



A-Level POLITICS PAPER 2

Government and politics of the USA and comparative politics

Mark scheme

Version 1.0

Mark schemes are prepared by the Lead Assessment Writer and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation events which all associates participate in and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation process ensures that the mark scheme covers the students' responses to questions and that every associate understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for standardisation each associate analyses a number of students' scripts. Alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed and legislated for. If, after the standardisation process, associates encounter unusual answers which have not been raised they are required to refer these to the Lead Assessment Writer.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of students' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

Further copies of this mark scheme are available from aqa.org.uk

Level of response marking instructions

Level of response mark schemes are broken down into levels, each of which has a descriptor. The descriptor for the level shows the average performance for the level. There are marks in each level.

Before you apply the mark scheme to a student's answer read through the answer and annotate it (as instructed) to show the qualities that are being looked for. You can then apply the mark scheme.

Step 1 Determine a level

Start at the lowest level of the mark scheme and use it as a ladder to see whether the answer meets the descriptor for that level. The descriptor for the level indicates the different qualities that might be seen in the student's answer for that level. If it meets the lowest level then go to the next one and decide if it meets this level, and so on, until you have a match between the level descriptor and the answer. With practice and familiarity you will find that for better answers you will be able to quickly skip through the lower levels of the mark scheme.

When assigning a level you should look at the overall quality of the answer and not look to pick holes in small and specific parts of the answer where the student has not performed quite as well as the rest. If the answer covers different aspects of different levels of the mark scheme you should use a best fit approach for defining the level and then use the variability of the response to help decide the mark within the level, ie if the response is predominantly level 3 with a small amount of level 4 material it would be placed in level 3 but be awarded a mark near the top of the level because of the level 4 content.

Step 2 Determine a mark

Once you have assigned a level you need to decide on the mark. The descriptors on how to allocate marks can help with this. The exemplar materials used during standardisation will help. There will be an answer in the standardising materials which will correspond with each level of the mark scheme. This answer will have been awarded a mark by the Lead Examiner. You can compare the student's answer with the example to determine if it is the same standard, better or worse than the example. You can then use this to allocate a mark for the answer based on the Lead Examiner's mark on the example.

You may well need to read back through the answer as you apply the mark scheme to clarify points and assure yourself that the level and the mark are appropriate. Examiners are required to assign each of the students' responses to the most appropriate level according to its overall quality, then allocate a single mark within the level. When deciding upon a mark in a level examiners should bear in mind the relative weightings of the assessment objectives and be careful not to over/under credit a particular skill. For example, in questions 1,2 and 3 more weight should be given to AO1 than to AO2. This will be exemplified and reinforced as part of examiner training.

Indicative content in the mark scheme is provided as a guide for examiners. It is not intended to be exhaustive and you must credit other valid points. Students do not have to cover all of the points mentioned in the Indicative content to reach the highest level of the mark scheme.

An answer which contains nothing of relevance to the question must be awarded no marks.

Levels of response mark-scheme for 9 mark questions

Question 1: Explain and analyse three ways in which third parties and independent candidates may be significant in US politics

Question 2: Explain and analyse three ways that the concept of federalism influences US government.

Question 3: Explain and analyse three ways that structural theory could be used to study executive/legislative relations in the UK and US.

Target AO1: 6 marks, AO2: 3 marks

| Level | Marks | Descriptors |
|-------|-------|--|
| 3 | 7-9 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed knowledge of relevant political concepts, institutions and processes is demonstrated and appropriate political vocabulary is used. (AO1). Thorough explanations and appropriate selection of accurate supporting examples demonstrates detailed understanding of relevant political concepts, institutions and processes (AO1). Analysis of three clear points will be structured, clearly focused on the question and confidently developed in to a coherent answer (AO2). |
| 2 | 4-6 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally sound knowledge of political concepts, institutions and processes is demonstrated and generally appropriate political vocabulary is used (AO1). Some development of explanations and generally appropriate selection of supporting examples demonstrates generally accurate understanding of relevant political concepts, institutions and processes, though further detail may be required in places and some inaccuracies may be present (AO1). Analysis will be developed in most places, though some points may be descriptive or in need of further development. Answers will, for the most part, be clearly expressed and show some organisation in the presentation of material (AO2). <p>Students who only make two relevant points will be limited to this level.</p> |
| 1 | 1-3 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Limited knowledge of political concepts, institutions and processes is demonstrated and little or no appropriate political vocabulary is used (AO1). Limited development of explanations and selection of supporting examples demonstrates limited understanding of relevant political concepts, institutions and processes, with further detail required and inaccuracies present throughout (AO1). Analysis will take the form of description for the most part. Coherence and structure will be limited (AO2). <p>Students who only make one relevant point will be limited to this level.</p> |
| 0 | 0 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nothing worthy of credit |

Question 1: Explain and analyse three ways in which third parties and independent candidates may be significant in US politics.

Indicative content

In their explanations and analysis, students should be expected to cover areas such as the following:

- Explanation and analysis of the effect independent candidates have on the level of choice given to voters in Presidential elections. This could be illustrated with examples of independent presidential candidates such as George Wallace, Ross Perot or Ralph Nader.
- Explanation and analysis of independent candidates as a mechanism for protest votes against the two main parties, or their significance in raising political issues often ignored by the two main 'catch-all' parties, such as the environment or budget deficits.
- Analysis of their significance in impacting on the outcome by taking votes from one of the two main contenders as Perot did with Bush Senior in 1992.

Students are required to consider only three ways that they are significant. If a student exceeds this number reward only the best three. However, some may include relevant points not listed above and these should be credited. If a student gives only one or two examples they will receive a maximum of three and six marks respectively.

Question 2: Explain and analyse three ways that the concept of federalism influences US government.

Indicative content

In their explanations and analysis, students should be expected to cover areas such as the following:

- Explanation and analysis of federalism as a key concept in the US Constitution. Students should have at least a basic understanding of what federalism is i.e. a form of power-sharing arrangement between the national government and the states.
- Explanation and analysis that in a federal system such as the USA there are variations in laws and rules, unlike a unitary system, such as the UK, where laws apply across the whole of the country.
- Explanation and analysis of aspects of federalism, such as the 'elastic clause' and the role of the Supreme Court in clashes between state and federal government. Responses may argue that it is not a fixed constitutional concept and the meaning of federalism is open to interpretation.
- Explanation and analysis of the significance of federalism in the structure of the Senate, as reflected by equal representation regardless of size of state.

Students are required to consider only three ways that federalism influences US government. If a student exceeds this number reward only the best three. However, some may include relevant points not listed above and these should be credited. If a student gives only one or two examples they will receive a maximum of three and six marks respectively.

Question 3: Explain and analyse three ways that structural theory could be used to study executive/legislative relations in the UK and US.

Indicative content

In their explanations and analysis, students should cover areas such as the following:

- A definition of structural theory and how it can be applied to understanding executive-legislative relations. Reference may be made to David Easton or Gabriel Almond to show that the theory provides a means of recognising differences in constitutional and governmental frameworks of power.
- Explanation and analysis of the stages through which structural theory can be applied in the study of executive/legislative relations.
- Explanation and analysis of the distinction between structure and function for comparative analysis:
 - The identification of structures as tools for political analysis such as legislatures (Congress/Parliament), chief executives (President/prime minister), bureaucracies (civil service/federal administration)
 - Explanation and analysis of the functions such as interest aggregation, interest articulation, rule-making.
 - Explanation and analysis of the relevant features of the environment in which the structures exist (such as legal framework, political culture, prevailing ideologies).
- Explanation and analysis of the structural model used in comparative studies this will involve inputs, process, outputs, feedback and environment.
- Explanation and analysis of the structures of legislatures e.g. British Parliament and UK's parliamentary system and America's presidential system. Such as the fusion or concentration of legislative and executive powers in the House of Commons and the institutional separation of powers and formal checks and balances.
- Application of the theory to appropriate areas of executive/legislative relations such as nature and method of selection for the executives, processes of oversight/scrutiny of executive actions and legislation, the nature of sovereignty in the two systems.

Students are required to consider only three ways that structural theory could be used to study executive-legislative relations. If a student exceeds this number reward only the best three. However, some may include relevant points not listed above and these should be credited. Students should not make comparisons in their response the focus should remain on structural theory.

Levels of response mark-scheme for 25 mark extract based essay

Question 4: Analyse, evaluate and compare the arguments in the above passage for and against the primary and caucus system used to select each party's presidential nominee.

Target AO1: 5 marks, AO2: 10 marks, AO3: 10 marks

| Level | Marks | Descriptors |
|-------|-------|---|
| 5 | 21-25 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed and accurate knowledge and understanding of relevant political concepts, institutions and processes are used to support analysis of the issue under discussion (AO1). Analysis of the extract is balanced and confidently developed. (AO2). Comparisons are well explained, are focussed on the question and fully supported with relevant and developed examples (AO2). Evaluation of the above leads to well substantiated conclusions that are consistent with the preceding discussion. (AO3). Relevant perspectives and/or the status of the extract are successfully evaluated in the process of constructing arguments (AO3). The answer is well organised, coherent and has a sustained analytical focus on the question (AO2). |
| 4 | 16-20 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accurate knowledge and understanding of relevant political concepts, institutions and processes are used to support analysis of the issue under discussion, though further detail may be required in places (AO1). Analysis of the extract is balanced and developed, though some elements of the analysis could be expanded and/or developed further. (AO2). Comparisons are relevant to the questions as set, and supported with examples. Evaluation of the above leads to conclusions that show some substantiation and are consistent with the preceding discussion (AO3). Relevant perspectives and/or the status of the extract are evaluated in constructing arguments, although in some places there could be further development of the evaluation (AO3). The answer is well organised, analytical in style and is focused on the question as set. |

| | | |
|---|-------|--|
| 3 | 11-15 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Generally sound knowledge and understanding of relevant political concepts, institutions and processes are used to support points made, though inaccuracies will be present (AO1) • Analytical points relating to the extract are made and developed in places, showing some balance, though some points are descriptive rather than analytical. (AO2). • Comparisons are made and may be supported by examples. (AO2). • Evaluation of the above leads to conclusions that are consistent with the preceding discussion, but that lack substantiation (AO3) • Relevant perspectives and/or the status of the extract are commented on in constructing arguments, though evaluation is lacking depth. (AO3) • The answer is organised, occasionally analytical and focused on the question as set. |
| 2 | 6-10 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Some knowledge and understanding of relevant political concepts, institutions and processes are used to support points made, though these contain inaccuracies and irrelevant material (AO1) • Analysis of the extract takes the form of description in most places, with some attempt at balance, though many points are unsupported assertions (AO2). • Comparisons tend to be limited and unsupported by examples. (AO2). • Some attempt to draw conclusions is made, but these lack depth and clear development from the preceding discussion (AO3). • Relevant perspectives are identified and some awareness of the status of the extract is shown in the process of constructing arguments, though evaluation will be superficial (AO3) • The answer shows some organisation and makes some attempt to address the question (AO2). |
| 1 | 1-5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Limited knowledge and understanding of relevant political concepts, institutions and processes, with inaccuracies and irrelevant material present throughout (AO1). • Analysis of the extract takes the form of description and assertion, with little or no attempt made at balance (AO2). • Comparisons tend to be superficial and undeveloped. (AO2). • Conclusions, when offered, are asserted and have an implicit relationship to the preceding discussion (AO3). • Little or no evaluation of relevant perspectives and the status of the extract is present (AO3). • The answer shows little organisation and does not address the question (AO2). |
| 0 | 0 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Nothing worthy of credit |

Question 4: Analyse, evaluate and compare the arguments in the above passage for and against the primary and caucus system used to select each party's presidential nominee.

Indicative content

In the analysis and evaluation of the argument that the primary and caucus system used to select each party's presidential nominee has more disadvantages than advantages, as made in the article, students should be expected to cover areas such as the following:

- Identification and analysis of the operation of the primary and caucus system in the context of the US presidential nomination process
- Analysis and evaluation of the claims in the article that the process for choosing nominees is convoluted and only involves ordinary voters in an indirect way
- Analysis and evaluation of the arguments presented in the article regarding claims of unfair and biased behaviour by some political actors, and consideration of whether such claims may be an inevitable characteristic of a pluralist democratic system
- Analysis and evaluation of the claims in the article regarding the influence of 'super delegates' in the nomination process
- Analysis and evaluation of the primary and caucus system as part of the US democratic process
- The analysis and evaluation of any political information is affected by;
 - who the author is - their position or role;
 - the type of publication - newspaper, academic journal, electronic media;
 - the overt or implicit purpose of the author - to inform, persuade or influence;
 - the relevance of the extract to a political issue or concern, and how representative the extract is of a particular viewpoint. Candidates will be expected to address some of these factors in their analysis and evaluation of the extract.

In relation to the extract for this question reference should be made to the fact that it is adapted from an article published in the New York Times and an article published by YouGov, an international internet-based market research firm. Both pieces adapted for the extract were published in 2016 in the run up to the US Presidential election and that the purpose is to inform and persuade.

Students are required to analyse and evaluate the arguments presented in the article. Students who identify which arguments support which of the different views may be awarded marks for analysis (AO2). To gain marks for evaluation (AO3) students must assess the relative strengths of the differing arguments.

The analysis and evaluation must clearly focus on the arguments presented in the article. Students would not need to cover each and every one of the above points to gain high marks; equally, some may introduce further relevant points and these should be credited. The conclusion should clearly focus on the issue in question. In their evaluation, it does not matter what view students reach. However, their position must be supported by their arguments and examples.

Students who fail to focus their discussion on the arguments in the article, however complete their answer may otherwise be, cannot achieve above level 2.

Levels of response mark scheme for 25 mark comparative Government and Politics essays

Question 5: The constitutional power of the Prime Minister exceeds the power of the President. Analyse and evaluate this statement. In your answer you should draw on material from across the whole range of your course of study in Politics.

Question 6: 'Citizens' rights are better protected by the judiciary in the USA than in the UK.' Analyse and evaluate this statement. In your answer you should draw on material from across the whole range of your course of study in Politics.

Target AO1: 5 marks, AO2: 10 marks, AO3: 10 marks

| Level | Marks | Descriptors |
|-------|-------|---|
| 5 | 21-25 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Detailed and accurate knowledge and understanding of relevant political concepts, institutions and processes are used to support analysis of the issue under discussion (AO1). Analysis is balanced and confidently developed. (AO2). Synoptic links are well explained, are focussed on the question and fully supported with relevant and developed examples (AO2). Evaluation of the above leads to well substantiated conclusions that are consistent with the preceding discussion. (AO3). Relevant perspectives are successfully evaluated in the process of constructing arguments (AO3). The answer is well organised, coherent and has a sustained analytical focus on the question (AO2). |
| 4 | 16-20 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Accurate knowledge and understanding of relevant political concepts, institutions and processes are used to support analysis of the issue under discussion, though further detail may be required in places (AO1). Analysis is balanced developed, though some elements of the analysis could be expanded and/or developed further. Synoptic links are relevant to the questions as set, and supported with examples. (AO2). Evaluation of the above leads to conclusions that show some substantiation and consistent with the preceding discussion (AO3). Relevant perspectives are evaluated in the process of constructing arguments, although in some places there could be further development of the evaluation (AO3). The answer is well organised, analytical in style and is focused on the question as set. |
| 3 | 11-15 | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Generally sound knowledge and understanding of relevant political concepts, institutions and processes are used to support points made, though inaccuracies will be present (AO1) Analytical points are made and developed in places, showing some balance, though some points are descriptive rather than analytical. Synoptic links will be made, though explanation will lack depth (AO2). Evaluation of the above leads to conclusions that are consistent with the preceding discussion, but that lack substantiation (AO3) Relevant perspectives are commented on in the process of constructing arguments, though evaluation is lacking depth. (AO3) The answer is organised, occasionally analytical and focused on the question as set. |

| | | |
|---|------|---|
| 2 | 6-10 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some knowledge and understanding of relevant political concepts, institutions and processes are used to support points made, though these contain inaccuracies and irrelevant material (AO1)• Analysis takes the form of description in most places, with some attempt at balance, though many points are unsupported assertions (AO2).• Synoptic links tend to be limited and undeveloped. (AO2).• Some attempt to draw conclusions is made, but these lack depth and clear development from the preceding discussion (AO3).• Relevant perspectives are identified, though evaluation will be superficial (AO3)• The answer shows some organisation and makes some attempt to address the question (AO2). |
| 1 | 1-5 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited knowledge and understanding of relevant political concepts, institutions and processes, with inaccuracies and irrelevant material present throughout (AO1)• Analysis takes the form of description and assertion, with little or no attempt made at balance (AO2)• Few if any synoptic links are offered (AO2).• Conclusions, when offered, are asserted and have an implicit relationship to the preceding discussion (AO3).• Little or no evaluation of relevant perspectives is present (AO3).• The answer shows little organisation and does not address the question (AO2). |
| 0 | 0 | <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Nothing worthy of credit |

Question 5: 'The constitutional power of the Prime Minister exceeds that of the President. Analyse and evaluate this statement.' In your answer you should draw on material from across the whole range of your course of study in Politics.

Indicative content

In the analysis and evaluation of the statement, students ~~may be expected to~~ should cover areas such as the following:

- Analysis of constitutional positions of the Prime Minister and President. For example, answers should make reference to the significance of the concept of 'Primus inter pares'/ 'first among equals' to the power of the UK Prime Minister, and the constitutional position of the executive in the US as expressed in article II of the constitution.
- Analysis of the changes in the power in each role according to circumstance, For example, the rise of prime ministerial power ('uncrowned monarchy') and the evolution of the presidency ('imperial/imperilled' presidents).
- A comparison of the limits placed upon the power of the prime minister and the president. For example, answers should make reference to the significance of the doctrine of Parliamentary Sovereignty to prime ministerial power, and the significance of federalism or the concept of checks and balances to the power of the president.
- Analysis of impact of the personalities to the power of the prime ministers and presidents, illustrated with historic and contemporary examples.
- Analysis of the terms of office for the prime minister and president, with reference to the significance of fixed terms for the executives in both the UK and US. Answers could also focus on the appointment and removal processes in both the UK and US and evaluate their impact on the power of each position.
- Analysis of the relationships to other parts of government in the UK and US and evaluate the influence that these relationships have on the power of each position. For example, students should focus on the relations to cabinets, relationship with the legislatures and the relationship with bureaucracies.
- The roles played by other factors that influence the power of the prime minister and presidency, for example the influence of their political parties, the media and other pressure groups on the power of the prime minister and president.

Further Synoptic links may be made in areas such as the state and society, core liberal and democratic values and separation of powers. Any response that does not include synoptic points cannot achieve above level 4.

Students would not need to cover each and every one of the above points to gain high marks; equally, some may introduce further relevant points and these should be credited. The conclusion should clearly focus on the issue in question. In their evaluation, it does not matter what view students reach. However, their position must be supported by their arguments and examples.

Question 6: 'Citizens' rights are better protected by the judiciary in the USA than in the UK.' Analyse and evaluate this statement. In your answer you should draw on material from across the whole range of your course of study in Politics.

Indicative content

In the analysis and evaluation of the statement, students should be expected to cover areas such as the following:

- Analysis and evaluation of the constitutional roles and relative powers of the judiciaries in the UK and US, with reference to the concept of judicial independence. The evaluation should focus on their impact on citizen's rights.
- Analysis of the significance of other key judicial concepts to citizen's rights in the UK and US. For example, answers should focus on the concepts of judicial activism, judicial restraint, judicial impartiality or judicial bias, and how these impact on the ability to protect citizen's rights.
- Analysis of the roles played by key legislation in the roles of the judiciary in both countries. For example, the influence of EU membership/*factortame*, the 1998 Human Rights Act and the 2005 Constitutional Reform Act on the protection of citizen's rights in the UK and the significance of the US Bill of Rights and Article 3 of the Constitution to the protection of citizen's rights in the US.
- Evaluation of the powers of judicial review in both the UK and US. Answers could also focus on the selection and appointment processes in the UK and US, and evaluate the impact of these on citizen's rights in both countries.
- Analysis of the significance of landmark rulings to citizen's rights in the UK and US, with a focus on the concept of precedent/ *stare decisis*.
- Analysis and evaluation of the limits placed on institutions of government in both countries, with reference to the concept of parliamentary sovereignty in the UK and the concept of checks and balances in the US.

Further Synoptic links may be made in areas such as the state and society, core liberal and democratic values and separation of powers. Any response that does not include synoptic points cannot achieve above level 4.

Students would not need to cover each and every one of the above points to gain high marks; equally, some may introduce further relevant points and these should be credited. The conclusion should clearly focus on the issue in question. In their evaluation, it does not matter what view students reach. However, their position must be supported by their arguments and examples.