

# A-LEVEL

# GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

GOV3A – The Politics of the USA

Mark scheme

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Mark schemes are prepared by the Lead Assessment Writer and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation events which all associates participate in and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation process ensures that the mark scheme covers the students' responses to questions and that every associate understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for standardisation each associate analyses a number of students' scripts: alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed and legislated for. If, after the standardisation process, associates encounter unusual answers which have not been raised they are required to refer these to the Lead Assessment Writer.

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.

Further copies of this Mark scheme are available from [aqa.org.uk](http://aqa.org.uk)

## 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
<p><b>Level 4 (4 marks)</b>  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.</p>	<p><b>Level 4 (4 marks)</b>  The student 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 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.</p>
<p><b>Level 3 (3 marks)</b>  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.</p>	<p><b>Level 3 (3 marks)</b>  The student 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 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.</p>	<p><b>Level 2 (2 marks)</b>  The student 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 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.</p>
<p><b>Level 1 (1 mark)</b>  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.</p>	<p><b>Level 1 (1 mark)</b>  The student 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 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.</p>	<p><b>Level 4 (10–12 marks)</b> 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.</p>	<p><b>Level 4 (6 marks)</b> 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.</p>
<p><b>Level 3 (7–9 marks)</b> 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.</p>	<p><b>Level 3 (7–9 marks)</b> 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.</p>	<p><b>Level 3 (4–5 marks)</b> 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.</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 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.</p>	<p><b>Level 2 (4–6 marks)</b> 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.</p>	<p><b>Level 2 (2–3 marks)</b> 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.</p>
<p><b>Level 1 (1–3 marks)</b> 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.</p>	<p><b>Level 1 (1–3 marks)</b> 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.</p>	<p><b>Level 1 (1 mark)</b> 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> 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)** Consider the significance of the congressional mid-term elections. **[10 marks]**

For AO1, most students will know that the congressional mid-terms occur every two years in fixed term elections, two years after the presidential election, and that all 435 House members are up for re-election. Good students may argue that this makes House elections more significant than those for the one third of the Senate up for re-election in staggered elections, because of their 6-year terms.

For high-level marks at both AO1 and AO2, students should focus on the following analysis:

Some students may argue that they are significant as a 'referendum' on the performance of the incumbent president and/or the economy mid-way between the more significant presidential elections, allowing the electorate to make a judgement on the president after the first two years.

They may argue that turnout in the mid-terms may be significant as the results are often decided by differential turnout, for example in 2010, when many Republican voters were energised to vote and many Democrat voters (especially young and minority voters) abstained, in contrast to the 2008 presidential elections.

Good students may argue that the stakes are not regarded as high, and the election issues may be more local than national and less energising. Low turnout (around 40%), therefore, may reduce their significance.

A further significance of the mid-terms, likely to be argued at the higher levels of response with supporting evidence, is that the mid-terms can alter the majority/minority position in the House and/or Senate, making it easier (as for President Bush in 2002) or harder for the president to govern (as in 2006 for President Bush, after which he became a 'lame duck' and, in 2010, for President Obama, where he got a 'shellacking' as the Republicans took control of the House from the Democrats).

Results can therefore lead to gridlock because of divided government and this analysis should be seen in a higher-level response.

At the lower levels of response, students are unlikely to present these arguments or any supporting evidence and examples. A simple description of mid-term elections is likely at this level.

Note that it is relevant if students argue that the mid-term results may **not** be significant as most members of Congress are 'safe' because of their incumbency advantages, the president cannot be removed through these elections and there is usually little turnover of seats. Such analysis, along with supporting evidence, is likely to be found at the higher levels of response.

AO1: 4

AO2: 4

AO3: 2



**(02)** To what extent have the role and functions of the national nominating conventions been reduced to mere formalities? **[30 marks]**

Debate is expected in higher-level responses, focusing on the changing role/functions of the national nominating conventions, referencing both 'reduced' and a 'mere formality' in the answers.

For AO1 marks, students should have knowledge of the role of the conventions ending the nomination process but before the national campaign begins. For context, good students may refer to the historic role and functions of the conventions as significant, as they actually decided the candidate as well as the vice-president, and the party platform was decided by the votes of the states. They may then contrast this with the current role of the conventions as 'rubber stamping' bodies where those decisions have already been made elsewhere.

For high-level marks at both AO1 and AO2, students must analyse and explain why party conventions may now be described as a 'mere formality', as the formal role of the convention in deciding the candidate has gone (unless there is no clear primary winner where the convention 'super-delegates' may become significant, although this has not yet happened), as well as the role of deciding the vice-president and the party platform.

Expect reference, at the higher levels of response, to the increasing role of the primary and caucus system since the McGovern-Fraser reforms reduced the role of 'party bosses' in 'smoke-filled rooms' in candidate selection, and the growing importance of the mass media in the conventions where the party candidate is concerned more with influencing the wider electorate than simply the party delegates, as in the past.

Good students should be able to distinguish between the 'formal' functions (which have declined) and the 'informal' functions (which have grown).

Students should present a case that the conventions still retain some important 'formal' functions covering, to a greater degree (Level 3 and Level 4) or lesser degree (Levels 1 and 2), the following arguments:

- It is the only time when the national party meets (rather than 50 state parties) and is organised/controlled by the National Committees.
- The 'coronation' of the candidate takes place with the acceptance speech and keynote speech given to the party delegates and to the nation.
- The candidate and vice-president are showcased at the convention as part of a 'balanced ticket' to influence voters.
- The Platform (party principles and goals known as 'planks') is announced, but **not** debated, at the convention and is **not** binding on the candidate.
- The candidate is looking for a 'bounce' in the polls resulting from a successful convention to take them into the national campaign during the 3-4 day highly stage-managed 'political theatre'.

Most students will recognise that the conventions do retain some role and important 'informal' functions, and that they remain an important 'ritual' and 'media event' ending the nomination process. They must be able to use several of the arguments below for high AO2 marks. There will be much less analysis and evidence at lower levels of response, which will be limited.

- The media focus on the party presidential candidate and his vice-president in the 3/4 day ‘jamboree’, and the focus on the party platform and values, may engage the public for the presidential campaign.
- The ‘bounce’ and ‘momentum’ that can come from a successful convention, as for the Democrats in 2008 or the loss of it as in the 1992 Republican convention, where the party was perceived as divided, or the failure to gain it as in the 2012 Republican convention.
- The role of the convention in healing party divisions, especially after divisive primaries such as those between Obama and Hillary Clinton in 2008 or Santorum and Romney in 2012, and the projection of a united party image with the party uniting around its chosen candidate for the national campaign.
- The energising of the core vote/base of the party.
- The attempt to appeal to undecided ‘swing’ voters.
- The enthusing of the party activists to organise the ‘ground war’ in the upcoming campaign in the states.

Good students may also refer to the fact that parties often locate their conventions in key swing states to try and impact the votes here, such as the Democrats choosing North Carolina and the Republicans in Florida in 2012.

Students should be rewarded when they use convincing evidence and examples of specific conventions to illustrate their answer.

At the higher levels of response, both sides of the analysis should be covered as to whether conventions do or don’t retain an important role or significant formal and informal functions.

At lower levels of response there will be little balanced debate, or any convincing evidence or examples on either side of the debate.

Levels of response will be distinguished by the focus on the set question, the extent and strength of the knowledge and analysis presented, the evidence and examples used and the overall communication of the answer, including syntax, vocabulary, structure and coherence.

AO1: 12

AO2: 12

AO3: 6

**Topic 2 Political Parties****Total for this topic: 40 marks****(03)** Explain how political parties are organised in the USA.**[10 marks]**

For high AO1 marks, students must be able to give evidence of the organisation of US parties. They may synoptically compare the relatively weak, de-centralised US party organisation with the much stronger national organisation of UK parties within a unitary system. They should present such evidence as:

- US parties are a collection of 50 state parties rather than one centralised national party as in the UK.
- There is no organised mass membership. There are activists and registered voters but individuals do not join parties as in the UK.
- There are no national party manifestos. Party candidates stand on their own views in the states and districts which, therefore, differ from candidate to candidate and state to state.
- There are no party 'leaders' as such.
- The choice of candidates is done through primaries, not parties.
- There is weaker party discipline in Congress and lower levels of party voting.

The more evidence presented of the above organisational features, the higher the AO1 mark is likely to be.

High AO2 marks are likely to be gained by **explanations** of such organisational features as the constitutional separation of powers and, in particular, the federal system which explains the de-centralised nature of the parties with them being different in each of the 50 states despite sharing a party label. Evidence should be presented of such differences, which also explains the relative lack of national organisation and control.

Very good students may refer to the relative strengthening of party organisation through super-delegates at conventions, the strengthening role of the National Committees or the increasing party discipline seen in Congress recently. They may, however, conclude that this is nowhere near the level of centralised party organisation and control seen in the UK.

At the lower levels of response there is likely to be simple description which may be inaccurate, with little or no explanation of US party organisation.

Many answers are likely to contain comparisons with UK institutions. Where relevant, these should be given credit but such comparison is not necessary to achieve the highest marks.

Some very weak students may drift to ideology in their answers and this should **not** be rewarded.

AO1: 4

AO2: 4

AO3: 2

**(04)** ‘Minor parties and independent candidates in the USA have little political significance and are destined to fail.’ Discuss. **[30 marks]**

Students are invited to analyse the role of minor parties/independent candidates and come to some conclusion both on their ‘political significance’ and whether they are ‘destined to fail’. It is not simply a question on the difficulties facing minor parties and independent candidates, nor their ‘advantages and disadvantages’, although weaker students may present such a limited response.

Students may agree with the description of ‘little political significance’ presenting (to a greater degree for Levels 3 and 4 or lesser degree for Levels 1 and 2) evidence **for** this assertion, such as their inability to make electoral gains either for the presidency or in Congress and the states, or to ‘break the mould’ of US 2-party dominance because of such factors as:

- Their electoral disadvantages, eg difficult ballot access.
- The effects of the First-Past-the-Post, winner-takes-all electoral system and the Electoral College (EC).
- Their financial and media disadvantages reducing their ability to campaign, eg lack of name recognition, 5% funding rule.
- The ‘catch-all’ ideological nature of the two ‘big tent’ parties and the strong party identification of most voters leads to the lack of ‘issue space’ for other parties to occupy unless ‘extreme’.
- The ‘appropriation’ or ‘clothes-stealing’ of their policies by the two main parties reduces the need for their existence.

Weaker students at the lower levels of response may refer only to one or two of the above factors and present little evidence or explanations.

Higher-level response students should present strong evidence of the above from recent US elections, with evidence of candidates who have lost, such as Perot in 1992 and 1996 and Nader in 2000.

Excellent students may go beyond these oft-cited examples and present evidence of more permanent minor parties such as the Prohibition Party, the Libertarian Party or the Green Party, or give examples of other minor parties and candidates they have studied.

However, students will also be expected to present a more balanced case and argue that, in some circumstances, minor parties and candidates **can** have some political significance. At the higher levels of response, supporting evidence and examples should be wide-ranging and will be likely to include:

- The ‘spoiler effect’ on the outcome of elections, such as Perot’s contribution to Clinton’s win and G Bush’s loss in 1992 when gaining 19% of the popular vote (although no EC votes). Also, Nader’s contribution to the outcome of the 2000 presidential election, with 2.7% of the national vote, but higher in the vitally important Florida.
- Their success in influencing the political agenda of the time and their effects on future elections and policies, eg the impact of Wallace’s US Independent Party in the 1968 election and his contribution to Nixon’s successful ‘southern strategy’ in 1972, or Perot’s impact on the 1992 and 1996 elections and budget deficits.
- Their potential impact on the workings of the Electoral College, such as Wallace’s 46 EC votes, gained by his concentrated vote in the south and the fact that this almost

dead-locked the EC, with Perot’s failure to gain EC votes explained by his widely dispersed vote throughout the states.

- Excellent students may present evidence of candidates who have won elections, such as Bernie Sanders, Senator for Vermont or Jesse Ventura, Governor of Minnesota, and their possible significance in decision-making.
- They also give more choice to the electorate and the opportunity to make a ‘protest vote’.

At the very highest level of response, students should refer to **why** they are ‘destined to fail’ although they may have incorporated some of these arguments in earlier analysis relating to ‘little significance’. Some analysis of ‘destined to fail’ is essential for very high-level marks as good students should know that most minor party and independent candidates have failed to sustain any momentum after even modest victories. This may relate to their own electoral or ideological weaknesses or the strength of the two dominant parties. Excellent students will present some evidence of this, such as:

- Perot’s Reform Party vote was halved in 1996 after Clinton adopted his plans for cutting the federal budget and the party disappeared after Buchanan’s candidacy in 2000.
- Nader did not repeat his 2000 success, and in 2008 there was a less than 1% vote for all minor party candidates combined and less than 2% in 2012.
- Wallace did not contest the 1972 election after the Republican Party adopted many of his platforms.

As Hofstadter stated, they are like the bees of US politics since most simply ‘sting and then die’ as they cannot sustain their momentum in a dominant 2-party system.

Levels will be distinguished by the focus on the set question, the extent and strength of the knowledge and analysis presented, the evidence and examples used and the overall communication of the answer including syntax, vocabulary, structure and coherence.

AO1: 12

AO2: 12

AO3: 6

**Topic 3 Voting Behaviour****Total for this topic: 40 marks****(05) Explain why the Hispanic vote is becoming more important in US elections. [10 marks]**

Students, in response to this question, should demonstrate knowledge and understanding of this growing block of US voters, often Spanish-speaking and Catholic, giving reasons for their becoming 'more important' in US elections.

Higher-level responses at both AO1 and AO2 will present several of the following arguments with supporting evidence:

- Demographic factors such as the increase in the Hispanic population due to immigration and birth rates, eg now 51 million (up from 43 million in 2000) and 16% of the US population, therefore the growth of their share of the electorate.
- They will become increasingly important as the Hispanic population ages (1/4 of Hispanics are under 18) and acquires the vote (hence the term 'Sleeping Giant', which should be fully explained if used in the response).
- Their concentration in several vital swing states such as Nevada, Colorado and New Mexico and states with high EC votes such as Florida, therefore their votes are even more important because of the closeness of the vote in these battleground states.
- They can be important 'swing voters' in elections, especially over social issues such as abortion/same-sex marriage, which attracted more social conservative Hispanics to the Republicans in 2004 (up to 44% of the vote). However, their vote was 67% for Obama in 2008 and 71% in 2012, attracted back to the Democrats as the party of minority rights, welfare and supporters of the 'Dream Act' allowing for naturalisation, eg Obama's Executive Order on citizenship for young Hispanics in 2012, before the presidential election. There was also evidence of the alienation of this group of voters in 2012 by Romney, whose reference to 'self-deportation' and anti-immigration views in the campaign is thought to have affected his chances of winning in several states, and for the Republican Party in future campaigns.
- The increasing importance of Hispanic voters is shown by their targeting by campaign strategists of both parties anxious to win in the most competitive states or districts, eg by campaigning in Spanish or supporting citizenship or the Republican focus on Hispanic candidates such as Marco Rubio in Florida and Ted Cruz in Texas.

At the highest levels of response, students must be able to support their answers with demographic evidence as well as statistical evidence from recent elections relating this increasingly crucial block of voters to party success.

At the lower levels of response there is likely to be little convincing evidence relating to the Hispanic vote, nor any explanations for its growing importance. There may be a simple descriptive response with little accuracy.

Some excellent students may point to the lower levels of both turnout at elections and political engagement among this group of voters and the fact that many are 'illegals' with no citizenship rights.

AO1: 4

AO2: 4

AO3: 2

**(06)** 'A continuing paradox of US voting behaviour is the willingness of many voters to split their ticket.' Evaluate the reasons for and the consequences of such electoral behaviour.

**[30 marks]**

Students should begin their response by explaining clearly what split-ticket voting actually is.

They must also be able to give some precise statistical evidence and supporting examples of split-ticket voting for higher AO1 marks, as well as the way that split-ticket voting has fluctuated at recent elections depending on the candidates and issues at the time. For example, the highest was in the 1980 and 1984 elections with 28% of voters splitting their ticket with 20% for the Republican President Reagan but for a Democrat to represent them in Congress. In 2008, 17% of voters split their ticket, including 9% 'Obama Republicans'.

At the higher levels of response, students should explain the paradoxical nature of split-ticket voting as voters vote for two (or more) different parties on the same ballot paper on the same day, leading to some unusual results in many states, which may be given as supporting evidence.

When explaining 'reasons for' split-ticket voting students should cover, to a greater (Levels 3 and 4) or lesser (Levels 1 and 2) degree, the following analysis:

- split-ticket voting should be related to the nature of US elections which are conducted under a constitutional system of separated powers and federalism. It is these factors that allow voters to make complex choices on their single ballot paper for different offices at different levels of government. This explanation is likely to be clearly presented, using examples, by higher-level students.

Students achieving higher-level marks at both AO1 and AO2 are likely to explain split-ticket voting through:

- The psephological concept of partisan de-alignment where a weakening of party attachments and habit voting is more likely to lead to split-ticket voting and voter volatility.
- The growth of the importance of single-issue voting rather than habit voting for a single party in straight-ticket voting. The views on issues put forward by different candidates may switch a vote (there are many examples of salient issues that good students will use) whilst continuing to vote for another party for another office.
- The growing importance of candidate-centred campaigning as a factor influencing voting behaviour. Some voters may switch to voting for a different presidential candidate because of a likeability factor, or for competence reasons, yet continue to vote for their preferred party for ideological reasons. For example, Bush Democrats in 2004 or Obama Republicans in 2008. A very poor candidate such as Dole in 1996 may have led to high levels of split-ticket voting as a result. A very popular candidate such as Reagan in 1980 or 1984 (with large numbers of 'Reagan Democrats') or Obama in 2008 may see high levels of split-ticket voting in districts/states.
- High congressional re-election rates because of numerous incumbency advantages may see voters returning their preferred member of Congress, yet voting differently for president or governor.
- 'Cognitive Madisonianism' may mean voters consciously voting for divided government because it would mean more effective checks and balances.
- Rational choice theory explains that voters may consciously vote for different things that will benefit them when casting a ballot such as low taxes with Republican voting and higher

social spending with the Democrats. Those supporting third party presidential candidates at elections will have to choose an alternative party further down the ticket.

To reach the higher marks, students must also explain some of the consequences of split-ticket voting, even though the 'reasons for' and 'consequences' need **not** be equally balanced in the essay and students may focus more on causes rather than consequences.

The main consequence of split-ticket voting to be analysed is the likelihood of divided government both in Washington DC and also in the states. Students should be able to give evidence of this apparent 'gridlock' which has occurred because of split-ticket voting (not to be confused with situations where there is divided government caused by the results of mid-term elections, as in 2006 and 2010).

Many excellent students may argue that divided government caused by split-ticket voting (as in 1984 with the Reagan presidency but the Democrat House, or when Republican president G Bush faced a Democrat Congress in 1988, or in 1996 when Clinton was faced with Republican majorities in both houses) could be **either** a 'good' or a 'bad' thing.

- Good because it leads to more consensus-seeking, compromise and moderation to get things done, as Clinton was forced to do in his second term.
- Bad because it hinders effective decision-making and causes a dysfunctional 'gridlock' so that little gets done and government is stalled, as after the 2012 election which produced a Democrat President and a Republican House of Representatives with different political agendas.

Weaker students at the lower levels of response are likely to present an over-generalised response with little understanding of either the reasons for and consequences of split-ticket voting or any evidence or reasoned explanations.

Levels will be distinguished by the focus on the set question, the extent and strength of the knowledge and analysis presented, the evidence and examples used and the overall communication of the answer, including syntax, vocabulary, structure and coherence.

AO1: 12

AO2: 12

AO3: 6



**Topic 4 Pressure Groups****Total for this topic: 40 marks****(07) Explain the role and significance of single-issue pressure groups in the USA. [10 marks]**

Students must be able to define and explain what a single-issue group is in the context of pressure-group politics in the USA.

For high AO1 and AO2 marks, students should explain that they are groups whose role is to organise and campaign around one single political issue or interest rather than multiple causes or interests. They work to try to raise the profile of the issue or interest on the political agenda, whether electoral (supporting or opposing candidates) or legislative (lobbying) or when they try to influence public opinion (through the media or direct action).

Many students will explain that they tend to be cause groups rather than protective groups and people join them if they agree with, and want to support, the specific issue.

Their significance will vary with the nature of their aim and the extent of their public and political support as well as the degree of their success.

Most tend to be outsider rather than insider groups as they tend not to have the access advantages such as money or expertise. They often use direct action to gain publicity for their views such as MADD or the pro- and anti-abortion groups.

Good students may argue that some single-issue groups are fanatical in their views and their methods, although such fanaticism may reduce their significance, such as the attacks on abortion clinics. They support single issues ranging from environmental protection such as the Sierra Club to the gun lobby (NRA) protecting and defending gun rights, to pro- and anti-abortion groups (Naral and Right to Life) which are the ones most likely to be chosen as examples. Excellent students may refer to countervailing groups that provide some degree of balance on single issues.

Students may choose alternative examples of single-issue groups to illustrate their answer. Any power and influence over politicians and their decision-making depends on the aim (such as the NRA's significance in the protection of the Second Amendment) and this is likely to be argued by students achieving higher-level marks. Weaker students may give inappropriate examples that are incorrect, or fail to assess their significance in a largely descriptive response.

AO1: 4

AO2: 4

AO3: 2

**(08)** ‘The political activities of pressure groups help rather than hinder the operation of pluralist democracy in the USA.’ Discuss. **[30 marks]**

Essential to a Level 3 or 4 response to this question is the clear understanding of the term pluralist democracy and not simply “democracy”. At this level students are likely to explain the term, perhaps using Dahl or Truman’s works to refer to the positive advantages of pressure-group activity in dispersing power and representing causes or interests in a democracy like the USA.

Once this has been defined, with a greater or lesser degree of accuracy, students can then focus on the debate as to whether the ‘political activities’ of pressure groups actually ‘help’ or ‘hinder’ pluralism.

Weaker students at lower levels of response may simply present a list of the advantages and disadvantages of pressure-group activity and focus on a description of the latter such as methods used.

At higher levels of response, students should explain the ‘help’ part of the question by identifying some of the positive democratic advantages of pressure-group activity backed up by appropriate examples, such as:

- Their representative functions, representing the many diverse views and minority opinions in the USA.
- Allowing for wider participation/involvement in the political system making up for the deficiencies of the party system (2-party dominance) and electoral system (focusing on targeted demographics).
- Their representation of views to decision-makers between elections.
- Their expertise and specialist knowledge aiding policy-makers.
- They educate and inform the public on issues and raise important issues on the political agenda.

However, students should also be aware of the debate about their influence over US politics with the elitist view (represented through the work of C Wright Mills), arguing that the excessive power and influence of some powerful groups hinders rather than helps democracy. Students achieving higher-level marks at both AO1 and AO2 should (to a greater or lesser degree) be able to present evidence for this alternative and less positive view of their democratic role, such as:

- The power of some special interests, of the public interest on political decision-making, with supporting examples of this power to influence, especially in blocking change wanted by the majority (NRA, AIPAC, corporate lobbies could be used as examples here). They may argue, at the highest level of response, that there are no ‘countervailing influences’ to the power of these lobbies.
- The insider access gained by some groups rather than others (ie the lack of ‘pluralist balance’) through campaign contributions, now easier after the Supreme Court’s ‘Citizens United’ case in 2010 opening the flood gates to corporate influence over elections and election outcomes through Super PACs.
- The extent of lobbying activities through the ‘revolving door’ gained by powerful groups but not others.
- The ‘Iron Triangle’ and ‘clientelism’ gaining influence for some pressure groups (examples would be needed) in a 3-way relationship between pressure group, executive department or agency and a congressional committee.

- The view that violent direct action used by some groups also hinders democracy and distorts views.

For students to achieve Level 4, a considered conclusion is required as to which side of the debate is most convincing, backed up with supporting evidence and examples used throughout the answer from actual pressure-group activity in the USA.

At the highest levels of response, students may argue that, whatever the power and influence gained by some pressure groups that are not balanced by countervailing views as the pluralist perspective asserts, there is a strong argument that no pressure group can be all powerful all of the time. Furthermore, that there are several restrictions/constraints on their political activities such as the Honest Leadership and Open Government Act of 2007, the transparency of much of their spending and the fact that decisions are made by elected politicians, accountable to the wider public at elections.

Levels will be distinguished by the focus on the set question, the extent and strength of the knowledge and analysis presented, the evidence and examples used and the overall communication of the answer including syntax, vocabulary, structure and coherence.

AO1: 12

AO2: 12

AO3: 6

**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>	<b>4</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>AO2</b>	<b>4</b>	<b>12</b>	<b>16</b>
<b>AO3</b>	<b>2</b>	<b>6</b>	<b>8</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>40</b>