

X235/301

NATIONAL
QUALIFICATIONS
2009

THURSDAY, 11 JUNE
9.00 AM – 10.00 AM

POLITICS
HIGHER
Paper 1

Answer **both** questions.



Study the sources below and answer the questions which follow.

Source A: Compulsory voting

Many political commentators are worried about the apparent rise in political apathy in the UK. One indicator, voter turnout, has approached historic lows in recent elections (under 60% in the 2001 General Election). In 2005, the “did not vote” section of the electorate was greater than the proportion of voters who supported the winning party.

A number of proposals have been made in order to combat this disengagement within our political system, some of which have been piloted in recent elections at local, devolved and national levels. These have included new methods of voting such as voting by e-mail, changing the electoral system to ensure every vote counts and altering the days elections are held on. Compulsory voting has also been advocated as a possible solution to this problem.

In 2001, MORI, on behalf of the Electoral Commission, carried out a survey and compulsory voting was identified as the best way to deal with low voter turnout. Compulsory voting exists in a number of countries across the world. If introduced in the UK it would mean that voters would be faced with a small fine, unless they had a reasonable excuse, if they failed to turnout at the polling station on election day. A similar system of compulsory voting exists in Australia though voters are not forced to make a choice and are free to spoil or leave their ballot paper unmarked.

One frequent criticism of compulsory voting is that it removes the right of the individual not to vote. If a right to vote exists then so surely should a right not to vote. However, it has been argued that voting is as much a responsibility as it is a right and turning out to vote should be viewed as a civic duty especially given the suffering faced by those who fought for this right to be available for all. The introduction of some form of compulsory voting would pose practical problems, it may be difficult to enforce and many groups may have to be exempted for a variety of reasons. The extent of the fine would also have to take into account the ability to pay so as not to unduly punish those on low incomes. These may reduce the effectiveness of the sanctions required to “encourage” non voters to turn up at their local polling stations. There may also be a risk that such a move would merely encourage the apathetic to cast spoiled ballot papers. Indeed, the fault may lie not with the individual voter but rest with the inability of the political parties to sufficiently motivate the electorate. Alternatively, it has been argued that much of the blame may rest at the door of a cynical media.

In 2001, a Private Members Bill, supporting compulsory voting, was introduced in Parliament although it did not pass beyond a First Reading in the Commons. Supporters of the introduction of compulsory voting have pointed out that the evidence suggests it does improve participation rates and that this can only be healthy for democracy. It would make the results of elections more representative of the population as a whole and enhance the legitimacy of the Government. It may even encourage the electorate to pay more attention to the issues thus raising the level of political awareness. This would allow the political parties to engage with the electorate rather than concentrating on their “core voters”.

Source B: Turnout in Parliamentary Elections in Selected Countries

Country	Parliamentary election	Turnout
Australia*	2007	95.6%
Belgium*	2003	96.3%
France	2007	61.0%
Germany	2005	77.7%
Greece*	2004	76.0%
United Kingdom	2005	61.4%

*denotes compulsory voting system in operation.

Question 1

Use only the information in Sources A and B.

What are the arguments for and against introducing compulsory voting in the UK. **6**

[Turn over

Source C: The 2007 Scottish Parliament Elections

The 2007 Scottish Parliament elections were notable for a number of reasons. Alex Salmond emerged as the new First Minister, leading an SNP minority administration. It was the first time the SNP had come first in a Scottish election and its 32.9% of the constituency vote was its highest vote ever. It was the first time Labour had failed to come first in a Scottish election since 1955.

The election saw the return of Scotland's first Asian MSP but will probably be remembered for the substantial increase in the number of spoiled ballot papers. It has been estimated that there were 75,073 more spoilt ballots than in the 2003 elections, a phenomenon attributed to voter confusion created by holding local council elections on the same day but using a different electoral system. In fact, in 15 of the constituencies, the number of spoilt ballots was greater than the majority of the winning candidate.

Source D: Voter Turnout by Region

Region	Turnout 1999	Turnout 2003	Turnout 2007
Central Scotland	59.40%	48.53%	50.49%
Glasgow	47.92%	41.47%	41.61%
Highlands and Islands	61.17%	52.29%	54.71%
Lothians	61.07%	50.47%	54.06%
Mid Scotland and Fife	59.32%	49.70%	52.83%
North East Scotland	54.52%	48.28%	50.71%
South of Scotland	61.72%	52.34%	53.64%
West of Scotland	61.54%	53.31%	56.51%
Scotland	58.16%	49.42%	51.72%

Source E: Scottish Parliament Election Results (2003–2007)

Party	Constituency		Regional		Total	
	2003 Seats	2007 Seats	2003 Seats	2007 Seats	2003 Seats	2007 Seats
Labour	46	37	4	9	50	46
SNP	9	21	18	26	27	47
Con	3	4	15	13	18	17
Lib Dem	13	11	4	5	17	16
SSP	0	0	6	0	6	0
Green	0	0	7	2	7	2
Others	2	0	2	1	4	1

Source F: Change in Share of Vote for Selected Parties

	2003–2007 Differences	
	Constituency %	Regional %
Labour	-2.5	-0.1
SNP	9.1	10.2
Lib Dem	0.8	-0.5
Con	0.0	-1.6
Green	n/a	-2.9
SSP/Solidarity	-6.0	-4.5

[Turn over

Source G: MSPs by Region (2007)

Region	Con	Lab	Lib Dem	SNP	Green	Others	Total
Central Scotland	1	8	1	7	0	0	17
Glasgow	1	9	1	5	1	0	17
Highlands and Islands	2	3	4	6	0	0	15
Lothians	2	5	2	5	1	1	16
Mid Scotland and Fife	3	5	2	6	0	0	16
North East Scotland	2	3	3	8	0	0	16
South of Scotland	4	5	2	5	0	0	16
West of Scotland	2	8	1	5	0	0	16
Scotland	17	46	16	47	2	1	129

Question 2

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

The 2007 elections to the Scottish Parliament were a triumph for democracy and also witnessed a significant increase in voter participation. The election represented an overwhelming victory across all parts of Scotland for the SNP whilst Labour and the Liberal Democrats emerged as the biggest losers.

To what extent does the evidence contained in Sources C, D, E, F and G support this viewpoint?

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[END OF QUESTION PAPER]

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NATIONAL
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2009

THURSDAY, 11 JUNE
10.20 AM – 12.00 NOON

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

Answer ONE question from this section.

Marks

A1. To what extent does Marxism offer a theory of the state that challenges the pluralist model?

(20)

A2.

Power, authority and legitimacy are closely linked.

Critically examine this statement, using the work of Lukes and Weber to illustrate your answer.

(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

Answer ONE question from this section.

Marks

B4. Compare and contrast the role of the UK Parliament in scrutinising the Executive with that of **either** the Scottish Parliament **or** the US Congress. **(20)**

B5.

The most important role of the Executive is to make policy.

Compare and contrast how the UK Executive fulfils this function with **either** the Scottish **or** US Executive. **(20)**

B6.

An independent judiciary is the best way to protect the constitution and peoples' rights.

Discuss with reference to the UK and **either** Scotland **or** the USA. **(20)**

[Turn over for Section C on Page four

Section C—Political Representation

Answer ONE question from this section.

Marks

C7.

The trustee and delegate models place contrasting demands on the behaviour of representatives.

Discuss

(20)

C8.

Short term influences on voting behaviour now have a far greater impact than long term influences.

Discuss

(20)

C9.

More proportional types of electoral systems are fairer but less likely to produce stable government than FPTP.

Discuss

(20)

[END OF QUESTION PAPER]