

**OCR ADVANCED SUBSIDIARY GCE
IN GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS (3834)**

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Teacher Support

This Teacher Support booklet is designed to accompany the OCR Advanced Subsidiary GCE and Advanced GCE specifications in Government and Politics for teaching from September 2000.

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1 Introduction

This guide has been produced to assist teachers when they are devising schemes of work and lesson plans in order to teach the OCR Advanced Subsidiary GCE in Government and Politics (3834). It consists of suggestions and approaches to the work which Centres may consider helpful.

The specification booklet contains the approved content which will be examined, and administrative details connected with the specification. The specification has been approved by QCA and cannot be changed without approval. This booklet, however, has the status of guidance only - there is nothing binding in it. It contains no additional 'requirements' to those in the specification booklet.

Suggestions for additions and improvements to this booklet are very welcome. Please contact the Subject Officer for Government and Politics at OCR (see Section 7 for contact details) with your ideas.

2 Teaching Strategies

The specification development team had in mind two possible teaching strategies:

- (a) one module could be taught per term, and Centres could start with either Module 2595 or Module 2597;
- (b) another approach might be that Module 2597 could be taught throughout the year in 40% of the weekly teaching sessions, with Modules 2595 and 2596 being taught in that order in the other sessions.

Some Centres may have two staff teaching a group, so one could teach Modules 2595 and 2596 and the other Module 2597. Those involved in the design of the OCR specifications, who were also intending to teach it, planned several different teaching models for the Advanced Subsidiary.

One model was simply one member of staff teaching the course throughout. Module 2597 could be taught first and examined in the January of the first year of the course. It was felt that this would serve very well as an introductory module and with its broader and more general sweep might be less taxing and therefore be suited to being taught first. As it counted for 20% of the total A level (with Units 2595 and 2596 counting for 15% each) it was also felt that the additional time that could be given to it in the longer Autumn term was more appropriate. It would be easier for students to revise, independently, over the Christmas break.

Another plan was for two teachers to teach the Advanced Subsidiary. With one teacher taking 4 x 40 minute sessions a week covering Modules 2595 and 2596 and one teacher with 3 x 40 minute sessions teaching Module 2597. This would suit Centres where it was not intended to timetable an AS January examination, but to use the January opportunity for the one retake in Year 13.

A third possible teaching programme, working on three ten week blocks, is set out below. This was a plan put forward by the three Principal Examiners for AS, all of whom are involved in teaching Year 12 students in Government and Politics.

Module 2595 Elections, Electoral Systems and Voting Behaviour in the UK

| Week | Topics |
|------|--|
| 1 | UK Parliamentary Elections |
| 2 | UK Parliamentary Elections |
| 3 | Local, Scottish, Welsh, Northern Irish, EU Elections |
| 4 | Referendums |
| 5 | Electoral Systems |
| 6 | Electoral Systems |
| 7 | Campaigns |
| 8 | Campaigns and Voting Behaviour |
| 9 | Voting Behaviour |
| 10 | Voting Behaviour |

Module 2596 Politics of the UK

| Week | Topics |
|------|---|
| 1 | Political Parties |
| 2 | Political Parties |
| 3 | Political Parties |
| 4 | Political Parties |
| 5 | Pressure Groups |
| 6 | Pressure Groups |
| 7 | Civil Rights and Liberties |
| 8 | Civil Right and Liberties and the Redress of Grievances |
| 9 | The Redress of Grievances |
| 10 | Citizenship |

Module 2597 Government of the UK

| Week | Topics |
|------|--|
| 1 | The Constitution |
| 2 | The Prime Minister and Cabinet |
| 3 | The Prime Minister and Cabinet |
| 4 | The Delivery of Government Policy |
| 5 | The Relationship between the executive and the judiciary |
| 6 | Parliament |
| 7 | Parliament |
| 8 | Parliament |
| 9 | The Relationship between the UK and the EU |
| 10 | The Relationship between the UK and the EU |

Additional Comments

We are very conscious that new Advanced Subsidiary GCE has to be very different from the old Advanced Supplementary. We will follow the guidelines of QCA in several ways to ensure that the level at which candidates are assessed is appropriate - in other words what it is proper to expect from a candidate at the end of Year 12. That will be our objective. We intend to achieve this in several ways.

- (a) The first way is by ensuring that the language used is entirely appropriate. While technical terms such as 'whips' are used they will be ones which are central to the specifications. We would think that words such as 'insider' or 'outsider' groups are appropriate when dealing with pressure groups, but we would not expect to use such concepts as pluralism in a question. If a candidate introduced such a concept, and it was relevant, in an answer then of course we would reward it very highly. We will seek to ensure that the language used in Advanced Subsidiary is entirely appropriate, both in the source material used and in the questions set.
- (b) We will always make it absolutely clear what we expect in terms of answers in the relevant mark scheme and in the way we phrase questions. Candidates should know that if we ask them to 'give definitions', 'describe', 'outline' we are allocating AO1 marks and if we ask them to 'explain', 'argue' 'examine', or 'make out a case' we are going to allocate mainly AO2 marks. AO3 marks are awarded for every question in AS. It is worthwhile stressing that AO3 marks total 60 of the 300 marks at AS which is a significant percentage. If there are three Assessment Objectives being targeted in a question such as in Unit 2596, Question 4, then the examiner will be expected to give three separate marks - one for each objective. In a question like Unit 2596, Question 1, where only AO1 and AO3 are targeted, only two separate marks will be allocated.
- (c) When setting questions, examiners aim for the A grade threshold at 80% of the marks and the E grade at 40%. We would expect it to be quite possible for an outstanding candidate to get 100% and we are anxious to get away from the idea that an A should start at 65% and that marks stop at about 80%. Candidates who demonstrate real awareness of contemporary political issues, sophisticated knowledge, signs of independent thought or research, the ability to think conceptually or present a powerful and thought out case will be highly rewarded.

Those setting and marking the papers will follow *QCA Code of Practice*, to ensure that we:

- (i) meet the aims of the specifications;
- (ii) meet the assessment objectives;
- (iii) use the assessment matrix properly;
- (iv) use the specifications fully and bear in mind the preamble to each unit as well as the content;
- (v) do not deviate from what is in the specifications or in the specimen assessment materials;
- (vi) adhere to the style of question laid out in the specimen assessment materials and the principles laid down in the specimen mark schemes.

Other points which we would like to stress to teachers of AS Government and Politics:

- questions overall will be simpler than the old A Level or the new A2;
- when we are looking just for AO1 marks we will make this clear by asking candidates to 'summarise', 'describe', 'outline';

- when we are looking for AO2 marks we shall ask them to 'assess', 'analyse', 'evaluate', 'comment on', 'argue a case', or 'explain';
- we would not expect answers to even the longest questions in Units 2595 and 2596 to be more than 400 words;
- we will not expect knowledge of events pre-1979;
- we would stress the need for relevance and sharp focus. We would not expect to see lengthy (or even any) introductions. Candidates should just answer the question. We would not expect to see conclusions either, unless the question clearly required them.
- really encourage candidates to use short, sharp sentences and paragraphs;
- detail and depth are still needed for high marks, encourage candidates to avoid the sweeping generalisation;
- really encourage candidates to use examples to back up points;
- answers must be in continuous prose, not notes or bullet points.

3 Module 2595: Elections, Electoral Systems and Voting Behaviour in the UK

This module is designed to be taught in one term. Naturally terms can vary in length according to the type of Centre. The amount of time allocated to a subject at AS will vary as well. Some Centres may wish to teach it after they have done Module 2597, perhaps in the second term which tends to be shorter than the first. This is appropriate as Unit 2595 counts for 30% of the AS total and Unit 2597 counts for 40%.

What has to be studied is laid out in the specification booklet. A sophisticated level of knowledge will not be required, but detail on elections from 1979 onwards will be required. A good level of knowledge of the General Election prior to the examination taken will also be expected, unless it takes place less than a month prior to the exam being taken. The same applies to all elections. We would expect to see a reasonable amount of knowledge of all elections in the United Kingdom; who can vote and how they vote and when the elections take place. We would expect to see a sound knowledge of the history of the referendum in the UK and the current debate on it.

The detail required on electoral systems is fairly evident in the specification content. We would expect to see a sound knowledge of the main different types of electoral system and the ability to compare the UK system with the various systems in use in the EU.

Voting Behaviour is possibly the most difficult to quantify. At least an outline knowledge of the main models is needed, as well as the prevailing 'thinking'. A reasonable knowledge of recent elections is called for (which will fit in well with earlier parts of this specification), as well as factors such as region, class, gender and ethnicity issues. Examiners will bear in mind that there will have been about 8 or 9 hours of taught time on this topic.

It is envisaged that at least two of the topics bullet-pointed in the specification content for Module 2595 will be examined in any one paper, but it could well be more. It is not difficult to envisage a question which easily covers the first four or five points listed. Examiners will expect students to have studied all of the specification content with a broad coverage rather than a very intensive one on just one or two topics.

3.1 Questions in Unit 2595

Question 1

Question 1 will always be similar to the one in the specimen paper. It will be out of 10 marks, 8 for AO1 and 2 for AO3. Several different types of source will be given ranging from excerpts from the press, speeches by politicians, pie charts, bar charts, statistics, cartoons. No analytical skills will be expected in the answer, just the ability to examine the sources and draw conclusions from them. The question will be along the lines of *'Using sources A and B, and your own knowledge, describe...'* The examiner will be expected to place two separate marks at the end of the question, one for AO1 and the other for AO3. Use of the candidate's own knowledge will be expected.

Question 2

This will be of a similar format to Question 1. It will be out of 20 marks with 16 for AO1 and 4 for AO3. It will be more challenging and will require more sophisticated explanation. Knowledge in addition to what is available from the source/s will be required. If three sources are specified, e.g. *'Using Sources A, C and D and your own knowledge, give four reasons for...'*, then full marks can only be obtained if all three sources are used.

Question 3

This will tend to be of the type similar to that in the specimen paper. There are 30 marks available, of which 16 are allocated to AO 1, 8 to AO 2 and 6 to AO3. In the specimen paper example, the 8 AO2 marks will be awarded for the quality of the explanation as to why class is less important. Arguing that it is still fairly important will also gain AO2 marks. The 16 AO1 marks are allocated partly to intelligent use of the sources (max 6) and the rest to the range of reasons, and backup facts, as to why class is less important and what other factors have become important in determining voting behaviour. Simply using own knowledge or the source will not do. A candidate just using the source would find it very difficult to get more than 10 marks, however well written the answer.

Question 4

This question will be broadly similar in approach to Question 3. More marks are allocated to AO2 (16), so candidates should be told that this is the question where discursive/analytical skills will be most highly rewarded. As the specimen states, an argument is called for. The candidate who utilises the source effectively (but fairly briefly) and then goes on not only to look at the merits of reform, but also at the failings of the present system should do well. The very highest marks will go to the candidates who not only have a well balanced case, but argue concisely and back up points with relevant and accurate statistics/detail.

4 Module 2596: Politics of the United Kingdom

This is the second module, and is intended to follow on from Module 2595. The intention is that a more sophisticated level of understanding is required in the assessment of this module. Although the source/s should provide a clear stimulus to aid answers it is not the intention that there will be the same degree of utility in terms of answer as is the case in Unit 2595. There will not be so much useful content in the source/s, because they are 'stimulus' material.

It is not the intention to set a question specifically on only one of the bullet pointed sections in the specified content each time the unit is examined. A question on both pressure groups and civil liberties could be expected. The sources and the questions could be on any one or more of the topics listed in the content section of the specification. It is expected that all the items specified will be taught.

The unit is suitable for examination in either January or June. We would see the method of assessment in this unit as a step on from that in Unit 2595, so this unit is perhaps more suited to being taken later in the course. There are more AO2 marks allocated than is the case with Unit 2595.

The level of detail expected will be appropriate for this level, half way between GCSE and the old A Level. For example in a 'Redress of Grievances' question, candidates would be expected to know what Parliament and an MP can do to assist a constituent, and be able to quote a relevant example or two. What the Ombudsman can or cannot do should also be known, and again an example or two should be known. On a 'Political Parties' question (where the specified content refers to 'philosophy and ideology'), we are not looking for a deep understanding and history of the evolution of socialism, but we would expect candidates to have some understanding of 'Old Labour' and how it became 'New', and the Labour policies that have come and gone. On 'Party Conferences' we would not expect a detailed knowledge of what had happened at the past three conferences for all the major parties, but for example if there had been a massive split in a major party in the autumn conference preceding the unit, then appropriate mention ought to be made of it in a question on party conferences.

We would expect to see a reasonable number of important and relatively recent examples to illustrate major points, for example, the Dunblane/Snowdrop example for pressure groups, the Conservative dissension over Europe and the current Government's policy on the Euro. We would like to stress that we expect candidates to back up specific points made in their answers with reasonably recent examples. Students having studied Pressure Groups ought not only to cover the areas laid out in the specified content, but also have a reasonable knowledge of three or four insider and three or four outsider groups to quote as examples. Under Political Parties - Funding we would expect knowledge about where the main parties get their funds from, some knowledge of the concerns caused by the Ecclestone/Ashcroft affairs, and the main points made by the Neill Report.

The specimen question indicates the type of assessment method that will be used. There will always be one or two pieces of prose of about this length. They may come from different types of source, but they will be from the sort of sources that a politics student might use. These might include parliamentary debate, an article from the Economist, a hand out from a pressure group, a party manifesto etc. The source/s will not necessarily be on the same topic. One might be on political parties and the other on pressure groups and the overall focus of the question could be the relationships between parties and pressure groups and the differences between the two.

If any technical language is used, then it will be of a type that candidates studying this topic ought to know, eg in the specimen, 'lobby' and 'insider' and 'outsider' groups.

4.1 Questions in Unit 2596

In Unit 2596 the first two questions will focus on A01 (there are no A02 marks for either).

Question 1

To get the 8 marks allocated for A01 in 1 (i) there has to be a full definition making at least four clear points which would get six marks. A further mark each would be given to each accurate example. The two marks allocated to A03 would be split roughly to two for the presentation, spelling grammar, punctuation etc, and a further two for the effectiveness of the communication.

Question 2

In Question 2, 16 marks are allocated to A01 and here (in the specimen paper example) we would be looking for a simple and accurate description of the Conservative and Labour methods of choosing their leaders. No debate on the old Labour method nor the proposed Conservative changes would be expected, but reference to the Blair/Hague processes would help and be rewarded. A straightforward and clear description of the role of conference in each party is all that is need for 2 (ii) - a couple of points on each will suffice for full marks. The A03 marks would be allocated in the same way as in (a).

Question 3

In Question 3, 16 marks are allocated for A01. To gain these marks in the specimen paper example the candidates would be expected to focus on areas such as the different structures and objectives. Candidates who bring in examples to highlight differences and show their understanding of them will be highly rewarded. The 8 AO2 marks will go to the discussion of which are the most important differences and why.

Keeping the focus on the 'most important' will be crucial. Candidates who show an awareness of such concepts as participation and representation will be highly rewarded.

Question 4

In Question 4 the 16 A01 marks are allocated to the ways in which pressure groups harm the democratic process. We would be thinking roughly in terms of four major points, fully developed with examples, for the sixteen AO2 marks. Again the candidate who could use examples to illustrate/reinforce a point would be rewarded. The 16 A02 marks will be awarded for the quality of the argument and the overall analysis of the issue. A candidate who feels strongly need not fear s/he would be penalised for strong views, but there would have to be clear signs of balance before marks in level 4 could be awarded. An understanding of the 'democratic process' in this context would be vital for gaining the highest marks.

5 Unit 2597: Government of the UK

Knowledge of the following areas will be required:

The Constitution - This requires a broad understanding of what is meant by the UK Constitution, its origins and its underlying principles. The debate over the written/unwritten constitution needs to be known as do the recent changes. The impact of membership of the EU on it ought to be known as well, but this of course overlaps with the later section on the EU.

Parliament - This will deal with the role of parliament in the government of the UK. Candidates should have a good awareness of the roles of Parliament and how effectively they are performed. Both parts of Parliament should be studied, and an awareness of the role of the second chamber and the recent changes and debates would be expected. Detailed knowledge of such items as the precise status of the report stage of a Bill or the powers of the Sergeant at Arms is not required. Keep the focus on the broader issues such as executive domination of the legislature and the changing roles of Parliament.

The Prime Minister and Cabinet - The roles of both and the changing relationship need to be known. A reasonable working knowledge of how they have changed since 1979 will be needed. The debate on the 'Presidential' issue ought to be known. The growing use of policy advisers for example should be known. Collective responsibility and its implications and importance would also be expected knowledge.

Ministers and Civil Servants - The main focus here should be on their respective roles, the needs of democracy in this context and the recent changes in the Civil Service and the creation of agencies. Candidates should know the different roles of a Civil Service Department and an agency. The role of the quangos needs to be known, and some idea of types and impact are needed. A detailed knowledge of Civil Service hierarchy and recruitment is not necessary.

The relationship between the Executive and the Judiciary - We are not looking for a detailed knowledge of the structure of the judicial system in the UK. The focus will be on the relationship between the Executive and the Judiciary; the degree of control which politicians exert over the judiciary; the 'independent' judiciary debate. Students should know about issues like the way in which the Lord Chancellor breaches the 'separation of powers' rule and related issues such as the rule of law and the independence of the judiciary in outline. Judicial Review should be taught, but of course linked in to the 'Redress of Grievances' section of Module 2596.

The relationship between the UK and the EU - The focus will be on the relationship between the two. Detailed knowledge of the actual workings of the EU Commission will not be required, but the relationship between the Commission, The European Courts, the European Parliament and their UK counterparts needs to be known. The impact of membership of the EU on all major aspects of British Government needs to be taught.

Resources

In addition to the standard texts recommended, the topics in this module are well covered in the 'Access to Politics' series, the two main periodicals targeted at 16+ students of Politics (see Section 6, page 13), and of course the Internet is an invaluable resource with all parties, most pressure groups, Parliament and the Government having their own website.

5.1 Questions in Unit 2597

It should be noted that three questions have to be attempted, including one from Section B. It is therefore essential to teach the European Union and it is strongly recommended that all the topics laid out in the specification content for Section A are taught as well. We do not guarantee to set a question on each of the topics in Section A. It is also worth remembering that if candidates proceed on to A2, the synoptic paper will assume that all parts of this module have been taught.

All the questions in Unit 2597 will follow a similar pattern, with half the marks going to AO1 objectives and half to A02. This is of course a greater allocation to AO2 than is the case in either Unit 2595 or 2596.

In Question 6 of the specimen paper for example we would expect to see a good survey of the main methods of 'executive checking' in 6(a), ranging from debates, committees, ombudsman, questions, etc. The key word to note is 'main' and we would not expect too much precise detail. Recent examples which demonstrate understanding will, of course, be well rewarded. In the second part, 6(b), the candidate who thinks what 'effective' might mean in this context will do well. We expect two separate methods to be considered. For example, one might be Select Committees and we would expect to see, for the highest marks, some comment on both their strengths and limitations, backed up with some examples.

6 Resources

In addition to those listed in the approved specifications, it is worth stressing other invaluable resources for AS Government and Politics.

Two periodicals aimed very much at students of the 16-18 age group are

- (a) Teaching Politics
- (b) Politics Review

which both regularly have articles on all the main topics studied in all three modules.

There is a huge number of resources made available by the Politics Association to member schools and colleges. Membership of this organisation is strongly recommended as not only does the organisation run courses for both teachers and students, but also publishes very cheaply a huge amount of relevant material (which is regularly updated) on virtually every aspect of British Politics.

The address of the Politics Association Resource Centre (PARC) is:

Politics Association Resource Centre (PARC)
Old Hall Lane
Manchester
M13 0XT

e-mail: politic@enablis.co.uk

website: www.politics-association.org.uk

telephone / fax: 0161-256-3906

7 OCR Contacts

Subject Officer for AS/A Level Government and Politics (syllabus-specific queries only)

OCR
Mill Wharf
Mill Street
Birmingham
B6 4BU

Training and Customer Support (INSET enquiries)

OCR
Mill Wharf
Mill Street
Birmingham
B6 4BU

Tel: 0121 628 2950
Fax: 0121 628 2940
Email: tcs@ocr.org.uk

OCR Information Bureau (other queries)

Tel: 01223 553998
Email: helpdesk@ocr.org.uk