

# X235/12/01

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NATIONAL  
QUALIFICATIONS  
2012

WEDNESDAY, 6 JUNE  
1.00 PM – 2.00 PM

POLITICS  
HIGHER  
Paper 1

Answer **both** questions.



**Study Sources A and B and answer the question which follows.**

**Source A: Referenda**

In the aftermath of the MP expenses scandal, several senior politicians argued that measures needed to be taken to create “a new kind of politics” that engaged the public more directly. One of the proposals concerned the more frequent use of referenda in the decision-making process. There has been an increase in the use of referenda in recent British history, usually on constitutional issues such as devolution or the creation of directly elected mayors. In recent years all of the main political parties have, at some time or other, argued for the use of referenda to settle contentious issues.

Supporters of increasing the use of referenda have argued that they would encourage greater participation in the political system. They have pointed to relatively high turnouts in referenda as evidence to back up their claims. They point out that referenda provide an additional opportunity for the public to engage with the political system other than just voting in elections. They also provide an opportunity for the public to indicate their support or opposition to a particular policy. However others fear that the more referenda are used then the more likely the result will be increasing voter fatigue and lower participation rates. Critics argue that in these circumstances decisions may be made by a relatively small section of the electorate when turnout is low and therefore referenda may not accurately represent the views of the public on a particular issue. As a consequence the result may, in fact, lack legitimacy.

Opponents also point out that the use of referenda undermines the system of representative democracy. By voting in an election, voters pass on responsibility for decision making to the elected representatives who can then deal with complex problems such as climate change and the future of pensions. This often involves negotiation and compromise. These critics have argued that some issues are too complex to be reduced to a simple Yes/No choice and would merely leave the choice in the hands of the less informed. The example of California is often highlighted. Voters in this state have frequently initiated referenda and have passed laws which have limited the ability of elected representatives to take effective action to deal with the problems facing California. Many suspect that this has been a major factor in California’s current financial crisis. On the other hand supporters have claimed that referenda would actually enhance public understanding of key political issues. Referenda campaigns, they argue, would provide an opportunity to inform the public on the merits of the respective arguments. The media coverage of the main arguments surrounding an issue could only result in a more educated and better informed electorate.

Referenda in the UK have been used to settle important constitutional issues as they have provided a clear and definitive answer to a specific question. In recent years their use has fulfilled the important task of legitimising some significant constitutional changes. For example, the 1997 Devolution referendum clearly indicated the desire of the Scottish people to see a devolved assembly created in Edinburgh. The scale of support in this referendum resulted in opponents accepting that this change was the “settled will” of the people of Scotland. This referendum was attacked by some nationalists because voters were not presented with the option of voting for complete independence. This exposes what some critics argue is a major flaw in the use of referenda. The government of the day may be able to word the question presented to voters in such a way as to achieve its desired outcome or to ignore a potentially more popular option.

**Source B: Results in recent referenda held in the UK**

*Marks*

| <b>Issue</b>                        | <b>Turnout (%)</b> | <b>Yes (%)</b> | <b>No (%)</b> |
|-------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------|---------------|
| Scottish Devolution (1997)          | 60·4               | 74·3           | 25·7          |
| Belfast Agreement (1998)            | 81·1               | 71·1           | 28·9          |
| London Mayor (1998)                 | 34·1               | 72·0           | 28·0          |
| North East Regional Assembly (2004) | 47·7               | 22·1           | 77·9          |

**Question 1**

*Use only the information in Sources A and B.*

What are the arguments for and against the use of referenda in the UK?

**6**

**[Turn over**

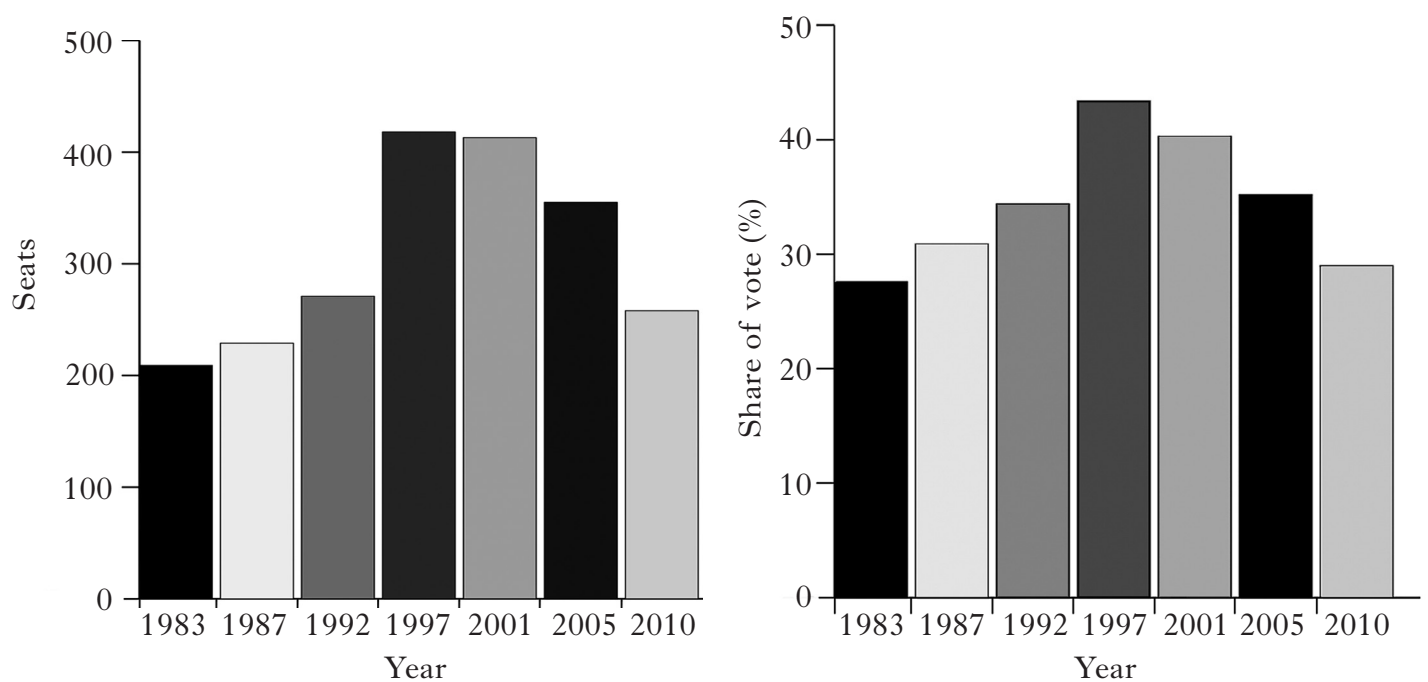
**Source C: Selected Opinion Polls released in the final days of the 2010 UK General Election campaign showing support for the major UK parties**

| <b>Polling organisation/<br/>Client</b>            | <b>Labour</b> | <b>Conservative</b> | <b>Liberal<br/>Democrats</b> |
|--|---------------|---------------------|------------------------------|
| YouGov/The Sun                                     | 28%           | 35%                 | 28%                          |
| Populus/The Times                                  | 28%           | 37%                 | 27%                          |
| Angus Reid Public Opinion/<br>PoliticalBetting.com | 24%           | 36%                 | 29%                          |
| Opinium/Daily Express                              | 27%           | 35%                 | 26%                          |
| ComRes/ITV/The<br>Independent                      | 28%           | 37%                 | 28%                          |

**Source D: UK General Election Result 2010**

|                              | <b>Seats</b> | <b>Change from<br/>previous<br/>election</b> | <b>Share<br/>of vote (%)</b> | <b>Change from<br/>previous<br/>election (%)</b> |
|------------------------------|--------------|--|------------------------------|--|
| <b>Conservative</b>          | 306          | +96  | 36.1                         | +3.8   |
| <b>Labour</b>                | 258          | -90  | 29.0                         | -6.3   |
| <b>Liberal<br/>Democrats</b> | 57           | -5   | 23.0                         | -0.9   |

**Source E: Labour Party Performance in UK General Elections (1983–2010)**



**Source F: Election results 2010 by Area (Great Britain) and change from previous election.**

|                 | <b>Con</b> | <b>Lab</b> | <b>Lib Dem</b> | <b>Others</b> | <b>Total</b> |
|-----------------|------------|------------|----------------|---------------|--------------|
| <b>England</b>  |            |            |                |               |              |
| Seats           | 297        | 191        | 43             | 2             | 533          |
| Change          | +91        | -87        | -4             | 0             | 0            |
|                 |            |            |                |               |              |
| Share of vote   | 39.5%      | 28.1%      | 24.2%          | 8.2%          | 100.0%       |
| Change          | +3.8%      | -7.4%      | +1.3%          | +2.3%         | 0            |
|                 |            |            |                |               |              |
| <b>Scotland</b> |            |            |                |               |              |
| Seats           | 1          | 41         | 11             | 6             | 59           |
| Change          | 0          | +1         | 0              | 0             | 0            |
|                 |            |            |                |               |              |
| Share of vote   | 16.7%      | 42.0%      | 18.9%          | 19.9%         | 100.0%       |
| Change          | +0.9%      | +3.1%      | -3.7%          | +2.3%         | 0            |
|                 |            |            |                |               |              |
| <b>Wales</b>    |            |            |                |               |              |
| Seats           | 8          | 26         | 3              | 3             | 40           |
| Change          | +5         | -4         | -1             | +1            | 0            |
|                 |            |            |                |               |              |
| Share of vote   | 26.1%      | 36.3%      | 20.1%          | 11.3%         | 100.0%       |
| Change          | +4.7%      | -6.5%      | +1.7%          | -1.3%         | 0            |

**Source G: Changes in Voting by Social Class, Gender and Age 2010 General Election**

|                     | <b>Changes since 2005 (%)</b> |            |                |
|---------------------|-------------------------------|------------|----------------|
|                     | <b>Con</b>                    | <b>Lab</b> | <b>Lib Dem</b> |
| <b>Social Class</b> |                               |            |                |
| AB                  | +2                            | -2         | 0              |
| C1                  | +2                            | -4         | +1             |
| C2                  | +4                            | -11        | +3             |
| DE                  | +6                            | -8         | -1             |
| <b>Gender</b>       |                               |            |                |
| Male                | +4                            | -6         | 0              |
| Female              | +4                            | -7         | +3             |
| <b>Age</b>          |                               |            |                |
| 18-24               | +2                            | -7         | +4             |
| 25-34               | +10                           | -8         | +2             |
| 35-44               | +7                            | -10        | +3             |
| 45-54               | +3                            | -7         | +1             |
| 55-64               | -1                            | -3         | +1             |
| 65+                 | +3                            | -4         | -2             |

## Question 2

Marks

Use only the information in Sources C, D, E, F and G.

“Opinion polls conducted in the last few days before the 2010 General Election accurately predicted the position of the major parties and their share of the vote. 2010 was undoubtedly Labour’s worst performance since 1983; Labour was comprehensively defeated right across the country with the Conservatives making the biggest gains in every area of Great Britain and in every section of the electorate.”

To what extent does the information in **Sources C, D, E, F** and **G** support this viewpoint? **14**

[END OF QUESTION PAPER]

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NATIONAL  
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WEDNESDAY, 6 JUNE  
2.20 PM – 4.00 PM

POLITICS  
HIGHER  
Paper 2

Candidates should answer **THREE** questions.

**ONE** from Section A—Political Theory

**ONE** from Section B—Political Structures

**ONE** from Section C—Political Representation

Each question carries 20 marks.



**Section A—Political Theory**

*Marks*

**Answer ONE question from this section.**

- A1.** Steven Lukes' classifications of types of legitimacy, authority and power are far more relevant for the 21st century than those of Max Weber.  
Discuss. **(20)**
- A2.** Using the works of appropriate theorists, examine the key features of direct and representative democracy. **(20)**
- A3.** Compare and contrast the key features of John Locke's Liberalism with those of Karl Marx's Socialism. **(20)**

**Section B—Political Structures**

*Marks*

**Answer ONE question from this section.**

- B4.** “Political assemblies are failing to scrutinise effectively the actions of the Executive.”  
Discuss with reference to the UK Parliament and **either** the Scottish Parliament **or** the US Congress. (20)
- B5.** Compare and contrast the main features of the UK constitution with that of **either** Scotland **or** the USA. (20)
- B6.** Compare and contrast the policy making functions of the UK Prime Minister with those of **either** Scotland’s First Minister **or** the President of the USA. (20)

**[Turn over for Section C on *Page four***

**Section C—Political Representation**

*Marks*

**Answer ONE question from this section.**

- C7.** To what extent do the delegate and trustee models place contrasting demands on the actions of representatives? **(20)**
- C8.** “Long term influences on voting behaviour now have much less significance than short term influences.”  
Discuss. **(20)**
- C9.** “The Additional Member System of voting has all the advantages of the First Past the Post system but none of its disadvantages.”  
Discuss. **(20)**

*[END OF QUESTION PAPER]*