

AS GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

Unit 2 Governing Modern Britain

Thursday 9 June 2016 Afternoon Time allowed: 1 hour 30 minutes

Materials

For this paper you must have:

- an AQA 12-page answer book.

Instructions

- Use black ink or black ball-point pen.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book. The **Paper Reference** is GOVP2.
- Choose **two** topics and answer **all** questions on each topic.
- Do all rough work in your answer book. Cross through any work you do not want to be marked.

Information

- The marks for each question are shown in brackets.
- The maximum mark for this paper is 80.
- Questions **02** and **03**, **05** and **06**, **08** and **09**, **11** and **12** should be answered in continuous prose.

For those questions you will be marked on your ability to:

- use good English
- organise information clearly
- use specialist vocabulary where appropriate.

Advice

- You are advised to read through the examination paper before you attempt the questions.
- You are advised to spend the same amount of time on each topic.

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

Each topic is worth 40 marks.

Topic 1 The British Constitution

Read the extract below and answer questions **01**, **02** and **03** which follow.

Britain's unitary constitution

There has always been some doubt about whether the UK really has a unitary, rather than a federal, constitution. It is, after all, the United Kingdom of Great Britain and Northern Ireland, which consists of four different nations: England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales. Since these four units have joined together, their individual rights and differences have always been to some degree protected.

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The need to recognise the ancient traditions of the different parts of the UK has always been an important political reality. Even so, the Westminster parliament has, over the years, modified the union. This has been especially so with regard to Ireland, but also with devolution to Scotland and Wales. This it could legally do because of the unitary nature of the constitution, and because of the principle of **parliamentary sovereignty**.

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Adapted from Peter Holmes, Politics for AS level, 2008

0 1

Explain the term '**parliamentary sovereignty**' used in the extract (line 10).

[5 marks]**0 2**

Using your own knowledge as well as the passage, identify **and** explain the difference between a unitary and a federal constitution.

[10 marks]**0 3**

'The British judiciary has become increasingly politicised.' Discuss.

[25 marks]

Topic 2 Parliament

Read the extract below and answer questions **04**, **05** and **06** which follow.

Discipline and dissent in Parliament

The bipartisan nature of British politics is institutionalised in the very structure of the House of Commons, with two sets of benches facing each other in confrontational manner, rather than the semi-circular design found in many assemblies.

Party loyalty is an extremely important requirement and certain MPs are appointed as party 'whips' with the task of ensuring this, sometimes exerting immense pressure on their colleagues. 5
Such discipline is crucial for a government because **the government depends on parliamentary support for its survival.**

However, this is not to say that rebels do not exist. From 2001, a number of Labour MPs opposed their government on a range of key issues, including fox-hunting, anti-terror measures, university fees, NHS reforms and the invasion of Iraq. By September 2014 the coalition 10
government had suffered five defeats, including one, in August 2013, on proposed military intervention in Syria.

Adapted from John Kingdom, 'United Kingdom', in J. Chandler (ed.), *Comparative Public Administration*, 2nd ed, 2014

- 0 4** Explain the statement '**the government depends on parliamentary support for its survival**' used in the extract (lines 6/7). **[5 marks]**
- 0 5** Using your own knowledge as well as the extract, identify **and** explain **two** reasons why MPs may support a rebellion in the House of Commons. **[10 marks]**
- 0 6** 'The House of Lords performs some important functions in government and does not require radical reform.' Discuss. **[25 marks]**

Turn over for the next topic

Topic 3 The Core Executive

Read the passage below and answer questions **07**, **08** and **09** which follow.

Cabinet government: theory and practice

The convention of **collective responsibility** lies at the heart of the concept of cabinet government. It suggests that cabinet members together consider the overall progress of government policy. However, in reality the Cabinet tends to work by considering a collection of individual policy areas: education, health care, the economy and so on. The form and structure of the Cabinet oblige it to function like a group of individuals, rather than as a united body. Each minister is concerned with his or her departmental portfolio and will expect to be judged in terms of the success of the policies in that particular area. 5

Indeed, Sir Douglas Wass (Permanent Secretary to HM Treasury 1974–83), in his second BBC Reith Lecture broadcast in 1983, asserted that, in his experience, no minister ever won political distinction by a contribution to collective decision-taking. The Blair government tried to remedy this weakness with talk of introducing ‘joined-up government’ but with little noticeable success. The result is that the only member of the Cabinet in a position to take a wide-ranging view is the prime minister. 10

0 7

Explain the term ‘**collective responsibility**’ used in the passage (line 1).

[5 marks]

0 8

Using your own knowledge as well as the passage, identify **and** explain **two** reasons why the Cabinet may ‘function like a group of individuals, rather than as a united body’.

[10 marks]

0 9

‘The power of the prime minister is more limited within a coalition government.’ Discuss.

[25 marks]

Topic 4 Multi-level Governance

Read the extract below and answer questions **10**, **11** and **12** which follow.

Local elected representatives

Local democracy is of great constitutional significance. Local councillors can claim legitimacy because they are elected. They serve four-year terms and most belong to one of the main political parties, although independents and minor parties are not uncommon.

Local elections have tended to show a swing against the party of government at Westminster. Hence, the long period of Conservative government in the 1980s and 1990s subjected the party to repeated losses at local elections. However, when Labour took the Westminster reins it too began to suffer defeats in local elections, until even the BNP was winning council seats. During a prolonged period of opposition the Liberal Democrats could regularly benefit from the anti-government swing, but in coalition from 2010 they began to pay the price of power, with the loss of many local councillors. 5

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Adapted from John Kingdom with Paul Fairclough, *Government and Politics in Britain*, 2014

1 0

Explain the term '**local democracy**' used in the extract (line1).

[5 marks]

1 1

Using your own knowledge as well as the extract, identify **and** explain **two** reasons why 'local elections have tended to show a swing against the party of government at Westminster'.

[10 marks]

1 2

'The Council of Ministers and the European Parliament each suffer from a democratic deficit.' Discuss.

[25 marks]

END OF QUESTIONS

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