

Final



**General Certificate of Education  
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**Government and Politics**

**GOV3A**

**The Politics of the USA**

**Unit 3A**

**Final**

***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.

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**

<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**

(01) Consider the importance of 'swing states' to the success of candidates in US presidential elections. (10 marks)

For high AO1 and AO2 marks, students must show that they clearly understand what swing states *are*, and *why* they are so important to the electoral campaigns of the presidential candidates. To gain these marks it should be shown *how* campaigns focus *on* winning the votes of these states as well as the connection with the *Electoral College* system where candidates must win the votes of the states rather than the popular vote.

For AO1, examples should be given of the ten or so states labelled 'swing' such as Nevada, Indiana, New Mexico and Colorado. Good students will know they are also known as 'battleground states' as the main electoral contest takes place in these states, especially in the swing states with large numbers of EC votes such as Pennsylvania or Florida, or those that are very finely balanced such as Ohio.

Swing states are the states that are *competitive* rather than safe, sometimes referred to as 'purple' states rather than the safe 'red' Republican states such as Texas or the 'blue' Democrat states such as New York. Good students may make such contextual comparisons and should be rewarded as long as they do not turn their answer into explaining 'safe states'.

For very high AO2 marks students should show that swing states will contain either:

- a greater social and/or ethnic mix of voters OR
- many independent voters, whose votes are 'up for grabs'.

However, this is an elections question not a VB question, so students should not be rewarded when they stray too far into explaining 'swing voters' rather than swing *states*, as weaker students may do.

The key point that must be covered for high AO1 and AO2 marks is that they are states that are *not predictable* in voting behaviour and therefore candidates 'target' these states and pour campaign workers and campaign finance (especially TV advertising) into them. Candidates will also make frequent campaign visits to these states. Turnout may also be higher. Evidence should be given of these things at the very highest level of response.

Weaker students at Level 1 or 2 are unlikely to analyse the importance of swing states, or to give any convincing supporting evidence or examples in their response.

<p>(02) 'Too long, too expensive and too dominated by style rather than substance.' Evaluate this view of the US presidential nomination process. <span style="float: right;">(30 marks)</span></p>
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This question is looking for understanding and an evaluation of the advantages and disadvantages of the US presidential nomination process of primaries and caucuses, possibly contrasting it to the previous 'machine politics...smoke-filled room' process of candidate selection and peer review before the reforms of the 70s. There should be a focus on the three characteristics outlined in the quotation for higher-level marks, although it is not expected that all three will be discussed *equally* for high marks. Students should **not** be rewarded when their response is not focusing on the nomination process but is focusing instead on presidential elections.

It is likely that most students will *accept the critique* implied in the quotation but **must** give a number of supporting reasons and evidence for high AO1 and AO2 marks.

However, the question does not exclude students *defending* the US nomination process and arguing against the description in the quote as long as they also present supporting evidence and examples.

It is expected that students at the higher level of responses will be able to give a balanced evaluation covering both the pros and cons of the primary and caucus nomination process.

Students should be able to explain the nomination process and for high AO1 marks it must be clear that the nomination process is fully understood. This need not be a long description of primaries and caucuses, as may be expected from students at lower levels of response, but contextual evidence of how the process actually works, from the 'invisible primary' through to the nominating conventions, including the *reasons for* the process being described as 'too long', 'too expensive' and 'dominated by style rather than substance'. (Answers are likely to focus on the primaries and caucuses but students may include the national party conventions in their analysis and should be rewarded for doing so if their arguments are convincing.)

'*Too long*' – students should refer to 'too long' and, for higher marks, discuss the *reasons* for the length of the nomination campaigns, such as the *invisible primary*, the *Iowa caucus* and New Hampshire primary and the following contests, which may extend until June, as in 2008.

It may be argued, therefore, for high AO2 marks that this process **is** 'too long', as it:

- leads to 'permanent campaigns' that alienate voters and lead to low turnout
- puts too much stress on early, unrepresentative states because of frontloading
- leads to exhausted candidates.

On the other hand, it is also acceptable to argue that the process is **not** 'too long' as the long, arduous contests are necessary for the best candidate to be eventually nominated and that the process:

- tests a candidate's stamina under pressure
- allows all the states to be involved in the process
- is linked to the necessity of raising funds for the contest so must start early.

Students should also explain *why* it is necessary to raise very large amounts of money in order to create ‘momentum’ for the long and very costly campaigns. Students may argue that this can be criticised because:

- it advantages rich candidates with the process now dominated by millionaire candidates such as Romney or those able to raise large ‘war chests’
- it leads to an excessive focus on fundraising
- public funding comes through matching funds but many candidates now reject this as it puts spending limits on their campaigns
- the lack of money may force good candidates without campaign funds out of the race (as Elizabeth Dole stated in 2000) or discourage them from running in the first place.

On the other hand, it would be acceptable for students to challenge this view and argue that:

- successful candidates will inevitably raise more than their rivals
- large amounts of funding are essential to conduct effective campaigns.

‘*Too dominated by style not substance*’ may be argued as a criticism of the process because of the relentless *media focus* on the nomination campaign encouraging a ‘beauty contest’ focus on *image* rather than serious debates on substantive policy issues. It is argued that this is not a good test of who would make the best president. Some argue that this focus has led to more ‘Washington Outsiders’ being elected with little experience of governing.

Students who give supporting examples and evidence from recent primaries, caucuses and conventions of the three identified characteristics, should be highly rewarded at both AO1 and AO2.

At the higher levels of response, students may argue that this is inevitable in the US nomination process where candidates may fail to gain any momentum if they fail to raise money and spend it on TV advertising, often negative and focusing on image. However, this may be balanced with the *democratic advantages* of the nomination process and preparations for the rigours of the presidency.

They may contrast this with the nomination process before 1968 where ‘party insiders’ chose the candidates, excluding registered party supporters, who had little, if any, say in the process. The extension of the democratic choice to party voters created an inevitable movement towards long expensive campaigns conducted through the media.

As a result, students may argue that although these characteristics are accurate, they are balanced by the *democratic advantages* of primaries and caucuses in candidate selection, such as producing a candidate who has proved their popularity and stamina campaigning through the 50 states, which inevitably involves a long, expensive and media/image focused contest and is a good preparation for the arduous task of running the presidential campaign and the executive branch of government.

However, others may argue that the process leads to cynical voters suffering from over-exposure to long and expensive media campaigns, photo-opportunities and sound bites and less likely to turn out to vote as a result.

Weaker students may simply offer a description of the nomination process which may gain AO1 marks but be at the lower level of response for AO2.

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

(03) Explain how third parties and independent candidates can have an impact in US politics.  
(10 marks)

For high AO1 and AO2 marks students will need to demonstrate understanding of the fact that although third parties/independent candidates have never been successful in presidential elections and very rarely in congressional ones (with exceptions such as Bernie Sanders in Vermont) this does not mean that they are without impact in US politics. For example they:

- give greater *democratic choice* to voters, allowing for *protest votes* against the two main parties, ‘sending them a message’ as Wallace said in 1968
- *raise political issues* onto the political agenda often ignored by the two main ‘catch-all’ parties, such as the environment (Green Party and Nader) or budget deficits (Perot in 1992 and 1996) and may force them to act
- give voice to more ‘*extreme*’ *political views* such as socialism or libertarianism, not catered for by the two main parties, thus representing a greater range of political views.
- They can speak more freely as they are not concerned with gaining power as such.

Coverage of such analysis would reach a minimum Level 3 at AO1 and AO2, especially when backed up by relevant examples and evidence of third party and independent candidate interventions in elections.

At the higher level of response, excellent students may also argue, that in some circumstances, candidates could have *even more of an impact* because of:

- the possibility that a candidate can gain enough votes to influence the *outcome of the Electoral College* as Wallace almost did in 1968, gaining 46 EC votes that even Perot with his 19% dispersed vote could not achieve
- the possibility that candidates could affect the outcome of elections by the spread of their votes, eg Perot contributed to the defeat of Bush in 1992, allowing Clinton to win the election with only 43% of the vote, and it could be argued Nader’s 3% of the vote helped Bush to defeat Gore in 2000.

Level 3 and certainly Level 4 answers **must** contain evidence of specific third parties and independent candidates, the alternatives they offer voters, the roles they can play and their impact on the outcome of elections.

<p>(04) Assess the claim that the Democratic and Republican parties are now ideologically distinct and internally united. <span style="float: right;">(30 marks)</span></p>
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In the past, a common description of the two main parties was that of ideological similarity and internal divisions. Whilst there may still be some residual evidence of these two features and good students may argue that this is still true to some extent, the main focus should be on the *changing* ideological nature of the two parties and the *growing* ideological chasm that **now** separates them. It is no longer possible to argue that they are like ‘two empty bottles’ or ‘only separated by abortion’ and students should not be given credit for arguing that they are.

The focus of the question relates to differences between (inter) the parties in *ideology*, including knowledge and understanding of their *core principles* and values and the *policies* that stem from these, as well as each parties growing internal ideological *cohesion*. (However, the decentralised state parties will still show some ideological differences and students may be rewarded for pointing this out in their answers.)

It is expected that the higher-level responses will demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the ‘**distinct**’ *ideological views* which now separate the parties, particularly the divisions over the *role and scope of government intervention*, such as the Democrats’:

- focus on the positive and activist role of government (‘Big government’) to bring about social and economic changes such as the support for welfare and the more equal distribution of wealth. Hence the recent health care reforms and stimulus spending supported by *most* Democrats, or the welfare reforms they support. For this reason they are perceived as the ‘tax and spend’ party.

This should be contrasted with the Republicans’:

- support for ‘small government’ and free markets, less government intervention in the economy and low taxes, low spending and balanced budgets. Hence their total opposition to health care reform and almost total opposition to bailouts and Keynesian spending programmes and strong support for private enterprise. Fiscal conservatism now dominates the party.

This means there is now a very wide divide between the more *liberal economic views* of the Democratic Party, especially since the loss of its more conservative ‘southern wing’ since the 1960s, and the much more *conservative economic views* of the Republican Party, especially since the Reagan presidency, the 1994 ‘Republican Revolution’ and recently under the growing influence of the more fiscally (and socially) conservative Tea Party Movement since 2008, which has pushed the Republican Party further to the right. Such references would be expected from students at the higher levels of response.

These changes mean that the two parties have become *ideologically polarised* as the Democrats are now more ideologically *liberal* in their views and the Republicans more ideologically *conservative*. They are now much more ideologically coherent internally and this argument must be addressed with supporting evidence by students achieving higher AO1 and AO2 marks.

It may also be argued that both parties are clearly distinct when looking at their views and policies on *social* as well as *economic* values and principles such as the greater social conservatism of the Republican Party and the increasing liberalism of the Democrats on social

issues. Weaker students may concentrate more on these factors, simply describing differences between the parties on issues such as abortion, gay marriage or family values, for example. These can be credited as long as such examples do not take over the essay to the exclusion of more convincing evidence specifically on differences in *ideology*, what they believe in and why.

Students may also refer to specific differences in views on *foreign policy* as further evidence of the parties being *ideologically distinct*, eg views on defence spending, foreign intervention. Credit also references to specific *policy differences* on all these ideological issues that divide the parties, such as the debates over the deficits, stimulus spending, taxation levels and raising the debt ceiling. Reference may also be legitimately made to ideological differences on key issues such as climate change and/or economic regulation that have dominated political debate recently. Differences over whether power should be at the federal or the state level may also be mentioned.

The term 'internally united' must also be addressed. Good students are likely to argue that because there is greater ideological unity within the parties today and stronger ideological differences between them (evidenced by reference to greater party unity and voting in Congress and divisive electoral campaigns at Level 3 and certainly Level 4), then it follows that there are *fewer* internal divisions and factions *within* the parties, especially when compared to the past. At the higher levels of response this should be explained by the previously outlined changes to the parties and the decline of their conservative (Democratic) and moderate (Republican) wings.

Evidence would be expected at the higher levels of response on changes to congressional groupings such as the *decline* of the fiscally and socially conservative Blue Dog Democrats (dropping to 23 from 54 members after the 2010 mid-terms) and the decline of more moderate, 'compassionate' conservatives (promised by Bush in the 2000 campaign and seen in the 'No Child Left Behind Act') in the Republican Party. However, students should be rewarded for giving accurate examples of different congressional ideological groupings in parties that still exist.

Excellent students at the highest level of response are likely to argue/conclude that US parties, because of their *decentralised* nature within a federal system, are always going to be, to some extent, internal coalitions of beliefs because of the very different voters and states that they represent. They may point to remaining conservative Democrats in the more liberal Democratic Party such as Mary Landrieu of Louisiana and the more moderate Republicans such as Susan Collins in Maine.

Very well prepared students may argue that the parties have become more internally united on principles because of the *defections* that have taken place with several elected representatives switching parties, using examples of such defections. This should be highly rewarded.

Some very well prepared students may link the *hyper-partisanship* and increasingly *adversarial* nature of US politics to the increasing hyper-partisanship of the American media, particularly the cable channels, leading to increasing focus on 'principle' rather than pragmatic 'reach across the aisle' bipartisan *compromise* politics that was more dominant in the past.

Weaker students may fail to focus on the question and write generically on the parties, with little up to date or accurate evidence on the changes that have taken place in party ideology in recent years. Such a response is unlikely to move beyond Level 2.

Some students may focus more on 'ideologically distinct' than 'internally united' and this is acceptable as there is no need for a totally balanced response. However, both terms must be addressed at higher levels of response.

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**Topic 3 Voting Behaviour****Total for this topic: 40 marks**

(05) Explain the concept of 'differential abstention' in US politics.

(10 marks)

The concept of differential abstention relates to the fact that different groups of voters are more, or less, likely to abstain in elections and this fact alone will affect the outcome of elections in the USA. For Level 3 and Level 4 marks the focus of the response must be on explanation of the term 'differential'. Generalised discussion of abstention should **not** be rewarded.

Voting behaviour is different at each election and different voters vote or abstain differently at each election. *Voters move in and out of abstention*. This can be related to the fact that different groups of voters are more, or less, motivated to vote or more, or less, engaged in electoral politics in each election. This is sometimes referred to as the 'enthusiasm gap' as in the mid-term election of 2010 when an energised Republican base turned out to vote and the electorate was 'smaller, whiter and older, than in 2008. For example, 80 million voters voted in 2010 compared to 130 million in 2008. 1 in 3 voters who voted in 2008 did not vote in 2010. (Such evidence is likely to be seen at the top levels of response.) Students may also refer to differential turnout in presidential, congressional and state elections and in swing and safe seats.

Explaining **clearly** what the term means is necessary for high AO2 marks.

High AO1 marks can also come from knowledge and understanding of the voting groups who are *more likely* to vote in all elections such as:

- the elderly
- higher socio-economic groups
- white voters
- the more educated and politically engaged
- aligned 'core' voters with a strong party identification.

And the groups *less likely* to vote at every election include:

- young voters
- lower socio-economic groups
- minority voters especially black and Hispanic
- the less educated and politically engaged
- de-aligned voters with a weak or no party identification.

The highest marks will be gained if the student can give *psephological evidence* of such differences in voting turnout from recent elections and some explanation of why some groups of voters are more likely to vote or not.

Excellent students will point out that elections can be won or lost through which kinds of voters turn out to vote and which voters abstain. For example, part of Obama's victory in 2008 was the much higher turnout of young and minority voters, whilst a larger number of Republican voters abstained for many reasons.

However, in the mid-term elections of 2010 many Democrat voters, especially the young and minority voters who had voted in 2008, failed to vote, yet more Republican voters, energised/motivated by the Tea Party, turned out to vote. Hence the election turned on the differential turnout of the voters. This kind of analysis should be very highly rewarded with AO2 marks.

(06) 'Despite variations in voting behaviour from election to election, the two main US parties can always rely on a solid block of core voters for support.' Discuss. (30 marks)

For high AO1 and AO2 marks it is important that students can show understanding that no two elections or their outcomes are the same in the US. There are different candidates, issues, events, voters and circumstances surrounding each election. So it is inevitable that some voters will vote differently at each election, especially the *independent and non-aligned* voters with little if any party affiliation or identification. This will explain the 'variation' in voting behaviour referred to in the quotation.

Good students will be able to distinguish between the long term 'primacy' factors influencing party alignment, such as socio-economic status, race and ethnicity, gender, religion and region, which are associated with *predictable and stable* VB and 'core voters', and the short-term 'recency' factors which are at work in each election, such as salient issues (the economy in 2008 and 2012, national security in 2004), circumstances (war or peace, economic stability or instability) or events (bank bail-out in 2008, 9/11 in 2001) which may attract or repel the *'independent' de-aligned voters* and thus affect their VB.

It is the latter 'recency' factors which can lead to changes in VB from one election to the next and affect who wins and who loses. Students at the higher levels of response should be expected to give evidence of at least some of the above analysis to show *unpredictability and variation* in VB and changes in support for parties and their candidates (leading to changes in the presidency and/or Congress as in 2006, 2008 and 2010).

This will gain higher AO1 marks if supporting evidence can be given from voting in recent elections.

However, as well as trying to win over the de-aligned, uncommitted 'independent' voters, the parties both have their 'core' aligned voters who have a strong sense of party identification and who will tend to support their party at each election. Identifying these should be the basis of a good or excellent response to the question.

For high AO1 and AO2 marks students must be able to identify and **explain** the '*solid block of core voters*' that each party relies on to turn out to support them. These should include for the Democrats:

- the lower socio-economic groups
- minority voters
- women
- trade unionists and blue-collar workers
- Catholics and Jews

Good students may also refer to the 'New Deal Coalition' of votes that existed from the 1930s to the 1960s.

For the Republicans:

- higher socio-economic groups
- white voters
- men

- white-collar workers
- WASPs and evangelical Christians.

For very high AO1 marks this should always be supported by psephological evidence for the links between these groupings and support for one or other of the parties.

For high AO2 marks some *explanations* should be given for the links, which will relate to the ideologies and policies of the parties which attract different kinds of voter to support them and provide their 'base' or 'core vote'.

At the very high levels of response students should give evidence of either the two main parties 'energising their base' of voters, as in 2004 when the Republicans concentrated on getting out their core voters, or in 2008 and 2012 when both parties were seeking out the 'independent' vote in order to win.

Also reward students who are able to demonstrate understanding of any **changes** in core support for the parties, such as:

- the breakdown of the Democrats' New Deal Coalition of voters in the 60s after civil rights legislation
- the loss of support of the 'Reagan Democrats' in the 1980s
- the decline in support for Hispanics and Catholics for the Democrats in 2004.

At the lower levels of response, students may simply describe voting behaviour with little attempt to address the question. They are unlikely to gain more than Level 2 Marks. They are also likely to lack supporting psephological evidence and examples.

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

<p>(07) Explain why US pressure groups may use different access points in trying to achieve their objectives. <span style="float: right;">(10 marks)</span></p>
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This question relates to *where* pressure groups attempt to influence decision-making and *why* these different access points are used and the focus must be here for high level marks at both AO1 and AO2.

It is essential for high AO1 and AO2 marks that students are able to clearly explain what the many different access points *are* and *why* there are so many, such as:

- federalism which leads to different levels of government to access, and/or
- the separation of powers which leads to differences of access *within* the levels of government.

In the case of the latter, students should distinguish between trying to access the different branches of government at the federal (or state) level such as:

- access to the executive branch of government such as the president, EXOP and the federal departments and agencies
- access to the legislative branch of government through either or both the Senate and the House of Representatives and their committees.

Both of these access points are used to:

- try and influence either the initiation or implementation of legislation/policy or to end it with the veto (executive branch) or
- try to influence the passage of legislation during the legislative process in Congress, especially through the Committee system (through lobbying and/or Iron Triangles).

Also in the US system influence could be sought through access to the judicial branch of government, the Supreme Court, to influence either the selection of Justices, or through Amicus Curiae briefs to try and influence cases before the Court, or to bring test cases before the Court affecting their interests/causes.

Examples must be given of some or all of the above and, at the higher levels of response, clearly demonstrating an understanding of the *reasons why* (AO2) pressure groups try and access different levels and branches of government in order to achieve their objectives (trying to influence the details of legislation, trying to start or stop legislation, trying to influence the Supreme Court when deciding cases).

Students may, when referring to the large number of access points in the US system, compare this to the UK with its unitary system and a fusion of legislative and executive powers and a Supreme Court with much less power than its US counterpart. This is one reason why US pressure groups have more favourable conditions in which to try and influence decision making and pressure group activity is more evident. However, this is not essential for high marks.

(08) Evaluate the view that US pressure groups are now far more powerful than political parties in the US political process. (30 marks)

The focus of this question is on the *relative power* of parties and pressure groups in the US political and electoral system and for high level marks the focus must be on 'far more powerful'. It is likely that students attempting this question will identify some of the *key differences* between parties and pressure groups as representative organisations (AO1) and use this as part of their analysis (AO2). This might include the fact that pressure groups, unlike political parties:

- do not put candidates up for election
- do not have wide-ranging ideologies covered in party platforms and do not cover a wide range of policy areas, but usually focus on one specific interest or one single cause
- seek access to and influence over the exercise of political power rather than to gain it and run the institutions of government.

Analytically, students may approach this question in two ways before coming to a reasoned conclusion:

1. they may give evidence of and explanations for the weakness of US parties and/or
2. they may give evidence of and explanations for the power and strength of US pressure groups.

Both approaches are acceptable, as long as the main focus of the question is not lost and a balanced conclusion reached.

As evidence that US parties may be weaker than pressure groups students may argue (AO2) that:

- US parties no longer select or fund their candidates. This is done by primaries and the candidates' own personal organisations raising funds from many sources apart from parties for electioneering purposes
- parties are not strongly organised in Congress (unlike in the UK) and have no 'sticks or carrots' to make party representatives vote in the same way.

As evidence that the US pressure groups are now 'far more powerful' students may argue (AO2) that:

- pressure groups and their associated PACs play a large role in elections, where they may fund and (since the Citizens United case in 2010) make direct and indirect contributions to support or defeat party candidates
- their lobbying activities in Congress (K St Corridor/'Revolving Door') are extensive as they try and influence the outcome of the legislative process in Congress (and the states). They may refer to Iron Triangles and 'influence-peddling' in favour of special interests rather than the national or public interest
- their membership is growing as the registered support of and identification with parties is declining. There are more people active in pressure groups than parties and evidence, such as the 40 million members of the ARP or the small membership of the NRA, may be given.

However, excellent students at the highest level of response may argue that parties and pressure groups are simply *different* representative political organisations with different purposes and different representation and that they exercise different kinds of power.

It could be argued that some pressure groups may be very powerful and have a lot of influence at certain times, but not all pressure groups are and not always. This would need some supporting evidence and/or examples.

It could also be argued that the elected representatives of the political parties are the only ones that can actually exercise power in the federal and state government and in the branches of those governments. They are actually making decisions rather than simply influencing them.

Pressure groups cannot exercise power in the same way, so in that sense cannot be 'far more powerful' than political parties whose candidates have stood for elective office to gain power to carry out their ideology/platforms. This analysis should be highly rewarded (AO2).

Students should be able to give examples of the 'power' of some pressure groups such as the NRA or AARP or AIPAC (amongst many possible examples) over decisions made by the elected party politicians. Or, alternatively, they may give evidence for the weakness of some pressure groups, whose demands can be ignored by elected representatives and therefore are not 'powerful'.

Weaker students at Level 2 or below are likely to have little focus on the set question and write generically about pressure groups and parties in a very over-generalised way.

### 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>