

Government and Politics

Advanced Subsidiary GCE **2698**

Government and Politics (US Option)

Mark Scheme for June 2010

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All Examiners are instructed that alternative correct answers and unexpected approaches in candidates' scripts must be given marks that fairly reflect the relevant knowledge and skills demonstrated.

Mark schemes should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and the Report on the Examination.

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These marks apply to all questions in this unit.

	A01	A02	A03
Level 4	19-24	19-24	10-12
Level 3	13-18	13-18	7-9
Level 2	7-12	7-12	4-6
Level 1	0-6	0-6	0-3

- 1 Discuss the view that the ability to manage the media is now the key to electoral success.**

[60]

(Specification: 2595 Voting Behavior. 2694 Presidential elections. 2698 Elections.)

A01: Candidates will show knowledge and understanding of the role of the media in influencing electoral behaviour and the work of politicians and their spin doctors in trying to manage or manipulate the media for their own benefit. Knowledge of other factors which ensure electoral success in the UK, the US and other countries, perhaps within the EU, is expected. They could be such factors as record, image, and money. Expect reasonable knowledge of the main theories of voting behaviour which are specified in the AS specifications. Examples should be recent and not too heavily dependent on just rambling variations on it was 'The Sun wot won it'. Reward highly knowledge of recent trends in the UK and the US with relevant examples based on the 2005 [and 2010] and 2008 UK and US elections respectively. Note that the question is on the ability to manage the media, and therefore candidates who just peddle out the standard response on the influence of the media should not get much beyond L2. Knowledge of the competing theories of media impact, the filter effect etc is expected for L3 and above.

Where appropriate candidates should draw upon the knowledge of different political systems studied in other parts of the AS and A2 courses.

A02: Expect discussion on how important media management is when compared with other factors which influence electoral success. The 2008 US election provides excellent material on the role of the media and the way in which candidates in both primary and the 'main' process tried to manage it and utilise it to their advantage. Contrast with recent UK elections is expected also. Candidates who debate other 'key' factors such as money, recency and record should be rewarded. Candidates in L3 and L4 should demonstrate clearly a reflective as well as an analytical approach and show clear evidence of comparing the US and UK traditions of voting behaviour. Those who bring in relevant points from elections outside the UK/US are likely to be in the top of L3 or L4.

2 To what extent are political parties democratic organisations?**[60]**

(Specification: 2596 Political Parties. 2694 US political parties. 2698 Political Parties.)

AO1: Candidates will display knowledge and understanding of the structure and organisation of political parties in both the UK and the US and, preferably, elsewhere. A definition of a democratic organisation and how it applies to political parties should be looked for. Knowledge of party processes such as selecting candidates and leaders is expected as is some knowledge of the policy making processes in parties. Primaries, candidate selection processes in the UK, Conference and Convention should be considered. Expect awareness of the role of the Democratic and Republican National Committees and also factors like the NEC within the Labour party and knowledge of such items as the Hague reforms within the Conservative party with its attempts to make parties more 'democratic'. The ability of party leaders to dominate the policy making process and the manifesto and platform are also very relevant.

Where appropriate candidates should draw upon the knowledge of different political systems studied in other parts of the AS and A2 courses.

AO2: Expect clear answer to the issue of 'extent'. Although parties are vital to the democratic process they can be highly undemocratic organisations. Comparison between the US and UK is looked for and a careful review of all party activity to see how 'democratic' they in fact are. There are a variety of possible approaches, and candidates who look initially at the influence of the individual member, and then look at how much influence an MP or Congressman might have and then compare that with the party leadership, would be highly rewarded. Consideration of whether either Conference or Convention are actual decision makers or merely exist to rubber stamp the wishes of the leadership. Again it is the thinking on what makes an organisation 'democratic' and then applying that definition to parties that is looked for in order to gain the higher levels.

- 3 Discuss the view that the reaction to 9/11 has had a seriously damaging effect on the rights and liberties of citizens. [60]**

(Specification: Rights and Liberties 2596. Judiciary 2597. Rights and Liberties, Supreme Court, the Executive 2694, Rights and Liberties 2698.)

AO1: Candidates will display knowledge and understanding of rights and liberties of citizens and of recent changes and developments in that area. Detailed knowledge of the 'war on terror' itself is not expected, but changes in legislation in the UK and the US, such as the Patriot Act and the various anti terrorist acts inspired by 9/11 and the London bombings is expected. Candidates who have knowledge of the work of the EU in this respect, for example, should be highly rewarded. Information about the increased role and powers of executives is also expected as is the work of judiciaries, particularly in defending rights and liberties. The better candidates should be able to differentiate clearly between a right and liberty.

AO2: Candidates will discuss in a balanced way whether recent legislative/executive and judicial changes have, or have not, had a damaging effect on the rights and liberties of citizens. Strong arguments either way are welcomed, but there has to be a degree of balance for L3 and above. Consideration of both the 'serious' and the 'damaging' is also looked for, and those who just argue for the necessity will not do well. The reflective overview, considering whether or not there is a fundamental change in attitudes towards rights and liberties is really what is looked for and should be highly rewarded if present. Seeing it as a temporary 'blip' is an acceptable argument.

4 Evaluate the importance of constitutions.**[60]**

(Specification: 2697 the UK Constitution. 2597 the EU. 2694 the US Constitution. 2698 Constitutions.)

AO1: Candidates will display knowledge and understanding of constitutions and the role they play. Information on the sources and the underlying principles of constitutions is looked for. In the US of course it is a document in daily use and plays a central role in much of US public life. The vagueness of the UK's version is also very relevant, and the fact that Brown has put it very much on the agenda with the creation of the Constitutional Policy Unit and the recent debates on the royal prerogative of war and peace over Iraq is relevant. The whole issue of the proposed EU constitution and the Lisbon Treaty could also be seen as relevant. Candidates who bring in other examples from other countries where the constitution plays a large/small part in public life should be rewarded.

AO2: What is looked for is the ability to evaluate least two constitutions, the unwritten UK and the written US in particular, and consider their importance. A variety of approaches could be considered, ranging from the highly theoretical to the very practical and all are to be considered on their merits. The real skill looked for is the ability to reflect on the role that constitutions play in public life and come to a considered decision on their importance or otherwise. A case could be made for them being important in theory, but of much less importance in practice, with the attitudes of citizens and governments towards them being the critical factor. Those who consider the attitudes of the French and Dutch publics towards the EU constitution, and of the Irish towards the Lisbon Treaty, should be worthy of merit. For L3 and above expect valid comment on the issue of importance.

5 Discuss the view that legislatures fail to check executives effectively. [60]

(Specification: 2597 Legislatures. Executives. 2694 Congress. The Presidency. The Constitution. 2698 Legislatures. Executives. Constitutions.)

AO1: Candidates will display knowledge and understanding of legislatures and their ability or otherwise to check executives. In the UK issues such as questions and debates, general and select committees and factors like motions of no-confidence might be considered. The role of the whips might well be quoted. Any consideration of other legislatures within the UK, such as the London Assembly or the Scottish parliament, is of course perfectly valid. As far as the US is concerned the formal powers given to Congress to check the executive, such as the approval of treaties and confirmation of SC appointments, the power of the purse, impeachment etc should be there as well as the informal checks such as senatorial courtesy. The ways round the formal checks such as executive agreements and Guantanamo might be mentioned as well. Candidates who look at other legislatures such as the EU Parliament with its checks on the Commission should be highly rewarded. Further issues such as the 'honeymoon' period and the 'coattails' effect might also be considered.

AO2: For the highest marks candidates should consider both the 'unwilling' and the 'unable' aspects of the question. There are a variety of reasons why they might be unwilling, such as partisan sympathy, similar ideology, pork barrel factors, influence of whips etc, while factors like the need for joined up government and awareness that the executive needs to be able to govern. The unable part is probably more straightforward and is more open to counterargument. Both Parliament and Congress have got considerable powers in theory, and while Congress is more inclined to use them, Parliament is not. The much more limited scope that the EU parliament has might be stressed. For L3 and above expect analysis of what 'effective' checking might imply, with focussed comment based on this linking to at least two legislatures.

6 Assess the view that executives often have too few powers to perform their duties effectively.

[60]

(Specifications: 2597 Executives. The EU. 2694 the Presidency. 2698 Executives.)

AO1: Candidates will display knowledge and understanding of the powers of executives. They are listed precisely in the US constitution as are the powers of the EU Commission and Council. The possibly limited powers of the US President, especially in domestic issues might be mentioned and the long list of formal constitutional checks is of course relevant. Examples of how Bush reacted to 9/11 and Katrina might be given. The fact that Prime Ministerial power is potentially greater with examples like Iraq and the way in which 'new' Labour ideas were imposed ought to be there. Expect also to see for the higher marks consideration of what the actual duties of executives are supposed to be with examples of how they have, or have not, been able to implement them. Both Katrina and the credit crisis of 2008 might provide very useful examples.

AO2: For the higher marks expect to see consideration of both the 'too few' and 'effectively'. What is the right amount of power for an executive in a democracy? What are the main duties? What is 'effective' performance of those duties? Don't necessarily expect consideration of all those factors, but for L3 and L4 there has to be a reflective consideration of at least two and a genuine attempt to answer the question in the appropriate way. It could be argued that the premise is applicable to the US, but not in the UK and the EU, but much depends on the candidates' definition of 'too few' and 'effectively'.

7 Discuss whether judiciaries should be involved in political issues. [60]

(Specifications: 2597 The Judiciary. 2694 the Supreme Court. 2698 judiciaries.)

AO1: Candidates will display knowledge and understanding of the role of judiciaries in both the US and the UK and the ways in which they can be seen to be involved in the political process. Awareness of the concept of the separation of powers is expected as also is the degree of interrelationship between executives, legislatures and judiciaries. Expect a clear definition as to what is a 'political' issue for L3 and above. Awareness of the ways in which judges are appointed/dismissed may be relevant also. The ability of judiciaries to block the actions of both legislatures and executives is relevant, as also may be issues such as judicial activism. For L3 and above expect to see recent examples of judicial involvement in 'political' issues in the US and the UK. Given the high profile of several recent cases involving the ECJ and the ECHR there may well be mention of both.

Where appropriate candidates should draw upon knowledge of different political systems studied in other parts of the AS and A2 course.

AO2: Expect discussion, following demonstrated awareness of what a 'political' issue is, in this context, of whether judiciaries should or should not be involved in those issues. Some may argue that given the theory of the separation of powers which theoretically underpins both the US and the UK constitutions the judiciary should leave 'political' issues to accountable politicians. However given that many issues which are seen as 'political' will end up in the courts in both the US and the UK, judiciaries have little choice but to get involved. Some might argue that there is a strong case for judicial involvement, given that an independent body which examines the cases in the light of a written constitution or a document like the European Convention on Human Rights is a critical part of any liberal democracy. Others may base an argument on the Bush v Gore example to look at the risks involved when judges get too involved in 'politics'. The key to L3 and above is a balanced argument showing a critical awareness of some of the many issues involved. A pedestrian examination of the role of the judiciary showing limited awareness of the key issues underlying this question is unlikely to get out of L2. Where appropriate candidates should analyse relevant features of, and make connections between, the different political systems studied in other parts of the AS and A2 course.

8 Analyse the factors which determine the effectiveness of different pressure groups.

[60]

(Specifications: 2596 Pressure groups. 2694 US pressure groups. 2698 Pressure groups.)

AO1: Candidates will display knowledge and understanding of pressure groups in political systems and the factors which make for effective lobbying and activity.

There may be knowledge of case studies concerning the effectiveness of certain groups, such as the green lobby, unions, the Countryside Alliance, the anti airport expansion protesters in the UK, or the NRA, AARP or the Christian Coalition in the US. There may be knowledge of membership sizes, of tactics, or the wider context in which groups operate. There may be knowledge of the growth of groups specifically organised to lobby the EU. For L3 and above expect breadth and depth as well as relevance in exemplar material.

Where appropriate candidates should draw upon knowledge of different political systems studied in other parts of the AS and A2 courses.

AO2: Expect discussion of what makes for an effective group. There may be analysis of the wider context of group activity - for example the power of parties to insulate the political system from groups and their support for elections. There may be analysis of groups' impact on the voting behaviour of elected representatives. There may be analysis of membership, whether groups broadly share the political objectives of government, financial resources, whether groups play a pivotal role in the economy and so on. There may be analysis of the insider/outsider relationship. There may be analysis of the contribution played by the structures of government, for example the British parliamentary system which limits interest group activity. There may be analysis making use of case studies of group activity. The key features of L3 answers and above are a serious reflection on effectiveness and a focussed answer on what might be the key features and why. Where appropriate candidates should analyse relevant features of, and make connections between, the different political systems studied in other parts of the AS and A2 course.

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