



**General Certificate of Education (A-level)  
June 2011**

**Government and Politics**

**GOV3B**

**(Specification 2150)**

**Unit 3B: Ideologies**

***Report on the Examination***

---

Further copies of this Report on the Examination are available from: [aqa.org.uk](http://aqa.org.uk)

Copyright © 2011 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

**Copyright**

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered centres for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to centres to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

The Assessment and Qualifications Alliance (AQA) is a company limited by guarantee registered in England and Wales (company number 3644723) and a registered charity (registered charity number 1073334).  
Registered address: AQA, Devas Street, Manchester M15 6EX.

## **Unit 3 (GOV3B): Ideologies**

### ***General***

All four topics proved popular. The ten mark questions revealed a good overall understanding of the main characteristics of liberalism, socialism, conservatism and fascism in the contexts of the questions set. The thirty mark questions required the application of theory to practice; a synthesis of both subject knowledge and requisite skills utilised to arrive at logical conclusions. It is encouraging to report that, given the fluidity of the contemporary political scene, students revealed a pleasing knowledge of current affairs and political developments. The best answers were not only impressive regarding the modern polity but were also strong on the origins and evolutions of political ideas. Very few responses read as prepared answers.

### **TOPIC 1 - LIBERALISM**

#### ***Question 1***

On the whole this was well handled. Most candidates were familiar with the terms positive and negative freedoms and utilised them to good effect in their answers. Virtually all of the candidates who attempted this question recognised that libertarianism is basically rooted in the idea of individual rights and entitlements and laissez-faire economic doctrines. They also appreciated that libertarians are critical of the welfare state and 'Big' government in general. At the top levels candidates pointed out the difficulty in specifically allocating libertarianism a precise location on the political spectrum given that both the New Right and anarchists champion values which could be described as libertarian.

#### ***Question 2***

In order to achieve marks at level 3 and above, candidates were required to reveal not just an appreciation of the core values of liberalism but also a knowledge of the extent to which these have impacted on party politics in the UK. The weakest candidates either regurgitated what they had already written on 01 or focused almost entirely on core values at the expense of the analysis of liberalism's impact on party policy. The best answers were holistic. Not only were they strong on the different liberal schools, but they were also knowledgeable on liberalism's impact on party policies over time. Analysis at this level was strong on both political history and political philosophy in time frames which spanned from the Enlightenment to the present day. Most candidates concluded that liberalism had indeed been highly influential, backing up their claims with policy evidence from the Labour and Conservative parties as well as from the Liberal Democrats and before them the Liberal Party. The more perceptive students were prepared to challenge the claim that liberalism had won the war of ideas in the UK by pointing out the policies and programs that were authoritarian rather than liberal.

### **TOPIC 2 - SOCIALISM**

#### ***Question 3***

The vast majority of candidates recognised that socialists previously held, and still do hold, optimistic and positive views about human nature. The themes of co-operation and collective behaviours, as opposed to egotistical, selfish individualism, were also discussed by most candidates. The best candidates alluded to the 'nature versus nurture' debates. In a few

cases excessive attention was paid to the differences between revolutionary and democratic socialism. Such answers tended not to focus directly enough on the 'human nature' core of the question and the points scored here tended to be achieved more by default than by design. Some useful contrasts and comparisons were made with conservative and even fascist views on human nature, revealing synopticity in an unforced way.

#### **Question 4**

Some of the students wrote too much about the term pragmatism when a sentence would have sufficed in explaining this concept. At the lower levels, candidates tended to claim that Labour had been highly ideological until fairly recently, arguing that Blair had steered the party from socialism to a more pragmatic 'Third Way'. The best answers contended that both ideological influence and pragmatism could be seen in Labour's actions from Attlee onwards, backing up such claims with both impressive theoretical knowledge and policy evidence (see the mark scheme). Stronger candidates avoided simplistic generalisations for balanced consideration. Teachers need to impress upon students the importance of skills (A02) in essay work. Whilst it is satisfying to read scripts which do reveal subject knowledge, this knowledge needs to be effectively tailored to the demands of the question. Description is not enough. Analysis and evaluation also need to feature strongly in the answers produced.

### **TOPIC 3 - CONSERVATISM**

#### **Question 5**

The vast majority of candidates were familiar with the term 'paternalistic conservatism' and explained it to good effect, utilising terms and concepts such as 'One Nation Conservatism' and 'noblesse oblige' in the process. Most were also familiar with the writings of Burke and Disraeli. The best candidates even cited its influence on conservative statements and policies in the Butskellite era and on the current coalition government. Only a very few failed to answer the question correctly or referred to 'paternalism' in generalised ways.

#### **Question 6**

To score marks at level 3 and above, candidates not only needed to reveal a good knowledge and understanding of Thatcherism itself (A01), but they also needed to evaluate and analyse its impact on conservatism post-Thatcher (A02). Even the poorest answers revealed a rudimentary understanding of the social and economic dimensions of Thatcherism. The stronger candidates pointed out its debt to both neo-liberalism and social authoritarianism, revealing an excellent knowledge of both key thinkers and programmes and policies in the process. Far too many candidates went straight from the 1980's to the present day when analysing the impact of Thatcherism on conservative thinking in Britain, virtually bypassing the period 1990-2005 in the process. The best answers did manage to evaluate how, and the extent to which, Thatcher's ideas and values impacted upon the policies, programmes and actions associated with British conservatism from Major to Howard. Coverage of the impact of Thatcherism on Cameron, both in opposition and government, was mixed. The poorer answers tended to be generalised and simplistic. In contrast, the best answers made genuine attempts to evaluate the extent to which the Cameron years have been indebted to Thatcherism and other conservative ways of thinking, such as One Nation Toryism. In these cases the answers were both strong on policy evidence and evaluation. Whilst the conclusions produced sometimes varied, the marks allocated reflected the quality of evidence and arguments utilised to arrive at reasoned final analysis.

## **TOPIC 4 - FASCISM**

### **Question 7**

Overall this question produced very pleasing responses. Candidates largely revealed a good understanding of the two terms and were able to explain why fascism could be described as being both anti-intellectual and anti-rational by outlining the core beliefs and values associated with the ideology and by examining the rhetoric and actions of fascist leaders and fascist parties in practice.

### **Question 8**

This question produced the widest range of responses. To score well here, candidates not only needed to know what the core values and beliefs associated with fascism were and are, but also needed to be able to measure the extent to which these were evident and still do exist in British far-right political parties and movements. The weaker answers were characterised by superficial analysis and evaluation; they also tended to focus on the British far-right in a very narrow context, both time-wise and across organisations. The best answers clearly focused on the extent to which core fascist values were, and are evident in British far-right movements, from the British Union of Fascists in the 1930's to the BNP and the English Defence League in the current period, including other bodies such as the National Front and Combat 18. A few spoke about UKIP being a fascist party and Enoch Powell being a fascist without really appreciating the flaws in such assertions. What stood out particularly in this question was how differently centres had prepared candidates on the topic of fascism. Some had studied it as little more than an inter-war ideology, albeit in a very simplistic way. The best prepared candidates, in contrast, not only appreciated the ideology's antecedents but were also able to evaluate the extent to which its core values were evident in the inter-war fascist movements and are evident in its more modern variants.

### **Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the Results Statistics page of the AQA Website: <http://www.aqa.org.uk/over/stat.html>.

### **Converting Marks into UMS marks**

Convert raw marks into marks on the Uniform Mark Scale (UMS) by using the link below.

**UMS conversion calculator** [www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion](http://www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion)