



**General Certificate of Education  
January 2012**

**Government and Politics**

**GOV3A**

**The Politics of the USA**

**Unit 3A**

***Mark Scheme***

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 students' 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 students' 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.

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Set and published by the Assessment and Qualifications Alliance.

## **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 Section 4.2 of the specification.

The schemes of marking reflect these objectives. The mark scheme which follows is of the *levels-of-response* type showing that students 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. Students should be given credit for partially complete answers. Where appropriate, students 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 mark 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.

At A2, generally speaking, there is no unambiguously 'right' or 'wrong' answer to the 30-mark questions. Answers will be judged on factors such as quality of the argument, depth of knowledge and understanding, a synoptic grasp of the subject, appropriateness of the examples and internal logic of the discussion. Where students are presented with a proposition to be discussed they may support it, reject it or adopt a balanced position.

There are no limits to the areas of knowledge that candidates may feel able bring to the discussion. Therefore the specification of requirements outlined in the mark schemes can only be indicative. Students are not expected to include all the material presented in order to access the full range of available marks. At the same time they may successfully include material from their particular studies which is not indicated in the scheme.

### **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 students' 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 students' 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 student 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 student'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.

**A2 GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS**  
**GENERIC MARK SCHEME for questions with a total of 10 marks**

<b>Knowledge and Understanding: Recall, Select &amp; Deploy</b>	<b>Skills: Analysis &amp; Evaluation</b>	<b>Communication</b>
<b>AO1</b>	<b>AO2</b>	<b>AO3</b>
<p><b>Level 4 (4 marks)</b> The student demonstrates a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of political concepts, institutions and processes. The student fully addresses the requirements of the question and provides developed and effective to comprehensive interpretation. The answer also provides clear to accurate evidence and, where appropriate, good to excellent examples to illustrate points made.</p>	<p><b>Level 4 (4 marks)</b> The student applies an excellent range of developed concepts and uses appropriate political theory to construct a clear and cogent explanation or argument.</p>	<p><b>Levels 3–4 (2 marks)</b> The student communicates clearly and effectively in a sustained and structured manner, using appropriate political vocabulary. There are few, if any, errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar, and the response should be legible.</p>
<p><b>Level 3 (3 marks)</b> The student demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of political concepts, institutions and processes. The student clearly addresses the requirements of the question and provides sound interpretation and contextual awareness. The answer includes good examples to illustrate points made.</p>	<p><b>Level 3 (3 marks)</b> The student applies a good range of developed concepts and uses appropriate political theory to construct a clear and cogent explanation or argument.</p>	<p>The answer has a clear sense of direction, is focused on the question and, where appropriate, has a conclusion which flows from the discussion.</p>
<p><b>Level 2 (2 marks)</b> The student demonstrates limited knowledge and understanding of political concepts, institutions and processes. The student makes a limited attempt to address the requirements of the question and provides little to partial, but reasonably effective, interpretation. Answers offer limited evidence and few, or inaccurate, examples to illustrate points made.</p>	<p><b>Level 2 (2 marks)</b> The student applies a limited range of concepts and makes limited use of political theory or ideas in developing an explanation or argument.</p>	<p><b>Levels 1–2 (1 mark)</b> The student communicates explanations or arguments with limited clarity and effectiveness, using limited political vocabulary. The answer may lack either a clear focus on the question or a sense of direction.</p>
<p><b>Level 1 (1 mark)</b> The student demonstrates little knowledge and understanding of political concepts, institutions and processes. The student makes little attempt to address the requirements of the question and provides little interpretation. Answers offer little evidence and few, or inaccurate, examples to illustrate points made.</p>	<p><b>Level 1 (1 mark)</b> The student applies few concepts and makes little use of political theory or ideas in developing an explanation or argument.</p>	<p>There are frequent errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar, and legibility may be a problem. A conclusion, where appropriate, may be offered but its relationship to the preceding discussion is modest or implicit.</p>
<p><b>0 marks</b> No relevant response.</p>	<p><b>0 marks</b> No relevant response.</p>	<p><b>0 marks</b> No relevant response.</p>

**A2 GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS****GENERIC MARK SCHEME for questions with a total of 30 marks**

<b>Knowledge and Understanding: Recall, Select &amp; Deploy</b>	<b>Skills: Analysis &amp; Evaluation</b>	<b>Communication</b>
<b>AO1</b>	<b>AO2</b>	<b>AO3</b>
<p><b>Level 4 (10–12 marks)</b> The student demonstrates a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of political concepts/theories/institutions and processes and the relationships between them. A synoptic approach is fully developed, drawing appropriately on knowledge, perspectives and examples from a wide range of studies in government and politics. The answer fully addresses the requirements of the question and demonstrates excellent contextual awareness. The answer includes excellent examples to illustrate points made. The answer includes detailed and comprehensive interpretations or explanations, as well as accurate evidence and relevant examples, to illustrate points made.</p>	<p><b>Level 4 (10–12 marks)</b> The student displays excellent awareness of the implications and demands of the question. There is an excellent and sustained focus on the specific question asked. There is clear and full evaluation of political institutions, processes and behaviour, which displays a sophisticated awareness of differing viewpoints and recognition of issues. Appropriate parallels and connections are clearly identified, together with well-developed comparisons. A wide range of concepts is used and developed.</p>	<p><b>Level 4 (6 marks)</b> The student communicates structured and sustained arguments, explanations and conclusions with clarity. Excellent use is made of political vocabulary to construct cogent and coherent arguments and explanations. The response should be legible, with few, if any, errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar. The answer has a clear sense of direction, culminating in a conclusion that flows from the preceding discussion.</p>
<p><b>Level 3 (7–9 marks)</b> The student demonstrates sound knowledge and understanding of political concepts/theories/institutions and processes and the relationships between them. A synoptic approach is well developed, using a range of knowledge, perspectives and examples gained elsewhere in the study of government and politics. The answer clearly addresses the requirements of the question and demonstrates sound contextual awareness. The answer includes developed and effective interpretations or explanations and also clear evidence and good examples to illustrate points made.</p>	<p><b>Level 3 (7–9 marks)</b> The student displays sound awareness of the implications and demands of the question. There is a clear focus on the question. There is a sound evaluation of political institutions, processes and behaviour, which displays good awareness of differing viewpoints and recognition of issues. There is good recognition of parallels and comparisons. Appropriate concepts are used and developed.</p>	<p><b>Level 3 (4–5 marks)</b> The student communicates arguments, explanations and conclusions well. Good use is made of political vocabulary to construct clear arguments and explanations. The response should be legible but there may be occasional errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar. The student produces an answer with a conclusion linked to the preceding discussion.</p>

**GENERIC MARK SCHEME for questions with a total of 30 marks (continued)**

<b>Knowledge and Understanding: Recall, Select &amp; Deploy</b>	<b>Skills: Analysis &amp; Evaluation</b>	<b>Communication</b>
<b>AO1</b>	<b>AO2</b>	<b>AO3</b>
<p><b>Level 2 (4–6 marks)</b> The student demonstrates outline knowledge and understanding of political concepts/theories/institutions and processes and some awareness of the relationships between them. The answer makes a limited attempt to address the question and demonstrates contextual awareness covering part of the question. An attempt to develop a synoptic approach is made, using a limited range of knowledge, perspectives and examples gained more broadly in the study of government and politics. The answer includes a partial and reasonably effective attempt at interpretation or explanation, with some examples to illustrate points made.</p>	<p><b>Level 2 (4–6 marks)</b> The student displays little awareness of the implications and demands of the question, resulting in a restricted focus. There is a limited evaluation of political institutions, processes and behaviour, which displays a partial awareness of differing viewpoints and issues.</p> <p>There is some recognition of basic parallels and comparisons. Arguments and explanations are undeveloped, with a limited use of concepts.</p>	<p><b>Level 2 (2–3 marks)</b> The student communicates arguments and conclusions adequately, with a limited use of political vocabulary. There are frequent errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar, and legibility may be a problem. A conclusion is offered but its relationship to the preceding discussion may be modest or implicit.</p>
<p><b>Level 1 (1–3 marks)</b> The student demonstrates a slight and incomplete knowledge and understanding of political institutions and processes and a limited awareness of the relationships between them. A very limited attempt at synopticity is made, sometimes using superficial or inaccurate knowledge, perspectives and examples cited from elsewhere in their study of government and politics. There is little attempt to address the requirements of the question. There is only superficial awareness, if any, of the context of the question, with little interpretation and few, if any, examples, often inaccurately reported or inappropriately used.</p>	<p><b>Level 1 (1–3 marks)</b> The student displays little awareness of the implications and demands of the question, and focus is lacking. Evaluation of political institutions, processes and behaviour is superficial.</p> <p>Analysis shows little awareness of differing viewpoints and issues. There is little, if any, recognition of parallels and comparisons. Arguments, explanations and use of concepts are superficial and naïve.</p>	<p><b>Level 1 (1 mark)</b> The answer relies upon narrative that is not fully coherent. There is little or no use of political vocabulary. Errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar may be intrusive and the response may not be legible. A conclusion, if present, is not adequately related to the preceding discussion.</p>
<p><b>0 marks</b> No relevant response.</p>	<p><b>0 marks</b> No relevant response.</p>	<p><b>0 marks</b> No relevant response.</p>

**Topic 1 The Electoral Process and Direct Democracy****Total for this topic: 40 marks**

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|--|
| (01) Consider the significance of the selection of vice-presidential candidates in the US nomination process. (10 marks) |
|--|

This question demands an understanding of the process of selecting a vice-presidential candidate by the presidential nominee at the National Nominating Convention, in order to “balance the ticket” for the presidential election in November.

In the response the principle and purpose of ticket balancing should be clearly understood for high AO2 marks. The selection of vice-president is done to try and maximise the potential vote of the ticket by the selection of a candidate who has different characteristics to the nominee and can bring something to the ticket that is not already there, in order to maximise the appeal of the ticket to a greater range of voters in a broader voting coalition.

For both high level AO1 and AO2 marks students must give examples of ticket balancing from past elections. This may include:

- Ideological balance (liberal/conservative)
- Geographical balance (candidates from different states or areas)
- Gender balance
- Religious balance
- Ethnic balance
- Age balance
- Washington insider or outsider balance.

Specific evidence is required of several of these factors for the highest level marks at both AO1 and AO2. It is likely that many students will use the 2008 election for their examples, explaining Obama’s selection of Joe Biden (experienced Washington insider) and McCain’s selection of Sarah Palin (female Washington outsider) giving reasons for these choices. However, the selection of vice-presidential candidates from previous elections such as Bush/Cheney or Clinton-Gore (where the ticket was NOT significantly balanced with two similar southern “New” Democrats) or even as far back as Kennedy/Johnson is acceptable as long as students are able to demonstrate why the choices were made and why they were “significant”.

Although V-P selection is regarded as important in gaining additional votes, at the highest level of response some students may legitimately challenge the “significance” of the second on the ticket, as a more popular V-P candidate will not save a less popular presidential candidate from defeat. The lack of significance of the office itself may also be brought into the analysis and such a response should be rewarded at AO2.

Some well informed students may know that Obama chose Biden before the NNC, therefore undermining the previous role of the NNC in the “choice” of the V-P.

- (02) 'Despite several attempts to regulate campaign finance, money increasingly dominates the US electoral process and is the main factor contributing to a candidate's success.'  
Discuss. (30 marks)

For high-level marks at both AO1 and AO2 students must be able to address the three distinct parts of the question:

1. Knowledge of the attempts to regulate campaign finance
2. How and why money "increasingly dominates" the electoral process and
3. The degree to which it is the "main factor" contributing to a candidate's electoral success.

For AO1 marks expect knowledge of the FECA reforms to attempt to regulate campaign finance in the 1970s and the Bipartisan Campaign Reform Act of 2002 (often referred to as McCain-Feingold) with some reference to their provisions.

At the higher levels of response students are likely to refer to the numerous "loopholes" in the legislation that have allowed "soft money" and "independent expenditures" to continue. Expect references at the highest level to:

- Supreme Court decisions protecting 1st Amendment rights such as the 2010 Citizens United v FEC decision removing restrictions on corporate and union campaign spending leading to "Super PACs" such as Karl Rove's "American Crossroads"
- the loopholes that allow PACs (who can "bundle contributions") and 527 and 501 (c) groups to "spend on behalf of" candidates or
- The Buckley v Valeo Supreme Court decision that allows candidates to spend as much of their own money on their campaigns as they wish.
- Presidential candidates can reject federal funding in order to do avoid restrictions on spending as Obama did in 2008.

This kind of knowledge will achieve high level marks.

Such knowledge and analysis demonstrates that campaign finance has **not** been sufficiently "regulated" and also why it "increasingly dominates" the electoral process. Students should also address, to a greater or lesser degree, why money is such a dominant factor in US elections. At the higher levels of response expect knowledge of:

- Armies of (paid) political consultants and advisers (cf unpaid activists)
- The need to campaign through increasingly expensive TV advertising and "infomercials" throughout the states
- The diversity of voters and their interests that need to be targeted and the mobilisation of both core and de-aligned voters
- Travel costs
- The "permanent campaign" hence the need to raise bigger and earlier "war chests"

At the higher levels of response expect accurate supporting evidence from recent campaign spending such as 2008 (\$5.3 billion combined costs helped by internet fundraising) or the 2010 mid terms (most expensive ever; \$4 billion spent compared to \$2.8 billion in 06) demonstrating

rising costs, or examples of the high number of millionaires in the Senate and in presidential and gubernatorial and primary campaigns.

However, students do not have to accept the statement that money **is** the “main factor” contributing to a candidate’s success. They may point to other significant factors that can influence a candidate’s success such as incumbency, image, policies, ideology or the events of the time.

At the higher levels of response it may be argued that candidates cannot win with money alone, perhaps pointing to examples of a higher spending candidates losing.

- For example they may point to the fact that Obama outspent his rival McCain in 2008, but would have won despite this because of other factors influencing his defeat of McCain. Similarly Bush in 2000 and 2004.
- In the 2010 mid-terms, Meg Whitman (who spent \$140 million of her own money) lost in California despite heavily outspending her rival Jerry Brown as did several other high spending losers such as Linda Mc Mahon in Connecticut (who spent \$47 million of her own money).
- Some students may legitimately refer to the spending of the Republican primary candidates in 2012 in their response.

In order to access the higher marks, students must present evidence of campaign spending to illustrate their analysis of “regulate” “dominance” and “success”. Some students may speculate that the dominance of money discourages less wealthy but good candidates from running and should be rewarded for this insight. It could be concluded that money doesn’t guarantee victory but it is hard to win without very large amounts of it. Weaker students may simply write a generalised response on campaign finances with little question focus.

**Topic 2 Political Parties****Total for this topic: 40 marks**

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|---|
| (03) Examine the extent to which the Republican Party may be described as <b>both</b> fiscally <b>and</b> socially conservative. (10 marks) |
|---|

This question needs a clear understanding of, and explanation for, the ideological views of the Republican Party. For AO1 expect knowledge of the two terms with examples given of both fiscal and social conservatism. For example:

Fiscal conservatives believe in and support:

- Low taxes (to encourage incentives)
- Low public spending (to encourage private initiative)
- Balanced budgets (to avoid deficits)
- Small Government.

These views have always been an important part of Republican ideology, supported by Republican electoral candidates, and examples should be given of this from recent elections at the higher level of response, eg Bush's tax cuts or the rejection of government bailouts and deficits.

Social conservatives believe in and support

- Traditional family values
- Anti abortion, anti gay marriage or anti stem cell research views.

These views became more dominant after Reagan and the growing influence of the Christian Right on the Republican Party.

For high AO2 marks, students should recognise that the Republican Party can be very internally divided on these ideological views. For example not all fiscal conservatives are social conservatives, eg more moderate Republicans such as Olympia Snowe.

At the highest level of response expect students to refer to the influence of the Tea Party movement and its influence on the Republican Party since 2009, pushing it further to the right with more a more fiscally and socially conservative ideology than in the past (before Reagan).

Reference to the views of Republican primary candidates in 2011-12 may be given as evidence.

- (04) ‘Destined only to sting like a bee then die.’ Evaluate this view of the significance of third parties and independent candidates in the USA. (30 marks)

This famous quote by US historian Richard Hofstadter is open to challenge or acceptance by candidates. It is likely that most students will accept the lack of electoral significance of third parties and independent candidates, using a greater or lesser degree of evidence and examples to prove this. At the higher levels of response expect reference to some of the following analysis:

- Their lack of electoral success in both presidential and congressional elections
- The winner take all, first past the post electoral system and the Electoral College system which disadvantages them
- The strength of the two party system covering most of the political spectrum apart from the extremes
- The strength of party identification/alignment
- The lack of finance, issue space, ballot access, name recognition which disadvantage third party electoral campaigns and, therefore, success.

However, the quote refers to 3rd parties and independent candidates “stinging like a bee” suggesting some kind of impact can be, and has been, made. Students should be able, to a greater or lesser degree, to point to evidence of this “impact” such as:

- George Wallace’s 13% of the vote (concentrated in the south) and 46 EC votes in 1968, which contributed to Nixon’s win and his “southern strategy” in 1972. Excellent students will know that Wallace could have dead-locked the Electoral College and thrown the result into disarray.
- Perot’s 19% of the vote in 1992 (and 8% in 1996) contributing to G. Bush’s defeat and Clinton’s win.
- Perot’s impact on the debate over the deficit thus affecting the political agenda and the views of both candidates in 1996.
- Nader’s candidacy in 2000 and his 3% of the vote nationally (based on a more left wing agenda) and the impact of his Florida vote on Gore’s loss and Bush’s win.
- The candidacies of Bernie Sanders and Joe Lieberman, their electoral success as independents and their impact on votes in the Senate.
- The importance of such candidates/parties raising particular issues of significance to the US electorate but ignored by the two main parties and offering further democratic choice to voters who feel unrepresented.
- They allow for a “protest vote” to be made against the two party system

AO1 and AO2 marks will relate to how much of the above kind of evidence students can introduce into their analysis.

The reference to “die” in the quote should also be picked up by students at the higher levels of response. Apart from very small, and sometimes extreme or one-issue parties such as the Socialist Party or the Libertarian party who survive but with little, if any, electoral impact (although some students may legitimately argue that in a very close race they could be significant) most do “die” as did Perot’s Reform Party, or they pick up very few votes but without

any impact, as in 2008 when the total third party vote including that for Nader, was less than 1%.

Survival, or maintaining a high level of support, is unlikely in such a well established two party system like that of the US, and reasons for this needs to be covered by students achieving high Level 3 and Level 4 marks.

Answers will be distinguished by the evidence and examples presented of both third party and independent candidate “success” or “failure” in recent US elections (expect references to the Tea Party from many students, but the movement did not put up its own candidates but worked to influence the choice of candidates in the Republican Party so is not strictly speaking a third Party).

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**Topic 3 Voting Behaviour**

**Total for this topic: 40 marks**

(05) Explain why some voters 'split their ticket' when voting in the US elections. (10 marks)
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To access the higher mark levels for this question, students must be able to give a clear definition of what split-ticket voting is. This is voting for different parties for different offices, but on the same ballot. It is not voting for different parties at different elections at different times, although weaker students may argue that it is. This should not be rewarded.

For higher-level marks, explanations of why voters split their tickets would need some knowledge and understanding of federalism and the separation of powers, creating complex ballot papers where voters can vote differently for different offices at different levels of government at the same time.

Other valid explanations gaining AO2 marks would include:

- Partisan de-alignment.
- Candidate and issue voting. Supporting different candidates because of personality factors or views on specific issues.
- Incumbency. Meaning supporting the member of Congress from the district who has 'brought home the bacon', but voting for a different party candidate for president.
- The wish for divided government in Washington, with greater checks and balances.
- Different voting criteria for members of Congress, state representatives and the president.

To access the higher AO1 and AO2 marks, students should refer to at least three of these explanations for split-ticket voting in the USA. AO1 credit should also be given for knowledge of its extent and its fluctuations and/or examples such as Reagan Democrats in 1984 or Obama Republicans in 2008 (19% STV).

(06) Assess the significance of region, race and religion as factors explaining voting behaviour in the USA. (30 marks)

This question focuses on three long term social factors known to influence/explain US voting behaviour and the voting patterns that emerge at elections. Students are asked to assess their significance.

Whilst it may be acceptable at times to indicate other factors that influence American voters to vote the way they do, this should NOT take over the answer, which is likely to be a Level 2 response at most if it fails to focus on and explain the 3 identified factors. Nor should the answer stray into explaining short term factors such as candidates or issues which may be raised as alternative influencing factors.

Students should be rewarded for indicating that these 3 factors may overlap and interact, for example a black, catholic voter living in the south, or a white Jewish voter living in a north-east state.

**REGION:** This factor is particularly important in the huge and diverse US with pronounced regional divisions, and states with historically different voting patterns and support for one of the main parties. Students may be rewarded for also explaining urban/rural differences in voting support. For example;

- The southern states, historically Democrat have increasingly been voting Republican since the Civil Rights era of the 60s. The historic “vote as you shot” divisions have been replaced with ideologically conservative voting throughout most of the Deep South states. This is sometimes referred to as “Red America” (along with other solid Republican areas such as Arizona and Kansas) and expect such terms in higher level responses.
- The North eastern industrial and coastal states and the West coast states (“Blue” America) tend to be more Democrat because of the kind of blue collar and more liberal voters found in these states.
- Excellent students may know of the concept of “Purple” America. A term referring to the differences in VB within states according to urban/rural/suburban divides rather than whole state differences.
- Good students may refer to the different interests or social characteristics of the different states, which may explain voting behaviour such as the mid west with its emphasis on rural, white and small town interests or the industrial interests and minority populations that have dominated many upper mid west states such as Illinois and Michigan.

**RACE:** This has long been a factor affecting the way people vote.

- The black vote has been overwhelmingly Democrat (95% in 08, 88% in 04) whilst white voters are more likely to vote Republican.
- Reasons for the high black vote for the Democrats include their greater ideological commitment to Civil Rights, Affirmative Action and welfare spending to support poorer minorities.
- Answers may include black voters alienation from Republican Party policies or its predominantly white nature.

- However, well informed students may give evidence of the Republican Party trying at times to attract the votes of black Americans, although with limited success.
- The white vote is less solidaristic than the black vote (white voters voted 43% Obama and 55% McCain)

Answers at the highest levels of response should be illustrated with accurate psephological, statistical evidence on the links between race and VB from recent elections. Vague over-generalised responses are unlikely to achieve more than Level 2.

RELIGION: This factor can be analysed separately in terms of the Catholic vote or the Jewish vote or the Protestant vote in the US. This would involve knowledge of:

- Catholic voting patterns and their fluctuations in recent elections, largely but not exclusively linked to the abortion or gay marriage issue and a more socially conservative political agenda
- The Catholic vote may be significant in some states because of Irish (Massachusetts) or Hispanic (Texas or Florida) voters. Therefore religion may be linked to region.
- The Catholic vote can be significant because the Catholic Hispanic vote is a “swing vote” (Obama won 54% of the Catholic vote cf Kerry’s 47% ) and can affect the election outcome in many important states.
- Catholic Democrat voting is usually high because of minority status, Democrat ideology and policies, eg on immigration
- Jewish voters are also more likely to vote Democrat because of their status as a minority and also because Jewish voters tend to be more liberal in their voting preferences.
- The Jewish vote is particularly strong in states such as New York and Florida but not in the majority of other states.
- Protestant voters are more likely to vote Republican, especially evangelical Christians, which may again be linked to region eg the Bible belt across the south.
- Atheists and those with no religion (a growing demographic) are more likely to vote Democrat.

The above are some indications of the kind of AO1 knowledge and AO2 analysis of the links between voters and their support for parties expected at the higher levels of response. For higher level marks psephological and statistical evidence must be present in answers. Weaker students are likely to offer very broad generalisations and assertions not backed up by any supporting evidence or any valid explanations for differences in VB caused by the three factors of region, race and religion.

It will still be possible to reach the higher marks if the answer is not equally balanced between the three factors. However some analysis is expected of all three social factors.

**Topic 4 Pressure Groups****Total for this topic: 40 marks**

(07) Explain the role of lobbying in US pressure group activity.

(10 marks)

For higher level AO1 marks students should demonstrate a clear understanding of what lobbying actually is in the context of pressure group activity in the US. For example:

- Lobbying involves an attempt usually by professional lobbyists to influence the making of political decisions at all levels of American government.
- It is a method of seeking influence over decision-makers making policy or legislation affecting the groups interest.
- It tends to take place inside the various “corridors of power” at federal or state level, in the Congressional committees and sub-committees and in the White House and Governor’s offices where lobbyists offer specialist information to legislators

Good students should recognise, for higher level AO2 marks, that to lobby requires access and therefore tends to be used by “insider” rather than “outsider” groups. Lobbying is also likely to be trying to alter the details of legislation rather than any sweeping changes.

Students should be rewarded at AO1 for knowing of the 34,000+ lobbyists operating around K Street in Washington DC, many ex-Members of Congress with insider knowledge and expertise.

At the top of Level 4 excellent students should recognise that lobbying has been regulated, eg by the 2007 Honest Leadership and Open Government Act, but first amendment rights protect the activity itself. They may also refer to and explain the existence of “Iron Triangles” and the “Revolving Door” syndrome both heavily criticised in recent years but particularly after the Abramoff lobbying scandal of 2005/6. Obama’s refusal to accept campaign donations from lobbyists and his critical comments on lobbying may be known by well-informed students.

Students may be rewarded for knowledge that groups who cannot gain access to the corridors of power to actively lobby may be forced to use other methods to influence decision-making such as direct action.

Weaker students at Level 2 or below are likely to offer an over-generalised response lacking specific evidence of lobbying or any understanding of why, when and where it is used by groups.

(08) 'Whilst pressure groups are vital to a pluralist democracy, they have come to dominate decision-making in the USA.' Evaluate this statement.

(30 marks)

In order to access the higher marks, students should address the specific statement, although weaker students may produce a generic and unfocussed answer on pressure groups. This is unlikely to gain more than Level 2 marks.

It is important that students at the higher levels of response say why pressure groups are "vital to a pluralist democracy" utilising as many as possible of the following arguments:

- They represent a diversity of groups and interests which governments will take into account when making public policy decisions.
- All groups are free to form and organise to try and influence those with power within a fragmented political system.
- The political system is open to all to participate and compete in. Political participation is encouraged and seen as legitimate.
- This disperses political power rather than concentrating it in elite groups.

In this theoretical view, best expressed by Dahl and Truman, pressure groups are essential to a fully functioning representative democracy with a variety of groups attempting to influence a diversity of power centres. Examples should be presented of pressure groups and their democratic activities in the US.

Weaker students may offer little in the way of explanation of the term and its connection to pressure group analysis.

The second part of the quotation must also be addressed for higher level marks. This is that pressure groups "have come to dominate" decision making.

This view of pressure group activity contends that instead of some kind of "pluralist balance" or countervailing groups existing in the pressure group arena some groups are so powerful that they do not simply contribute to political pluralism and diversity but dominate the way decisions are made. This view of pressure groups is supported by elite theorists such as C Wright Mills.

Students who support this argument should be credited for the following kind of analysis for higher level AO1 and AO2 marks:

- The power of "insider groups" (with examples) in influencing congressional decision-making and the White House, through their lobbying activities and access to decision-makers but especially the powerful congressional committees.
- The funding of candidates through PACs, connected to strong lobbies or other indirect ways of supporting candidates (such as those now allowed after the FEC v Citizens United decision allowing unlimited spending to corporations or unions to support or oppose electoral candidates) thus giving them undue influence over electoral outcomes.
- Their expertise/specialist knowledge needed by legislators when passing legislation.
- The sheer numbers involved in some pressure groups such as the AARP with over 40 million members (who tend to vote).

- The power of small but united groups such as the NRA who often “target” candidates to support or oppose them and who have been successful in stopping gun control legislation.
- The power of “Iron triangles” or “issue networks in influencing policy in their area of influence (such as veteran groups or the “military-industrial complex”).
- The power of AIPAC, the Jewish lobby, over some aspects of US foreign policy where there are no “countervailing groups” to balance their influence.
- The advantages held by rich pressure groups such as the corporate lobbies or the US Chamber of Commerce in gaining what they want compared to those representing the interests of the poor or disadvantaged because of unequal resources to influence.

However, students may wish to argue that on some issues there is some kind of pluralist “balance” and countervailing power such as on the abortion issue with pro-choice and pro-life groups rather than any dominance. Also credit analysis of restrictions on pressure group activity that suggests that they may not be “dominant” in decision-making, such as the 2007 Honest Leadership and Open Government Act (which may be argued is “dominated” by elected representatives of political parties accountable to the electorate **not** pressure groups).

The debate is a long-standing one, both in the UK as well as the US and student’s marks will depend on the strength of the analysis of the quotation and the evidence and examples of pressure group dominance (or lack of) brought to the debate.

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**ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVE GRID**

<b>A2 Assessment Objective</b>	<b>Marks allocated by Assessment Objective 10-mark question</b>	<b>Marks allocated by Assessment Objective 30-mark question</b>	<b>Total Marks by Assessment Objective</b>
<b>AO1</b>	4	12	16
<b>AO2</b>	4	12	16
<b>AO3</b>	2	6	8
<b>Total</b>	<b>10</b>	<b>30</b>	<b>40</b>

**Mark Ranges and Award of Grades**

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the Results Statistics page of the AQA Website: <http://www.aqa.org.uk/over/stat.html>.

**Converting Marks into UMS marks**

Convert raw marks into marks on the Uniform Mark Scale (UMS) by using the link below.

**UMS conversion calculator** [www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion](http://www.aqa.org.uk/umsconversion)