the Electoral College, as George Wallace’s American Independence Party almost did in 1968.
- A minor party candidate could be seen as helping to swing the election from one candidate to another, as Nader was accused of doing in 2000, thus helping to defeat Gore and elect Bush because of the voting patterns in the key state of Florida.

All the above arguments lead to the view that minor parties may be seen more as significant players in the American political system even though they do not generally win. For high level marks there should be examples given of the importance of minor parties in US elections using evidence from US elections.

(04) ‘Organisationally weak and ideologically similar.’ To what extent is this still an accurate description of the two main US parties? (30 marks)

Here candidates are presented with a statement alleging two characteristics of the two main US parties; that they are ‘organisationally weak’ and also that they are ‘ideologically similar’. It is up to candidates to argue the extent to which they think that these terms still are accurate descriptions. Both of the descriptions are open to debate with evidence and examples.

‘Organisationally weak’. This has traditionally been the description of US parties (compared to their stronger, centralised UK counterparts, for example) because of:

- The weakness of national party organisation (with party organisation found more at the state level).
- The lack of an organised mass membership.

- Absence of national party manifestos.
- Lack of party leaders as such.
- Weak party discipline and party voting in legislatures and executives.
- Less of a role in the organisation of elections and the selection and financing of candidates.
- The parties' National Committees only become significant every four years at the time of the Nominating Conventions.

At the higher levels of response candidates should give much of this evidence to demonstrate their understanding of 'weak organisation'. However, the question invites consideration of whether this is still an accurate description, so strong candidates should indicate knowledge of the evidence that there has been some 'strengthening' of party organisation in recent years so the two main parties may no longer be 'accurately described' as weak:

- The strengthening of the parties' National Committees in between elections with some control over the parties' choice of candidate through the use of 'super-delegates' at the NNC's (Democrats) and over the direction of the election campaigns and their financing.
- The strengthening of party loyalty and discipline in the Congress.
- The Republican Party's House manifesto in 1994, 'The Contract with America', showing party unity on key issues.

The question also asks candidates to evaluate whether the two main US parties are also 'ideologically similar'. This description has been fairly accurate in the past where descriptions such as '2 bottles both empty but bearing different labels' or 'separated only by the issue of abortion' or 'not a dime's worth of difference between them' were common descriptions. Candidates could give examples of issues on which there is a substantial amount of consensus between the two parties to show 'similarity', such as:

- The role of the constitution in political and governmental life.
- The workings of a capitalist, free market economic system.
- Acceptance of the 'American way' and the 'American dream'.

Evidence could also be given of their essential pragmatism, ability to adapt to changing conditions and their 'big tent' nature, with many internal divisions on issues.

However, the description of ideological similarity between the parties is no longer accurate (if it ever was) as there are substantial ideological differences between the parties on a number of key political issues, which should be indicated by candidates, such as:

- How the economy should be run. Democrats are more collectivist, committed to state intervention and regulation and 'activist state', with the Republicans more individualist, supportive of a 'hands-off state' and committed to de-regulation.
- Social issues. Democrats are more liberal on key social issues such as being pro-choice on abortion, pro-gun control and affirmative action, with Republicans being more socially conservative on these issues, often supporting 'traditional family values'.
- Social welfare. Democrats believe in developing social welfare programmes to promote equality such as Medicare or Medicaid, whereas Republicans support a more individualistic philosophy.
- Foreign policy. The Democrats are more 'doveish' and internationalist whereas the Republicans are more 'hawkish' in the defence of American interests both at home and abroad.
- The parties differ substantially on where power should be, with the Democrats supporting federal power and its use, and the Republicans being more supportive of states' rights.

Candidates should use several of these areas to demonstrate evidence of ideological differences, not similarities, between the parties. However, at the higher levels of response, expect reference to some analysis of *greater ideological differences* between the parties recently as the Republican Party has become much more ideologically *conservative* on many policy positions, particularly since the Reagan presidency, and has lost many of its more moderate members and voters. Similarly, the Democratic Party has become much more ideologically *liberal* as it has shed its southern wing of voters and representatives. Thus both parties have become ideologically more coherent and cohesive, and evidence and examples of this would be expected at the higher levels of response.

**Topic 3 Voting Behaviour****Total for this topic: 40 marks**

(05)	Explain the increasing importance of the Hispanic vote in US elections.	(10 marks)
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Hispanic voters have always been important in electoral contests in the USA but recent factors have made them *increasingly important*. At the higher level of response expect knowledge of what is meant by the term ‘Hispanic’, such as the fact that such voters tend to come from Spanish-speaking areas such as central and South America and many are recent immigrants to the USA. These voters also tend to be Catholic. One important factor likely to be indicated at a higher level of response may be that they are not a cohesive community and there are many divisions apparent between the different countries of origin and also class. Some are black, some white, some are poor immigrants from Mexico, others have fled from Castro’s Cuba and settled in Florida where they are a significant voting block. They are sometimes referred to as the ‘sleeping giant’ of US politics as they are the USA’s fastest growing minority (approx 14%). The ‘growing significance’ of the Hispanic vote could be related to this fact, plus:

- They tend to be concentrated in key battleground ‘swing’ states such as Florida and New Mexico.
- They also represent a significant percentage of the vote in states with a large number of Electoral College votes such as Texas, California and New York. They could, therefore, be crucial ‘swing voters’ in these states.
- As the majority are Catholic they can be energised to vote through the relatively new ‘moral’ issues affecting voting behaviour such as abortion, stem cell research and gay marriage. There is evidence that this has happened in recent elections such as 2004.
- They have been ‘targeted’ for their votes by the candidates’ campaign organisations in recent years because of the increasing recognition of their importance to a candidate’s success or failure.

At the highest level of response expect some statistical references to Hispanic voting in recent elections, issues affecting Hispanic voters (such as immigration reform) and some evidence of the recognition of their growing significance by campaign consultants and candidates themselves (such as Bush campaigning in Spanish in 2004). Excellent candidates may recognise that, despite the above, Hispanic voters are less likely to register and to vote compared to other groups of voters.

(06)	Why do some voters split their ticket when voting in US elections <b>and</b> what are the consequences of such behaviour?	(30 marks)
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In response to this question candidates should be able to give a definition and to demonstrate a clear understanding of what split ticket voting (STV) is and why it occurs in the context of American elections. They may note the paradoxical nature of STV as some voters are apparently voting for two different parties on the same ballot paper at the same election (and should not confuse STV with the fact that the Congress can change party control as a result of the mid-term elections as in 2006). There are several explanations of *why* some American voters ticket-split, including:

- Because *they can!* Federalism and the separation of powers in the US allows voters to make different choices for different offices at different levels of government on the same ballot paper.

- Partisan de-alignment and the weakening of partisan attachments leads to voters who are more volatile and therefore more willing to ticket split.
- Issue voting. Voters are more willing to vote on the basis of a candidate's views on issues, even though they may have a party identification with another party, eg a Democrat voting for Bush in 2004 because of his views on abortion.
- Candidate voting. Because of the rise of candidate centred campaigns voters may vote for a candidate because of personal factors but continue to vote for their preferred party for another position, eg Republicans who may have voted for Obama in 2008 but continued to vote Republican for their member of Congress.
- The incumbency factor and the records of members of Congress in 'bringing home the bacon' may mean voters vote to re-elect their member of Congress but vote for another party candidate for President.
- The voters wish to bring about divided government in Washington to assert the principle of checks and balances in US government.
- Voters may be behaving rationally by voting for two separate parties on the ticket as this may bring them benefits, eg voting Democrat for Congress to maintain health and welfare services whilst at the same time voting Republican for President to bring about lower taxes.

Candidates who identify and discuss several of these factors will reach the higher mark level, especially when they give evidence of STV from recent elections.

The question also needs some focus on the *consequences* of STV such as:

- Divided government in Washington, with examples of this from recent elections. Candidates may discuss the effects of this on governmental decision-making and may consider the effects to be either *good*, such as more effective checks and balances (unlike the 'elective dictatorship' often alleged to be the result of the UK electoral system), or *bad*, such as the 'gridlock' that often occurs when the branches of government are controlled by different parties as a result of the voters' choices.
- It may be argued that American voters, in effect, get the 'best of both worlds' as the result of their voting may lead to lower taxes at the same time as high public spending.

To reach the highest level, candidates must present evidence and examples of STV and its effects, with perhaps some statistical evidence from elections or examples of voters who split their ticket such as the Reagan Democrats in 1980 and 1984.

**Topic 4 Pressure Groups****Total for this topic: 40 marks**

(07)	Explain, using examples, why US pressure groups may use direct action to try to achieve their aims.	(10 marks)
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Candidates should include a definition of direct action as a tactic used by some pressure groups to try and bring their aim(s) to the attention of the public through media coverage and therefore to the decision-makers who are making the decisions affecting their aims and/or interests. Direct action may be legal or illegal, peaceful or violent, depending on the group and what it wants.

Pressure groups tend to use direct action as a means of influencing decision-making for several reasons. They may have used more conventional methods of influence, such as gaining access to congressional decision-making through lobbying or campaign contributions, but these have failed to get them what they want so they are forced into using direct action. Or the group(s) have *no access* to the corridors of power and are therefore forced to use alternative methods to influence decision-makers by trying to influence public opinion to influence the decision-makers *indirectly*, such as the million mom march in Washington in 2000 to protest against the nation's gun laws. There are many examples of groups using direct action, both successfully and unsuccessfully, from the civil rights protests of the 1950s and 1960s (sit-ins, boycotts and demonstrations) through to the anti-war protests since 2003, or the pro and anti-abortion groups from the 1980s (the latter using illegal methods at times) but candidates must include relevant examples in their answers to achieve a Level 4 mark.

(08)	Assess the factors that make pressure groups so powerful in the USA.	(30 marks)
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Candidates should recognise that there are several factors that can be assessed to explain the power of US pressure groups and the reasons for their strength within the political system (cf political parties who are often perceived as 'weak' in the USA):

- The political culture of the US is favourable to pressure group activity.
- The US system of open government is very accessible to group influence because of federalism and the separation of powers. There are multiple access points where groups can attempt to exert influence: three branches of government, bicameral legislature at state level as well as federal level. Lobbying and the 'revolving door' in Congress. The judicial branch and the significance of Amicus Curiae briefs and lobbying on judicial appointments. The executive branch and the existence of 'Iron Triangles'.
- US citizens (whose diversity leads to a proliferation of different and competing interests) are more likely to participate in political activity by joining pressure groups to express their specific political views especially on single issues. The US has long campaigning and participatory traditions.
- Guaranteed constitutional rights and protections from the 1st amendment of the Bill of Rights, such as freedom of speech and assembly and the right to petition the government for the redress of grievances, thus encouraging the operation of groups and their legitimacy in the political system.
- Weaker parties, lack of manifestos, less party discipline, legislators more open to influence/persuasion from groups leads to more influence from groups in the legislative process.

- The financial contributions of groups to electoral campaigns through Political Action Committees in candidate centred campaigns. As a result many members of Congress are unwilling to speak out against strong lobbies such as the National Rifle Association (NRA) or American Israel Public Affairs Committee (AIPAC).

Therefore, pressure groups are powerful compared to the UK, where they are less powerful because of the absence of much of the above and the existence of a powerful executive branch, a relatively weak legislature, the absence of constitutional rights, etc.

In explaining pressure group power, reward candidates who offer specific examples and provide evidence of pressure group power in the USA.

### ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVE GRID

<b>A2 Assessment Objective</b>	<b>Marks allocated by Assessment Objective 10-mark question</b>	<b>Marks allocated by Assessment Objective 30-mark question</b>	<b>Total Marks by Assessment 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>