



General Certificate of Education  
Advanced Subsidiary Examination  
June 2014

## Government and Politics

## GOVP2

### Unit 2 Governing Modern Britain

Monday 2 June 2014 9.00 am to 10.30 am

**For this paper you must have:**

- an AQA 12-page answer book.

#### Time allowed

- 1 hour 30 minutes

#### Instructions

- Use black ink or black ball-point pen.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book. The **Paper Reference** is GOVP2.
- Choose **two** topics and answer **all** questions on each topic.
- Do all rough work in your answer book. Cross through any work you do not want to be marked.

#### Information

- The marks for questions are shown in brackets.
- The maximum mark for this paper is 80.
- Questions **0 2** and **0 3**, **0 5** and **0 6**, **0 8** and **0 9**, **1 1** and **1 2** should be answered in continuous prose. For these questions you will be marked on your ability to:
  - use good English
  - organise information clearly
  - use specialist vocabulary where appropriate.

#### Advice

- You are advised to read through the examination paper before you attempt the questions.
- You are advised to spend the same amount of time on each topic.

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Choose **two** topics and answer **all** questions on each topic.

Each topic carries 40 marks.

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### Topic 1 The British Constitution

Read the extract below and answer questions **0 1**, **0 2** and **0 3** which follow.

#### Does Britain have a constitution?

There is much debate about whether Britain actually has a constitution. It clearly lacks one in the widely used sense of the term: there is no single comprehensive written code or document which sets out the rules affecting the relations between government institutions and between these institutions and citizens. On the other hand, it does have one in the sense that, in the view of constitutional expert Hood Phillips, there is a body of laws, customs and 'conventions' which define the composition and powers of organs of the State, and regulate the relations of the various state organs to one another and the private citizen. In other words, there are established procedures regulating the conduct of government, and these are largely adhered to.

Britain has long been regarded as a country that illustrates the claim that it is not necessary to have a codified constitution to be a democracy. After all, Britain has been a stable democracy for over a century and scores relatively highly as a protector of civil liberties.

Source: adapted from D Kavanagh, *British Politics: Continuities and Change*, 4th edition, by permission of Oxford University Press, 2000

- 0 1** Explain the term 'conventions' as used in the extract. **[5 marks]**
- 0 2** Using your own knowledge as well as the extract, identify **and** explain **two** ways in which the British constitution regulates 'the conduct of government'. **[10 marks]**
- 0 3** 'Neutrality and independence are central features of the British judiciary.' Discuss. **[25 marks]**

**Topic 2 Parliament**

Read the extract below and answer questions **0 4**, **0 5** and **0 6** which follow.

**Adversarial politics in the Commons**

The important features of the physical layout of the House of Commons are: the separation of the governing party (or coalition) from the rest of the Commons and the physical line of division between the two halves, ensuring they face each other across the chamber; and the symbolic placing of the Speaker between the two. The leading members of the main parties all occupy the front benches of either side. In other words, this is a House organised to conduct a public battle, albeit a non-violent one, between supporters of the governing party (or coalition) and the opposition.

On the side of the opposition this is further organised by the now long-established principle of forming a 'shadow cabinet'. On big set-piece occasions – such as Prime Minister's Question Time – the organisation of business is dominated by a public adversarial contest in which Government and Opposition confront each other. In this way, the opposition parties try to hold the government to account.

Source: adapted from M Moran, *Politics and Governance in the UK*, reproduced with permission of Palgrave Macmillan, 2005

- 0 4** Explain the term 'shadow cabinet' used in the extract. **[5 marks]**
- 0 5** Using your own knowledge as well as the extract, identify **and** explain **two** arguments in favour of adversarial politics as practised in the House of Commons. **[10 marks]**
- 0 6** 'The principal role of backbench MPs in the House of Commons is to support their parties, not to exercise their personal judgements or air their consciences.' Discuss. **[25 marks]**

**Turn over for the next question**

**Turn over ►**

**Topic 3 The Core Executive**

Read the extract below and answer questions **0 7**, **0 8** and **0 9** which follow.

**Appointment to the cabinet**

The prime minister may be left with rather little choice in appointing a cabinet. That is not to say that there is no room for manoeuvre. Some powerful figures have been kept out of the cabinet by their prime minister, or out of the cabinet post they really wanted. Thatcher and Blair contrived to put their own supporters into important government positions, and cabinet sackings and promotions are fairly frequent, as prime ministers try to balance the demands of political circumstances and groups jockeying for power. Equally, two very successful post-war prime ministers, Macmillan and Thatcher, seem to have signalled weakness rather than strength when they engaged in major 'cabinet reshuffles' in 1962 and 1989. Both were soon out of power.

The prime minister's powers to hire and fire government members are, as are many other functions of the office, a mixture of freedom and constraint. There is often little choice, and some ministers choose themselves by virtue of their political position and stature. At the same time, some prime ministers have juggled the careers of powerful people and have shaped governments to their own taste.

Source: adapted from I Budge et al, *The New British Politics*, 4th edition, © Pearson Education Limited, 2007

- 0 7** Explain the term 'cabinet reshuffles' used in the extract. **[5 marks]**
- 0 8** Using your own knowledge as well as the extract, explain why a prime minister's power to hire and fire government members is 'a mixture of freedom and constraint'. **[10 marks]**
- 0 9** 'Civil servants advise while ministers decide.' How true is this of the relationship between Britain's senior civil servants and their ministers? **[25 marks]**

**Topic 4 Multi-level Governance**

Read the extract below and answer questions **1 0**, **1 1** and **1 2** which follow.

**Political groupings in the European Parliament**

The members of the 'European Parliament' (MEPs) are elected by proportional representation from within member states to represent their countries, their constituencies and their parties. This means that they can be torn by conflicting loyalties. Although MEPs do not confront each other in the semicircular chamber like a government and opposition, they do form political groupings, ranging from left to right, that cut across national boundaries. Although often terming themselves parties, the groupings are not like the parties found in national political systems. They do not have mass organisations or fight elections with clear manifestos. However, in joining a political grouping, MEPs are expected to broadly accept its ideological position. The Euroscepticism of British Conservatives has often created major problems within the centre-right European People's Party (EPP) group. For example, after the 2009 elections, to some dismay of moderate centre-right leaders such as Germany's Angela Merkel, David Cameron fulfilled a controversial pledge to leave the EPP and join a new anti-federalist grouping. Not all his MEPs were enthusiastic about this.

Source: adapted from J Kingdom, *Government and Politics in Britain: An introduction*, Polity Press, 2003

- 1 0** Explain the term 'European Parliament' used in the extract. **[5 marks]**
- 1 1** Using your own knowledge as well as the extract, explain why Members of the European Parliament can 'be torn by conflicting loyalties'. **[10 marks]**
- 1 2** 'Rather than satisfy the nationalists, the devolution settlements for Scotland and Wales have led to demands for even greater independence.' Discuss. **[25 marks]**

**END OF QUESTIONS**

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