

General Certificate of Education
January 2004
Advanced Level Examination



GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS
Unit 4 Comparative UK/USA Government

GOV4

Tuesday 27 January 2004 Afternoon Session

In addition to this paper you will require:
a 12-page answer book.

Time allowed: 1 hour 30 minutes

Instructions

- Use blue or black ink or ball-point pen. Pencil should only be used for drawing.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book. The *Examining Body* for this paper is AQA. The *Paper Reference* is GOV4.
- Answer **Question 1** and **one** other question.

Information

- The maximum mark for this paper is 80.
- Mark allocations are shown in brackets.
- You will be assessed on your ability to use an appropriate form and style of writing, to organise relevant information clearly and coherently, and to use specialist vocabulary, where appropriate. The degree of legibility of your handwriting and the level of accuracy of your spelling, punctuation and grammar will also be taken into account.

Advice

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

Answer **Question 1** and **one** other question.

1

Total for this question: 40 marks

Study the extract below and answer parts (a), (b) and (c) which follow.

LEGISLATURES AND EXECUTIVES

The legislature has a fundamentally different character in parliamentary and presidential systems. In a parliamentary system like Britain's, rebellions in the House of Commons in which legislators defy the wishes of party leaders are rare. Most MPs will hope for re-election and promotion into the government's ranks. For both they are dependent on the party leadership.

In a presidential system like America's, however, the president and the legislative branch of government are separately elected and answer to different electorates. The first loyalty of legislators will be towards their constituents, upon whom they depend for re-election, rather than the president.

Although there is a whipping system in the Congress, there are few sanctions that can be employed against rebels. Party discipline is consequently weak and loose. Furthermore, those serving in the legislature cannot at the same time occupy executive positions. As a consequence, rebellions in which legislators vote with members of another party are commonplace.

Legislatures traditionally oversee (scrutinise) the work of government departments. In Britain, this is the responsibility of select committees, but criticism of the government is often muted and ignored. In a presidential system, the legislature devotes greater resources to *oversight (scrutiny)*, even though the executive is not responsible to the legislature.

Because presidents cannot necessarily command a majority in the legislature, they must engage in a process of persuasion and bargaining around each legislative proposal, and agreement may prove impossible. Such a rigid separation of powers, it is said, ensures that government does not become too powerful. Others argue that the US system is characterised by gridlock and much needed reforms cannot be introduced. The UK system has been subject to a very different form of criticism. In the 1970s, Lord Hailsham described British government as an "elective dictatorship" with few restraints upon the actions of the executive.

Source: adapted from an article by EDDIE ASHBEE, *Politics Review* (Philip Allan Updates) February 2002

- (a) Using the extract, explain the term *oversight (scrutiny)*. (8 marks)
- (b) Using the extract and your own knowledge, compare the extent to which parties influence the behaviour of MPs and members of Congress. (12 marks)
- (c) Compare the extent to which Parliament and Congress can control the exercise of executive power. (20 marks)

Answer either **Question 2** or **Question 3** or **Question 4**.

- 2 Compare the role played by the judiciary in the protection of citizens' rights in the UK and the USA. *(40 marks)*

- 3 Compare the resources and support available to the US President and the UK Prime Minister as heads of their respective executives. *(40 marks)*

- 4 "In the UK sovereignty lies with Parliament, whilst in the USA the Constitution is sovereign." Discuss. *(40 marks)*

END OF QUESTIONS