



General Certificate of Education  
Advanced Subsidiary Examination  
January 2012

## Government and Politics

## GOVP2

### Unit 2 Governing Modern Britain

Wednesday 18 January 2012 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 on each topic.
- Do all rough work in your answer book. Cross through any work you do not want to be marked.
- Use continuous prose.

**Information**

- The marks for questions are shown in brackets.
- The maximum mark for this paper is 80.
- In Questions 

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 and 

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 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.

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Choose **two** topics and answer **all** questions on each topic.

Each topic carries 40 marks.

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### Topic 1 The British Constitution

Read the extract below and answer questions 

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 which follow.

#### Judges in the modern British constitution

The role and constitutional importance of judges have changed significantly in recent years. In addition to interpreting statute law and *constitutional conventions*, judges have been given, or have created for themselves, greater capacity to review high profile government policy in judicial review cases. Moreover, the creation of a new Supreme Court following the Constitutional Reform Act, 2005, has significantly increased the judiciary's independence. This Act has clarified the position of the judiciary within the modern constitutional arrangements of the UK.

As a result of these developments the judiciary now possess considerable powers to scrutinise legislation and decisions taken by ministers and other public authorities, and to protect citizens' rights. The longer term influence of this new constitutional framework remains uncertain and may lead to increasing tension between the judiciary and government.

Source: adapted from A LE SUEUR, *Judges in the modern British Constitution*, Politics Review, pp 14-16, Vol. 18, no 3, Philip Allan Updates. February 2008  
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 Explain the term *constitutional conventions* as used in the extract. (5 marks)
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 Using your own knowledge as well as the extract, explain how the establishment of the Supreme Court has 'significantly increased the judiciary's independence'. (10 marks)
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 'The British constitution provides effective protection for the rights of UK citizens.'  
Discuss. (25 marks)

## Topic 2 Parliament

Read the extract below and answer questions 

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 which follow.

### MPs and party whips

The House of Commons, unlike the House of Lords, is a democratically elected chamber. The number of MPs is not fixed, but can change following reviews of parliamentary constituencies. In the chamber, the governing party, or parties, sit to the right of *the Speaker* and members of the opposition parties sit on the benches to the Speaker's left. The main opposition party appoints shadow ministers to confront their rivals. Ministers and shadow ministers are known as frontbenchers because they occupy the benches closest to the floor of the chamber. The majority of MPs have no ministerial or shadow ministerial posts and are known as backbenchers.

Almost all MPs are elected as representatives of a political party. Each party appoints a number of MPs to act as whips, whose main function is to enforce discipline within the parliamentary party. Because MPs tend to vote in divisions as their party whips instruct, the party system in the House of Commons has traditionally been strong.

Source: adapted from P LYNCH and P FAIRCLOUGH, *UK Government and Politics*, 3rd edition 2010 Philip Allan Updates, p182. Reproduced by permission of the Publisher

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 Explain the term *the Speaker* as 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 most MPs tend to vote in divisions as their party whips instruct. (10 marks)
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 'The House of Lords performs no useful role in the British political system and should now be abolished.' 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.

**Individual ministerial responsibility**

The Government has come under pressure to cut the number of ministers. Although the number has remained steady at just over 100 in recent years, the Prime Minister, David Cameron, is facing questions in Parliament about why so many ministers are needed.

A House of Commons select committee chaired by Tory MP Bernard Jenkin has launched an inquiry. This committee is investigating whether there are too many ministers, what they actually do and whether they should continue to be appointed from within Parliament, or from outside. While having ministers who are not members of either House of Parliament would massively increase the pool from which ministers are drawn, it would seriously undermine the accountability of ministers to Parliament under the convention of individual ministerial responsibility (IMR).

Part of the investigation will be concerned with the impact that any reduction in the number of ministers will have on the effectiveness of government, particularly if the number of *civil servants* is also cut.

Source: adapted from 'Top Tory asks: what do Ministers actually do?'  
London Evening Standard, p4, 14 September, 2010

- 0 7** Explain the term *civil servants* as used in the extract. (5 marks)
- 0 8** Using your own knowledge as well as the extract, explain why individual ministerial responsibility is central to the operation of UK government. (10 marks)
- 0 9** 'In theory, but not in practice, the powers of modern prime ministers are unlimited.'  
Discuss. (25 marks)

**Topic 4 Multi-level Governance**

Read the extract below and answer questions 

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 and 

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 which follow.

The extract for Topic 4 cannot reproduced here due to third-party copyright constraints.

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 Briefly explain the term *devolved government* used in the extract. (5 marks)
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 Using your own knowledge as well as the extract, identify **and** explain **two** problems arising from the West Lothian Question. (10 marks)
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 'There is still a democratic deficit in the governance of the European Union.' Discuss. (25 marks)

**END OF QUESTIONS**

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