



Pearson

## AS and A level Politics questions clarification

February 2018

### A level source questions

#### Q1(a) and 1(b) - 9PL01 and 9PL02

This clarification relates to the source questions in the following components:

- Paper 1: UK Politics and Core Political Ideas - questions 1(a) and 1(b)
- Paper 2: UK Government and Non-core Political Ideas - questions 1(a) and 1(b)

These questions require students to do the following (this update was published in December 2017 and is found here). The question rubric on all source questions for the A level is:

In your response you must:

- compare and contrast the different opinions in the source
- examine and debate these views in a balanced way
- analyse and evaluate only the information presented in the source.

**Bullet point one** requires candidates to compare and contrast different opinions within one or more sources. Remember that comparing is about finding similarities and contrasting is about finding differences. So when a rubric refers to similarities and differences, it is urging students to take the 'compare and contrast' instruction seriously.

**Bullet point two** requires that both sides in a contested political debate given in the source are addressed and discussed.

**Bullet point three** requires students to analyse (AO2) and evaluate (AO3) the issues (i.e. 'political information') raised in the source; the task is to develop AO2 and AO3 from the source alone. As part of their evaluation, students are expected to reach and justify a conclusion

So for example if the source talks about (1) the electoral system or (2) collective cabinet responsibility or (3) the roles of opposition parties, candidates can support their analysis (AO2) and reach their conclusion through evaluation (AO3) using relevant examples or evidence from their own knowledge as long as they are specifically exemplifying points made or other material in the source.

However, if the source (for example) talks about (1) the electoral system or (2) collective cabinet responsibility or (3) the roles of opposition parties but a student ignores these precise topics and talks instead about (4) voting behaviour or (5) individual ministerial responsibility or (6) the parties of government, then they will receive credit for the relevant AO1 knowledge and understanding they deploy about (1) the electoral system or (2) collective cabinet responsibility or (3) the roles of opposition parties, but receive no credit for having analysed (AO2) or evaluated and reached a conclusion (AO3) concerning (4) voting behaviour or (5) individual ministerial responsibility or (6) the parties of government. This is to ensure students remain focused on the question being asked about the political information in the source, and to stop them hijacking the question and talking about what they want to instead.

AO1 marks can arise from the source or they can arise from the candidate's own knowledge. Any examples or evidence which are relevant and help to support the students' arguments will receive credit. This would be considered AO1 knowledge and understanding.

The signposts for AO2 and AO3 are present in the source. A candidate cannot introduce own knowledge (AO1) and gain AO2 and AO3 credit for this. It is the AO2 and AO3 set out in the source which must be developed.

It is essential candidates recognise source questions as depending directly on the source and answer them using these rules. It is a mistake to answer source questions as essays

## **AS papers**

### **Q2 - 8PL01 and 8PL02**

Please note that the same principles stated above apply to the Question 2 in both the AS papers (except that there is no AO3 credit at all – since the question is 5 marks for AO1 and 5 marks for AO2 – so there is no judgement or conclusion required).

So while a Q2 calls for knowledge and understanding (AO1) such as providing examples to exemplify the source and also analysis of the source (AO2), it does not call for any evaluation, reaching or justifying a conclusion, since this would be AO3 and no Q2 will

have any marks allocated for AO3. Q2 questions are based entirely around the source and there is no need to deviate or digress from the topics and themes in the source.

### **Q3 - 8PL01 and 8PL02**

For Question 3 on both AS papers, there are no AO1 marks available. The question requires the candidates to do the following:

*Using the sources, assess whether xxx.*

*In your response you must compare and contrast similarities and differences and consider competing points by analysing and evaluating them; only knowledge which supports this analysis and evaluation will gain credit.*

And the mark scheme states that:

*AO2 and AO3 require candidates to analyse and evaluate the sources and develop their answers, showing comparative analytical and evaluative skills to address the question. Candidates should focus their comparison on analysing the similarities and differences of the viewpoints given in the sources.*

*There are no AO1 marks available. Do not give credit to responses where candidates demonstrate knowledge alone. Any knowledge used must support their analysis and evaluation.*

So, for example, if a candidate in answering an AS question 3 question analysed and evaluated the sources and in doing so used lots of knowledge from beyond the source, and it is not linked to or used to develop their analysis (AO2) and evaluation (AO3) then they would get no credit for it.

Thus, a Q3 (i) based on the inadequacies of the first-past-the-post system set on Paper 1 or, similarly, a Q3 on Paper 2 about (ii) the composition of the Supreme Court would not earn a student any marks at all if she or he (i) introduced new knowledge, such as examples of why, how or when other voting systems would be preferable, all of which would be AO1, or (ii) wrote an answer all about inadequacies of the role presently allocated to the Supreme Court or explaining supposed mistakes in the court's judgements, all of which (if factually correct) would earn no marks because they are new knowledge (i.e. not focussed on 'composition'), taking the answer beyond the range and limits of the source.

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