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General Certificate of Education  
January 2011

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## Government and Politics

Assessment Unit A2 1

Comparative Government

[AQ211]

FRIDAY 21 JANUARY, MORNING

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AQ211

### TIME

2 hours 15 minutes.

### INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Write your Centre Number and Candidate Number on the Answer Booklet provided. Choose **either Option A**: The United Kingdom and the United States of America **or Option B**: The United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland.

From your chosen option, study the source provided and answer questions **1** to **4** and either **5(a)** or **5(b)**.

### INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

The total mark for this paper is 100.

Quality of written communication will be assessed in questions **1**, **3**, **4** and **5**.

Figures in brackets printed down the right-hand side of pages indicate the marks awarded to each question or part question.

### ADVICE TO CANDIDATES

You are advised to take account of the marks for each question in allocating the available examination time. For your chosen option, you should spend approximately **40 minutes** in answering question **1** in Section A.

You are advised to study the source before attempting to answer this question and refer to the source in your answer.

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**Option A: The United Kingdom and the United States of America****Section A: The US Constitution**

Study the source below and answer the question that follows.

**Source**

For States' Rights advocates, the Federal model is hard to recognise in modern USA. The government in Washington DC has far more power than was ever intended. It intervenes in local affairs in ways that the Framers wished to prevent. From this point of view, the watershed was the New Deal, in which the President was able effectively to bully the Supreme Court into accepting a fundamental change in the relationship between the states and the Federal government. This demonstrated the validity of the concerns long voiced by supporters of States' Rights: that the constitutional safeguards against the concentration of power at the national level are inadequate.

*Adapted from: William Storey, US Government and Politics, Edinburgh University Press, 2007*

- 1 With reference to the source, and any other information you have studied, discuss the extent to which the US Constitution continues to limit the power of the Federal Government.

[30]

**Section B: Government in the UK and the USA**

**Answer all four questions.**

- 2 Explain what is meant by the term “electoral college”. Support your answer with a relevant example.
- 3 Explain how the President can overcome constitutional restraints. [10]
- 4 Compare and contrast the scrutinising powers of the Senate and the House of Lords. [25]
- 5 **Either**
- (a) “US Presidents have much less legislative freedom than British Prime Ministers.” Evaluate this view. [30]
- Or**
- (b) “UK Prime Ministers have fewer limitations than US Presidents on the exercise of their powers.” Evaluate this view. [30]

## Option B: The United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland

### Section A: The Irish Constitution

Study the source below and answer the question that follows.

#### Source

Bunreacht na hÉireann has been the subject of periodic review. What emerges from the reviews, including the more recent ones by the Constitution Review Group and the two All-Party Oireachtas Committees that have preceded this one, is that the constitution is a fundamentally sound document that commands the respect of the people and serves them well. However, the reviews suggest that in addition to the twenty-three amendments already carried out, some further amendments are necessary or desirable in order to renew the constitution fully.

© Department of the Taoiseach. Adapted from: *The All-Party Committee on the Constitution*. [www.constitution.ie](http://www.constitution.ie)

- 1 With reference to the source and other relevant material you have studied, discuss the view that the constitution is a “fundamentally sound document” that serves the Irish people well.

[30]

**Section B: Government in the UK and the Republic of Ireland**

**Answer all four questions.**

- 2 Explain what is meant by the term “collective responsibility”. Support your answer with a relevant example.
- 3 Explain why TDs spend so much of their time on constituency work. [10]
- 4 Compare and contrast the composition and functions of the House of Lords and Seanad Éireann. [25]
- 5 **Either**
- (a) “British governments are strong and durable but Irish governments are weak and prone to collapse.” Evaluate this view. [30]
- Or**
- (b) “Scrutiny of the executive is much more effective in the UK than it is in the Republic of Ireland.” Evaluate this view. [30]

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**THIS IS THE END OF THE QUESTION PAPER**

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