



General Certificate of Education
Advanced Subsidiary Examination
January 2011

Government and Politics

GOVP2

Unit 2 Governing Modern Britain

Tuesday 18 January 2011 1.30 pm to 3.00 pm

For this paper you must have:

- an AQA 12-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 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 [0 2] and [0 3], [0 5] and [0 6], [0 8] and [0 9], [1 1] and [1 2] 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 **0 1**, **0 2** and **0 3** which follow.

The separation of powers and the judiciary

The main difference between the UK and many other democracies is the absence of a clear separation of powers. The principle of parliamentary sovereignty, one of the cornerstones of our Constitution, has also traditionally limited the power of the judiciary to challenge and amend Acts of Parliament.

Of course, it can be argued that while Parliament is still legally sovereign in form, it is no longer sovereign in practice and no longer exercises unlimited political authority. Today, the powers of Parliament are clearly limited by the European Union. Moreover, many of the Blair government's reforms have significantly altered the relationship between the judiciary and Parliament.

The 1998 Human Rights Act, for example, has led to an expansion in the scope of *judicial review*. In addition, the Constitutional Reform Act 2005, by creating a Supreme Court which effectively removes judicial functions from the House of Lords, has also gone some way towards a separation of powers.

Source: adapted from V BOGDANOR, *A Codified Constitution for Britain*, Politics Review Vol 18, No 1, Philip Allan Updates, 2009, reproduced by permission of the Publisher

- 0 1** Explain the term *judicial review* used in the extract. (5 marks)
- 0 2** Using your own knowledge as well as the extract, explain why the creation of a Supreme Court has taken the UK some way towards a separation of powers. (10 marks)
- 0 3** 'There is now an overwhelming case for a codified UK constitution.' Discuss. (25 marks)

Topic 2 Parliament

Read the extract below and answer questions

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 which follow.

MPs and the scrutiny of government

Parliamentary time is largely monopolised by the government and, to a lesser extent, by the Official Opposition, through devices such as Opposition Days. Ministers and Shadow Ministers usually take the leading role in important House of Commons debates. Ordinary backbench MPs, by contrast, may feel powerless to make significant contributions in debates or to introduce legislation. The ability of individual MPs to influence national events is also severely limited. Governments implementing their mandate are unlikely to take much notice of protests by backbench rebels in their own party, let alone opposition MPs.

Some backbenchers, however, do manage to make an impact by serving on *select committees*. Others can make an impact by attending public functions or through the media, by appearing on TV and radio programmes and writing articles in local and national newspapers. Today, however, MPs are often held in low esteem by voters. Most backbenchers do not have a high profile and are conscious of the limitations upon their ability to do the job as well as they would wish.

Source: adapted with the permission of Nelson Thornes Ltd from AQA Government and Politics AS, DUNCAN WATTS, ISBN 978-0-7487-9821-6, first published in 2008

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 Explain the term *select committees* used in the extract. (5 marks)
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 Using the extract and your own knowledge, identify **and** explain **two** ways in which the Official Opposition in the House of Commons can challenge the government. (10 marks)
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 'The main role of backbench MPs is to support or oppose the government in the House of Commons, not to represent the views of their constituents.' Discuss. (25 marks)

Turn over for the next question

Turn over ►

Topic 3 The Core Executive

Read the extract below and answer questions **0 7**, **0 8** and **0 9** which follow.

Cabinet politics

Over three days in June 2009, a group of senior ministers came close to toppling the Prime Minister. Since Gordon Brown took over from Tony Blair, the government had lurched from crisis to crisis. With county council and European elections looming, and Labour's poll ratings worsening, some of Mr Brown's Cabinet opponents decided to act. They knew that the Prime Minister was planning a Cabinet reshuffle to assert his authority, so several ministers were inclined to resign first, before he could replace them with others more loyal to himself. Hazel Blears and James Purnell actually did resign. However, Lord Mandelson saved the day. He used one of his former special advisers to phone round other wavering ministers to persuade them to stay in *the government*.

However, while the Prime Minister survived on this occasion, his position remained weak, and damaging divisions still existed within the Cabinet.

Source: adapted from P HENNESSY AND M KITE, *Anatomy of a Cabinet Coup*,
© Telegraph Media Group Ltd, 2009

- 0 7** Explain the term *the government* used in the extract. (5 marks)
- 0 8** Using your own knowledge as well as the extract, explain how prime ministers might use Cabinet reshuffles to assert their authority. (10 marks)
- 0 9** 'In modern times the prime minister, not the Cabinet, dominates the core executive.' Discuss. (25 marks)

Topic 4 Multi-level Governance

Read the extract below and answer questions

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 which follow.

Elected representatives and multi-level governance

Mr and Mrs Handley live in Scotland. When they had an anti-social behaviour problem in their street, they turned to their elected representatives. However, the couple have no fewer than 20 elected representatives. They have four councillors, one MP, seven MEPs and eight MSPs. They had no idea who to contact to get help. When they approached one of their councillors, he wrote to the police. When nothing happened, they contacted their MP who promised to speak to one of their MSPs, but still nothing happened. They didn't consider approaching an *MEP* because they considered them too remote to deal with local problems.

Britain has around 30 000 elected politicians. Having so many elected representatives is confusing and expensive, and it blurs accountability. Moreover, some levels of government are still *outside effective democratic control*. The European Union, for example, has an unelected Commission which still largely dominates policy making. At the same time, other levels, like local government, can only do what higher tiers of government allow them to do.

Source: adapted from DANIEL MARTIN, *A Plague of Politicians*, © Daily Mail, 2009

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 Explain the term *MEP* used in the extract. (5 marks)
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 Using your own knowledge as well as the extract, identify **and** explain **two** reasons why the European Union might be seen as *outside effective democratic control*. (10 marks)
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 'The advantages clearly outweigh the disadvantages.' Discuss with reference to **either** local government **or** devolved government in Britain. (25 marks)

END OF QUESTIONS

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