



**General Certificate of Education
June 2012**

Government and Politics GOV4B

Political Issues: Ideologies in Action

Unit 4B

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 students' 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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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 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, 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 students 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 students know, understand and can do.

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

Knowledge and Understanding: Recall, Select & Deploy	Skills: Analysis & Evaluation	Communication
AO1	AO2	AO3
<p>Level 4 (4 marks) 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>Level 4 (4 marks) 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>Levels 3–4 (2 marks) 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>Level 3 (3 marks) 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>Level 3 (3 marks) 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>Level 2 (2 marks) 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>Level 2 (2 marks) 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>Levels 1–2 (1 mark) 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>Level 1 (1 mark) 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>Level 1 (1 mark) 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>0 marks No relevant response.</p>	<p>0 marks No relevant response.</p>	<p>0 marks No relevant response.</p>

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

Knowledge and Understanding: Recall, Select & Deploy	Skills: Analysis & Evaluation	Communication
AO1	AO2	AO3
<p>Level 4 (10–12 marks) 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>Level 4 (10–12 marks) 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>Level 4 (6 marks) 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>Level 3 (7–9 marks) 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>Level 3 (7–9 marks) 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>Level 3 (4–5 marks) 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)

Knowledge and Understanding: Recall, Select & Deploy	Skills: Analysis & Evaluation	Communication
AO1	AO2	AO3
<p>Level 2 (4–6 marks) 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>Level 2 (4–6 marks) 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>Level 2 (2–3 marks) 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>Level 1 (1–3 marks) 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>Level 1 (1–3 marks) 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>Level 1 (1 mark) 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>0 marks No relevant response.</p>	<p>0 marks No relevant response.</p>	<p>0 marks No relevant response.</p>

Topic 1: Ethnicity and Gender

Total for this topic: (40 marks)

01	Examine the differences between integration and assimilation.	(10 marks)
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Students are likely to view integration as a process by which different cultures are accommodated within society, without losing their defining characteristics or sense of cultural identity. Many will link the idea of integration to the concept of multiculturalism. In contrast, assimilation is likely to be seen as an attempt to break down cultural identity and encourage those living and settling in the UK to conform to a set of cultural norms. In this context it is likely that students may refer to the concept of 'Britishness' and efforts to tackle the ghettoisation or Balkanisation said to be affecting parts of the UK. Students may also make reference to the experience in other countries. For example, some may comment on efforts to integrate Hispanic immigrants in many US states, or make reference to terms such as 'melting pot', 'stew pot' or 'salad bowl'.

At the higher levels of response it is likely that students will look to comment on the event to which the UK can be said to have pursued a policy of integration or assimilation in recent years. Students may also raise the question of whether the UK is in fact a multicultural society. Some may touch on the question of whether multiculturalism has failed, therefore demanding an approach based on a greater degree of assimilation. In this context students may make mention of the electoral rise of parties such as the BNP, the recent positions taken by the main UK parties on the issue of immigration and integration/assimilation and the thoughts of leading figures (eg Norman Tebbit's 1990 'cricket test').

02	'Feminism has no relevance in 21st century politics.' Discuss.	(30 marks)
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Whilst students at the lower levels of response may seek to view feminism as a single coherent movement, it is likely that higher-level responses will be characterised by an attempt to consider the range of approaches and ideas encompassed by the term. Students may take a broadly chronological approach in answering the question, offering definitions and discussion of the various strands/waves of feminist thought and considering the extent to which such ideas remain relevant. In taking this approach students may well argue that as many of the goals of early feminists (eg female suffrage, equality legislation) have been achieved the movement could largely be seen to have served its purpose. However, it is likely that students at the higher levels of response will recognise that contemporary feminists are divided on the extent to which the broader goals of the movement (eg de facto equality and an end to patriarchy) have been achieved. Students may also look to draw a distinction between the 'private' and 'public' spheres.

Students may look at the specific goals identified by specific feminists or feminist groups as a way of showing that certain forms of feminism are still relevant. In this context they might make mention of writers such as Shulamith Firestone, with her focus on biology and reproductive roles, or on the ideas of those radical feminists who favour the creation of a society controlled by women. Consideration may also be given to the way in which many contemporary feminists seek to address the issues of pornography and human trafficking – both of which are clearly relevant to the 21st century. It is likely that some students at the higher levels of response will argue that the proposition is rooted in perceptions of the way in which women's lives have changed in the west in the last 60 years. This, it may be argued, ignores the fact that women in other parts of the world are still denied the kinds of rights long-held by those in the west. In this context, students may argue that even some of those strands of feminism that have fallen from grace in the west are still relevant to many living elsewhere. Some students may even question the extent to which those living in the west can be said to have a common experience. This may lead students to touch upon some of the issues raised in Q01, where the desire to integrate rather than assimilate has allowed some communities to maintain practices that some feminists would oppose.

Topic 2: The Environment

Total for this topic: (40 marks)

03	Explain what is meant by the phrase 'joined-up government' in the context of environmental policy.	(10 marks)
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Students at all levels of response are likely to define joined-up government as an attempt to make sure that government policy across departments is coordinated in such a way as to ensure that individual initiatives in one area do not inadvertently serve to undermine those in others. It is likely that some students will recognise that the phrase was one of those used by New Labour at the time of the 1997 General Election.

The focus on environmental policy requires students to address why it is important to think in a more holistic way when tackling environmental issues. It is likely that students will also look to assess the extent to which government policy is indeed joined-up in respect of the environment. In this context some students may opt to look at the UK government's approach to dealing with environmental issues. At the higher levels of response there may be mention of the apparent disconnect between New Labour's commitment towards negotiating global emissions targets and their support for extensive road-building programmes (at the start of their period in office) and a third runway for Heathrow (at the end). Consideration may also be given to the way in which political or electoral realities may force the government to pursue policies that are clearly not joined up, eg defending the favourable duty on aviation fuel and the growth of low-cost airlines, whilst at the same time stressing the need for road-pricing and the fuel escalator for those using the roads. Students may also make mention of the debate over nuclear power and consider the factors that will shape the debate over whether or not to construct new reactors.

All of this may well lead into a discussion of the way in which mainstream parties can be said to have 'green-washed' their policies – grasping the low-hanging fruit (eg banning high wattage conventional light bulbs) whilst failing to address more fundamental questions relating to the relationship between man and the environment. This may lead students at the higher levels of response to contrast the more joined-up approach of dark green ('deep') ecologists with light green ('shallow') environmentalists:

- 'light greens' as those seeking to make lifestyle choices that bring environmental benefits without, perhaps, committing to a more fundamental re-ordering of the relationship between 'man' and the environment; and
- 'dark greens' as those who see contemporary environmental problems as a function of capitalism and therefore take a more ideological approach, favouring fundamental changes in the way in which society is organised.

Note that students may well use terms such as 'shallow' and 'deep' ecologism as analogous to 'light' and 'dark' green environmentalism (as indicated above).

04 Evaluate the view that the failure of international environmental initiatives means that it is time to 'think globally but act locally'. (30 marks)

Students at all levels of response are likely to be familiar with the slogan 'think globally, act locally' as a call to arms for individual action and local action in response to the environmental challenge. Students may use their knowledge to provide illustration of this approach in action eg initiatives to clear local waterways or encourage domestic recycling.

However, the question also requires students to address (and perhaps challenge) the assumption inherent in the title, ie that international environmental initiatives have failed. In considering this statement it is likely that students will make mention of some of the various international conferences and summits that have taken place in recent years and the resulting agreements, eg Rio, Kyoto, Copenhagen. Mention may be made of limits on carbon emissions and the concept of carbon-trading. It is likely that most students will seek to offer an assessment of the worth of such initiatives, ie offer an assessment of the extent to which they have 'failed'. In doing so students may take a global perspective (for example, focusing on the challenge posed by massive economic growth and industrialisation in countries such as China and India) or focus on UK government policy, eg efforts to give legal force to their promise to reduce the UK's carbon emissions, and the stated desire to move towards a low carbon economy.

Whilst this discussion will lead some students to agree with the broad thrust of the statement in the question, others (particularly those at the higher levels of response) may argue that international initiatives have not in fact failed or, with equal validity, that such issues must be tackled at international level. Whilst some students will see worth in individual and local action, it is likely that others will regard such activities as futile in the face of what is going on in some parts of the world. Other students may suggest that the action should be national as well as local and international.

It is likely that students at all levels of response will have a working knowledge of the main principles of environmentalism, for example, sustainability, self-sufficiency and conservation. At the lower levels this knowledge may not move significantly beyond a list of principles, whereas students at the higher levels may be able to explain such principles and show how they are linked to one another. It is likely that some students will take a more theoretical approach. They may explore the differences between anthropocentric and the more ecocentric positions with regards to green concerns and issues. Such discussions may be framed in terms of the contrast between more 'shallow' forms of humanist ecology and 'deep ecology'. This may lead students to conclude that environmental concerns can only be addressed by a change in people's consciousness and that this must come from the local and the individual as opposed to being imposed from above. In this context students may suggest that international cooperation is often driven by anthropocentric considerations, eg the global economy, the demographic and political problems that may result from global warming and rising sea levels.

Topic 3: Education

Total for this topic: (40 marks)

05 Argue the ideological case against private education.

(10 marks)

Students at all levels are likely to make the point that a good education should be a right (as opposed to a privilege), perhaps going on to discuss the extent to which the existence of private schools undermines the notion of meritocracy in education. Students may therefore point out that those on the left regard private education as a barrier to equality, ie something that reinforces élites. As the examination results achieved by students attending such schools are often significantly better than those achieved by their peers in state schools, access to private schooling is seen as a way in which more wealthy parents can in effect 'buy' a better education for their children, than those unable to afford the fees charged by such schools. In this context students may make the link between where one is educated and one's likely career path or life-chances. Those attending private schools, though only 7% of the school-age population, are disproportionately represented in the higher echelons of business, politics and the media, eg in 2011, 10% of those in government had attended Eton.

It is likely that many students will develop this point by examining the extent to which this separation between privately and publicly funded education might prove divisive, damaging society and undermining social cohesion. Some may argue that separating students on the basis of their parents' ability to pay also denies children from more wealthy backgrounds the opportunity to work alongside those whose families have less disposable income – contributing to a situation where some leading business figures and politicians may be genuinely out of touch with the experiences of those affected by their everyday decisions.

Students may approach the argument from the perspective of education funding, focusing on government revenues and expenditure. They may argue that the money that those from more privileged backgrounds are spending to send their children to fee-paying schools should be taken in taxes to provide better state education for all: or that forcing everyone to attend state schools would make those who currently pay to 'opt-out' of state education for reasons of educational standards, take a more direct interest in state education and how it is funded. Other students may adopt a more theoretical or ideological framework; linking opposition to private education to one or more of the mainstream ideological traditions.

06 'UK education policy since the 1980s has owed more to electoral politics than to ideology.'
Discuss.

(30 marks)

The question asks students to consider precisely what has motivated education policy in the UK since the 1980s and suggests two possible 'drivers': ideology and electoral politics. It is likely, therefore, that students will seek either to assess the various initiatives in education since the 1980s in turn (considering at each stage the motivations behind each policy) or, alternatively, take a more thematic approach – by looking at 'ideology' and 'electoral politics' as key drivers and drawing on examples from the last thirty years to support each view.

At the higher levels of response it is likely that students will be aware of the difficulty of separating one educational aim from another, ie the idea that a more accurate answer might be found in 'degree' to which each factor motivated policy - as opposed to 'either/or'. Such responses may also consider the extent to which governments must always consider the electoral impact of what they plan to do, rather

than allowing themselves to be totally driven by ideology, ie simply reacting to the education zeitgeist as opposed to seeking to shape it.

Students clearly need to appreciate the meanings of the terms 'electoral politics' and 'ideology' if reasoned analysis is to follow.

Students taking the more chronological approach may seek to provide a context for their discussion by pointing out that for much of the post-war period education was something of an ideological battleground, with the left criticising selective education for being socially divisive and producing self-perpetuating élites and with the right criticising comprehensive education as a tool for social engineering and the 'dumbing down' of academic education. Divisions over private education could also appear in these discussions.

Thereafter it is likely that students will focus more clearly on the precise time-frame in question (1980-2012). The Conservatives' efforts to bring 'the market' into education in the 1980s may be seen as evidence of ideology at work. The introduction of opted-out Grant Maintained schools in the 1990s may be seen as an attempt by those on the ideological right to bring competition and financial accountability to state schools. The introduction of student loans in higher education may be seen in a similar light. The introduction of a prescriptive National Curriculum might also be regarded as an attempt by the government to instil the knowledge and values that they hold dear in a generation of state school students (linking this to conservatism). Students focusing on the policies introduced under New Labour might regard initiatives such as the EMA and the Party's efforts to address issues of 'access' in higher education as evidence of ideology at work, ie being in keeping with socialist perspectives on equality and social justice.

In considering the extent to which policy in the period in question has been driven by 'electoral politics', students may see the focus on national testing and league tables, improving school discipline, enhancing parental choice, tackling failing schools, and targeting failing teachers as evidence of the parties 'playing to the audience' by offering parents 'what they want'. The Coalition's policy of allowing the establishment of continental-style 'free schools' may be seen in a similar light: reaching out to those middle class voters – a key voting block – disaffected with state provision but unable to afford to send their own children to fee-paying schools.

The fact that there now appear to be so few differences between the major parties in the field of education may be seen as evidence of the increasing importance of electoral politics over ideology.

Topic 4: The Economy

Total for this topic: (40 marks)

07	Briefly explain why governments have found it so difficult to deliver low inflation alongside low unemployment. (10 marks)
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Students at all levels of response are likely to offer definitions of both inflation and unemployment: the former as the rate at which prices increase over a period of time; the latter as the percentage of the available workforce who are seeking employment at a given time.

Some students may approach the question from the perspective of economic theories. Marxists see the unemployed as part of the reserve army of labour, arguing that under capitalism unemployment is necessary in order to keep wages down. Low unemployment or full-employment would result in skills shortages that would force employers to increase rates of pay above the rate of inflation in order to recruit and retain workers. Where wages rises outpace the rate of inflation workers are left with a real terms increase in their disposable income. This results in increased demand for goods, which in turn results in higher inflation. This link between low levels of unemployment and rising levels of inflation is described in the Philips Curve.

In this light, students may note that the emergence of stagflation (where both unemployment and inflation rates are high) in the 1970s led writers such as Milton Friedman to question the worth of the Philips Curve. Such critics argued that unemployment was not a prerequisite of pay restraint and low inflation, because both employers and employees would ultimately see the sense in agreeing pay deals that were in line with projected inflation. Indeed, workers have been shown to be more likely to accept a nominal pay cut (eg a 4% pay rise when inflation is 7%) than an actual pay cut (eg a 2% pay cut when inflation is 0%). Thus very low inflation may actually see employment falling.

Students at the higher levels of response who approach the question from the perspective of economic theory are likely to factor-in the impact that the government's approach to taxation and public spending will have on inflation and employment. High levels of public spending (for example creating lots of public sector jobs) will reduce unemployment. However, increased government spending may also serve to inject more money into the economy, particularly where the funds come from government reserves, the sale of government bonds, or – at some points in history – simply printing money. Students may also point to the fact that an increase in fixed costs (eg the price of certain raw materials or components) may result in rapidly rising inflation, even where unemployment is also rising. Students may also advance the view that, in the long-term, low inflation is only sustainable where there is a single and consistent rate of unemployment – the 'natural rate of unemployment' – or Non-Accelerating Inflation Rate of Unemployment (NAIRU).

Some students may prefer to approach the question from the perspective of the political difficulties governments may face in trying to deliver low inflation alongside low unemployment, eg the likely effects of the decisions they may be forced to take on their electoral prospects, the political opposition they are likely to face from some trade unions and pressure groups, and the fact that the government may face difficulties in securing parliamentary support for the measures that they consider necessary.

NB: as both approaches (the 'economic' and the 'political') are equally valid in response to this question, students will be able to secure the full range of marks even where they focus exclusively on one over the other. It is likely, however, that many students will touch on both the political and the economic realities when seeking to explain why governments will find it hard to achieve both objectives.

08 “The main UK parties are now all committed to free-market economics.’ Discuss.

(30 marks)

Students at all levels of response are likely to demonstrate knowledge of the historical positions taken by the main UK parties in the area of economic policy. In this context it is likely that many will make mention of:

- the key economic policies and programmes associated with the post-war consensus – Keynesian demand-management, corporatism, the mixed economy, progressive taxation, high welfare spending and strategies to ensure full employment
- the Thatcherite attack on this consensus, based on neo-liberal New-Right thinking with its emphasis on supply-side measures, monetarism, reducing inflation (even at the cost of rising unemployment) and privatisation. Essentially policies and measures intended to produce a thriving free market and an enterprise culture – ‘the business of government is not the government of business’
- Labour’s left-wing challenge to these step changes in the early to mid-1980s (eg the party’s 1983 manifesto – ‘the longest suicide note in history’)
- New Labour’s acceptance of many of the Thatcherite changes and policies as illustrated by the revised Clause IV, the acceptance of a dynamic market economy and the recognition of the need to control inflation by handing over control of interest rates to the Bank of England
- the fact that until 2008 there appeared to be a broad consensus across the parties with regard to the principal tools and aims of economic policy, even though the Liberal Democrats called for tax increases and high public spending.

Such discussion is likely to result in many students concluding that whilst there was certainly a point at which the statement would not have been a fair assessment of the positions of the main UK political parties, such a view has been more applicable since the mid-1990s. However, at the higher levels of response it is likely that students will look to fine-tune their answers by considering in more detail precisely what is meant by the term ‘free-market economics’ and examining the extent to which the main UK parties all truly adhere to the principles underpinning such an approach.

In this context students are likely to examine the statement of intent that was Labour’s ‘new’ Clause 4 more closely, assessing the extent to which the Labour Party in government allowed the market to ‘decide’, or whether, in fact, they retained a degree of control in the field of economic affairs. Students may make mention of the way in which control of interest rates was symbolically handed to the Bank of England as evidence of the government’s desire to step away from direct intervention. They may then contrast policies such as this with the more interventionist stance taken by the party in the wake of the global credit crisis that emerged after 2008.

Students may see the years 2008-2010 as a period in which the Labour government was forced to fire-fight: resorting to policies and programmes that appeared to owe more to Keynesianism than to supply side economics in an attempt to alleviate the worst aspects of this recession. Students would be expected to discuss the Labour government’s massive spending programmes, the huge deficits that were run-up, its partial nationalisation programmes in the banking sector and its efforts to kick-start economic recovery and consumer spending through the short-term reduction of VAT and quantitative

easing. Conversely, students may argue that the Labour government was at the same time unwilling to back troubled or failing companies such as such as LDV, the Midland-based van producer, and Rover Group.

Students may also challenge the accuracy of the statement by identifying the clear differences in approach apparent at the time of - and in the wake of - the 2010 General Election.

In this context, some students might refer to the Coalition's efforts to curb public spending and its sale of Northern Rock. Others might mention Labour's preference for smaller scale cuts and a fiscal stimulus to kick-start the economy.

ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVE GRID

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