



**General Certificate of Education
June 2012**

Government and Politics

GOVP2

Governing Modern Britain

Unit 2

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 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.

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.

AS GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

GENERIC MARK SCHEME for questions with a total of 5 marks

Knowledge and Understanding: Recall, Select & Deploy
AO1
<p>Level 4 (5 marks) The student successfully demonstrates excellent knowledge and understanding of political data, concept(s) or term(s).</p> <p>Where appropriate, the student is able to illustrate his/her answer with relevant evidence/example(s).</p>
<p>Level 3 (4 marks) The student successfully demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of political data, concept(s) or term(s).</p> <p>Where appropriate, the student is able to illustrate his/her answer with relevant evidence/example(s).</p>
<p>Level 2 (2–3 marks) The student demonstrates limited knowledge and understanding of political data, concept(s) or term(s).</p> <p>The student may illustrate his/her answer with evidence/example(s) of limited relevance.</p>
<p>Level 1 (1 mark) The student demonstrates little knowledge and understanding of political data, concept(s) or term(s).</p> <p>The student may illustrate his/her answer with evidence/example(s) of little relevance.</p>
<p>0 marks No relevant response.</p>

AS 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 an excellent knowledge and understanding of political concepts/theories/institutions and processes.</p> <p>The student deploys relevant knowledge and understanding to fully address the requirements of the question and produces accurate and/or relevant 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 structured and sustained manner, making excellent or good use of appropriate political vocabulary.</p> <p>There are few, if any, errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar and the response should be legible.</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 3 (3 marks) The student demonstrates good knowledge and understanding of political concepts/theories/institutions and processes.</p> <p>The student addresses the requirements of the question and produces examples and/or evidence 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>Level 2 (2 marks) The student demonstrates limited knowledge and understanding of political concepts/theories/institutions and processes.</p> <p>The student makes a limited attempt to address the requirements of the question and produces few or inaccurate examples and/or limited evidence 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>There are frequent errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar and legibility may be a problem.</p>

GENERIC MARK SCHEME for questions with a total of 10 marks (continued)

Knowledge and Understanding: Recall, Select & Deploy	Skills: Analysis & Evaluation	Communication
AO1	AO2	AO3
<p>Level 1 (1 mark) The student demonstrates little knowledge and understanding of political concepts/theories/institutions and processes. The student makes little attempt to address the requirements of the question and produces few examples and/or little evidence 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>Levels 1–2 (continued) (1 mark) 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>

AS GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

GENERIC MARK SCHEME for questions with a total of 25 marks

Knowledge and Understanding: Recall, Select & Deploy	Skills: Analysis & Evaluation	Communication
AO1	AO2	AO3
<p>Level 4 (10–11 marks) The student successfully demonstrates accurate knowledge and understanding of political concepts/theories/institutions and processes and the relationships between them, producing an answer that deploys relevant knowledge and understanding to address the requirements of the question and demonstrates significant contextual awareness.</p> <p>The student's answer includes relevant evidence and/or examples to substantiate and illustrate points made.</p>	<p>Level 4 (7–8 marks) The student evaluates political institutions, processes and behaviour, applying appropriate concepts and theories.</p> <p>The student provides analysis which displays sound awareness of differing viewpoints and a clear recognition of issues. Parallels and connections are identified, together with valid and precise comparisons. The answer includes relevant and convincing interpretations or explanations.</p>	<p>Level 4 (5–6 marks) The student communicates clear, structured and sustained arguments and explanations, making excellent use of appropriate political vocabulary.</p> <p>The response should be legible with few, if any, errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar.</p> <p>The student produces answers with a clear sense of direction leading towards a coherent conclusion.</p>
<p>Level 3 (7–9 marks) The student demonstrates generally accurate knowledge and understanding of political concepts/theories/institutions and processes and the relationships between them, producing an answer that addresses the requirements of the question and demonstrates adequate contextual awareness.</p> <p>The answer provides evidence backed up by clear examples to illustrate points made.</p>	<p>Level 3 (5–6 marks) The student evaluates political institutions, processes and behaviour, applying some concepts or theories.</p> <p>The student provides clear arguments and explanations and demonstrates awareness of differing viewpoints and recognition of issues. Parallels and connections are identified, together with some sound comparison.</p>	<p>Level 3 (3–4 marks) The student communicates arguments and explanations, making good use of appropriate political vocabulary.</p> <p>The response should be legible but there may be occasional errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar.</p> <p>A conclusion is linked to the preceding discussion.</p>

GENERIC MARK SCHEME for questions with a total of 25 marks (continued)

Knowledge and Understanding: Recall, Select & Deploy	Skills: Analysis & Evaluation	Communication
AO1	AO2	AO3
<p>Level 2 (4–6 marks)</p> <p>The student demonstrates basic knowledge and understanding of political concepts/theories/institutions and processes and some awareness of the relationships between them, making a limited attempt to address the requirements of the question.</p> <p>The student may demonstrate contextual awareness covering part of the question, and may produce limited evidence and/or few examples.</p>	<p>Level 2 (3–4 marks)</p> <p>The student offers a limited evaluation of political institutions, processes and behaviour and begins to construct arguments which contain basic explanations.</p> <p>The student shows some awareness of differing viewpoints. There is recognition of basic parallels or limited comparisons.</p>	<p>Level 2 (2 marks)</p> <p>The student attempts to develop an argument using basic political vocabulary.</p> <p>There are frequent errors of spelling, punctuation and grammar and legibility may be a problem.</p> <p>Where a conclusion is offered, its relationship to the preceding discussion may be modest or implicit.</p>
<p>Level 1 (1–3 marks)</p> <p>The student demonstrates slight and/or incomplete knowledge and understanding of political concepts/theories/institutions and processes and limited awareness of the relationships between them.</p> <p>The student makes a very limited attempt to address the requirements of the question. Only superficial awareness of the context of the question is evident and the few examples cited are often inaccurately reported or inappropriately used.</p>	<p>Level 1 (1–2 marks)</p> <p>The student makes a partial attempt to evaluate political institutions, processes and behaviour. Arguments offered are superficial or simplistic. There is very limited awareness of parallels or comparisons.</p>	<p>Level 1 (1 mark)</p> <p>The answer relies upon narrative which is not fully coherent and which is expressed without using political vocabulary.</p> <p>Errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar may be intrusive and the response may not be legible.</p> <p>A conclusion is either not offered or it is not related to the preceding material.</p>
<p>0 marks</p> <p>No relevant response.</p>	<p>0 marks</p> <p>No relevant response.</p>	<p>0 marks</p> <p>No relevant response.</p>

NB: whilst there is no requirement for students to make reference to the extract or passage provided when answering questions with a total of 25 marks, the use of such material can be credited on AO1 and AO2, where it is relevant to the question posed. Students may also be given credit for using relevant material drawn from the extracts or passages which accompany other questions on the paper.

Topic 1 The British Constitution**Total for this topic: 40 marks**(01) Explain the term *entrenched provisions* used in the extract.

(5 marks)

Students should explain that *entrenched provisions* are those constitutional provisions that cannot be changed by the normal legislative process. They must be subject to a complex amendment process. Students may point out that the British constitution does not contain entrenched provisions. Stronger students may explain that such provisions are placed in constitutions in order to make them immune to political manipulation by the government of the day. Some students may include comment on the significance of the rule of law. Higher-level students may illustrate with examples of constitutions with entrenched provision such as those of the USA or France.

(02) Using your own knowledge as well as the extract, identify **and** explain **two** sources of the British constitution. (10 marks)

With respect to AO1, students should draw from the extract the information that ‘the British Constitution differs from most in that it is not drawn up in a single codified document’. They should explain that it is often described as ‘unwritten’. However, students should explain that it is more correct to say that it is uncoded, with much of it found in ‘written’ form in a number of sources (the royal prerogative, statutes, common law, conventions and authoritative opinion). Students may identify two of these and offer examples.

For AO2 students must address the ‘explain’ requirement of the question. They may discuss the origins of the sources they have identified and note limitations and problems associated with them. Strong students may look beyond these traditional sources to consider the constitutional effects of treaties, international conventions and membership of the EU.

(03) ‘The case for Britain retaining its uncoded constitution remains extremely strong.’ Discuss. (25 marks)

In terms of AO1, students will need to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the debate over Britain’s uncoded (or unwritten) constitution. They should recognise that, in the contemporary world, such a constitution is relatively unusual. They may also be aware of the views of a range of constitutional reformers, such as the Liberal Democrats and groups such as Unlock Democracy (formerly Charter 88).

Higher-level students may also show knowledge and understanding of the essential functions of a constitution. This will offer the opportunity to move on to AO2 discussion by evaluating Britain’s uncoded constitution against these criteria. Strong students may also display knowledge of the particular circumstances that have led to the British constitution being the way it is. Advanced students may also show knowledge of moves towards a written constitution such as the incorporation of the ECHR, the Coalition Agreement of May 2010, and the ‘Cabinet Manual’ produced by Cabinet Secretary Sir Gus O’Donnell in January 2011. Some may introduce the notions of the ‘dignified’ and ‘efficient’ elements in a constitution.

With respect to AO2, the essential analysis should centre on arguments supportive of an uncodified constitution and subject these to critical evaluation. At a basic level of response students may be expected to stress ideas such as flexibility and the protection of the sovereignty of Parliament: keeping judges out of the political arena, while elevating the authority of the elected politicians. At higher levels of response students may elaborate the conservative view that a constitution should arise in an evolutionary manner to be uniquely suited to a particular polity. Such students may also consider the post-enlightenment movement towards reason and rationality in politics. From this they may argue that Britain's non-revolutionary constitutional history has produced the constitution most fitted to the country's political culture.

Some students may address the question more obliquely by considering arguments *against* a codified constitution. At a basic level of response they may point to problems such as its inflexibility and the difficulty of enacting amendments. They may cite states with particularly emblematic written constitutions, such as France or the USA. Higher-level responses may note problems with EU treaties. Similarly, they may note the effect of the incorporation of the European Convention on Human Rights into UK law, and an associated increase in judicial activism, noting confrontations between judges and certain home secretaries.

Higher-level students will do more than present the case for Britain's uncodified constitution. 'Extremely' is a discriminator and they will note and discuss weaknesses in the arguments they have identified. They may introduce arguments against an uncodified constitution, such as lack of clarity, uncertainty and the danger of overbearing government. Higher-level students may stress the dangers of important constitutional changes being made through nothing more than the normal legislative process (eg Lords reform, devolution). However, particularly advanced students may note that, where constitutional matters are concerned, the committee stage of a bill is usually taken on the floor of the House.

Some advanced students may take the discussion further by arguing that the political culture can override the effect of constitutions. Thus, states with codified constitutions can actually fall under oppressive and even totalitarian regimes (examples may be given), while one with an uncodified constitution may enjoy orderly government with high respect for civil liberties. Students may conclude variously. They may support the proposition in the question, reject it, or adopt an intermediate position. However, it is important that the conclusion is logically derived from the preceding discussion.

Topic 2 Parliament**Total for this topic: 40 marks**

(04) Explain the term *parliamentary majority* used in the extract.

(5 marks)

At a basic level students should explain that the term ‘parliamentary majority’ refers to the party balance, in terms of numbers of MPs, in the House of Commons. At this level they may say that a majority is necessary to sustain a government in office. At higher levels students may explain the difference between an absolute majority and a relative one. Some may discuss the role of minority parties in the construction of majorities. The formation of the 2010 coalition may be cited.

(05) Using your own knowledge as well as the extract, explain why government defeats on confidence motions are rare.

(10 marks)

For AO1 basic-level, students will explain what a confidence motion is. They may also draw from the extract information on the rarity of defeats on confidence motions. Higher-level students may elaborate with more knowledge on the collapse of Callaghan’s Labour government. Students may note that dissolution of Parliament need not necessarily follow defeat on a confidence vote. A new coalition could be formed from within the existing Parliament.

With respect to AO2, a basic answer is likely to argue that party discipline is the reason for the rarity of defeats on confidence motions. At the higher levels, students will go further to discuss factors such as the importance of the size of a government’s majority, noting the particularly tenuous position of both the Callaghan and Major governments. They may also evaluate the potential power of backbenchers through the threat of rebellion, citing examples. This could lead to an examination of the role of the whips in appeasing or threatening backbenchers. Higher-level students may advance further reasons for the reluctance of MPs to rebel, such as party loyalty, constituency pressure and the fact that, for most, the possibility of a dissolution is not something they would relish. It could also be argued that public opinion generally favours strong, stable government. These higher-level students may consider how the existence of a coalition government affects the question. Credit discussion of the effect of the Fixed Term Parliament Act.

(06) ‘The legislative process in the House of Commons offers backbench MPs significant opportunities to influence policy.’ Discuss.

(25 marks)

In terms of AO1, students are required to show knowledge and understanding of the House of Commons legislative process, from first to final readings. They must recognise aspects such as the nature of each stage, voting procedures and the degree of backbench participation. Marks awarded must reflect the depth and degree of accuracy of this account. Higher-level students may show knowledge and understanding of significant figures in the process such as the Speaker (and Deputy Speakers), the chairs of the public bill committees and the whips. Students may also note the procedures facilitating private members’ legislation.

The AO2 element comes in the analysis of the process in terms of the levels of influence afforded to backbenchers. At the basic level students may discuss the process in generalised terms without breaking it down into its constituent stages. Such students may argue in general

terms that the executive exerts a great degree of control over the legislative process through party discipline. At higher levels students will analyse the stages in some detail. They will note how some are little more than formalities. They may distinguish between debates on broad principle and those on detailed clause-by-clause analysis. They should note that the committee stage can be significant and should explain the formation and composition of the public bill committees. They will also discuss the report stage of bills, and may give examples showing where legislation may, or may not, have been modified. In illustrating their discussion students may be expected to give examples of the passage of noteworthy bills and the receptions they have received. These will probably be in high-profile areas such as anti-terrorism and student financing. Higher-level students may also consider pre-legislative scrutiny of bills. Some may examine the impact of coalition government on the process. They may also include some analysis of the opportunities afforded to MPs through private members' bills.

There should be a concluding section that clearly focuses on the issue of the backbenchers' role in the various stages of the legislative process. Higher-level students will address the word 'significant' in the question, which is a discriminator. Students may vary in their conclusion on the proposition in question. However, it is important that this is logically derived from the preceding discussion.

Topic 3 The Core Executive**Total for this topic: 40 marks**

(07) Explain the term *Secretary of State* used in the extract.

(5 marks)

At a basic level students should pick up from the extract that a Secretary of State or equivalent has overall control of a department, which they represent in the cabinet. They should understand that the position is held by a senior politician, usually from the House of Commons. They may note that secretaries of state work closely with the permanent secretaries of their departments. Higher-level students may mention the two conventions of collective and ministerial responsibility. They may also note a number of other roles and function of secretaries of state, such as introducing bills, answering parliamentary questions, appearing before select committees, speaking to the media and performing constituency duties.

(08) Using your own knowledge as well as the extract, consider why it is necessary to have four or five ministers within most government departments.

(10 marks)

For AO1, basic-level students should show that they understand from the extract that the number of government ministers is variable and has generally risen since 1900. They should also have knowledge and understanding of the structure of ministerial portfolios, with some positions being of higher status than others. Higher-level students will also understand the concept of the ministerial hierarchy within departments and have knowledge of titles such as cabinet minister, minister without portfolio, non-cabinet minister, junior minister and so on.

AO2 marks are to be gained in the analysis of reasons why it is necessary to have four or five ministers in most departments. The reasons may be selected from points such as the increased role of government in the economy, the rise of the welfare state, an increase in the size and complexity of government departments, the need for ministers to specialise in particular aspects of a department's area of responsibility, the need for prime ministers to repay political debts and to promote friends, a desire to increase the 'payroll' vote, the need to reflect a wide range of political views, and attempts to appease sectional interests. Some excellent students may bring in the thesis of the rational choice theorists that public bureaucracies have a built-in tendency to grow larger.

(09) 'Ministers have considerable power and opportunity to restrain a prime minister.' Discuss.

(25 marks)

AO1 material should demonstrate students' knowledge and understanding of the nature of cabinet government, the powers of the prime minister and the conventions of cabinet government. They may refer to the idea of leadership implied in the term *primus inter pares*.

In terms of AO2, students should realise that this question has a particular focus. Unlike a question on the power of the prime minister, it is concerned with the limitations on prime ministerial authority arising from the powers available to his or her ministerial colleagues. Higher-level students may note that although a prime minister has an important power of patronage and can shape a government according to personal preference, it is usually necessary to include those with strong claims for inclusion, such as long experience, specialist expertise, rhetorical skills, a following in the country, pressure-group connections or a strong

body of parliamentary support. Advanced students will recognise that such ministers will not necessarily be loyal and supportive. Some may espouse different policy agendas and some may be rivals for the prime minister's position. Some may have been appointed to the government because they would constitute a threat if remaining on the backbenches. Students should note that ministers can be unhappy with the style of leadership.

Students should identify and analyse the range of opportunities for ministers to restrain prime ministers. These could include personality clashes, the formation of factions, plots, negative briefings by supporters, alliances between departments, leaks to the media, debates and arguments within the cabinet and committees, resignation threats and, in the last resort, actual resignations followed by embarrassing resignation speeches to a (usually packed) House of Commons. Higher-level students will offer relevant examples such as the Blair–Brown rivalry, the resignation of Robin Cook, John Major's travails (the 'bastards') and Geoffrey Howe's fatal undermining of Thatcher. Rewards should be given for students considering the bearing of coalition government on the question.

Weaker students may tend to write generally about the powers of the prime minister. It is appropriate and necessary for students to discuss the broad picture of prime ministerial power. However, without a clear focus on the question this will gain credit largely in terms of AO1.

There should be a concluding section that clearly focuses on the extent to which ministerial resignations over policy or leadership style give them power to restrain a prime minister. The word 'considerable' is a discriminator and should be addressed for higher-level marks. Students may accept or reject the proposition in the question. Alternatively, they may adopt an intermediate position. However, it is important that the conclusion is logically derived from the preceding discussion.

Topic 4 Multi-level Governance**Total for this topic: 40 marks**

(10) Explain the term *directly elected mayor* used in the extract.

(5 marks)

At a basic level students should explain that a directly elected mayor is a local leader elected by the people to take control of a local authority. Other councillors assume a largely scrutinising role. Students may explain that the idea is a relatively new feature of British local government, promoted in the Local Government Act of 2000 as one of a range of measures designed to centralise executive control. Higher-level students may explain that local referendums have been called in the decision to introduce such systems. Strong students should be able to give some examples of authorities where the system has been adopted. Some may contrast the directly elected mayors with the traditional lord mayors who hold largely ceremonial positions. Higher-level students may also note that the directly elected mayor is a feature of local government in several other countries.

(11) Using your own knowledge as well as the extract, identify **and** explain **two** reasons why elected councils can be seen as 'central to local democracy'.

(10 marks)

For AO1 students can take from the extract a number of references, including the fact that councils are elected, meetings take place in council chambers, there is some resemblance to the Westminster model and party politics is present at local level. At higher levels these can be elaborated from students' own knowledge. Thus, for example, students may recognise that the fact of being elected by local people makes councils formally responsible and accountable to the community. Students may elaborate on the local electoral process, raising such issues as local manifestos and mandates.

For AO2 students will analyse in more detail some of the reasons why councils may be said to further local democracy. They may discuss features such as the following: Councillors represent wards so that the council contains representatives from all parts of the area. Local elections and electioneering serve to educate the local community and keep them aware of local issues. Councils can be a focus for local interest group activity. The system allows ordinary people to become involved in decision-making. Local councils deal with matters that are more important to the lives of most people than those attended to by the Westminster government.

(12) 'The European Parliament has seen a gradual increase in its power and authority.'
Discuss.

(25 marks)

In terms of AO1 students will need to show knowledge and understanding of the European Parliament (EP), its history, its functions and its evolving relationship with the other European Union (EU) institutions. At a basic level of analysis they must recognise that the EP is one of a number of EU institutions that interact with each other in the process of producing legislation and managing the budget.

In terms of AO2 students will discuss the role and powers given to the EP at its inception and note their evolution. They may be expected to note factors such as the following: originally the members of the EP (MEPs) were not elected, but when they were, they gained greater legitimacy. The EP has the formal power to reject the EU budget as drawn up by the European

Commission and can dismiss the Commission *en bloc*. Students may point out that it can be argued that such draconian powers are not useful in day-to-day affairs. Advanced students may note that the EP shares with the Commission a supranational vision of the EU, which has led to the Commission being sympathetic to an increase in its power. Hence, the Commission promoted major reforms in 1988 to increase the EP's budgetary powers.

Students should see the evolving legislative process as a central feature of their answers. They should recognise that this has been a bargaining and negotiating process between the EP and Council and has seen a gradual increase in the EP's power. Students should appreciate that the EP's original role was in a *consultation process* in which it had little influence over the Council. The Single European Act (SEA) of 1986 introduced a *co-operation* procedure in which the Council and Commission were compelled to take more account of the EP opinion in certain areas, including those associated with the advancement of the single European market. The Maastricht Treaty of 1992 introduced a *co-decision* procedure, further increasing the EP's powers in a limited number of areas. These were considerably widened in the Amsterdam Treaty of 1997. If agreement with the Council could not be reached, the EP gained the power to reject a proposal. The Lisbon Treaty transferred the policy areas under *co-operation* procedure to the *co-decision* procedure which became the 'ordinary legislative procedure' of the EU. It is now possible to describe the EP as co-legislator with the Council of Ministers.

Higher-level students may also consider the EP role in the budgetary cycle, which follows a number of stages in the EU financial year (1 January to 31 December). It opens with the proposal of annual spending plans by the Commission which are negotiated between the European Parliament and the Council of Ministers. Following the Lisbon Treaty this is through the usual legislative process, with the EP a co-legislator for the entire budget.

Advanced students may note that the SEA also introduced an *assent procedure*, now called the *consent procedure*, in which certain Council and Commission decisions must receive EP assent by an absolute majority. This applies, *inter alia*, to the admission of new states into the EU. In addition, the Maastricht Treaty made provision for the EP to play a part in the initiation of the legislative process by submitting an 'own initiative' report to the Commission.

Students should note the controversial idea of an EU 'Constitution' debated at the 2004 Rome summit. This led to the watered down version in the Lisbon Treaty of 2007, which made Co-decision the 'Ordinary Legislative Procedure', giving more power to the parliament. It also created the positions of EU 'president' and 'Foreign Minister'. Some students may note that the *Assent Procedure* became the *Consent Procedure*.

There should be a concluding section that clearly focuses on the extent to which the power and authority of the EP has increased. The word 'gradual' is a discriminator and should normally be addressed for higher-level marks. Students may accept or reject the proposition in the question. Alternatively, they may adopt an intermediate position. However, it is important that the conclusion is logically derived from the preceding discussion.

ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES GRID

AS Assessment Objective	Marks allocated by Assessment Objective 5-mark question	Marks allocated by Assessment Objective 10-mark question	Marks allocated by Assessment Objective 25-mark question	Total Marks by Assessment Objective
AO1	5	4	11	20
AO2	0	4	8	12
AO3	0	2	6	8
Total	5	10	25	40