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# A-Level POLITICS PAPER 1

Government and politics of the UK

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Mark scheme

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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](http://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 the significance of three sources of the British constitution.

Question 2: Explain and analyse three ways in which pressure groups seek to influence government policy.

Question 3: Explain and analyse three factors that can influence voting behaviour.

**Target AO1: 6 marks, AO2: 3 marks**

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

**Question 1:** Explain and analyse the significance of three sources of the British constitution.

**Indicative content**

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

- Explanation and analysis of statute law, such as the 2011 Fixed Term Parliament Act.
- Explanation and analysis of the common law, such as the 2017 Supreme Court ruling on the triggering of the Brexit process.
- Explanation and analysis of the concept of a constitutional convention such as the convention that the PM must come from the House of Commons.
- Explanation and analysis of the Royal Prerogative such as the right to appoint government ministers.
- Explanation and analysis of authoritative opinion such as Bagehot's *The English Constitution*.
- Explanation and analysis of EU legislation, such as the EU consumer rights directive, and European Court of Human Rights decisions, such as *Hirst v UK (No 2)*, voting rights for prisoners,

Students are required to consider only three constitutional sources. 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 in which pressure groups seek to influence government policy.

**Indicative content**

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

- Explanation and analysis of lobbying at Westminster and Whitehall through, for example, meetings with MPs, ministers and civil servants and analysis of its significance.
- Explanation and analysis of lobbying at an EU level by, for example, establishing offices at Brussels and analysis of its significance.
- Explanation and analysis of the use of mass media by, for example, having members write letters and articles in the print media, having representatives appear on radio and TV, recruiting 'celebrities' to their cause or gaining the support of a media mogul and analysis of its significance.
- Explanation and analysis of the use of social media to, for example, extend public support, recruit members and organise e-petitions to parliament.
- Explanation and analysis of financial methods, for example through sponsoring an MP or making donations to party funds and analysis of its significance.
- Explanation and analysis of direct action organised by pressure groups, such as organising and taking part in demonstrations and analysis of its significance.

Students are required to consider only three ways in which pressure groups seek to influence government policy. 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 factors that can influence voting behaviour.

**Indicative content**

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

- Explanation and analysis of the concept of voting behaviour.
- Explanation and analysis of social factors, such as age, social class, class identification, race, ethnicity and gender (eg. older people tend to be more right wing, working class people tend to be more left wing, habitual voters, immigrants tend to vote labour).
- Explanation and analysis of linked concepts, such as voter apathy and abstention (eg voter fatigue, turnout figures and rational non-voting).
- Explanation and analysis of political factors such as party loyalty, ideology, partisan dealignment, and tactical voting (eg. traditional labour supporters, floating voters, rise of neo-liberalism, shrinking working class and third party effect).
- Explanation and analysis of the roles of wider factors that influence voting behaviour, such as the media or the economy (eg. the 'feel-good factor')
- Explanation and analysis of rational choice theories of voting behaviour (eg. the consumer voting model, self-interested voting).

Students are required to consider only three factors that influence voting behaviour. If a student exceeds this number reward only the best three. However, some may introduce 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.

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

Question 4: Analyse, evaluate and compare the arguments in the above article over a cap on individual donations to political parties.

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

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

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

Question 4: Analyse, evaluate and compare the arguments in the above article over a cap on individual donations to political parties.

### **Indicative content**

In the analysis and evaluation of the case for a cap on individual donations to political parties, as made in the article, students should be expected to cover areas such as the following:

- Analysis of the impact of falling membership of traditional mass parties and evaluation of the impact this has on party funding.
- Evaluation and comparison of the arguments presented in the article around whether traditional parties have an ‘unquestionable right to survive’.
- Analysis and evaluation of the extent to which donations buy ‘influence, along with baubles and titles’
- Analysis of the concept of state funding and evaluation of its advantages and flaws
- Evaluation and comparison of public attitudes towards funding of political parties from taxation ‘at a time of spending cuts’
- Analysis and evaluation of possible funding implications ‘in a digital age’
- Analysis and evaluation of the impact of the suggested cap on individual donations
- Evaluation whether, or not, the argument presented in the article supports the view that individual donations to political parties should be capped.
- 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 was published in the Guardian, a left-leaning newspaper in 2016 and that the extract is informative and persuasive. Reference could also be made to the fact that Ian Birrell writes for newspapers and journals of different persuasions and that he has been a speech writer for David Cameron in the run-up to the 2010 general election.

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-essays**

Question 5: 'There are many factors that can give the prime minister power over cabinet colleagues.' 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: 'Despite their weaknesses select committees play an increasingly central role in British Politics.' Analyse and evaluate this statement.

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

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

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

Question 5: 'There are many factors that can give the prime minister power over cabinet colleagues.' 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 view that *Primus inter pares* implies equality with colleagues but in practice the Prime Minister is dominant however independent action can result in serious failures eg Thatcher and poll tax, Blair and Iraq.
- Analysis and evaluation of the prime minister's constitutional power of patronage and control over the cabinet agenda, and limits of these powers.
- Analysis and evaluation of the view that constitutional power of patronage enables the Prime Minister to shape cabinet however strong figures can't be ignored eg Brown in the Blair cabinet, early Thatcher.
- Analysis and evaluation of the view that control over the cabinet agenda enables the Prime Minister to ignore subjects eg Blair and Iraq. However key areas cannot be ignored indefinitely
- Analysis and evaluation of the significance of the prime minister's use of 'bilaterals', 'inner cabinets' and 'sofa government' can lead to cabinet splits eg Major over Europe.
- Analysis and evaluation of the significance of support from key government departments, such as the Cabinet Office/Cabinet Secretary, Treasury and various Number Ten policy units though they are not genuine prime ministerial departments.
- Analysis and evaluation of the view that the opportunity to act upon a world stage gives the prime minister an international profile but can lead to resentment at home.
- Analysis and evaluation of media portrayal of the prime minister in presidential terms but media can also undermine eg, 'Theresa Maybe.'
- Analysis and evaluation of the idea of a personal mandate following a general election. As with earlier points this can be debated either way.
- Examples of various prime ministers to illustrate above analysis.

Synoptic links may be found in areas such as cabinet, convention of collective responsibility, and party support in legislature, and the media. 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: 'Despite their weaknesses select committees play an increasingly central role in British Politics.' Analyse and evaluate this statement.

**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 nature, working and power of the scrutinising select committee, and significance of the appointment, composition, subject areas and mode of enquiry.
- Analysis and evaluation of the powers of the committees, such as their ability to compel ministers to face forceful questioning and to call for persons and papers from beyond Westminster.
- Examples of particular committees and inquiries could be used to illustrate the points made, with reference to particular issues addressed (for example press phone hacking).
- Analysis and evaluation of the weaknesses of select committees (for example, party composition, limitation on power to call witnesses, leaks by committee members, delay in publication of reports, interference by whips, reliance upon experts).
- Analysis and evaluation of the strengths of select committees (for example, issue of reports of national importance, scrutiny of the executive, stimulation of public debate, alternative career path for MP's with no ministerial ambitions, opportunities for MP's to specialise, generation of policy initiatives).

Synoptic links may be found in areas such as interest groups, sovereignty of parliament, party ideology, and media and politics. 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.