AQA

ASSESSMENT and
QUALIFICATIONS
ALLIANCE

General Certificate of Education

Government and Politics 5151/6151

GOV1   Electoral Systems and Voting Behaviour

Mark Scheme

2008 examination – January series

Mark schemes are prepared by the Principal Examiner and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation meeting attended by all examiners and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation meeting ensures that the mark scheme covers the candidates' responses to questions and that every examiner understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for the standardisation meeting each examiner analyses a number of candidates' scripts: alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed at the meeting and legislated for. If, after this meeting, examiners encounter unusual answers which have not been discussed at the meeting they are required to refer these to the Principal Examiner.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of candidates' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

Further copies of this Mark Scheme are available to download from the AQA Website: www.aqa.org.uk

CRITERIA FOR MARKING AS/A2
GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

Introduction

AQA's revised Government and Politics specification has been designed to be objectives-led in that questions are set which address the assessment objectives published in the specification. The assessment objectives for A Level and AS are the same, but the weightings are different at AS and A2. Details of the weightings are given in paragraphs 7.2 and 8.4 of the specification.

The schemes of marking reflect these objectives. The mark scheme which follows is of the *levels of response* type showing that candidates are expected to demonstrate their mastery of the skills required in the context of their knowledge and understanding of Government and Politics. Mark schemes provide the necessary framework for examiners but they cannot cover all eventualities. Candidates should be given credit for partially complete answers. Where appropriate, candidates should be given credit for referring to recent and contemporary developments in Government and Politics.

Consistency of marking is of the essence in all public examinations. It is therefore of vital importance that assistant examiners apply the marking scheme as directed by the Principal Examiner in order to facilitate comparability with the marking of other options.

Before scrutinising and applying the detail of the specific mark scheme which follows, assistant examiners are required to familiarise themselves with the general principles of the mark scheme as contained in the Assessment Matrix.

Using a levels of response mark scheme

Good examining is about the **consistent** application of judgement. Mark schemes provide a framework within which examiners exercise their judgement. This is especially so in subjects like Government and Politics which in part rely upon analysis, evaluation, argument and explanation. With this in mind, examiners should use the Assessment Matrix alongside the detailed mark scheme for each question. The Assessment Matrix provides a framework ensuring a consistent, generic source from which the detailed mark schemes are derived. This supporting framework ensures a consistent approach within which candidates' responses are marked according to the level of demand and context of each question.

Examiners should initially make a decision about which Level any given response should be placed in. Having determined the appropriate Level the examiners must then choose the precise mark to be given within that Level. In making a decision about a specific mark to award, it is vitally important to think first of the mid-range within the Level, where that Level covers more than two marks. Comparison with other candidates' responses to the same question might then suggest whether the middle mark is unduly generous or severe.

In making decisions away from the middle of the Level, examiners should ask themselves questions relating to candidate attainment, including the quality of language. The more positive the answers, the higher should be the mark awarded. We want to avoid "bunching" of marks. Levels mark schemes can produce regression to the mean, which should be avoided. A candidate's script should be considered by asking "Is it:
- precise in its use of factual information?
- appropriately detailed?
- factually accurate?
- appropriately balanced or markedly better in some areas than others?
- generally coherent in expression and cogent in development (as appropriate to the level awarded)?
- well presented as to general quality of language?
The overall aim is to mark positively, giving credit for what candidates know, understand and can do.

AS GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS (GOV1, GOV2, GOV3)

GENERIC MARK SCHEME for part (a) questions (Total: 8 marks)

	Knowledge and Understanding: Recall, Select & Deploy	**Skills: Analysis & Evaluation**	**Communication**
	AO1	**AO2**	**AO3**
	Levels 3–4 (3–4 marks) The candidate successfully demonstrates accurate or generally accurate knowledge and understanding of political data, concept(s) or term(s). Where appropriate, the candidate is able to illustrate his/her answer with relevant evidence/example(s).	**Levels 3–4 (2 marks)** The candidate provides an appropriate analysis of political data, concept(s) or term(s) showing an awareness of differing viewpoints where appropriate.	**Levels 3–4 (2 marks)** The candidate communicates clearly and effectively using appropriate political vocabulary.
	Levels 1–2 (1–2 marks) The candidate demonstrates slight or basic knowledge and understanding of political data, concept(s) or term(s). The candidate may illustrate his/her answer with evidence/example(s) of limited relevance.	**Levels 1–2 (1 mark)** The candidate provides a superficial or partial analysis of political data, concept(s) or term(s).	**Levels 1–2 (1 mark)** The candidate communicates with limited clarity and effectiveness using a limited political vocabulary.

AS GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS (GOV1, GOV2, GOV3)

GENERIC MARK SCHEME for part (b) questions (Total: 22 marks)

	Knowledge and Understanding: Recall, Select & Deploy	Skills: Analysis & Evaluation	Communication
	AO1	AO2	AO3
	Level 4 (10–11 marks) The candidate successfully demonstrates accurate knowledge and understanding of political concepts/theories/institutions and processes and the relationship between them, producing an answer that deploys relevant knowledge and understanding to address the requirements of the question and that demonstrates significant contextual awareness. The candidate's answer includes relevant evidence and/or examples to substantiate and illustrate points made.	**Level 4 (7 marks)** The candidate evaluates political institutions, processes and behaviour, applying appropriate concepts and theories. The candidate provides analysis which displays sound awareness of differing viewpoints and a clear recognition of issues. Parallels and connections are identified, together with valid and precise comparisons. The answer includes relevant and convincing interpretations or explanations.	**Level 4 (4 marks)** The candidate communicates clear arguments and explanations using accurate political vocabulary. The candidate produces answers with a clear sense of direction leading towards a coherent conclusion.
	Level 3 (7–9 marks) The candidate demonstrates generally accurate knowledge and understanding of political concepts/theories/institutions and processes and the relationship between them, producing an answer that addresses the requirements of the question and demonstrates adequate contextual awareness. The answer provides evidence backed up by clear examples to illustrate points made.	**Level 3 (5–6 marks)** The candidate evaluates political institutions, processes and behaviour, applying some concepts or theories. The candidate provides clear arguments and explanations and demonstrates awareness of differing viewpoints and a recognition of issues. Parallels and connections are identified, together with some sound comparison.	**Level 3 (3 marks)** The candidate communicates arguments and explanations using some political vocabulary. A conclusion is linked to the preceding discussion.

GENERIC MARK SCHEME for part (b) questions (continued)

	Knowledge and Understanding: Recall, Select & Deploy	Skills: Analysis & Evaluation	Communication
	AO1	AO2	AO3
	Level 2 **(4–6 marks)** The candidate demonstrates basic knowledge and understanding of political concepts/theories/institutions and processes and some awareness of the relationship between them. He/she makes a limited attempt to address the requirements of the question. The candidate may demonstrate contextual awareness covering part of the question, and may produce limited evidence and/or few examples.	**Level 2** **(3–4 marks)** The candidate offers a simplistic evaluation of political institutions, processes and behaviour and begins to construct arguments which contain basic explanation. The candidate shows some awareness of differing viewpoints. There is recognition of basic parallels or simplistic comparisons.	**Level 2** **(2 marks)** The candidate attempts to develop an argument using basic political vocabulary. Where a conclusion is offered, its relationship to the preceding discussion may be modest or implicit.
	Level 1 **(1–3 marks)** The candidate demonstrates slight and/or incomplete knowledge and understanding of political concepts/theories/institutions and processes and limited awareness of the relationship between them. The candidate makes a very limited attempt to address the requirements of the question. Only superficial awareness of the context of the question is evident and the few examples cited are often inaccurately reported or inappropriately used.	**Level 1** **(1–2 marks)** The candidate makes a partial attempt to evaluate political institutions, processes and behaviour. Arguments offered are superficial. There is very limited awareness of parallels or comparisons.	**Level 1** **(1 mark)** The answer relies upon narrative which is not fully coherent and which is expressed without using political vocabulary. A conclusion is either not offered or it is not related to the preceding material.

1   **Total for this question: 30 marks**

(a)   Explain the term *class de-alignment* used in the extract.   *(8 marks)*

The extract provides a useful starting point in explaining that class de-alignment is a process or situation involving a weakening in the relationship between members of an occupational class and electoral support for their 'natural' class party. It may be primarily described in terms of declining working-class support for Labour, although other examples may be cited. There may be specific references to the 1970s and 1980s, the changing voting behaviour of the C2s, or the 'deviant' working-class Tories or references to middle-class support moving to Labour in 1997. Other related concepts may include partisan attachment, deference, embourgeoisement or contested measurements of class.

(b)   To what extent does social class explain contemporary voting behaviour?   *(22 marks)*

The stimulus provides results of the 2005 General Election in terms of support from the main social classes, with Labour winning 40% and 48% of C2 and DE support respectively, and the Conservatives winning 37% and 36% support from classes AB and C1 respectively. The strongest responses may compare these contemporary figures with post-war 'alignment' in which two-thirds of the working class supported Labour and three-quarters of the middle class supported the Conservatives. There is no expectation that candidates refer to measures such as the Alford Index or provide sophisticated statistical interpretations. The strongest answers provide plausible support for the assessment demanded in the set question. Many are likely to argue that life-long primacy explanations of voting behaviour have declined as more immediate and volatile recency factors have grown in importance. However, whilst some may argue that social class now has little influence in an age of higher education levels, media dominance and catch–all parties, others may argue that social class remains more important than other primacy influences such as gender, age, or religion. Only ethnicity appears as more influential in explaining voting behaviour than class, although there is a view that ethnicity is closely related to class. Analysis might also include comments on contemporary Britain in terms of the decline of traditional industries and the classes associated with them, middle-Britain, the rise of white-collar occupations and increasing wealth and welfare. The stimulus also contains data on other voting categories, notably the Liberal Democrats. Some might argue that the size of the non-Labour and non-Conservative vote is yet more evidence regarding the declining influence of social class on patterns of voting. Conclusions should address the set question and offer at least a general assessment of the influence of class on contemporary voting behaviour.

2 **Total for this question: 30 marks**

(a)   Explain the term *sound-bites* used in the extract. *(8 marks)*

Candidates are likely to see sound-bites in the context of modern election campaign methods and political marketing set out in the stimulus extract. They explain sound-bites as carefully thought-out brief quotes which will sound good and have maximum impact on viewers or listeners. The electorate no longer attends political meetings to listen to long political speeches, rather politics is absorbed from the media. Here, brevity has become an essential. Candidates are likely to give examples of key phrases now seen as sound-bites such as "Tough on crime. Tough on the causes of crime", "Education, education, education" and "the Lady's not for turning".

(b)   'The more professional election campaigns have become, the less interest the electorate has shown in voting.' Discuss. *(22 marks)*

This question provides candidates with an opportunity to explore two variables and any relation which might exist between them. Although most candidates are likely to agree that New Labour's election campaigns have been professionally managed in terms described in the stimulus passage, some may argue that previous parties have also provided examples of modern election management, perhaps most notably the Conservatives under Thatcher. In other words, media management, spin, media consultants and stage-managed conferences existed before Mandelson, Campbell and New Labour, although the latter arguably took such professionalism to new heights. Most candidates are also likely to agree that generally, as measured by electoral turnout, interest in voting has declined, albeit in an uneven trend (1992 78%; 1997 71%; 2001 59%; 2005 61%). It may also be observed that public opinion measuring respect of politicians has deteriorated over recent years. The key analytical task for candidates is to explore the relationship between these political phenomena. Some may argue that slick marketing methods have increased the gap between political rhetoric and reality, resulting in increasing public withdrawal and disengagement from elections. For example, some commentators have attacked Labour's 'tough anti-crime legislation' noting that it has invariably been 'weakly implemented' and then show no surprise that the electorate has become disillusioned with such 'tough talk' followed by inaction. Other candidates may not recognise this correlation as having any merit in explaining declining public interest in voting. They may attribute other causes to declining turnout, such as contentment with party/government performance, 'hapathy' (the decline of scarcity), or redirected electoral participation through other forms of political behaviour (rise of pressure group activity). Some may even observe that unsophisticated political campaigns have resulted in increased support, such as Northern urban support for the BNP, or even the initial 'renegade campaign' resulting in the direct election of Livingstone as London's mayor. Conclusions should address the set question and reach a conclusion supported by arguments and evidence.

3 **Total for this question: 30 marks**

(a)   Explain the term *single transferable vote system* used in the extract.   *(8 marks)*

Single Transferable Vote (STV) may or may not be described as a system of proportional representation, particularly in Northern Ireland, but nevertheless it is based on multi-member constituencies with electors ranking candidates in order of preference. A quota is established (the Droop formula need not be spelt out) but the principle is that in a five member constituency each party would need to win around 20% to win a seat. Votes that a candidate wins surplus to the quota are redistributed according to second, third and fourth preferences, and so on. If STV is to be proportional, it requires more seats to be contested in large constituencies.

(b)   'The possibility of electoral systems based on proportional representation producing coalition governments should be seen as a strength, not a weakness.' Discuss.   *(22 marks)*

In responding to past questions about first past the post, candidates invariably perceive a major advantage of the system being the improbability of the need for coalitions. Here candidates are provided with an opportunity to explore whether or not coalitions are such undesirable election outcomes as frequently assumed. Some candidates may wish to commence their responses with a working definition of a coalition: when two or more parties combine, usually in an attempt to form a government. Only rarely has Britain had a coalition government, although coalitions have been common at local and devolved levels. Candidates are likely to discuss the strengths and weaknesses of coalitions, pros being increased representation of the electorate, moderation through bargaining and brokerage, stability through representation of much of the electorate, with examples drawn from Wales, Scotland and Germany. Cons being destruction of the mandate, increased wheeling and dealing beyond public gaze, disproportional representation of minorities and consequent extremism, instability if coalition partners drop out, with examples likely to be drawn from pre-war Germany, Italy and Israel. Some candidates might argue that single-party government is not necessarily a polar contrast from coalition government, since parties are themselves coalitions made up from distinct factions. Credit should be given for references to election results in more recent elections, especially in Scotland and Wales. Conclusions should review the evidence and reach the evaluation demanded in the set question.

4 **Total for this question: 30 marks**

(a)   Explain the term *electorate* used in the extract. *(8 marks)*

The body of registered individuals eligible to vote. Some candidates may contrast electors with voters, whilst others might discuss related issues as part of the context, such as the changes to the franchise, qualification for voting, the organisation of the electorate into constituencies for some votes or nationally for others. Others may argue that the electorate's preferences might change according to the voting system in operation or, guided by the extract, discuss the level of political knowledge held by the electorate.

Britain retains a qualified franchise in terms of age requirements, but no longer in terms of gender or property. In 1985, Britons living abroad were given the right to vote as were, more recently, hereditary peers who sat in the unreformed House of Lords. Although still subject to political debate, serving convicts and involuntary patients in mental hospitals do not have the right to vote.

(b)   'Despite criticisms, the case for making greater use of referendums is overwhelming.'
       Discuss. *(22 marks)*

The general thrust of the stimulus extract is against wider use of the referendum, with some arguments briefly outlined. The set question demands candidates to consider the case for wider usage, although in so doing the case against might also be considered. Candidates are likely to take an argument alluded to in the stimulus – that referendums are a form of direct democracy which expresses the will of the people. Additionally, they might argue that general elections have limitations as a means of expressing the public's will – infrequent, overall verdict on parties rather than specific to issues, usually won on a minority basis – as well as useful for deciding sensitive issues such as continued EU membership, devolution (including regional assemblies) especially if such decisions divide parties. Referendums might also stimulate public interest and education in politics in a way that other forms of participation do not, and they might help counter special interests which have undue influence on government. These and other pro arguments should be considered in the body of the response, even if they are dismissed by counter arguments which are then raised. Prompted by the stimulus extract, it might be counter-argued that referendums condense complex questions into a simple yes/no response, that they undermine parties and parliament, that they encourage single-issue politics and can work to the disadvantage of minorities. The conclusion should reach the assessment demanded in the set question based on preceding argument and evidence.