



General Certificate of Education
Advanced Subsidiary Examination
January 2010

Government and Politics

GOVP2

Unit 2 Governing Modern Britain

Tuesday 19 January 2010 1.30 pm to 3.00 pm

For this paper you must have:

- an 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.
- Answer **two** questions from a choice of four.
- 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.
- Part (b) and part (c) questions should be answered in continuous prose. For these part 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 question.

Answer **two** questions from a choice of four.

Each question carries 40 marks.

1 The British Constitution

Read the extract below and answer parts (a) to (c) which follow.

The Nature of the British Constitution

Although some parts of the British constitution are written down, others are not. The issue of Britain adopting a fully written constitution is, therefore, a complicated one. Nevertheless, there is now a strong case for a fully written, or codified, British constitution.

In Britain, unlike the USA, there is no firm separation of powers between the executive, the legislature and *the judiciary*. Moreover, while the constitution, because it is flexible, allows the British political system to adapt easily to changing circumstances, it leaves British citizens without any constitutional guarantees. For example, if the Human Rights Act were to be included in a fully written constitution, there would be a benchmark of rights which no government would be able to tamper with. At the same time, such a document could be changed but only by constitutional amendment.

Source: adapted from P COCKER and A JONES, *Essential Topics in Modern British Politics and Government*, Liverpool Academic Press, 2005

- (a) Explain the term *the judiciary* used in the extract. (5 marks)
- (b) Using your own knowledge as well as the extract, explain why the British constitution allows the political system to adapt easily to changing circumstances. (10 marks)
- (c) ‘The absence of a separation of powers in Britain gives the government too much power.’ Discuss. (25 marks)

2 Parliament

Read the extract below and answer parts (a) to (c) which follow.

The House of Lords

The threat of defeat in the House of Commons is rare because *backbenchers* usually obey the party whips. Governments, however, are regularly defeated in the House of Lords – over 400 times since 1997. Although the Lords does not have an absolute veto, these defeats can have a real impact; indeed, Labour’s reform of the Lords has strengthened its influence. These reforms have not only made the Lords more legitimate, they have also created a chamber in which no party has an overall majority.

The Liberal Democrats and Conservatives, individually and collectively powerless in the House of Commons in the face of New Labour’s huge majorities, are powerful players in the Lords. The Crossbenchers, Labour rebels and even Bishops can also have influence. It seems clear that, despite its continuing unelected basis, the House of Lords has a growing role in the policy process and has the potential to change some of the fundamentals of British politics in significant ways.

Source: adapted from M RUSSELL and M SCIARA, ‘Why does the Government get defeated in the House of Lords?: The Lords, the Party System and British Politics’, *British Politics*, vol 2: no 3, Palgrave Macmillan, 2007

- (a) Explain the term *backbenchers* used in the extract. (5 marks)
- (b) Using your own knowledge as well as the extract, explain why recent reforms can be said to have made the House of Lords more legitimate. (10 marks)
- (c) How successfully does Parliament perform its representative functions in modern Britain? (25 marks)

Turn over for the next question

Turn over ►

3 The Core Executive

Read the extract below and answer parts (a) to (c) which follow.

Cabinet Ministers

Below are extracts adapted from Alastair Campbell's diaries. Alastair Campbell was a Special Adviser to Tony Blair before the 2003 Iraq War.

March 6th 2003. Cabinet was difficult. Two Cabinet ministers, Robin Cook and Clare Short, raised concerns about the Prime Minister's Iraq policy.

March 9th Clare phoned saying she had given an interview threatening resignation if we invaded Iraq without another United Nations resolution. I replied that Cabinet ministers should raise their concerns in Cabinet, and then, unless they resigned, should support Cabinet decisions.

March 14th Robin Cook said that he would resign as it was dishonest to pretend that he supported the proposed Iraq invasion.

March 17th Tony started the Cabinet. Clare asked where Robin was. Tony replied that he had resigned. Clare said that she would consider her position.

March 26th Cabinet was awful. Afterwards Tony had a *bilateral* with the Deputy Prime Minister, John Prescott, who said that Clare's behaviour at Cabinet meetings was intolerable and that she should be sacked if she didn't resign.

Source: adapted from ALASTAIR CAMPBELL, *The Blair Years*, Hutchinson, 2007

- (a) Explain the term *bilateral* used in the extract. (5 marks)
- (b) Using your own knowledge as well as the extract, consider the view that Cabinet ministers who disagree with government policy should resign. (10 marks)
- (c) 'The main policy decisions within government are still made by the Cabinet.'
Discuss. (25 marks)

4 Multi-Level Governance

Read the extract below and answer parts (a) to (c) which follow.

Moves Towards Multi-level Governance

Multi-level governance is receiving increasing attention in British politics. Essentially, it involves the growing distribution of power across and between different levels of government; the evolution and creation of new power centres and the emergence of ‘fuzzy’ accountability.

Local government is responsible for delivering important public services. In recent years, power has also been transferred to new democratic arenas above and below the nation state, a development which could be seen as limiting the power of British government. As a result of *devolution*, ministers in Whitehall must now co-ordinate with their counterparts in Scotland and Wales. Increasing integration within Europe means that they also have to look upwards to the key policy makers in the European Union.

All of this stands in contrast to the key characteristics of the traditional ‘Westminster model’ view of British politics which emphasised a strong central government, parliamentary sovereignty and clear lines of ministerial responsibility.

Source: adapted from M FLINDERS, ‘The Half-Hearted Constitutional Revolution’, in P DUNLEAVY *et al*, *Developments in British Politics 8*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2006

- (a) Explain the term *devolution* used in the extract. (5 marks)
- (b) Using your own knowledge as well as the extract, explain the statement that local government is responsible for delivering important public services. (10 marks)
- (c) To what extent does multi-level governance increase democracy and bring government closer to the people? (25 marks)

END OF QUESTIONS

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