AQA

AS
POLITICS
Government and Politics of the UK

Thursday 24 May 2018   Afternoon   Time allowed: 3 hours

Materials
For this paper you must have:
* an AQA 12-page answer book.

Instructions
* Use black ink or black ball-point pen.
* Write the information required on the front of your answer book.
* Answer questions from both sections:
    * in Section **A**, answer questions 1, 2, 3 and **either** question 4 **or** question 5
    * in Section **B**, answer questions 6, 7, 8 and **either** question 9 **or** question 10.
* Do all rough work in your answer book. Cross through any work you do not want to be marked.
* Do **not** tear out any part of the book. All work must be handed in.
* If you use more than one book, check that you have written the information required on each book.

Information
* The marks for questions are shown in brackets.
* The maximum mark for this paper is 98.

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Section A – The Government of the UK

Answer questions 1, 2 **and** 3

0 1 Explain, with examples, the methods of parliamentary scrutiny used by the House of Commons.

[6 marks]

0 2 Explain, with examples, the powers of the Scottish Parliament.

[6 marks]

Read the extracts below and answer question 3 that follows.

Extract 1

This extract is adapted from a summary by the UCL (University College London) Constitution Unit of a 2016 article published in the journal Governance*. The role of the Constitutional Unit is to conduct research into constitutional change and the reform of political institutions.*

What is the UK Constitution?

An uncodified constitution creates two problems. First, it makes it difficult to know what the state of the constitution actually is. Second, it suggests that it is too easy to make changes to the UK Constitution compared with countries with written constitutions, because the latter have documents with a 'higher law' status against which ordinary statute law and government action can be tested, and are only amendable by elaborate procedures. The flexibility of the UK Constitution is evident from the large number of constitutional reforms since 1997, including the abolition of the majority of hereditary peers in the House of Lords, the introduction of the Human Rights Act 1998, and devolution to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland.

Extract 2

This extract is from the House of Commons Select Committee on Political and Constitutional Reform, published in 2014. The role of the select committee is to consider, and report on, a range of options for reform of the constitution to be considered by the government.

The case against a written constitution

The case against a written constitution is that it is unnecessary, undesirable and un-British. The fact that the UK system of government has never been reduced to a single document is an indication of the success of the Westminster system of parliamentary democracy and the stability it has brought to the country. This is in contrast to most other countries, whose written constitutions were the product of revolution or independence. The unwritten nature of the constitution is something distinctively British, it reminds us of a great history, and is a source of national pride. Contrary to claims that it is out of date, it is evolutionary and flexible in nature, more easily enabling practical problems to be resolved as they arise and individual reforms made, than would be the case under an entrenched constitutional document.

| 0 | 3 | Analyse, evaluate and compare the arguments presented in both of the above extracts concerning the need for a codified constitution in the United Kingdom. |

[12 marks]

Turn over for the next question

Answer **either** question 4 **or** question 5

In your answer you should draw on material from across the whole range of your course of study in politics.

Either

0	4

'The Cabinet is no longer the main decision-making body in the UK.' Analyse and evaluate this statement.

[25 marks]

Or

0	5

'Recent reforms have increasingly politicised the judiciary.' Analyse and evaluate this statement.

[25 marks]

Section B – The Politics of the UK

Answer questions 6, 7 **and** 8.

| 0 | 6 | Explain, with examples, the concept of pluralism.

[6 marks]

| 0 | 7 | Explain, with examples, one electoral system used to elect a devolved body in Scotland, Wales or Northern Ireland.

[6 marks]

Turn over for the next question

Turn over ▶

Read the extracts below and answer question 8 that follows.

Extract 3

From page 72 of the 2015 Conservative party manifesto. The purpose of the manifesto is to set out to the electorate the policies of the Conservative party that would be implemented by the party if elected to government. The extract is taken from the section of the manifesto regarding Britain's relationship with the European Union.

Real change in our relationship with the EU

It will be a fundamental principle of a future Conservative Government that membership of the European Union depends on the consent of the British people – and in recent years that consent has worn wafer-thin. That's why, after the election, we will negotiate a new settlement for Britain in Europe, and then ask the British people whether they want to stay in the EU on this reformed basis or leave. David Cameron has committed that he will only lead a government that offers an in-out referendum. We will hold that in-out referendum before the end of 2017 and respect the outcome.

Extract 4

This extract is adapted from an article on the website of The Institute for Strategic Studies by Professor Erik Jones. The institute for strategic studies is a think tank that conducts research into international politics. Professor Erik Jones is a university professor who has specialised in the study of the European Union during his career.

Calling an EU referendum was a bad idea

The British referendum on EU membership is based on two bad ideas. The first is that the popular legitimacy of a referendum can restore the sovereignty of the British Parliament. The Leave campaign believe they can take power from Brussels and give it back to Westminster. That is a fantasy. The British Parliament will be more constrained and less effective if the UK leaves. The second bad idea is that referendums are more democratic than acts of parliament. By giving the people the chance to speak their mind on a yes-or-no (in-or-out, remain-or-leave) question, the reasoning goes, we can discover what they really want. That is not how people work. Real people prefer trial and error. Real people also like to delegate responsibility for making complicated decisions.

0	8

Analyse, evaluate and compare the arguments presented in both of the above extracts for and against the use of referendums in the UK.

[12 marks]

Answer **either** question 9 **or** question 10

In your answer you should draw on material from across the whole range of your course of study in politics.

Either

| 0 | 9 | 'Britain can only accurately be described as having a two-party system.' Analyse and evaluate this statement.

[25 marks]

Or

| 1 | 0 | 'The campaign is increasingly important in determining the outcome of UK general elections.' Analyse and evaluate this statement.

[25 marks]

END OF QUESTIONS

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