v1.0.

**General Certificate of Education
June 2013**

Government and Politics   GOV4B

Political Issues: Ideologies in Action

Unit 4B

Final

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 students' 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 students' 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 students' 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.

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 students 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. Students should be given credit for partially complete answers. Where appropriate, students 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 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, 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 students 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 students may feel able bring to the discussion. Therefore the specification of requirements outlined in the mark schemes can only be indicative. Students 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 students' 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 students' 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 student 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 student'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 students know, understand and can do.

A2 GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

GENERIC MARK SCHEME for questions with a total of 10 marks

Knowledge and Understanding: Recall, Select & Deploy	Skills: Analysis & Evaluation	Communication
AO1	AO2	AO3
Level 4 (4 marks) The student demonstrates a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of political concepts, institutions and processes. The student 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.	**Level 4 (4 marks)** The student applies an excellent range of developed concepts and uses appropriate political theory to construct a clear and cogent explanation or argument.	**Levels 3–4 (2 marks)** The student 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.
Level 3 (3 marks) The student demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of political concepts, institutions and processes. The student clearly addresses the requirements of the question and provides sound interpretation and contextual awareness. The answer includes good examples to illustrate points made.	**Level 3 (3 marks)** The student applies a good range of developed concepts and uses appropriate political theory to construct a clear and cogent explanation or argument.	The answer has a clear sense of direction, is focused on the question and, where appropriate, has a conclusion which flows from the discussion.
Level 2 (2 marks) The student demonstrates limited knowledge and understanding of political concepts, institutions and processes. The student 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.	**Level 2 (2 marks)** The student applies a limited range of concepts and makes limited use of political theory or ideas in developing an explanation or argument.	**Levels 1–2 (1 mark)** The student 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.
Level 1 (1 mark) The student demonstrates little knowledge and understanding of political concepts, institutions and processes. The student 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 made.	**Level 1 (1 mark)** The student applies few concepts and makes little use of political theory or ideas in developing an explanation or argument.	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.
0 marks No relevant response.	**0 marks** No relevant response.	**0 marks** No relevant response.

A2 GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

GENERIC MARK SCHEME for questions with a total of 30 marks

Knowledge and Understanding: Recall, Select & Deploy	Skills: Analysis & Evaluation	Communication
AO1	AO2	AO3
Level 4 (10–12 marks) The student 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.	**Level 4 (10–12 marks)** The student 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.	**Level 4 (6 marks)** The student 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.
Level 3 (7–9 marks) The student 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.	**Level 3 (7–9 marks)** The student 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.	**Level 3 (4–5 marks)** The student 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 student produces an answer with a conclusion linked to the preceding discussion.

GENERIC MARK SCHEME for questions with a total of 30 marks (continued)

Knowledge and Understanding: Recall, Select & Deploy	Skills: Analysis & Evaluation	Communication
AO1	AO2	AO3
Level 2 (4–6 marks) The student 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.	**Level 2 (4–6 marks)** The student 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.	**Level 2 (2–3 marks)** The student 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.
Level 1 (1–3 marks) The student 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.	**Level 1 (1–3 marks)** The student 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.	**Level 1 (1 mark)** 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.
0 marks No relevant response.	**0 marks** No relevant response.	**0 marks** No relevant response.

Topic 1 Ethnicity and Gender   **Total for this topic: 40 marks**

(01)   Consider the differences between liberal and radical approaches to equal opportunities.
(*10 marks*)

Students at all levels of response are likely to demonstrate an understanding of the term 'equal opportunities'. Many may seek to draw a distinction between 'equality of opportunity' and 'equality of outcome'. There may be an attempt to broadly link the former to 'liberal approaches' and the latter to more 'radical approaches'.

Liberal approaches to equal opportunities involve the removal of barriers to equality; allowing for a situation in which individuals are able to compete on an equal footing within society, regardless of differences of ethnicity or gender. Students are likely to note that, in order to provide for such equality of opportunities, governments legislate to outlaw overt discrimination and limit discriminatory practices. It is likely that those at the higher levels of response will provide examples of such laws and regulations in support of their analysis (eg the 1964 US Civil Rights Act or the 2010 UK Equality Act).

Radical approaches to equal opportunities start from the premise that the liberal model is flawed, as it fails to recognise that historic discrimination and established modes of behaviour cannot simply be 'legislated away'. The radical approach therefore involves direct intervention in order to remove long-standing inequalities (as opposed to simply seeking to legislate against further discrimination). This may involve the use of tools such as workplace quotas or other associated affirmative action programmes, such as those used in the USA in the 1970s. It might also involve direct intervention to ensure that the various groups within society are properly represented in public office, eg the use of all-women shortlists and A-lists in the selection of candidates in elections to the Westminster Parliament. Radicals see such devices as a necessary means to overcome historic inequalities.

(02)   Evaluate the view that multiculturalism has failed.   (*30 marks*)

Multiculturalism is an ideological approach that requires different cultures to be valued and institutionalised alongside one another within society. Students at all levels of response are likely to see multiculturalism as an extension of integration. They are also likely to recognise that multiculturalism is opposed to assimilation (where different cultures are broken down and added to the whole). Multiculturalism involves cultural diversity and the accommodation and celebration of this diversity through state institutions and practices. Thus, whilst those favouring assimilation often refer to the concept of a 'melting pot', those advocating multiculturalism speak instead of a 'salad bowl' or 'stew pot'.

Advocates of multiculturalism argue that culture should not be homogeneous and that no culture is inherently 'better' (as implied by advocates of assimilation). Multiculturalists drew lessons from the genocides and ethnic cleansing at the time of the Second World War and, subsequently, in places such as Rwanda and Kosovo. Multiculturalism is seen as reflecting the high ideals of egalitarianism and toleration.

Opponents of multiculturalism argue that it has singularly failed to deliver. They argue that it is simply not possible for all opposing cultures to live happily alongside one another and that the belief that this can happen is, paradoxically, born of a western liberal democratic take on the ideal of toleration. Multiculturalism also serves to erode national identity and cohesion. In this context, students may refer to governmental efforts to redefine and enforce national identity, eg the Britishness test in the UK, limits on

religious clothing and foreign-language broadcasting in France. Those who argue that multiculturalism has failed also point to the extent to which many western countries are now facing Balkanisation, with concentrated populations from specific cultural backgrounds living, working and raising families entirely within their own communities. Even where those from different cultural traditions are truly mixed, for example in larger cities, critics argue that there is a tendency towards ghettoisation and a loss of trust/community (Putnam). At the heart of the argument against multiculturalism is the belief that unregulated cultural diversity, without commonly agreed principles or ground-rules, can only result in conflict.

Topic 2 The Environment   **Total for this topic: 40 marks**

(03)   Argue the case in favour of green consumerism.   (*10 marks*)

Green (or 'ethical') consumerism is the practice of deliberately purchasing products and services that are produced or provided in an ethical manner. It involves boycotting products and services produced by those companies that exploit natural resources or their employees, as well as actively supporting those who operate along ethical lines.

Those who advocate green consumerism argue that it represents an effective way for consumers to use their economic power in pursuit of goals that might otherwise be unachievable in the face of government opposition (or government support for business). It also provides an immediate and relatively easy way for citizens to participate politically without the need to engage directly with those in public office. Ethical consumerism can take many forms and it is likely that students will look to demonstrate their knowledge of such activity in action. Action against oil companies through boycotts of their petrol station forecourts has been seen to be effective in bringing consumers' economic power into play, eg the Europe-wide boycotts of Shell Oil at the time of the Brent Spar campaign. Boycotts of South African and Israeli fruit (over apartheid and occupation of Palestinian territories respectively) are also said to have brought some success. Anti-vivisection groups have targeted the shareholders of those companies involved in animal experimentation (eg Huntingdon Life Sciences). In terms of positive consumer action, the rise of the Fair Trade movement has encouraged ethical treatment of workers in less developed countries. The removal of CFCs from aerosols and the decimation of the battery farm egg industry were also largely achieved through consumer action, as opposed to government legislation. Pressure groups producing environmental ratings of companies competing in the same sector have also proven influential in terms of allowing consumers to move their custom to those operating in a more ethical way. This has in turn forced companies to engage with the green debate and assess their own operating practices, even where governmental regulation is limited (another benefit of green consumerism). The rise of green consumerism has also served to make certain forms of conspicuous consumption socially unacceptable.

(04)   'Sustainability is incompatible with economic growth.' Discuss.   (*30 marks*)

Students at all levels of response are likely to seek to define the key terms identified. In the context of environmentalism, sustainability is the belief that human activity needs to operate within parameters that allow for the long-term survival of the species. Whilst the notion of sustainability is one that is common to both light and dark green thinking, it is more commonly associated with more anthropocentric positions because it focuses on the idea of stewardship and the survival of humanity, as opposed to the more holistic, ecocentric view taken by writers such as Arne Næss and James Lovelock.

The single-minded pursuit of economic growth would appear to be incompatible with the goal of sustainability because it will necessarily involve the exploitation of finite resources. Students are likely to illustrate this point by drawing on examples from their own knowledge, eg the relentless use of fossil fuels or the deforestation involved in mining for rare metals. At the lower levels of response, it is likely that students will simply seek to use such arguments to prove the point. Higher-level responses are likely to be characterised by an attempt to challenge and evaluate this orthodoxy.

In so doing, it is likely that students will want to consider the concept of sustainable development, defined by the Brundtland Commission as 'development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs'. Thus, it is argued, those seeking to mine valuable ecosystems for scarce resources should consider the damage they might do to other environmental resources – the value of which is as yet unknown. Sustainable development therefore involves provision for resource management and the replacement of those resources consumed. It requires individuals, institutions and organisations of all types to look at their own environmental impact (their 'environmental footprint') and adjust their behaviour accordingly. The development of environmental technologies, such as those associated with renewable energy, allows sustainability and economic development to work hand-in-hand. Sustainable development stresses the importance of balancing the 'three Es' (environment, social equity and economy). In this context, students may also make reference to the acronym ELF (environment, local people, future).

Topic 3 Education   **Total for this topic: 40 marks**

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(05)   Explain what is meant by the term social engineering in the context of education policy.
(*10 marks*)

In the context of education, the phrase social engineering refers to governmental efforts to shape society through changes in education policy. It is a pejorative term, in the sense that those engaging in social engineering are often seen as being on the 'wrong' side of the argument. However, as the purpose of government is to bring about societal change, social engineering should not necessarily be seen in a 'bad' light. Those on the right tend to label as 'social engineering' all that seeks to interfere with the free market or undermine traditional practices.

Students at all levels of response are likely to offer a definition of the term before moving on to offer examples from their own knowledge by way of illustration. Such examples of supposed social engineering in education policy are numerous. Students may argue that the comprehensivisation of British secondary education in the 1960s and 1970s represented social engineering of sorts; the earlier introduction of the tripartite system could be seen in a similar light, as might the introduction of the GNVQs or the English Baccalaureate. Students might draw on examples from other countries, eg the teaching of intelligent design or the promotion of abstinence-based sex education in some US states. Mention might also be made of Labour's 'Sure Start' programme or the weighing of 'access factors' in university application or the suggestion (strongly opposed by the Conservative Education Secretary Michael Gove in 2011) that universities should overtly rank the A-level results of those applying to join degree courses according to their background (thus giving a helping hand into university for those from less advantaged backgrounds). Such approaches have been seen previously with college quotas and the school bussing programmes once operating in a number of US states.

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(06)   'Comprehensivisation has failed.' Discuss.   (*30 marks*)

Students are likely to define comprehensivisation as the efforts of Labour governments in the 1960s and 1970s to replace the tripartite system introduced under the Butler Education Act with a single-tiered, non-selective system designed to cater for the needs of pupils of all abilities in England and Wales. At the higher levels of response, it is likely that students will be aware that comprehensivisation was a 'process' (and one that was not completed) as opposed to an 'outcome'.

It is likely that students at all levels of response will set out the arguments for and against comprehensivisation. Whilst this material will be credited on AO1 at the lower levels of response, students will need to offer a clearer focus on the precise terms of the question posed if they are to achieve Levels 3 or 4 on AO1 or AO2. In order to do this, candidates will need to explicitly address the issue of 'failure'. This will inevitably involve some consideration of aims and outcomes.

Critics of comprehensivisation argue that, far from resulting in improvements in educational standards (ie bringing all schools up to the level of those that prospered under the tripartite system), the adoption of a one-size-fits-all approach to education has instead led to a 'levelling down': a lowest-common denominator often referred to in the popular press and by some politicians as the 'bog-standard comprehensive'. Those who adopt such positions generally see the loss of academically selective state grammar schools across large parts of England and Wales as something that has hindered social mobility as opposed to enhancing it. Even those comprehensives that do offer high levels of academic achievement generally benefit from a more uniformly affluent or middle-class catchment area. The

introduction of grammar-school style academic streaming and later setting in comprehensives, and the tiering of GCSE papers in many subjects, effectively meant that those in the lower sets, though interacting with their more academically able peers socially between lessons, were receiving a very different education. The introduction of GNVQs and the recognition of such qualifications alongside GCSEs in the league tables further served to reinforce this idea of schools within schools.

When assessing the programme against the goal of improving educational standards, it is likely that students will make mention of the Great Debate, perhaps touching on the divisions between the progressives in education and those traditionalists who wanted to see a return to traditional teaching methods and a greater focus on discipline within lessons. It is likely that students will also make some mention of examination results as a way of quantifying any increase in standards. Some may cite increases in the percentage of students achieving 5 or more GCSEs at grades A*–C (where comprehensives have made significant ground since 2003). Those questioning such data might point to grade inflation or the inclusion of vocational qualifications at a notional GCSE value. Mention might also be made of the extent to which schools have been forced to focus on C/D borderliners in an effort to improve their position in the league tables (in preference to stretching the most able).

At the highest level of response, students might question whether it is possible to make any meaningful assessment of the merits or demerits of comprehensivisation in light of a) the continued existence of the independent sector, b) the fact that the comprehensivisation process was not completed (ie that some grammar schools remain) and c) all that has been done to unpick the concept of universal provision in recent years (eg academies, specialist schools and faith schools).

Topic 4 The Economy   **Total for this topic: 40 marks**

(07)   Argue the ideological case against a minimum wage.   (*10 marks*)

Students at all levels of response are likely to demonstrate awareness that a minimum wage is the minimum hourly rate that an employer may legally give to an employee. By definition, it is also the minimum rate at which potential employees may enter into a contract to sell their labour.

Many students are likely to recognise that those on the right tend to oppose the concept of a minimum wage. Thereafter, students at all levels of response are likely to explore some of the arguments offered in opposition to a government-imposed minimum wage. Those at the higher levels of response are likely to offer developed explanation of at least two areas or provide a comprehensive overview of a range of arguments, whilst at the same time framing their answers in explicitly ideological terms:

- a minimum wage limits the freedom of workers to offer their labour at the lowest rate for which they are prepared to work. This might make it difficult for those will a more limited skill-base to find work at all, even where they are prepared to work for a level of remuneration that is below the legal lower limit
- small businesses are disproportionately affected by a minimum wage because they do not have sufficient funds to hire the staff they need to grow the business. Service sector businesses operating in fields that are not highly specialised may be unable to charge their clients the levels of fees necessary to cover the wages of those they employ
- a minimum wage can lead to inflation because businesses will seek to pass on the increased labour costs to their customers
- in a globalised economy, companies in countries operating a minimum wage might find it impossible to compete with competitors overseas
- a minimum wage might result in a less flexible labour market and higher levels of unemployment than would otherwise be the case
- setting a legal lower limit can reduce the differential between the lower-paid and higher-paid employees within a business, thus leading to those with higher-level skills not being properly remunerated for their abilities and education/training
- it may encourage unskilled workers to remain in entry-level positions rather than seeking to advance by taking advantage of additional training or education
- examples, by way of illustration, may be drawn from the UK or elsewhere.

(08) Evaluate the importance of economic factors in electoral politics. (*30 marks*)

Students will have explored the various determinants of voting behaviour in the UK as part of their AS studies (GOVP1 Topic 1). Whilst those at the lower levels of response might draw on some of this material in support of their answer, those that offer a generic response on factors affecting voting behaviour are unlikely to move beyond the bottom of Level 2 on AO1 and AO2. Higher-level responses will be characterised by a clearer focus on the 'economic factors'.

Students at all levels of response might attempt to define precisely what the term 'economic factors' might encompass. Whilst some may focus on the state of the economy (eg employment/unemployment rates, inflation rate, growth in GDP, consumer debt and national debt/deficit), others may choose to look at party policy, thereby introducing the theme of prospective voting alongside the retrospective model. The slogan, 'It's the economy, stupid', which originated with Bill Clinton's campaign in the 1992 US presidential election, is likely to provide a way into the question for many students. Other elections are also likely to be cited as having been heavily influenced by economic factors (eg the 1980, 1984 and 2008 US presidential elections, the 1979, 1987 and 2010 UK general elections).

As already indicated, students at the higher levels of response on AO2 will look to explore a number of distinct ways in which the economy can influence electoral politics, with the obvious split being between voters making an objective assessment of the state of the economy and those assessing the perceived economic competence of those parties seeking election at a given election. Students may recognise that voters do not always give incumbent politicians credit for an electoral upturn which they see as being part of a general national or global economic cycle. Similarly, those in office will not always suffer heavy election losses if voters judge that they are not entirely to blame for the nation's predicament. This ability to disconnect the state of the economy from the perceived performance of incumbent politicians is particularly apparent in countries with a formal separation of powers. In the USA, for example, voters might back the president and blame a Congress controlled by the opposing party (or vice versa) when problems in the economy emerge.

The political context and precise nature of economic problems may also be significant in assessing the importance of economic factors in electoral politics. In the case of the 2008 US presidential election, for example, Barack Obama (a Democrat) was elected comfortably, even though the Republicans are traditionally seen as the party more suited to dealing with an emerging economic crisis. This could be explained by the fact that the crisis in question resulted, in part, from the kind of deregulation commonly favoured by the Republicans – and because the crisis had begun under the previous president, George W Bush (a Republican). In contrast, voters' unease over the Labour Party's competence to manage the economy helped the Conservatives to remain in office in the UK in 1992 in spite of a sharp economic downturn.

Students may comment on the extent to which those individuals directly affected by economic factors may be more influenced in their voting behaviour than those unaffected or only indirectly affected (for whom the perception of whether the government is 'on the right track', to use the popular US opinion poll question, is more of an issue). It is likely that many students will also make reference to electoral politics in some of those Eurozone countries most affected by the sovereign debt crisis, eg Eire, Greece, Portugal and Spain.

NB: whilst most students are likely to focus on the theme of voting behaviour, those who focus instead on the extent to which economic factors shape the campaign itself (eg speeches, billboards, election broadcasts etc) should be credited fully.

ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVE GRID

A2 Assessment Objective	Marks allocated by Assessment Objective 10-mark question	Marks allocated by Assessment Objective 30-mark question	Total Marks by Assessment Objective
AO1	4	12	16
AO2	4	12	16
AO3	2	6	8
Total	**10**	**30**	**40**