

Examiners' Report  
January 2012

GCE Government and Politics 6GP03 3A

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## Introduction

This paper saw a marked preference amongst candidates for the questions focusing on more recent policies and events, with a majority of candidates choosing to answer Questions 1, 2 and 5 on higher education funding, benefits reform and coalition policy on policing. It is gratifying to see so many candidates and centres apply themselves so fastidiously to the study of current affairs that this paper requires, and this was evidenced in a number of excellent top-mark responses across such questions.

It was noticeable, however, that many candidates still avoid and find more challenging issues surrounding the economy, particularly recent issues which have arisen on reform of the banking system (the focus for Question 3). This suggests that this is still a weak point for many centres and individual candidates.

An inability to address the question set continues to be an issue across the paper, particularly for candidates who are very knowledgeable about general themes on the four key issues. This was a major factor in limiting the marks of many excellent responses to Question 6 in particular.

There are also still a significant number of candidates who are failing to include the vital political aspect of their studies in their responses, particularly in Environment questions and also in the Law and Order essay.

However, synopticity marks have continued to improve. A significant number of candidates now avoid the simplistic yes/no style of response when answering essays that so often keeps their synopticity marks at the lower end of level 2. More candidates are now choosing to answer thematically, either by factors for discussion or by the overall perceived success/failure of governments/parties. This encourages more direct and explicit comparison and contrast of different ideas, policies and perspectives as required by synopticity.

## Question 1

This was the second most popular short-answer question, and covered an issue that many candidates obviously felt very strongly about. Unfortunately, this meant that many candidates tried to turn this into a question on the arguments for and against tuition fees in general, so missing the focus of the question on political divisions.

Surprisingly few candidates referenced either the Browne review or the issue that has arisen from plans to cut university funding whilst claiming the increase in fees will fund better services and facilities for students. Many candidates were prevented from entering level 3 by *only* being able to cite divisions between the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats.

The most successful answers were from candidates who focused from the outset on the question - explicitly addressing the "politically divisive" part of the question. Level 3 responses usually identified this as the key evaluative issue in their opening sentences, and went on to address the party-political impact of the topic, especially within the coalition. It was not enough, however, to merely identify divisions within the coalition for level 3 - candidates would also need to identify and explain at least one more aspect of "political division" to enter this level. Most candidates who accessed this level used Labour party policy as their second area of political divisiveness, e.g. by evaluating their arguments that fees of £6000 and a graduate tax would be less likely to disadvantage poorer students than fees of £9000.

Equally important for entering level 3 was the depth of explanation of the divisions within the coalition. Many candidates cited pre-election policy as their sole evidence of such a split; such responses were generally limited to level 2 for a lack of depth of knowledge. More successful answers were able to reference rebellions on the tuition fees vote and in some excellent cases, the response of the Liberal Democrat grassroots members at last year's party conference.

Less successful answers tended to equate "politically divisive" with more general reasons for the changes to be unpopular, failing to balance criticisms with consideration of arguments for the changes. Such responses often discussed the impact of the increase in fees on students rather than the political impact. Responses such as this were limited to the middle of level 2.

A number of weaker candidates also put the issue of higher education funding into the general context of cuts, and were unable to develop their responses further, thus limiting their marks to a maximum bottom level 2.

There were also a significant number of irrelevant responses on other educational sectors: further education, the EMA, academies, free school and even primary schools. Such responses were awarded 0 marks **if** there were no references at all to higher education.

Higher education funding has had to increase due to the massive rise in numbers of applicants and students. This occurred when Tony Blair proclaimed that everyone should have the chance to go to university, which was a complete opposite from the tripartite system set up after world war 2. The funding has been politically divisive as fees have gone from £9,000 a year. A substantial increase from when it used to be free in the early 90's.

The issue of funding higher education is that public money is being wasted on degrees which are somewhat pointless in the civilian street. For example, you can do a degree in James Bond or Golf course management. This is why funding has been politically divisive. Some say that the government should focus on renaissance subjects at university, like Maths as degrees like this would be beneficial to companies, business and also the economy.

Another reason why funding for higher education is politically divisive is due to the fact that a mass amounts of funding is being spent to keep universities going. Ever since Blair ~~increased~~ encouraged everyone to go to university, funding has shot through the roof. Before we mainly had the Russell Group of universities and it was seen as a privilege to go to university. That is why political division is being caused as some think all need the opportunity for university, and this has caused the increase in funding and the number of universities to increase whereas some think it would be better for fewer students, fewer universities and a more renaissance education like subject option.



## ResultsPlus

Examiner Comments

This is an example of a response where the candidate has missed out the political part of the question. They have explained two reasons for divisions, so entering level 2. However, there are no references to political policies or viewpoints, thus keeping this at the bottom of the level. 7 marks were awarded.

Higher education funding has been politically divisive for several factors. Under the Brown Labour government, the Browne report was investigated in order to provide aid for governments in deciding <sup>whether</sup> to raise university tuition fees.

Due to the current deficit the coalition are facing in public finances, the Conservative and Liberal Democrat government have decided to raise tuition fees from a previous cap of just over £3000, to £6000 and in some cases £9000.

This ~~has~~ has been so politically divisive as the Liberal Democrats stated in their 2010 election manifesto that they would not raise tuition fees. However, since forming a coalition in the national interest, they have had to face compromises and one of which was to raise university tuition fees which the Conservatives support.

Splits between the Liberal Democrats have occurred within the coalition, however Clegg has felt the raise in fees is a fairer ~~any~~ system as graduates do not pay back their fees until they are earning over £21,000 and more bursaries are available for those from poorer backgrounds.

The Labour Party have criticised the coalition for rising of higher education fees as they feel it is a ~~progressive~~ <sup>regressive</sup> system and will discourage many students from poorer, deprived areas from attending. They are seeking to impose perhaps a graduate tax instead.



finally, the higher education fees have caused significant outrage from students who are particularly angry at the Liberal Democrats for going against their manifesto promise. This sparked off violent demonstration protests in November 2010, in London. In addition, the far left politically and many trade unions are opposing the fees.

As a result, the Liberal Democrats have certainly lost significant support from the public who feel they have been betrayed after the higher education fees rise. Many Liberal Democrat Back Benchers have resigned ~~to~~ highlighting the political controversy.



**ResultsPlus**

**Examiner Comments**

This is a good example of a level 3 response, where the candidate clearly understands the splits that the issue of higher education funding has caused both within the coalition and between parties.

The points include the pre-coalition position, current attitudes and also the potential electoral impact of the issue on the Liberal Democrats. This combines to demonstrate a candidate who merits a level 3 award for both the range of points and depth of understanding of several facets of the issue.

This response was awarded 12 marks. To progress to the top of the level, the candidate could have included an additional point on cuts to higher education funding as a contrast to the tuition fees debate.

## Question 2

This was the most popular of the short-answer questions, and allowed candidates to demonstrate a wealth of knowledge of this very current political issue. The main problem that candidates encountered in this question was a tendency to list points without explanations and such responses were limited to the middle of level 2 at most.

There were, however, a significant number of excellent answers to this double-barrelled question. Many candidates chose to explain the "why" part of the question in their opening paragraph, and then go on to develop the "how" in subsequent paragraphs. This was a valid approach to the question, and it was pleasing to note that far fewer candidates in this examination series misread the question and only addressed one half of the "how" and "why". This meant there were far more responses at the top end of level 2 and level 3.

Level 3 responses saw candidates explain fully at least two reasons for the changes/proposed reforms as well as at least two changes/proposed reforms. It was expected that level 3 responses would be able to specify coalition government policy, reflecting the 'Key Issues' nature of this examination. To progress within level 3, candidates would be expected to link the "how" and the "why" together, thus showing an explicit understanding of the relationship between the reasons for reform and the actions taken.

Less successful candidates limited their own marks by over-answering the question. A significant number of very knowledgeable candidates treated this question as though it asked, "Why are the benefit changes controversial?" This often led to very critical answers rather than an explanation of why reforms are being carried out. It was unfortunate to note that many of these responses write far more than was necessary for such an answer as they got carried away with criticising the proposals and 'shoe-horning' in the House of Lords rejection of the Welfare Reform Bill the night before, which was not relevant to this particular question. Such candidates then found themselves short of time later on in the paper, and so had to limit their responses to the essay in particular, or miss out one short-answer question. This demonstrates again, as did the NHS question in the June 2011 series, the importance of emphasising the strict adherence to time required to complete this examination.

Since the coalition government of the conservatives and liberal democrats came into power in May 2010 as many political issues they have been working towards is the reform of the benefits system within the UK.

The government has been focusing on this for many reasons and have implemented many measures to do so. One of the first reasons was to make and set at plans to make a fairer society, by stopping high tax earners, and who earn £10,000 or more from being ~~eligible~~ eligible for child tax credits which were a universal benefit. This was set at to save money and to help close the gap between the very poor and the very



wealthy with the gap between in this country being 9.3% difference.

The government has also set out and tried to reform the benefits system by capping the total amount of benefits a family can claim to £26,000 per year and also capping housing benefit to £400 per month. The coalition justify this saying they've introduced these caps to encourage people to go to work and also to help stop people having large families which in reality they can't afford. David Cameron has also spoke in recent conferences such as in Leeds saying his government are also doing this to help prevent a dependency culture and to make society fairer, saying it isn't fair people are going to work and working hard to pay for people to not be in work and who are better than them.

The coalition also set out to reform incapacity and disability benefits by fitting everyone who is claiming these specific benefits, such as disability living allowance (DLA), through mean tested processes to determine if they are fit and well enough to work.

This reform is going through so again the government can try and punish the dependency culture we have and also get more people into work so they can be better off. The overall outcomes of these cuts are to make living on benefits actually worse than living on a wage that someone has earned to help contribute to the coalition ideological 'big society' to make things fairer.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

This is a clear example of a level 3 response where the candidate explains a range of reasons why reforms have been proposed/ carried out as well as three reforms. 12 marks were awarded.

The benefits system has been a key part of the Welfare State for decades in Britain. The current coalition government however have had to amend many aspects of this system by cutting benefits because of the financial drain they have on government expenditure. During the last New Labour government's terms in office, between 1997 and 2010, vast sums of public money was invested into the infrastructure of the benefits system. This was intended to help those who had become unemployed during the minor recession that occurred during the early 1990's under John Major and the Conservatives. New Labour introduced measures such as the minimum wage as an incentive to work and began giving tax credits to families that needed lifting from the poverty trap. The tax band was increased to help move people in society, who were poor and out of work as well.

However all these changes to the benefits system came at a huge financial cost. Although means testing was introduced by New Labour, to target those <sup>most</sup> in need and stop benefit fraud, the system has been terribly exploited and undermined by people who do not need benefits. Due to the increase of people taking benefits, tax credits etc, between 1997 and 2010, the government ended up spending huge amounts on a system that was not actually paying the economy back (by using benefits as an incentive to work). A benefit culture had occurred and appeared to be unbreakable. Instead of getting rid of the poverty trap the system only went further to increase the number of people in it. Many unemployed people felt they gained more from Labour's benefits than from work.

Due to this vast cost, and the massive expenditure in other public sectors, by the last government, the current coalition have had to make some serious cutbacks in the benefits system to reduce the country's outstanding deficit. The coalition has proposed to make means-testing stricter and benefits harder to claim if you are not looking for a job. In his speech on welfare, Ian Duncan Smith stated that he, and Mr Cameron, wanted 'to make work pay'.

Instead of spending huge sums on initiatives to get people to work, the coalition government has instead tried to increase the number of private sector jobs and opportunities as a way of employing people. In an ideal, deficit-free world the benefits system would not be changed. This is the view taken by some Liberal Democrats in the coalition and Lib Dem peers, such as Paddy Ashdown.

However the government has had to make means-testing and benefit collection tougher in order to rid the system of frauds and the benefit culture that had arose during New Labour's time in office. In all they are trying to provide this much needed safety net yet more efficiently and so it targets those in society that 'really' need them.



### ResultsPlus

Examiner Comments

This is an example of a knowledgeable candidate who spends too much time on the history of benefit reform. The candidate writes nearly 2 pages before they reference the coalition.

While the historical background does include valid points, such as explaining the increase in claimants under New Labour which has led to a 'benefit culture', the answer does not focus enough on the "how" part of the question to achieve its full potential. The points made about the financial drain and the benefits culture could have been summarised in a paragraph rather than nearly 2 pages, thus allowing the candidate more time to add specific reforms and so fulfil the criteria required for level 3.

Nevertheless, the reasons why reforms have been proposed are well enough explained, especially in the latter half of the essay which references the coalition. This allows this candidate to achieve the top of level 2 with 10 marks awarded.



### ResultsPlus

Examiner Tip

Remember to examine the wording of the question. Here, both 'how' and 'why' were required to enter level 3. A knowledgeable candidate missed out on the highest level because of a lack of examples.



### Question 3

This was by far the least popular question, which was somewhat surprising given the topical nature of the issue and how it follows on directly from candidates' study of the causes and consequences of the 2008 economic crisis.

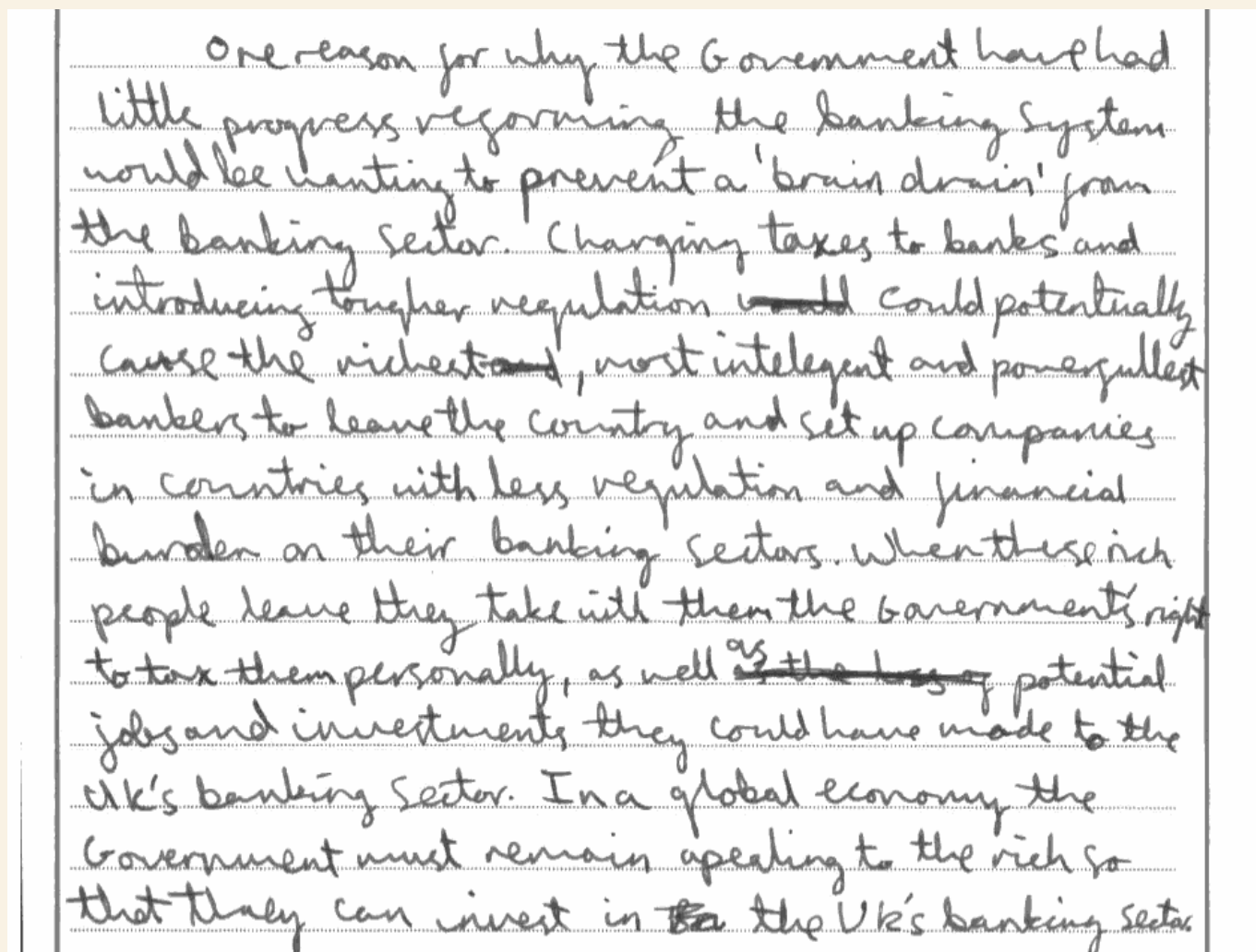
This question also showed the weakest range of responses, suggesting that for many candidates it was a poor choice of question, particularly as the depth of understanding displayed was also very weak.

A number of candidates chose to focus their responses on the Thatcher era, which is too historic and so, if there were no references to Labour or coalition policy or attitudes, would be limited to level 1.

Most responses seen were level 2 calibre candidates who were mostly able to identify the issue of globalisation as a reason for a lack of reform, and the fact that the banks do not want to be reformed. For most candidates, this was the full extent of the depth of their understanding of the issue. There were almost no references to reforms that have been carried out or proposed, even of the bankers' levy which has been a fairly topical issue.

The very few level 3 responses that were seen were able to fully explain at least two reasons for difficulties in reforming the system (usually linked to a particular government) and were able to cite at least one example of a reform/proposal. This was most likely to be the bankers' levy or the difficulties in establishing international rules in a globalised system.

Surprisingly, there were only a handful of candidates who were able to cite Project Merlin or the Vickers Report as examples of reforms/proposals, suggesting that this is an area that centres have omitted from their teaching.



One reason for why the Government have had little progress reorganizing the banking system would be wanting to prevent a 'brain drain' from the banking sector. Charging taxes to banks and introducing tougher regulation ~~would~~ could potentially cause the richest and most intelligent and powerfull bankers to leave the country and set up companies in countries with less regulation and financial burden on their banking sectors. When these rich people leave they take with them the Government's right to tax them personally, as well ~~as the loss of~~<sup>as</sup> potential jobs and investments they could have made to the UK's banking sector. In a global economy the Government must remain appealing to the rich so that they can invest in ~~the~~ the UK's banking sector.

Another reason the Government has made little progress to reform the banking system is that many banking companies believe they are too big to fail. By this one means that the companies know that should they fail their economic impact would be so devastating that the Government would have no choice but to bail them out.

It should also be noted that banking makes up a large proportion of the nation's GDP, and so attempting to reduce its profits through taxation could cause a reduction in wages / marks. This could lower revenue gained from income tax and reduce further the overall tax revenue. Financial Services is one of the few services the UK offers to the world so governments are keen to see it expand.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

The quality of explanation and range of reasons here when discussing why it is difficult to reform the banking system allowed this response to be awarded a top level 2. The lack of context such as specific examples of reforms/proposed reforms prevented this from entering level 3. 10 marks were awarded.



### ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Always include examples of political party/ government policies/ideologies/attitudes/ criticisms etc to ensure you enter level 3.

When the financial crisis occurred in 2008 Gordon Brown did his best to save the banks and financial sector, announcing a £500 billion support package as part of the 'bank bailout'. New Labour made many reforms of the banking system such as giving the Bank of England operational independence and the creation of the Financial Services Authority (FSA). These reforms, plus the huge sums of money spent during the crisis, has made the Coalition have a difficult time picking up the pieces and thinking up further reforms to prevent another crisis.

Giving the banking system so much space through minimal government intervention is hard to revert once the fairly arm's length relationship between the state and economy has been operating for quite some time, ~~spurred~~ <sup>sparked</sup> ~~on~~ by Thatcher's neoliberalist views and privatisation.

Similar neo liberalism argued that the struggling banks should have been allowed to fail, thus increasing their competitiveness nationally and internationally.

This international aspect of the banking system is one reason why it's difficult to reform as institutions have become so intertwined with increasing globalisation. Brown admitted that he did not realise until too late how complex these links were, and how it was naive to believe the FSA could regulate the banking system effectively on its own.

Governments also make limited progress due to the strong contrasts in ~~beliefs~~ economic views over management of the economy.

Liberal Democrats during the financial crisis took a Keynesian view, believing that the government should have gone further



and nationalized the insolvent institutions. Now with two main parties forming the Coalition Government, this has made it more difficult to find a common ground. The government would also need to take into account public opinion, which is understandably bitter about the brunt they've had to bear. Although Vince Cable is currently putting pressure on the government to reform the executive pay of those at the top of the banking system, suggesting that shareholders should be able to veto excessive pay cheques. Cameron has also voiced opposition to 'rewards for failure'. However of course the recipients of these bonuses do not want their salaries and incomes reduced in any way, making it difficult for the government to intervene.

The Treasury Select Committee however has recently reviewed the governance of the Bank of England, interviewing Mervyn King only yesterday a few days ago. Suggestions have included implementing measures into law to ensure the Chancellor is involved the moment the Bank raises concern over public finances. This would ensure the Chancellor is not sidelined in the important decisions made, however agreements will be difficult to reach and therefore limits the government's efforts to reform the banking system. Although progress must be made soon as the Financial Services Act is due to be released in a few months time.



**ResultsPlus**

**Examiner Comments**

An example of a level 3 response. The candidate clearly understands why action by the previous administration has made reform difficult, and links this to some proposed reforms. 12 marks.

## Question 4

This question showed that candidates have a firm grasp of the concept of 'green taxes', and are mostly very aware of the key arguments for and against 'green taxes'.

However, the majority of responses to the question were marked by the exclusion of any political reference whatsoever, so limiting a large number of very knowledgeable candidates to level 2. While the question did not specify 'what are the **political** arguments for and against 'green taxes', the very fact this is a Politics paper tells candidates that they need to include explicit references to either party or government policies or attitudes. Too many candidates used very generalised arguments that could have been taken from a Geography or a General Studies paper, so limiting their marks on this political paper.

Low level 2 answers tended to be dominated by examples from transport, often generalised in terms of 'reducing emissions', while stronger top level 2 answers were able to extend the range of arguments referenced to include energy policy or landfill/recycling.

Level 3 responses were expected to have at least two arguments for and two arguments against 'green taxes', which were backed up by specific references to examples of 'green taxes' that have been carried out or proposed, or political party attitudes towards such taxes. The most common examples seen were Vehicle Excise Duty, fuel duty, aviation taxes, the third runway at Heathrow and the HS2 rail link.

Plan Argument

- Regressive
- Climate change exists?
- hypothetical business

For

- raise money for green initiatives
- carbon contribution → limits emissions

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In recent years green taxes have been highly controversial and as a result there is divided opinion on whether or not they should be imposed.

When arguing against ~~green~~ taxes, many argue that they are regressive and hit the poor disproportionately to all other social groups. For example, the increase in vehicle excise duty (VED) where cars were taxed on how much carbon and green house gases they emitted caused many to argue that this was social harmful to people with

inefficient and old cars. Hence, many on the left take the view that green taxes are unfair and harmful to lower earners.

Another argument ~~against~~ <sup>is</sup> against the use of green taxes ~~divorces~~ <sup>disregards</sup> the actual existence of climate change.

Many on the right agree that green taxes should not be imposed on people on top of other austerity measures (like a rise in VAT) if there is doubt over whether climate change actually exists. For example, Nigel Lawson's think tank set up after the East Anglia university "Climate Gate" scandal brought into ~~question~~ <sup>questioned</sup> the need for many environmental measures.

A final argument against green taxes comes from the neo-liberals like George Osborne who agree that <sup>green</sup> taxes hurt businesses. Indeed in the 2011 Conservative Conference he argued that the UK could not protect the environment "at the harm of businesses." Landfill tax increases is an example of where green taxes ~~has~~ <sup>have</sup> hurt many small enterprises. Hence, neo-liberals agree



that other solutions should be imposed.

On the other hand, they argue that green taxes are a good thing.

Firstly, green taxes when implemented have the capability to raise money for other green and environmental solutions, such as wind farms, cycle routes and other schemes. Hence, environmental campaigners and ecologists feel that their use aid the environmental campaign and the introduction of a greater focus in the environment.

Lastly, they argue that green taxes prevent carbon being emitted. For example, an increase in air passenger duty has made many families think about air travel and discouraged its use. Hence, the view could be taken that green taxes are beneficial to reducing GHG emissions and meeting environmental targets.

In conclusion, there is sometimes of an ideological divide over green taxes between those who wish to protect businesses and the environment. However, green taxes provide revenue and at a time of deficit reduction, this is beneficial to the government.

(Total for Question = 15 marks)



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

An excellent level 3 response where the candidate clearly and explicitly links the arguments they present to policy examples in a balanced answer. This response was awarded 15 - full marks.

Green taxes are supposed to encourage the use of more environmentally friendly alternatives such as wind power or more efficient cars. In theory they do so by making the 'dirty' choices more expensive thus enabling the green ones, ~~or~~ who are often more expensive, to compete. They also increase revenue for the government who then can invest that in green technology. They can as well encourage or force industries and businesses to invest in environmentally friendly technology which pollutes less in order to avoid heavy taxation. This is vital <sup>in the</sup> ~~in the~~ fight against climate change as industries and businesses have shown little interest in reforming themselves, and the UK needs to <sup>reach</sup> ~~reach~~ their target for green energy for 2012.

However in practice green taxes have proven to be more problematic. They hurt the economy even though it is done with the intention to force reform. The technology such as wind power is still in many ways flawed and despite the UK having the biggest off shore windfarm in the world, it is still not enough to end

dependancy on coal and gas for electricity or heating. ~~the~~ Coal, gas and oil ~~is~~ now heavily taxed with green taxes and that along with the expense of green alternatives ~~is~~ is pushing the price of electricity up. The rising cost of electricity and heating ~~is~~ is hurting the average family and reducing the disposable income and other green taxes such as congestion charge and tax on petrol could be doing serious harm to the economy.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

This is an example of how candidates can achieve level 3. The candidate offers a balanced response with 2 brief examples.

To progress within the level, the candidate should have included more specific policies and examples of green taxes. 11 marks were awarded.



## Question 5

This was the most popular third choice question for candidates, and the range of responses seen quite often reflected the 'last choice' attitude, as a significant number of candidates made this into a question of their own choosing on police powers rather than coalition policy on policing.

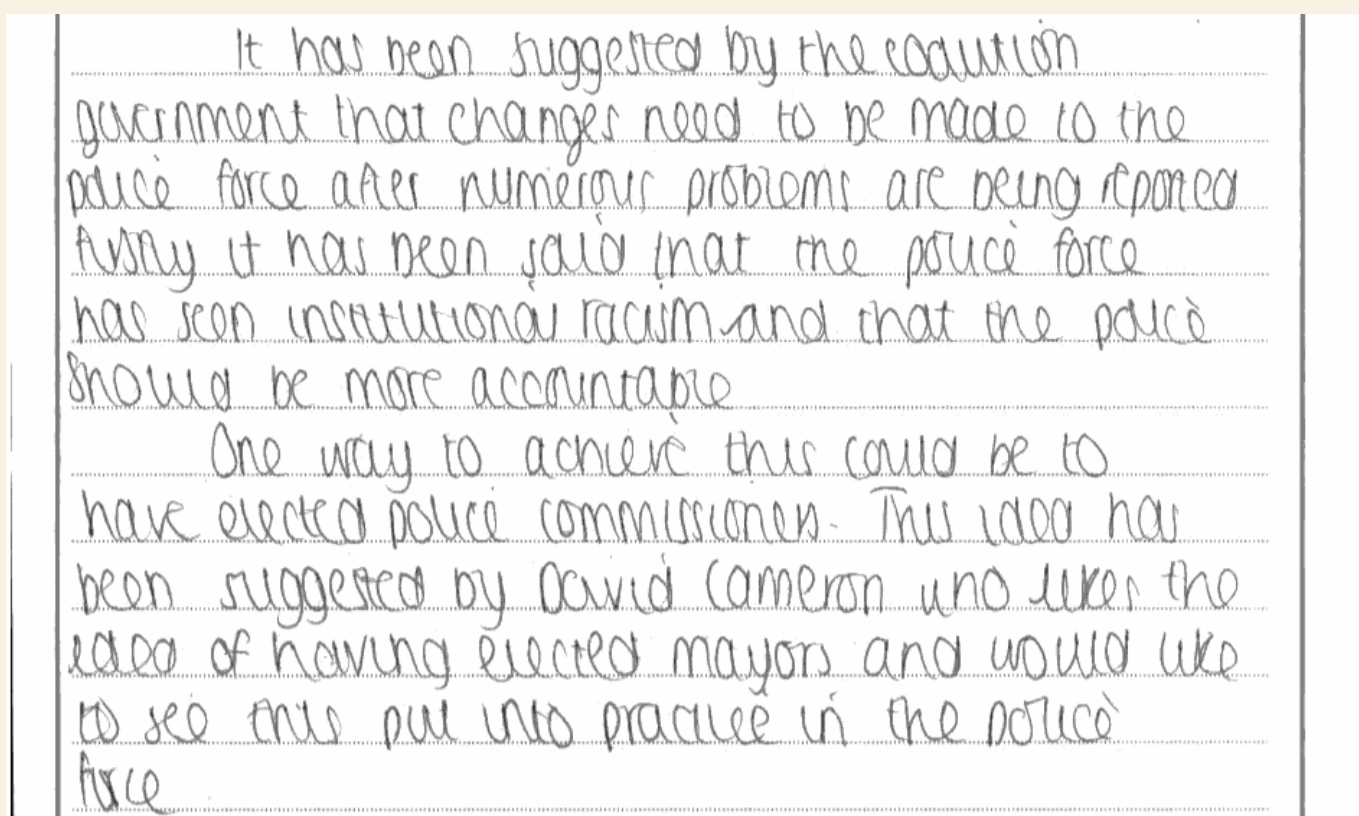
Consequently, there were a large number of responses where candidates were side-tracked into discussing the summer 2011 riots and the questions that arose from those events such as should the police have more powers to use tasers or rubber bullets or kettling. These were not valid points, however knowledgeable candidates may have been about arguments for and against using such tactics, as none of these powers are specific coalition policy. It appeared that a number of candidates had also learned the provisions of the Protection of Freedoms Bill, which was not entirely relevant to this question.

There was also a degree of confusion about changes to Section 60 stop-and-search powers. This was also inaccurate, as this was a change by the Metropolitan police rather than the coalition. References to the dropping of Section 44, however, were correct and some excellent candidates were able to discuss the controversial nature of this policy in light of suggestions that this unrestricted power to stop-and-search may be restored temporarily during the Olympic Games this summer.

Indeed, few candidates seemed to be aware of any coalition policy other than generalised knowledge on cuts the coalition plan to make in all areas, or references to directly elected police commissioners. Even responses on the commissioners were also often limited by a lack of knowledge as to why they have been controversial. As a result, many candidates' marks remained at the bottom or middle end of level 2, for a lack of knowledge of proposals.

There were also a number of candidates who had obviously prepared responses on prisons and sentencing policy, neither of which were relevant to this question and so gained 0 marks. The minority of responses which once again read "policing" as 'policy' and wrote generalised answers criticising the coalition, also failed to gain any marks.

Level 3 responses saw candidates explain at least three reasons why coalition policy has been controversial, and needed to include examples of specific policy as evidence for this.



If the police commissioners are elected this means that they are legitimately making decisions and that the public are able to hold them to account. If the people in one area are unhappy then they can be voted out and replaced. In theory, it should make police forces in local areas more efficient because the person elected should have more knowledge of what needs to be done and changed.

However, it has been controversial because it is taking power away from central government and also it has many disadvantages. The candidates do not need to have any qualifications for this job and so this undermines the theory that elected candidates should be able to do a better job. In addition, it could be argued that the salary acts as a big incentive to get into this job for personal gains.

It could be said that this is an example of subsidiarity as power is being devolved down to the people who can elect the commissioners. However, this is controversial as there is no guarantee that it will solve problems within the police force if people are not qualified. It could see politics being brought into the policing system which could affect decisions being made and promote bias towards particular parties.



### ResultsPlus

Examiner Comments

This is an example of a mid level 2 response. The candidate explains one point only, on directly elected police commissioners, and is quite general about **who** finds it controversial. 9 marks were awarded.



### ResultsPlus

Examiner Tip

Remember that even a 15 mark question requires more than one point to be discussed. If you are offering criticism or support for a policy, whose criticism or support are you offering? Can you make your response more political, and so more likely to enter level 3?

The coalition plans for policing have been controversial for a number of reasons.

The coalition have in all areas of policy put a high emphasis on reducing bureaucracy & over the top paperwork. However their policy to force all regional police forces to publish monthly statistics on crime & the levels of crime in their areas seems counter intuitive to this. This has caused controversy & brought criticism since people agree the police need to spend more time 'on the beat' & less time in offices.

The introduction of police commissioners has been by far the most controversial of the coalition policing policies. It has been said they will be too expensive - initial salaries suggested at between £66 000 & £100 000 - & because of their elected nature they may not have the expertise required to do the job well. Furthermore, the move to publicly elected commissioners with result in a 'politicisation' of the police force. Certain Critics say that too the police force should always sit above politics in order to ensure continuity & ensure that individuals are not treated in a way which may benefit a particular party, viewpoint or candidate.

The coalition plans for monthly 'on the beat' meetings have also been subject of controversy. Critics argue that it will

take even <sup>more</sup> ~~the~~ out of the forces time spent working on the streets for themselves, it is said that those who will attend the meetings will predominantly be people with a lot of time & a worry or fear of crime; <sup>ie. the elderly</sup> this means many other groups such as young people may have their views rejected so police spend more time trying to please those who come knocking at their door once a month.



## ResultsPlus

### Examiner Comments

This is a clear level 3 response. The candidate outlines 3 policies and explains why they are controversial.

Like the last exemplar response, this candidate has also been general about **who** criticises the policies. This is why this response remains at the bottom of level 3. 11 marks were awarded.



## Question 6

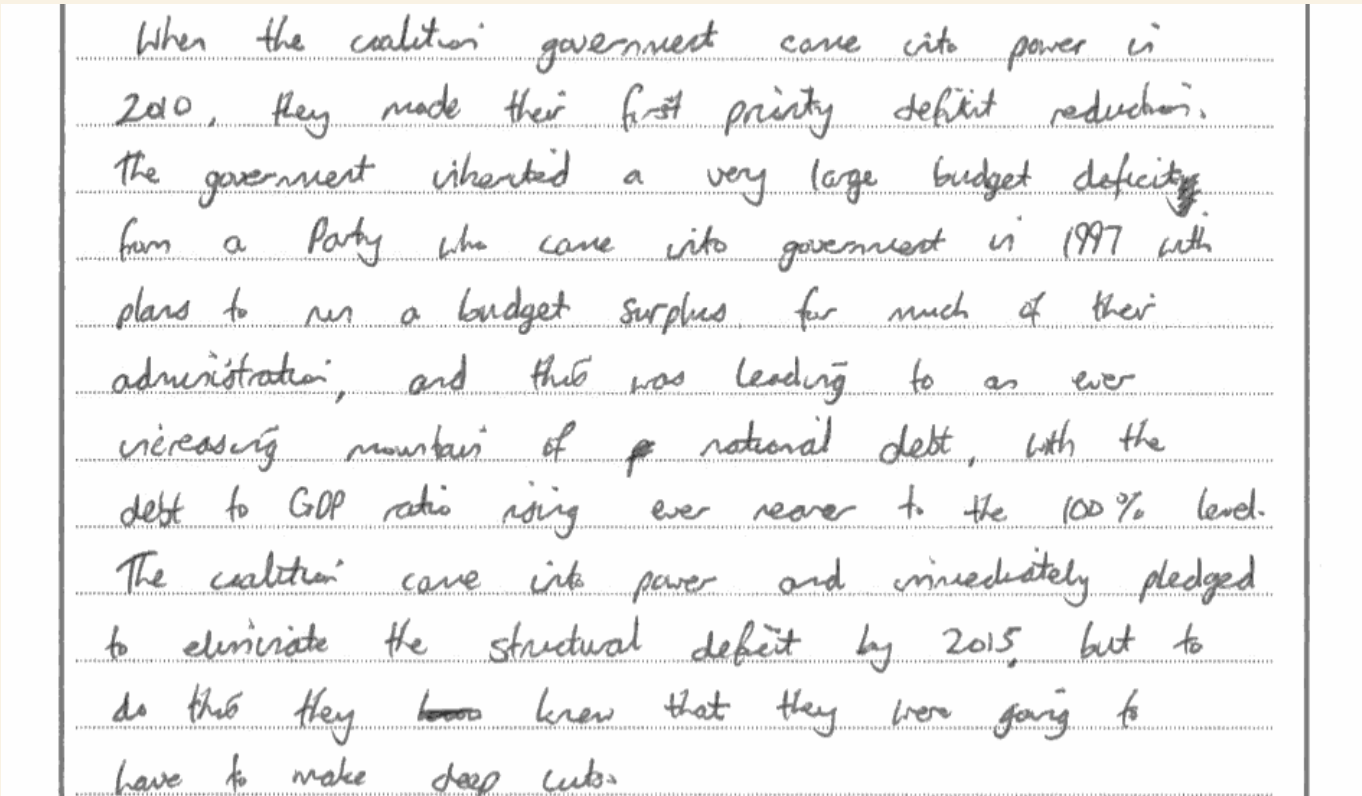
This essay focused on the issue of the Economy. Unfortunately, a significant number of candidates misinterpreted this as a Welfare question instead, and so write responses that were entirely focused on the cuts being made/proposed to the welfare state. While this was a valid point, it was only one factor in a 45-mark essay that required a range of 4-5 factors for analysis. If the analysis of the welfare cuts was done in detail, with explicit reference to arguments for and against 'too far, too fast' from a political perspective, it was possible for such responses to reach the middle of level 2 across the assessment objectives. The lack of range and depth, however, would preclude further progression within the level.

Many 'welfare' answers also sadly spent too long describing cuts to welfare, rather than specifically economic/financial measures such as examining the general social impact of welfare cuts, rather than analysing them in the economic context of deficit reduction. Such responses would be limited to the bottom of level 2 for a lack of balance and range.

There were also still a minority of answers that focused on giving a historical review of the origins of the credit crunch as a means of explaining the Coalition's deficit reduction programme rather than focusing on the actual programme itself thus limiting their marks to level 1 across all assessment objectives for failing to address the question as set.

Candidates also need to beware of answering such questions in an opinionated way. Some very knowledgeable candidates limited their marks to mid level 2 for AO2 and level 1 for synopticity by failing to provide at least an attempt at a balanced answer. Conversely, there were some excellent synoptic responses that were balanced and even able to reference Labour's recent acknowledgement that they would have to maintain the cuts in government, even if they would prefer a 'growth' rather than 'cuts' plan of action.

To reach level 3, candidates were required to be able to explain and exemplify at least three policies from the deficit reduction programme. Education and health could be two of these policies, as long as they were teamed with a third economic policy such as the Enterprise zones, apprenticeships or taxation. For level 3 synopticity, an awareness of divisions within the coalition would be expected, even if not fully explained. Many candidates simply accepted that the whole coalition whole-heartedly accepts and endorses all the cuts and changes being made.



When the coalition government came into power in 2010, they made their first priority deficit reduction. The government inherited a very large budget deficit from a Party who came into government in 1997 with plans to run a budget surplus for much of their administration, and this was leading to an ever increasing amount of national debt, with the debt to GDP ratio rising ever nearer to the 100% level. The coalition came into power and immediately pledged to eliminate the structural deficit by 2015, but to do this they knew that they were going to have to make deep cuts.

Their first major decision was to reverse the previous Labour spending plans, which followed the Keynesian theory of spending one's way out of recession, and implement immediate cuts in public spending. The government commissioned an immediate Comprehensive Spending Review with Chancellor George Osborne and Chief Secretary to the Treasury David Laws challenging departments to find savings in their departments which sometimes ran into the millions of pounds. George Osborne then implemented these cuts in his ~~Emergency~~ Emergency Budget and brought about the coalition austerity drive.

In launching this austerity drive, the coalition aimed to reduce the budget deficit gradually whilst not endangering the nation's economic recovery from recession. Whilst this was more in line with the traditional Conservative policy of less government intervention and thus less government and more private sector spending, it did not sit well alongside traditional Liberal Democrat policy. The Lib Dem leadership, however, managed to convince the Party faithful that this was the correct approach to take. The most loyal opposition in the Commons, the Labour Party, however accused the government of cutting "too far and too fast". Since taking over from Alan ~~Johnson~~ Johnson as Shadow Chancellor, Ed Balls has been a very vocal critic of the government's austerity measures. The Labour plans did involve cutting the deficit, but over a longer period, and involved higher spending whilst the economy was still in recovery. By cutting so fast, Balls and Miliband have accused the coalition of endangering the recovery, an accusation they back up by pointing to stagnating growth in the economy.



and little improvement in the unemployment figures.

It is indeed true to say that the coalition's austerity measures have taken a toll on the economy as a whole. ~~Their cuts have done little to help~~

During the first quarter of austerity the economy shrunk by 0.3%, something which was blamed in severe snow.

The economy has flattened since, however, it is hard to pin-point exact areas where this has occurred. Instead, the coalition has made cuts across the board and made enemies with large sectors of workers. The Police Federation have opposed Theresa May's cuts to the policing budget, claiming that it will lead to a weaker police force, whereas the coalition has promised to protect the so-called "bottoms on the boat". The rise in student fees have, perhaps, caused most controversy with students protesting in Parliament Square over the rise of the maximum yearly fees to £9000.

There has also been controversy surrounding proposed cuts to the so-called 'Jewel in the Crown' of Attlekes welfare state, the NHS. The coalition claim that spending on the NHS will be protected, however the Conservatives believe strongly in more private involvement in the service. These plans have been met with disapproval from both Labour, who accuse the coalition of quasi-privatisation, and by the party of Beveridge, the Liberal Democrats who rejected the proposals at their Spring Conference in 2010.

Labour also accuse the government of doing little to help the unemployed and those on low income,

a class so essential to the state of an economy. Cuts in benefits have not been met with vast numbers of new benefits and Tony plans to reduce the redistribution of wealth ~~was~~ by abolishing the SDP tax rate had to be vetoed by the Liberal Democrats

On the other hand, the coalition can point to a variety of measures aimed at getting the economy moving again and helping those of lower incomes. Nick Clegg's Enterprise Zones, if classified, will help boost growth in both the business and industry sectors and the government's new Youth Contract will help reduce youth unemployment.

When it comes to helping those on lower incomes, the government have introduced the first page Lib Dem manifesto pledge to increase the personal tax allowance to £10,000 by the end of this Parliament, taking less than 8 million low earners out of paying income tax altogether.

Chris Huhner's Green Deal and the Green Investment Bank will help provide growth in the 'green industry', producing both new jobs and benefits for the industry and economy as a whole. The Fair Fuel Stabiliser will ensure motorists pay a fair price at the pump and Sarah Teather's Pupil Premium will ensure children from disadvantaged backgrounds

get the fair start in life they deserve.

Recently, Miliband and Balls have admitted that they do not have the Plan B for the ~~country~~<sup>economy</sup> that they once claimed to have and that if in government they would stick to the existing government's spending plans.

Overall, whilst there is evidence to suggest that the coalition's government's austerity drive is mostly affecting the economic recovery in an adverse way, ~~it must be~~ claims that they are cutting 'too far, too fast' should be considered to be mostly rhetoric and Party political points scoring. The Conservative's five point lead over Labour in the polls show that the public mostly support their austerity ~~and~~ measures and by reducing the structural deficit the coalition is setting Britain on a course for a ~~big~~ highly ~~and~~ prosperous future.



## ResultsPlus

### Examiner Comments

This candidate demonstrates a strong understanding of the key issues surrounding the coalition's deficit reduction programme, and backs this up with good examples of specific policies. There is a clear line of argument and balance offered, along with explicit party views offered.

AO1 10

AO2 19

Synopticity 9

AO3 7

New Labour left the government in 2010 ~~at~~ with a huge amount of debt. When the coalition government came to power in 2010, the ~~the~~ Chancellor of the Exchequer, Osborne, announced that they wanted to cut the ~~deficit in~~ whole deficit by the next General Election. Labour is against this plan and argue that the deficit reduction programme goes 'too far, too fast.'

Gordon Brown, when Chancellor in 1997, took the government over in stable economic conditions. He followed the previous Conservative government plan for spending for three years. He also introduced his own 'Golden-rule' which means that you will only ~~spend~~ <sup>borrow</sup> for long-term investment. The UK saw in the begin of the century ~~a~~ <sup>an</sup> economic growth of  $\approx 3\%$  and the government noted surplus in its budget. However, the deficit grow when Brown abonded his golden rule and the credit crunch hit the UK in 2008. This created a huge deficit ~~in~~ in the budget and needed to be tackled by the coalition government.

George Osborne announced that he would cut in many government areas, except to aid and to the NHS. ~~His~~ His target was to reduce the deficit





evidence to this argument, as UK unemployment has risen to over 8% and <sup>youth</sup> unemployment has hit a record of over 1 million youth unemployed.

However, the Chancellor announced more apprentices and ~~to~~ work-schemes to tackle unemployment.

The Labour Party also states that more cuts would lead to more children trapped into the poverty trap. The target is to reduce child poverty by 2020. They say that the government has made cuts to sure start and child care programmes. The government says that they will introduce initiatives to help poorer children.

Having said all of this, the Chancellor announced in his autumn speech that they cannot achieve the targets to reduce the deficit by 2015 and so it will be reduced somewhere between 2015 and 2020.

This ~~is~~ reflects Labour ideas of reducing half the deficit by 2015 and the other half by 2020. The coalition government has come to face the truth of their deficit reduction programme being unrealistic.





## ResultsPlus

### Examiner Comments

The first page of this response is introductory, with a brief and unnecessary history of Labour's fiscal policies. The response then goes on to reference policies in quite general ways, with mention of cuts and managing monetary policies, but with no specific examples of policy.

There is little analysis offered of the points made, and limited synopticity other than criticisms made by the Labour Party.

Overall, this response does not show a clear understanding of the arguments that are taking place over the coalition's deficit reduction programme and the alternatives that have been offered, and is quite unbalanced in its criticisms of the overall cuts being made.

This limits the marks allocated to this response.

AO1 6 (low level 2)

AO2 6 (low level 2)

Synopticity 5 (low level 2)

AO3 5 (level 2)



## ResultsPlus

### Examiner Tip

Make sure your essay has at least an attempt at balance- this will increase your AO2 and synopticity marks in particular. Remember, each essay question has been **designed** to allow you to answer a key debate or issue and so access those AO2 and synopticity marks. Ask yourself whether or not you are addressing these in your work.

## Question 7

As with Question 4, this question often saw quite generalised responses about whether or not governments in general are 'all talk and no action', citing general environmental issues as evidence of this. This once again demonstrates the need for centres to emphasise the need to include specific policy and party political/government attitudes and views towards this issue.

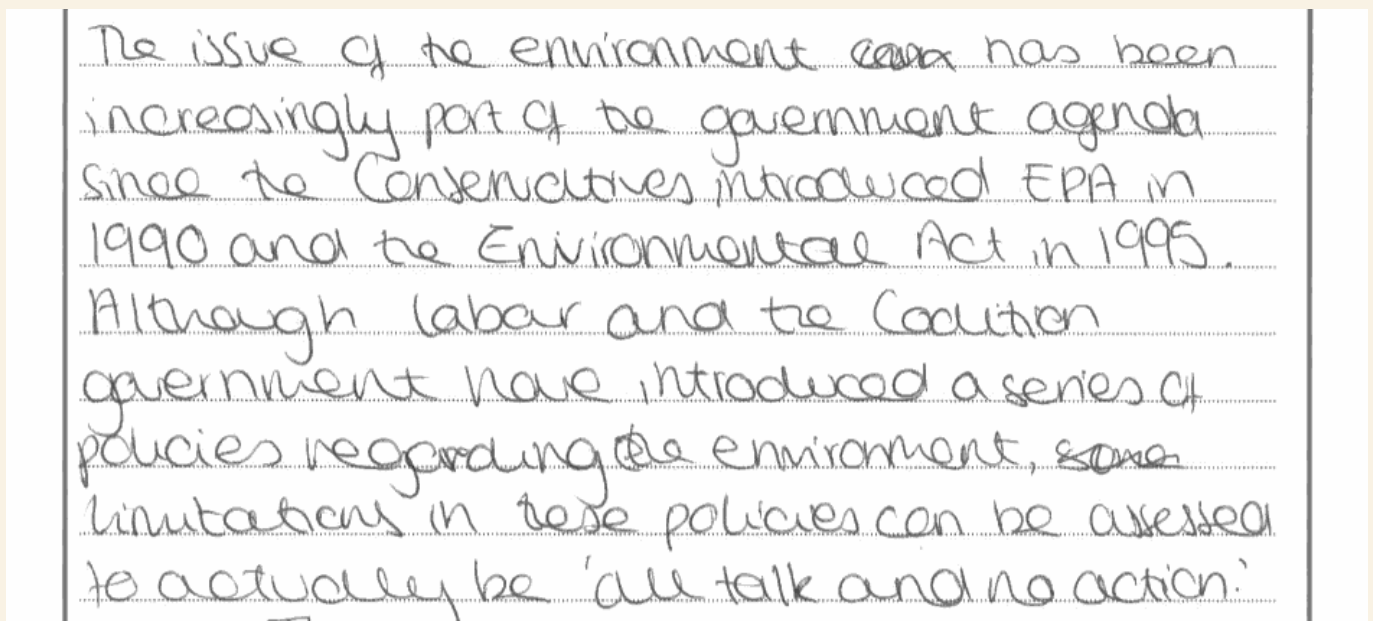
There were also a number of responses that interpreted "recent governments" to mean pre-1997, and so included large amounts of historical detail on the rise of the 'green lobby' and Thatcher's attitudes towards the issue of the environment. Candidates should be reminded that examples are expected from the Labour and coalition governments on this paper as pre-1997 is too historical for a Key Issues paper. Although it has now been nearly 2 years since the coalition took office, the Labour government is also still a valid and important area of study for contrast and comparison to the current coalition.

Top level 3 responses were able to address both the coalition and Labour governments, and were able to cite a range of specific policy examples from both governments. There were some excellent discussions of the motivation behind such policies, and how subsequent policies have contradicted government claims thus suggesting that governments can indeed be 'all talk and no action'. Examples include Labour's drive to reduce car use while building more roads and backing down on fuel duty, or the coalition abolishing plans for a third runway but now possible considering the Thames Estuary plans.

Candidates who were limited to level 2 found themselves able to argue a balanced case, but not always backed up with evidence from either government, or were only able to examine two areas of policy such as climate change targets or transport. A minimum of 3 policies were expected for discussion for level 3.

A number of candidates also accepted the premise given in the question, and limited their AO2 and synopticity marks in particular by failing to balance their answers in anything other than very general terms such as the coalition must be green because of the Conservative Party slogan 'vote blue, go green'.

One very common error, in terms of knowledge of policies, was the assumption that the Thanet windfarm opened in 2010 was a coalition project. Candidates should be made aware that this was in fact begun in 2008 by the Labour government, and merely opened by the coalition one month after taking office.



The issue of the environment ~~can~~ has been increasingly part of the government agenda since the Conservatives introduced EPA in 1990 and the Environmental Act in 1995. Although Labour and the Coalition government have introduced a series of policies regarding the environment, some limitations in these policies can be assessed to actually be 'all talk and no action.'

The Labour government for example did achieve in their carbon emission cuts by 2010 according to the EEA. Moreover, the Labour government cut carbon waste down by 10 million tonnes whilst due to the Kyoto Summit introduced targets of cuts of 12.5% in the UK by 2025 and 8% of the EU as a whole.

Yet these successes can be analysed to be 'all talk and no action' as environmental groups such as Friends of the Earth argued that the cuts did not go far enough so that targets should actually be 80% by 2050. In this way the Labour government can be argued to have been 'all talk and no action'. Moreover, although international meetings such as Kyoto can be judged as successful in terms of bringing international affairs of the environment to be more cooperative, other international summits, such as the Copenhagen Summit in 2009, have received less praised reception as inconclusive agreements were made. Thus, the Labour government can be argued to have done little to environment policies.

~~Therefore~~ On the other hand however, the Labour government did introduce three major Acts over the environment including Sustainable Energy Act 2003, Climate Change and Sustainable Energy

Act 2006 and the 'Climate Change Act' 2008, thus addressing how the Labour government to effectively address and act against environmental policies. In this way, government legislation depicts how the government were actually 'all talk and...action.'

In agreement, recycling quadrupled under the Labour government whilst the UK was deemed 6th in the world for 'clean technology'. Moreover, the government invested in ~~the~~ public transport by ~~addressing~~ for ~~the~~ high speed rail. In this way, the Labour government can be assessed to have effectively addressed the environment under the coordination of Blair, followed by Brown and Environment Minister Ed Miliband.

Conversely, the Labour government can be argued to have been 'all talk and no action' when in terms of recycling, the UK were far behind the standards of the EU such as Sweden who recycled four times more than the UK and even Denmark, who the UK have only just overtaken in most of recycling even though Denmark is only 1/10 of the size of the UK. Moreover, the £30bn and 10 year road building programme stipulates the judgement that Labour were not actually addressing the issues of the environment through transport but were actually more preoccupied with issues of the economy. Indeed, environmental groups





changed their party logo suggesting that the Conservatives are highly concerned with issues of the environment. Moreover, the Liberal Democrats of the Coalition government have been argued to be the most green out of Labour, the Conservatives and the Liberal Democrats where such arguments are supported with the rhetoric that the Liberal Democrats pledged the highest public spending of 'green' issues, such as £400bn on renewable energy, in their manifesto.

Indeed, the Coalition government created the Green Investment Bank, a subject and in direct authority of 'green' spending. In this way, the action of creating an investment bank for 'green' spending directly contradicts the notion that recent governments have been 'all talk and no action'.

On the other hand however, the Green Investment Bank can be analysed to be 'all talk' as investment cannot begin until 2015 whilst the start up fund of £3m <sup>is dwarfed</sup> compared with the needed £500bn denoting how not even 0.6% of needed funding has been put forward. In this way, the Green Investment Bank, although initially sounds promising, is highly limited in delivering and ~~is~~ disappointing. Thus, the Coalition Government actions have

been 'all talk and no action.'

Another way in which the Coalition Government supports the notion that recent governments are 'all talk and no action' when regarding environmental issues is through the cuts for the Feed-In-Tariff. Although the Labour government can be argued to have effectively addressed environmental policies through the feed-in-Tariff by encouraging more people to invest in renewable energy, the Coalition cuts directly reverse this. Perhaps considering them into the backdrop of the deficit can maybe be argued to justify the Coalition actions. However, in terms of environmental policy, the Coalition government here can be assessed to be 'all talk and no action.'

~~Furthermore, the Coalition~~ On the other hand however, the Coalition government has agreed to the ~~environmental~~ Climate Change Committee's recommendation of 50% cuts in carbon emissions by 2015 and a further 60% by 2020. In this way, the Coalition agreements denote a sense of accountability in the coalition pledges and therefore not 'all talk and no action.'

These targets however, have further



enhanced the perception that the coalition government is 'all talk and no action' as these targets have created a divide in Cabinet mood, the divide has exposed disagreements between 'environmental' ministers and 'economic' ministers such as George Osborne and Vince Cable. Indeed, these targets received a 'lukewarm' reception as many believe these targets will impact economic recovery and the support the nation to the coalition government are 'all talk and no action'.

Prime Cameron however, the intention of David Cameron by stating that the targets were official and not be supported implies a dedication of the government and therefore are not 'all talk'.

In conclusion, since the principle of the environment has become of principle concern, or interests, since the 1970s, all three governments have put financial policies and actions to contradict these notions that government has been 'all talk' however, limitations, especially economic limitations, have implied that the environment is not of principle concern, thus, perhaps in some respects recent governments have



Indeed been 'all talk and no action'

→ ran out of time

= our points = Coalition for SE outcomes.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

A strong level 3 response where the candidate covers the last two governments and examines a range of policy. This response is clearly synoptic, and even discussed the divide within the coalition Cabinet.

There is a good range of examples, and the response addresses the question directly throughout.

AO1 10

AO2 10

Synopticity 10

AO3 7

New Labour in 1997 said they were committed to saving and protecting the environment. Their attendance and participation of the Kyoto agreement showed their willingness.

The success of New Labour's environmental policies are two-fold. They were widely respected for meeting their Kyoto agreements of reducing greenhouse gases by 8% by ~~2010~~<sup>2010</sup> which they have ~~achieved~~ achieved. Kyoto was an important part of New Labour's environmental policies as it was the only piece of legislation forcing countries to make a consensus effort to reduce greenhouse emissions.

However ~~there~~ some have argued that ~~the~~ some countries have only recently attended the Durban conference in order 'to kill off Kyoto'. With members like Canada already leaving, it is doubtful the treaty will last with some countries saying they'll only renew if the bigger countries like USA and China sign.

New Labour seemed to be more passionate and more optimistic about the environment when in opposition than when in power. For example, their policies on transport were slow to come and when they did, were disappointing. Road extensions were actually made under Labour, encouraging more travel by cars and therefore more carbon dioxide emissions released into the atmosphere. When Ken Livingstone proposed the congestion charges in London City Centre, the Labour government seemed hesitant and unenthusiastic. However, despite this, they did introduce incentives to use more environmentally friendly cars. For example car tax on smaller engines was decreased and there was no tax on ~~the~~ electric cars and hardly any on hybrids.

In 2000, petrol prices increased substantially leading to a national campaign across the country. The Labour government could technically have claimed that high fuel taxes started under the previous conservative governments. Gordon Brown was in a crisis of what to do. He claimed high petrol prices ~~were~~<sup>were</sup> part of their commitment to Agenda 21, but went on to decrease petrol prices which many environmentalists claimed was 'giving in.'

Labour's record on renewable fuels isn't the best. When they came to power in 1997, they had plans for huge wind farm expansions but again this was slow to start. They did however build many new nuclear power stations which pleased many ecologists but most environmentalists were strongly opposed due to the danger and risk.

Therefore, it can be said that to an extent, Labour was "all talk and no action." They claimed to be committed to ~~the~~ the environment yet when Livingstone proposed the charges which substantially have reduced traffic and therefore emissions, the party was hesitant. Yet the party was widely acclaimed for its Kyoto targets and reforms to car tax which encouraged people to purchase cars with smaller engines. It seems to be that Labour did well, but could have done better.

When the coalition came to power in 2010, it was questioned if blue and yellow would form green? There seemed to be areas where conflict between the two would be likely such as nuclear power stations. As the Conservatives believe they are the best way in combating climate change ~~the~~<sup>but</sup> the Lib Dems are strictly opposed. The coalition has been accused of having a highly anti-environmental agenda despite Cameron saying



he wanted to be 'the greenest government ever.' George Osborne even stated in the Autumn Statement that green legislation was a ridiculous cost on business.

The coalition has introduced some policies - some bad and some good.

One of the most controversial is badger culling which farmers are lobbying for as they believe they spread TB. This has been highly opposed by environmentalists claiming it was inhumane and unnecessary.

David Cameron has also substantially decreased the amount of funding for flood defence despite knowing that global warming increases the chance of flooding. The government also proposed to build a new airport in the Thames estuary, home to ~~the~~ hundreds of thousands of wetland birds.

Despite these controversial proposals, the coalition has also created the Green Investment Bank for environmental projects. However refused to allow it to work like an ordinary bank and earn money for itself.

They have also created the Green Deal which is all about insulation. Homeowners can insulate their homes for free and just pay an extra sum in their energy bill.

The ~~the~~ coalition also introduced the 10:10 scheme which successfully reduced local government emissions by 10% in 2010. They encouraged individuals, businesses and celebrities to do the same.

They also promised not to extend Heathrow any further but did promote regional airports. However, they also promoted electricity reform to get every last electron from green sources.



Therefore it can be said that the coalition has made some positive changes however the negative policies are large key areas. Therefore to an extent, the coalition is all talk and no action because Cameron promised to be the greenest government ever yet has introduced some highly flawed policies.



**ResultsPlus**  
Examiner Comments

This is a top level 2 answer, where there is a good range of knowledge, particularly from the Labour governments. There is a tendency to list policies that contrast rather than explicitly analyse them, so the AO2 and synopticity marks are lower than AO1.

More evaluation of the coalition in particular, and in the overall conclusion would progress this to level 3 across all the assessment objectives.

AO1 8

AO2 7

Synopticity 7

AO3 5

## Question 8

As with Question 4, many candidates gave very knowledgeable but also very non-political responses to this question and in many cases limited their marks across all assessment objectives to a top level 2. It is worth bearing in mind that the topic of Crime and Deviance is a popular A-Level Sociology option. Many candidates who are studying both Politics and Sociology may find that this study helps with their revision of this topic but also limits their marks on this political paper.

This was the most popular essay question by far, and also the one which saw the widest range of responses. Weaker candidates often took a very descriptive or historical approach; there were several general analyses of crime rates and the 'causes of crime' without specific link to penal policy i.e. prison sentences and the experience of prison. This limited candidates' marks to the bottom of level 2.

The style of response that candidates adopted also significantly affected many synopticity marks. Candidates who answered in a simplistic agree/disagree fashion often found it very difficult to access synopticity marks, as many ran out of time before writing an evaluative conclusion that would have allowed them to gain such marks. When adopting this style of response, candidates should be aware that they will need to counter their own points when writing the 'disagree' part of their essay or risk just listing points and so remaining in level 1 for synopticity for failing to explicitly and directly compare and contrast ideas, viewpoints and perspectives.

Common errors included candidates who, when discussing Labour policies, drifted off into an explanation of Labour's attempts to tackle the social causes of crime without linking this to prison policy. It was also surprising to see so few candidates reference arguments referring to restorative justice, particularly as this was a manifesto pledge for all three main political parties in 2010.

The key to level 3 on this question was to include and evaluate coalition policy, particularly divisions within the coalition for level 3 synopticity. A number of excellent responses were able to discuss the division of traditional ideology between the coalition parties or the clash between the Justice Secretary and the Home Secretary (Ken Clarke and Theresa May).

Harold Wilson famously said in 1993 "Prison does work", this has long been the line that the Conservative Party has taken on prisons. The Labour <sup>party</sup> government however accepted that they needed to adopt a harder approach to law and order to gain power. Tony Blair famously said that they should be "tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime".

However like many things that are funded by the state, they become inefficient and expensive, much like the problems that have arisen with the NHS, prisons have become overstretched and staff are ~~not~~ unable to cope with the amount of prisoners in a public sector prison, there are 3 prisoners to every prison officer per prison officer and in private prisons there are 2 prisoners to every

prison officer. Prison has two functions, one main function is to protect society, so in one sense prison is effective as prisoners are kept off the streets for the greater protection of society. They are also used to reduce crime rates, however it is evident that crime rates have reduced due to advancements in car technology. However the types of crime that are committed are evolving, meaning there is more fraud committed, costing the UK government £9 billion. This type of crime is harder to detect.

Often however it is not prison that is the tool that allows offenders to break out of the cycle of committing crime, social causes also need to be addressed, due to the cycle of deprivation and the poverty trap, this layer of society do not see it to be worthwhile to work, so therefore higher rates of unemployment lead to more crime being committed.

One way in which this was tackled by the Labour government was to increase funding into rehabilitation, this meant that alternatives were offered to prisoners offenders, such as first time offenders were offered to be put on restorative courses, and under 18s were given ASBOs which meant that could not be in a certain area restricting their movements. A further reason apart from the fact that ~~rehabilitation~~ <sup>alternatives</sup> is effective because they are able to let offenders for instance become more educated, one way in which the offenders can now ~~be~~ participate in society is to be allowed into sheltered housing so they are 30% less likely to commit a crime.

Rehabilitation schemes are also cheaper than sending offenders to prison, a detention centre is up to offer 24 hour supervision at 50% of the cost of sending someone to prison, it currently costs the public purse \$55,000 a year per offender.

A further reason why prison does not work is because they have too many rights in prison. In other words due to the nature of

prison, the attitude towards prison has changed, as usually the people that commit crimes have a better life inside than they do outside, this was further emphasized by the notion that prisoners should gain the right to vote, meaning that they effectively have the same rights as an innocent person.

A further point that shows that prisons do not work is the amount of reoffending rates, they currently stand at 75%, one way in which the Coalition aims to combat this is to give prisons payment by results. Arndly prison is the first prison to be payment by results. This entails that if reoffending rates drop by 5% then they are given a 10% top-up, the chief executive of the Prison Officers Association said that "the prison service should be run to protect society, not so that they gain a profit". This could also mean that funding and resources are aimed at targeting those that are most unlikely to reoffend, meaning that much like in schools that target resources into C/D borderline candidates, those that are of high risk are not catered for.

A further point that prison doesn't work is that sentences that offenders gain are too soft for the crime that they have committed, this is underpinned by the judicial system. This is because judges are not representative of society as they are usually white, middle class and privately educated so that they are unable to make a judgement that would be seen as fair in the public eye.

A further point, however is that prison is still effective because the government still places funding into it, this is because law and order is politically divisive. If funding to prisons was cut by any Labour government, they would lose credibility because culturally law and order is a divisive topic. Prison is still effective because criminal records still affect people's ability to gain employment, however this can also be seen as a hindrance to the offender.



as they are unable to break out of the cycle of deprivation due to the fact that they are unable to gain employment due to prison.

Privatisation within the prison sector also shows that prison is ineffective because the state does not find it anymore, meaning that the outlay of financing is not correspondent with the effectiveness of prison to reduce reoffending rates. This could be seen as moving back the state, by the Coalition government.



**ResultsPlus**

**Examiner Comments**

This is a mid level 2 response, where the candidate includes a wide range of points but is not always focused on the question. More examples of policy and references to political party views would progress this within and above the level.

AO1 7

AO2 7

Synopticity 6

AO3 5

The efficacy of prisons is a popular political topic today due largely to Justice Minister Ken Clarke's stance on reform. He believes in a 'rehabilitation revolution' - so does this mean Michael Howard's famous "prison works" speech is now rendered invalid? Here I will discuss the reasons why some ~~to~~ believe we need an alternative to prison, and why some believe it is the only effective means of reducing crime.

~~First of all~~, To begin, I will analyse the views of liberal thinkers. For liberals, prisons are merely 'universities of crime', and are an expensive way of making bad people worse. It has recently come to light, for example, that many prisoners were clean before they were sent to prison, but have since acquired a drug habit since being inside. With arguments like these, how can we say that prison works when it is making criminals more experienced in concealing their crimes?

Liberals also believe that prisons are ineffective because there is little focus on rehabilitation. This is ~~not~~ the liberal alternative to prison, because they believe ~~the~~ crime is caused by society failing individuals and therefore work must be done to ~~the~~ reform criminals so that they can be integrated back into society. Liberals think that prisoners are leaving without ~~anything~~ learning anything - punishment is not enough to deter crime.

Authoritarians, however, would agree with a tougher approach to criminals. As Michael Howard once said, "prison works". It is simply the most effective way of reducing crime because it puts offenders in a safe place away from society where they can be punished for their actions.

This is another aspect of authoritarian thinking: criminals must be held responsible for their actions. Teaching them new skills and trying to reform them through discussion will not solve the problem - they must be sentenced to jail so that they can be deterred from their mistakes. As Max Hastings said in *The Mail*, crime is caused by a 'lack of effective sanctions to deter it'.

Another reason why prison is said to work is that they not only punish the criminal, but it does justice to the public by protecting them from criminals. Society is therefore safer and the offenders get the punishment they deserve.

From a more policy-orientated view though, in recent years we have seen a huge increase in the number of prisoners in this country. Due to Howard's Crime Sentences Act lengthening the ~~amount~~ stay of many prisoners, and Labour's 4,000 new officers created - many of which were imprisonable - and the rise in serious crimes such as knife and gun crime. If Margaret Thatcher hadn't ordered for eight new prisons to be built under her hard line policy, it is likely that we would have a crisis on our hands as a ~~test~~ country.

The current capacity of our prisons according to the Home Affairs Select Committee is 80,000. Currently we have 83,000 prisoners in jail, therefore making prisons massively overstretched.

A senior figure in prison operations, Lord Ramsbotham, calls the justice system 'absurd, broken, and chaotic' thanks to the inefficiency of our prisons. He says that not enough <sup>government</sup> focus is placed on repeat offenders - the most serious threat to our prisons. Instead, he claims, the government is "too wrapped up in serious cases".

This brings me to my next point: the current recidivist rate. This is a weighty argument why prisons simply fail to solve crime in this country, because overcrowding prisons keep getting fuller and fuller due to a high number of repeat offenders. The most recent statistic is that 60% of former prisoners reoffend within 2 years of leaving prison. This is over half. It therefore suggests that prisons aren't working - if they were effective, prisoners wouldn't want to reoffend again because they would be afraid of the punishment. Evidently this is only the case for the minority.

This thinking is ~~is~~ most likely the reason why Ken Clarke has proposed changes to the system. He wants to, much like liberal thinkers, introduce a 'rehabilitation revolution' to prisons. He proposes to pay private companies to reform ~~convicts~~ criminals, he says to get them out of 'the revolving door of crime' which is adding pressure to our already struggling prison system. In short, Clarke wants more educational and vocational training, more medical assistance for those with drug addictions, and more of a 'community-based' approach to justice similar to that employed by the Conservative government from 1991-1993. He believes this will make prisons more effective and will eventually reduce crime in the long term.

However this is not without opposition. Home Secretary Theresa May has expressed some discomfort at the idea of a focus shifting away from punishment and onto rehabilitation. She shares the view of Michael Howard, who ~~was~~ sees Clarke's proposals as 'too soft' on crime. They are in agreement in that prisons are the only way to truly punish a criminal and solve the issue of crime.



New Labour's stance on prisons was slightly different. It did not dismiss the idea of reform, nor did it dismiss the idea of punishment within prisons. In fact, the Blair and Brown administrations preferred to combine the two to create 'restorative justice'. Although they ultimately kept some offenders in prison, schemes were created in cities around the UK to bring community payback into the justice system. In Manchester in 2005, community payback teams cleared leaves from parks and cemeteries, ~~and~~ repaired school buildings and community centres, and basically gave something back to the community. This is so interesting because of the high visibility jackets the team in Manchester wore, which seemed to bring in an element of humiliation for some, but gave an element of advertised ~~responsibility~~ responsibility for others. Essentially Labour combined ~~of~~ the good aspects of prison with the good aspects of rehabilitation - but only in these circumstances. More commonly Blair in particular emphasised the need to be "tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime", and therefore it can be argued that this pro-authoritarian and therefore pro-prison attitude has contributed to the overcrowding of prisons in recent years.

After analysing the opinions of various administrators towards prisons and offering the opposing views of liberal and authoritarian thinkers, we can now see that the debate is simply too divisive ~~to~~ to simply say that prison either works or it doesn't. The more likely outcome is that prison has aspects of efficiency in principle, but as we have concluded through study this is not always the case. In my personal view, I believe that governments have been too populist in the past and have missed ~~the~~ the point, to put it frankly. For me, crime can't be solved by

locking someone in a cell for a number of months or years - good behaviour is something which must be learned through training and integration into society - something that prisons don't currently offer, although Ken Clarke may change this in the near future with his proposed rehabilitation revolution, if it is passed.



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Examiner Comments

An excellent example of an essay that merits full marks. There is a wide range of points and a balanced set of arguments with political references that are coherently organised into a direct answer to the question.

## Paper Summary

In order to improve performance, candidates should:

- Ensure they address the question as set and keep within that framework. For example, in Question 2, they should not include erroneous information such as why proposed benefit reforms are controversial and instead of focus on how and why reforms have been proposed.
- Answer all questions in a **political** way. As they are planning an answer, candidates should always check that they have referenced specific political party ideology/attitudes/policies
- Make sure they do not include too much **historical** information.
- Check their knowledge and understanding of economic issues is up-to-date, as this was a major weakness for many candidates.
- Remember that simplistic yes/no or agree/disagree answers do not **explicitly** demonstrate synopticity, and so will require a longer, more evaluative conclusion to show the examiner you have utilised this skill.

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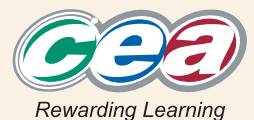
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