



General Certificate of Education
Advanced Subsidiary Examination
June 2009

Government and Politics

GOVP2

Unit 2 Governing Modern Britain

Specimen paper for examinations in June 2010 onwards

This question paper uses the new numbering system and new AQA answer book

For this paper you must have:

- an AQA 8-page answer book.

Time allowed

- 1 hour 30 minutes

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 GOVP2.
- Choose **two** topics and answer **all** questions in each topic.
- Do all rough work in your answer book. Cross through any work that you do not want to be marked.

Information

- The marks for questions are shown in brackets.
- The maximum mark for this paper is 80.
- Questions 02 and 03, 05 and 06, 08 and 09, 11 and 12, should be answered in continuous prose. For these questions you will be marked on your ability to:
 - use good English
 - organise information clearly
 - 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 topic.

Choose **two** topics and answer **all** questions in each topic. Each topic carries 40 marks.

Topic 1

The British Constitution

Read the extract below and answer Questions 01, 02 and 03 which follow.

The Judiciary and the Political Process

Judicial independence is an essential feature of democratic political systems. The Judiciary's main roles are to interpret the law, peacefully resolve disputes between individuals, try cases and punish wrongdoers. However, it has often been regarded as having limited interest to those who study politics. This has been particularly so in Britain where judges, unlike their counterparts in countries such as the USA, have traditionally not been called on to interpret the constitution. One of the reasons for this, of course, is the absence from the United Kingdom of a codified constitution such as that in almost all other countries. Nevertheless, in recent years, judges have become increasingly significant figures in the political system. This is a development that has aroused disquiet among some elected politicians who now see their policy-making role as being under threat.

Source: adapted from D WATTS, *British Government and Politics: A Comparative Guide*, Edinburgh University Press, 2006

- 0 1** Explain the term *judicial independence* used in the extract. (5 marks)
- 0 2** Using your own knowledge as well as the extract, explain why the absence of a codified constitution in the UK has traditionally resulted in judges having a limited role in interpreting the constitution. (10 marks)
- 0 3** 'Recent constitutional developments have led to an increasingly political role for judges.' Discuss. (25 marks)

Topic 2**Parliament**

Read the extract below and answer Questions 04, 05 and 06 which follow.

The Role of an MP

An MP has many roles. At the most basic level, an MP is a representative; but who, or what, does an MP actually represent: constituency, party, sponsor, pressure group? MPs are elected under party labels although the primary relationship is between MPs and their constituencies. Often this is unproblematic, as when MPs raise constituency matters at *Prime Minister's Questions*. At other times, however, it may cause a conflict of roles for MPs. For example, many Labour MPs were opposed to the Iraq war, as were their constituents, whereas the party leadership supported it. On this, and other issues such as student tuition fees, many Labour MPs refused to toe the party line. When an MP acts in this way there is a possibility that s/he may lose the party whip. Others voted with the party leadership and ignored constituency pressures.

Source: adapted from *The Role of an MP*, *New Politics Pal*, 2005

- 0 4** Explain the term *Prime Minister's Questions* used in the extract. (5 marks)
- 0 5** Using your own knowledge as well as the extract, explain why the threat of losing the party whip will usually persuade MPs to 'toe the party line'. (10 marks)
- 0 6** 'Parliament's most important function is to scrutinise and challenge the government, not to maintain it in office until the next general election.' Discuss. (25 marks)

Turn over for the next question

Turn over ►

Topic 3

The Core Executive

Read the extract below and answer Questions 07, 08 and 09 which follow.

Constraints on the Prime Minister

Many observers of the British political system have advanced the claim that the British Prime Minister is becoming too powerful. It is a view, moreover, that has been applied particularly to a number of recent Prime Ministers. This view, however, does not stand up to close examination. The Prime Minister cannot simply impose his or her policies on ministerial colleagues and their *civil servants*. In fact, the Prime Minister's ability to control policy making is very limited indeed, and then operates largely as a veto. Departmental ministers are relatively autonomous in the development of policy and, while the Prime Minister can veto a policy in a cabinet committee or the full Cabinet, it is very difficult for him or her to force ministers to adopt a policy against their will.

Source: adapted from M J SMITH, *The Core Executive in Britain*, Macmillan, 1999

- 0 7** Explain the term *civil servants* used in the extract. (5 marks)
- 0 8** Using your own knowledge as well as the extract, identify **and** explain **two** reasons why the Prime Minister's power to influence policy making is limited. (10 marks)
- 0 9** 'Under the pressures of modern government, the Cabinet tends merely to "rubber-stamp" decisions made elsewhere.' Discuss. (25 marks)

Topic 4**Multi-level Governance**

Read the extract below and answer Questions 10, 11 and 12 which follow.

Tiers of Government

In Britain, multi-level governance is now a reality. As well as elected *local government*, we now have devolution. In 1997, Labour's manifesto promised referendums on establishing a Scottish Parliament and a Welsh Assembly. However, when these bodies were subsequently established, they were considered by many reformers as only a first step. Very few observers supposed that the reforms would actually rest there, especially because the various parts of Britain were treated so differently. There was, for a start, the difference in powers between the Welsh Assembly and the Scottish Parliament, while England received nothing at all.

Yet another source of controversy surrounds the representation of Wales and Scotland at Westminster. In this piecemeal and evolutionary manner the United Kingdom appears to be edging very gradually towards a federal system.

Source: adapted from A GAMBLE, *Between Europe and America: The Future of British Politics*, Palgrave, 2003

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 Explain the term *local government* used in the extract. (5 marks)
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 Using your own knowledge as well as the extract, explain why, following devolution, there is controversy about the representation of Scotland at Westminster. (10 marks)
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 'Devolution has resulted in a genuine dispersal of political power in Britain.' Discuss. (25 marks)

END OF QUESTIONS

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