

General Certificate of Education
June 2008
Advanced Subsidiary Examination



GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS
Unit 1 Electoral Systems and Voting Behaviour

GOV1

Friday 23 May 2008 9.00 am to 10.00 am

For this paper you must have:

- an 8-page answer book.

Time allowed: 1 hour

Instructions

- Use black ink or black ball-point pen.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book. The *Examining Body* for this paper is AQA. The *Paper Reference* is GOV1.
- Answer **one** question from Section A and **one** question from Section B.
In Section A, answer **either** Question 1 **or** Question 2.
In Section B, answer **either** Question 3 **or** Question 4.
- Do all rough work in the answer book. Cross through any work you do not want to be marked.

Information

- The maximum mark for this paper is 60.
- The marks for part questions are shown in brackets.
- You will be marked on your ability to use good English, to organise information clearly and to use specialist vocabulary where appropriate.

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 **one** question from Section A and **one** question from Section B.

SECTION A

Answer **either** Question 1 **or** Question 2.

Each question carries 30 marks.

EITHER

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

The Cheadle By-election, July 2005

Party	Votes
Liberal Democrat	19 593
Conservative	15 936
Labour	1 739
Others	299

[Turnout: 55.2%]

The first by-election under the Labour Government, which was returned to power in June 2005, was held in Cheadle following the death of the Liberal Democrat MP. Cheadle, once seen as traditional Conservative territory, had been one of the key targets for the Conservatives in the General Election. However, Liberal Democrats were successful in defending the seat in the by-election. Since this was a Liberal Democrat/Conservative *marginal seat*, Labour did not expect to do well and indeed its candidate lost his deposit.

Source: adapted from A JONES, *Politics Pal*, 2006

- (a) Explain the term *marginal seat* used in the extract. (8 marks)
- (b) 'By-election results are not a good guide to the electorate's voting intentions in general elections.' Discuss. (22 marks)

OR

- 2 Study the extract below and answer parts (a) and (b) which follow.

Opinion Polls

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The extract relates to the increasing use of opinion polls. It explains what opinion polls are and argues that they are not a good indicator of actual election results, citing the 1992 General Election as an instance where the opinion polls were significantly inaccurate.

Source: adapted from B JONES (ed), *Politics UK*, Pearson Education, 2004

- (a) Explain the term *share of the vote* used in the extract. (8 marks)
- (b) ‘Opinion polls are major influences on both campaigns and outcomes in general elections.’ Discuss. (22 marks)

Turn over for the next section

Turn over ▶

SECTION B

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

Each question carries 30 marks.

EITHER

3 Study the passage below and answer parts (a) and (b) which follow.

Electoral Reform

In terms of electoral reform, many political scientists agreed that 1999 should be recorded as the year of the 'great British experiment'. With the Single Transferable Vote System already in operation in some Northern Ireland elections, the *Additional Member System* was used to elect members to the new devolved bodies in Scotland and Wales. Also, for the first time the Regional Party List System was used to elect MEPs to the European Parliament. Political scientists argued that these more proportional electoral systems had changed not only the way in which votes were translated into seats but also the way some people had voted in the first place. In other words, new electoral systems had resulted in changing electoral behaviour. Few were surprised that all ideas of reforming elections to the Westminster Parliament were shelved indefinitely.

- (a) Explain the term *Additional Member System* used in the passage. (8 marks)
- (b) 'Electoral reform is bound to change electoral outcomes.' Discuss. (22 marks)

OR

- 4 Study the extract below and answer parts (a) and (b) which follow.

The Single Member Simple Plurality System

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The extract briefly explains the 'first past the post' system. It gives examples of countries in which it is used and states an advantage and a disadvantage of the system, suggesting that minor parties can be unfairly penalised.

Source: adapted from I BUDGE et al, *The New British Politics*, Pearson Education, 2004

- (a) Explain the term *single member constituencies* used in the extract. (8 marks)
- (b) 'Despite being unfair, 'first-past-the-post' is the best electoral system for Britain.'
Discuss. (22 marks)

END OF QUESTIONS

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