



AS and A level Politics: Notice of changes to assessment materials

17.11.2017

Version 1.0

Due to a review of the assessment materials for the AS and A level Politics qualifications, we have made some minor changes to some candidate instructions and one question in particular. These are explained below.

For points 1 and 2 below, the live assessments will reflect these changes. But the AS document online will not be updated.

For point 3, this modified question supersedes the one in the current SAMs document online.

Each question, its rubrics and requirements, are fully explained and exemplified in the document on the Pearson Edexcel website called 'Politics assessment guidance'.

1. A level components 1 and 2, questions 1(a) and 1(b)

Candidate instructions changed from:

In your response you must:

- compare the different opinions in the source
- consider the view and the alternative view in a balanced way
- use a balance of knowledge and understanding both arising from the source and beyond the source to help you to analyse and evaluate.

To:

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.

2. AS components 1 and 2, question 3

Candidate instructions changed from:

In your response you must compare both sources by analysing and evaluating them. You will not gain credit for use of knowledge and understanding alone. Any knowledge and understanding used in your response must support your analysis and evaluation of both sources in order to gain credit.

To:

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.

3. AS, component 2, question 4,

The question has been slightly modified question to change its emphasis from political agenda to parliament, and new mark scheme has been provided

The question has been changed from:

‘Prime Ministers are able to successfully control **the political agenda**’

How far do you agree with this view of Prime Ministerial power?

To:

‘Prime Ministers are able to successfully control **Parliament**’

How far do you agree with this view of Prime Ministerial power?

A new mark scheme is below:

Question Number	Indicative Content
4b	<p>AO1 (10 marks), AO2 (10 marks), AO3 (10 marks)</p> <p>This question requires candidates to draw on their knowledge and understanding of UK politics and government (AO1) to underpin their analysis (AO2) and evaluation (AO3).</p> <p>AO2 and AO3 require candidates to develop their answers showing analytical and evaluative skills to address the question – such responses will be underpinned by their use of knowledge and understanding.</p>

	<p>Candidates may demonstrate the following knowledge and understanding (AO1) in relation to the view that UK Prime Ministers are able to control Parliament:</p> <p>Agreement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prime Ministers (PM) invariably have a majority in the House of Commons and on this they can fulfil their policy plans – often following a general election • Many post war PMs have had large majorities (landslides) in order to achieve this – Attlee, Wilson, Thatcher and Blair – they thus dominate Parliament • If a PM fails to get a major bill through Parliament they by convention have to resign – this has only happened once in 1979 to Callaghan since 1945 • PMs have at their disposal processes and procedures which allow them to exercise power over Parliament – such as the Royal prerogative, the ability to decide the timing of a general election (limited but not wholly constrained by the Fixed Term Parliament Act) <p>Disagreement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Not all PMs have enjoyed majority support in the House of Commons. Wilson and Attlee both had slim majorities as did Callaghan Major and currently May • PMs have had to abandon plans and policy in the face of Parliamentary opposition • A PM who delivers a weak performance in Parliament to assure his/her MPs and also the general public will lose control of Parliament. Parliamentary control reaches out to committees and other forms of scrutiny and accountability • The House of Lords can and does limit PM power <p>Candidates may refer to the following analytical (AO2) and evaluative (AO3) points when agreeing with the view:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PMs often emerge from a general election with an almost personal mandate to put into place the policies in the manifesto and drive and deliver change (AO2) They claim to have legitimacy to do this as they have the consent of the people to carry out their actions (AO3) • PMs with large Parliamentary majorities make a huge impact on political, social and economic life in the UK and abroad. The periods of Parliaments being subservient to PMs such as Thatcher and Blair saw the implementation of seismic economic and constitutional change (AO2). History gives a clear verdict and conclusion on their time in office and how Parliament acceded to their demands (AO3) • It is rare that a PM is hounded from office or destroyed by Parliament as was the case in 1979 and as such the PM moulds and shapes Parliament to their will rather than the opposite view (AO2). It is more
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	<p>accurate to say that the media or the PMs party act to provide more constraints on the PM than Parliament (AO3)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • PMs use the Royal prerogative to by-pass Parliament and exert power most visible in times of crisis (AO2). Often in times of national emergency the PM takes the lead and Parliament follows and supports, we can thus conclude with a powerful media focus the PM dominates Parliament (AO3) • If a PM cannot make a case at the dispatch box <p>Candidates may refer to the following analytical (AO2) and evaluative (AO3) points when disagreeing with the view:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • When PMs have their majorities cut, their power over Parliament fails. This can be as a result of losing majorities or only gaining a small/no majority at a general election getting legislation passed is very hard (AO2) We can conclude this as we see May in a more vulnerable position after the 2017 general election. (AO3) • If the majority of the PM in the Commons is narrow, policy making becomes much more consensual and cautious (AO2). PMs avoid any policy which even a minority of their own supporters may disagree with – such a fate has befallen Cameron and May (AO3) • A PM may lack the respect and gravitas if s/he does not please Parliament. Parliament has become much bolder in the light of the recent reforms (AO2). David Cameron as the head of a coalition government could not persuade Parliament to grant him powers to launch bombing raids in Syria and we can conclude that Parliament flexed its muscle over the PM (AO3) • The House of Lords can and does limit the power of the PM given its growing independence it challenges the PM and thwart legislation (AO2). Although it could not bring down the PM we can conclude that the PM is mindful of its power (AO3) <p>Candidates may refer to the following synoptic points:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are various factors which affect a PM and his/her party – A PM is there to represent the ideological tradition of their political party (2.2) • It is the electoral system namely first past the post which delivers power to the PM at the head normally of a majority government (3.3) • The PMs power is at the behest of the media which is biased and can increase or decrease a PMs power base. (4.2) <p>Reasonable alternative interpretations of the above events should be credited.</p> <p>Candidates may refer to alternative Prime Ministers, provided they discuss at least two Prime Ministers (one pre-1997 and one post- 1997).</p>
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	<p>Candidates must consider both views in their answers in a balanced way. The judgement a candidate reaches about these views should be reflected in their conclusion.</p> <p>Candidates who have not referred to one pre-1997 and one post-1997 Prime Minister and/or have not considered both views in a balanced way cannot achieve beyond Level 2.</p> <p>Candidates who do not make any synoptic points cannot achieve Level 5.</p> <p>Accept any other valid responses</p>
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