

A-level
POLITICS
7152/1

Paper 1 Government and politics of the UK

Mark scheme

June 2021

Version: 1.1 Final



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 Examiner.

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

Copyright information

AQA retains the copyright on all its publications. However, registered schools/colleges for AQA are permitted to copy material from this booklet for their own internal use, with the following important exception: AQA cannot give permission to schools/colleges to photocopy any material that is acknowledged to a third party even for internal use within the centre.

Copyright © 2021 AQA and its licensors. All rights reserved.

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.

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

0 1 Explain and analyse three ways in which membership of the EU has had an impact upon UK politics.

[9 marks]

0 2 Explain and analyse three ways in which collective responsibility has come under pressure since 1979.

[9 marks]

0 3 Explain and analyse three long-term factors, other than class, that can influence voting behaviour.

[9 marks]

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 demonstrate detailed understanding of relevant political concepts, institutions and processes (AO1) analysis of three clear points is 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 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) 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). <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 demonstrate limited understanding of relevant political concepts, institutions and processes, with further detail required and inaccuracies present throughout (AO1) analysis takes the form of description for the most part. Coherence and structure are 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.

0	1
---	---

Explain and analyse three ways in which membership of the EU has had an impact upon UK politics.

[9 marks]

Indicative content

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

- explanation and analysis of the impact of EU membership upon the constitution, such as the challenges to parliamentary sovereignty following the European Communities Act 1972. EU law takes precedence over UK law, demonstrated by cases such as Factortame 1990; challenges to parliamentary sovereignty through the use of referendums for decision making regarding membership, such as in 1975 and 2016
- explanation and analysis of the political impact of EU membership such as upon political parties and party discipline by creating divisions within both the Conservative and Labour parties, for example factions such as the ERG readily defying the party whip; the formation of new parties such as UKIP, Brexit party and Change.UK; increasing political tensions between the devolved regions and Westminster since 2016 referendum; suspension of collective responsibility, such as during the 2016 and 1974 referendums
- explanation and analysis of the impact of EU membership upon elections held within the UK, such as the 2019 General Election and the breaching of Labour's 'red wall'; increased support in Scotland for the pro-remain SNP and 2% of the vote to the Brexit Party 2019; EU elections with UKIP winning 24 seats in 2014 and 2019 with the Brexit Party winning 29 seats
- explanation and analysis of the impact of EU membership upon political leadership and governing, such as David Cameron's decision to hold a referendum and his subsequent resignation; the resignation of all three main party leaders following the result of the 2016 referendum; Theresa May's cabinet having to include Brexiteers such as Liam Fox and Boris Johnson; Thatcher's resignation due in part to loss of support from her cabinet following disagreements over Europe; John Major's problems within the cabinet over Europe; ministerial resignations
- explanation and analysis of the institutional impact of EU membership upon government institutions, such as changes to the way in which individual departments operate and are organised for example, DEFRA ; the creation of new government departments, such as the Department for Exiting the EU; the impact upon the workload of ministers within departments.

Students are required to consider only three ways. 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.

0 2

Explain and analyse three ways in which collective responsibility has come under pressure since 1979.

[9 marks]**Indicative content**

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

- explanation and analysis of collective responsibility being the convention whereby individual members of the government are held accountable for the actions and decisions of government as a whole and that ministers must support cabinet decisions or resign from the government. This does not always happen for example, the 'Wets' remained in Thatcher's first cabinet despite criticism of government policy; Boris Johnson remained as Foreign Secretary despite publicly criticising Brexit policy in 2018. In March 2019, eight cabinet ministers voted against a government motion to request an extension to Article 50. This included the Leader of the House, Andrea Leadsom, who remained in her post until June
- explanation and analysis of collective responsibility coming under pressure due to leaks to the media by disgruntled ministers for example, Theresa May ordered her ministers to stop leaking details of cabinet discussions over Brexit policy 2017. In April 2019, there was a formal inquiry into leaking of discussions about Huawei. Cabinet discussions have been revealed in books written by former ministers, such as Ed Balls
- explanation and analysis of the concept of collective responsibility coming under pressure due to prime ministers ignoring their cabinet, undermining the ability of ministers to have free and frank discussions prior to coming to a collective decision for example, Mo Mowlam's criticisms of Blair undermining cabinet government. Michael Heseltine, Geoffrey Howe and Nigel Lawson all criticised Thatcher's approach to her cabinet when resigning. Prime ministers appoint special advisers, such as Dominic Cummings, with de facto ministerial powers and rely upon them for advice rather than the cabinet
- explanation and analysis of how collective responsibility can be formally set aside such as during the 2016 EU referendum campaign. Collective responsibility was suspended in October 2016 so that ministers could maintain individual positions on the decision to build a third runway at Heathrow. David Cameron allowed a free vote on the Marriage Bill 2013 and two cabinet ministers, Owen Paterson and David Jones, voted against. During periods of coalition government, such as 2010-15, collective responsibility has been set aside for party political issues, including the 2011 referendum on electoral reform.

Students are required to consider only three ways. 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.

0	3
---	---

Explain and analyse three long-term factors, other than class, that can influence voting behaviour.

[9 marks]

Indicative content

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

- explanation and analysis of the impact of gender, such as how and why women were traditionally more likely to vote Conservative and men more likely to vote Labour, with a gender gap once being more predictable. There have been changes in voting behaviour, such as in 1997 with New Labour closing the gender gap and Labour only winning a larger share of the female vote under Tony Blair. In 2017 there was a small gender gap, with women equally split between Labour and the Conservatives and men leaning towards the Conservatives by 6%. Political parties make efforts to target female voters for example, Labour's Woman to Woman pink minibus 2015, Labour's all-women shortlists 1997. A very small majority of 51% of women voted Remain in 2016 EU referendum while 55% of men voted Leave
- explanation and analysis of how and why age plays a significant role in voting behaviour, such as older voters traditionally being more likely to vote Conservative and the concept of 'senescent Conservatism.' Age was a factor in the 2016 EU referendum, with over 70% of 18-24 year olds voting for Remain compared to 40% of those over 65. Age has an impact upon turnout, with younger voters being less likely to vote than older voters, such as in 2019 turnout ranged from 47% among 18-24 year olds up to 74% among over-65s
- explanation and analysis of how and why ethnicity can have an impact upon voting behaviour, for example BAME voters tending to support Labour due to legislation such as the Race Relations Acts and the Conservatives taking a firmer stance on immigration. 77% of BAME voters voted Labour in the 2017 election compared to 37% of white voters. 69% of BAME voters voted Remain in comparison to 46% of white voters in 2016. Ethnicity has an impact upon turnout such as in 2017 turnout ranged from 64% among all registered BAME voters compared to 69% of white voters
- explanation and analysis of region and how traditionally there was a clear north-south divide for example, southern voters were more likely to vote Conservative, while many northern and Welsh voters supported Labour. Divisions were traditionally linked with social class and urban areas for example, the north having many industrial jobs, such as coal mining, and the south having many wealthy rural areas and highly paid professional jobs. There have been changes in electoral support, such as for SNP in Scotland in 2015 and 2019. There have been regional shifts in electoral support for example, in 2019 traditional Labour safe seats in the Midlands and north of England voted Conservative due to issues such as Brexit. Differential turnout occurs across the regions, such as in 2019 where turnout in Scotland was the highest of any UK country. Seats with the lowest turnout in 2019 were traditional Labour seats and 10 were in the Yorkshire and Humber region.

Students are required to consider only three ways. 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.

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

0	4	Analyse, evaluate and compare the arguments in the above extracts regarding House of Lords reform.
----------	----------	--

[25 marks]**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 (AO2). • Evaluation leads to conclusions that show some substantiation and 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 (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 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 (AO2).
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).

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.

0 4 Analyse, evaluate and compare the arguments in the above extracts regarding House of Lords reform.

[25 marks]

Indicative content

In the analysis and evaluation of the debate regarding House of Lords reform, as made in the extracts, students should be expected to cover areas such as the following:

- analysis and evaluation of the current status of the House of Lords in comparison to the House of Commons in the UK’s bicameral legislature. Reforms have been made since 1999, such as 2014 and 2015 Acts which provided for Peers to retire or resign. Further reforms, such as a reduction in numbers, are perhaps necessary as argued in Extract One. Comparisons may be made to concerns regarding the current House of Lords, such as there still being 92 hereditary peers and reforms have not gone much beyond the first phase since 1998 House of Lords Act, with Extract Two arguing for abolition
- analysis and evaluation of the extent to which important ‘changes to improve legislation’ are made by the House of Lords and how the majority of peers are ‘active members.’ Reference may be made to the extent to which the House of Lords has increased its assertiveness in recent years. Comparisons may be made with the arguments in Extract Two regarding how many peers fail to ‘participate in any Lords business’ and yet claim daily allowance expenses. Reference may be made to recent scandals
- analysis and evaluation of the extent to which the House of Lords acts as a check on executive dominance and the extent to which scrutiny is enhanced to ensure that legislation is subject to ‘proper debate and analysis,’ particularly when the government has a large majority for example, following the 2019 general election. Many Peers regularly attend and bring expertise to their work, acting as trustees who represent the nation without fear of electoral or party backlash and

the burden of constituency work. This strengthens Lord Fowler's case for retaining the House of Lords. Comparisons may be made to arguments in Extract Two that question the quality of the extent to which scrutiny is performed by members who have been awarded a peerage due to their political allegiances, such as 'party donors.' Some references may be made to concerns regarding cash for peerages

- analysis and evaluation of how and the extent to which the Lords should be retained, due to the important roles played by the committee system and expertise provided in specific areas. Extract One argues that those who make 'little or no contribution' are in a 'minority.' In comparison, Extract Two argues that the Lords is 'not brimming with specialists and experts' and therefore should be abolished
- analysis and evaluation of and the extent to which further reforms are required that may enhance the current House of Lords, such as 'action to reduce numbers' given the size in membership of the current chamber, as argued in Extract One. Comparisons can be made to arguments in Extract Two, which suggests that reform is not enough and a 'unicameral system' is preferable
- analysis and evaluation of the need for reform, rather than abolition, due to concerns in Extract One regarding the power of patronage and the use of the 'resignation honours list' by some prime ministers as a 'reward.' Comparisons can be made to arguments in Extract Two as to how the existence of the House of Lords is 'an affront to democracy' and should be abolished
- analysis and evaluation of how and why Extract One views 'abolition of the second chamber' as undesirable in comparison to Extract Two, which views abolition as being a better solution than replacing the current House with 'an elected chamber.' Reference may be made to failed attempts to reform the Lords, such as the Lib Dems' proposal to halve the number of members and ensure that at least 80% of peers were elected.

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 extracts.

- in relation to the extracts for this question, reference should be made to the fact that they are both taken from The Guardian newspaper, which some students may identify as left-wing. This provides balance as both extracts are political opinion pieces whose authors have different political leanings
- extract One is written by Norman Fowler who was a cabinet minister for Margaret Thatcher and this may well explain his preference for retaining the House of Lords as an institution, whilst arguing that further reform is necessary in terms of reducing the size of membership. He is also the Lord Speaker and therefore a peer himself, which may be used by some to explain his perspective in terms of retaining his own position
- extract Two is written by Owen Jones who is a regular Guardian columnist, journalist and Labour Party activist. He is left-wing in his political views and is therefore clearly in favour of the abolition of the House of Lords. The Guardian newspaper has regularly reported on scandals regarding the House of Lords
- both extracts were written in early 2019, before the December 2019 general election. This may lead some candidates to question the arguments made by Norman Fowler in Extract One regarding the effectiveness of the House of Lords now that the government has such a large majority in comparison to the political situation when the articles were written. However, some may also argue that the case for retaining the House of Lords is now even stronger given the

results of the 2019 general election. In comparison, some may conclude that further reform is necessary and perhaps even complete abolition given the weaknesses of the Lords in relation to the Commons.

Students are required to analyse and evaluate the arguments presented in the articles. Students who identify which arguments support which of the different views towards House of Lords reform may be awarded marks for analysis (AO2). To gain marks for evaluation (AO3) students must assess the relative strengths of the differing arguments and whether the arguments in Extract One regarding retaining and reforming the House of Lords are more convincing than those in Extract Two that are in favour of abolition. The analysis and evaluation must clearly focus on the arguments presented in the articles.

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 articles, however complete their answer may otherwise be, cannot achieve above level 2.

Levels of response mark scheme for 25-mark essays

0 5 'The ongoing process of devolution threatens the sovereignty of the Westminster Parliament.' Analyse and evaluate this statement. **[25 marks]**

0 6 'Political parties fulfil valuable roles and functions within the UK political system.' Analyse and evaluate this statement. **[25 marks]**

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 (AO2). 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 (AO2).
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 (AO2). Synoptic links will be made, may be supported by examples, 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).

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The answer is organised, occasionally analytical and focused on the question as set (AO2).
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.

- | | | |
|----------|----------|---|
| 0 | 5 | ‘The ongoing process of devolution threatens the sovereignty of the Westminster Parliament.’ Analyse and evaluate this statement. |
|----------|----------|---|

[25 marks]**Indicative content**

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

- analysis and evaluation of the process of devolution within the UK and the impact upon the sovereignty of the Westminster Parliament, such as how power has continued to be devolved to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland since 1998. It is no longer possible to simply label the UK as a true unitary state, where unlimited power is concentrated in Westminster. Powers now lie in devolved bodies such as the Scottish Parliament, the Welsh Parliament, the Northern Ireland Assembly and with regional bodies such as the Greater London Assembly, London mayor and Greater Manchester mayor
- analysis and evaluation of devolution as an ongoing process which has created more challenges to the unitary state and the concept of a ‘quasi-federal’ state. Legislation such as the Scotland Act 2016 has had a significant impact upon parliamentary sovereignty as it established in statute that Westminster cannot legislate in devolved areas without consent and recognised that the devolved institutions are permanent features of the UK’s constitutional arrangements. Devolution can only be overturned by a referendum and has been labelled ‘devo-max’
- analysis and evaluation of how ‘asymmetrical devolution’ has strengthened further calls for greater autonomy, such as in Wales where devolution was initially weaker. The powers of the Welsh Assembly were strengthened following a successful referendum in 2011 by the Wales Acts 2014 and 2017. The Welsh Assembly has now become the Welsh Parliament due to the differences between its 1999 beginnings and its role today with full law-making powers and the ability to vary taxes
- analysis and evaluation of how the process of devolution has democratic legitimacy, with referendums held to gain a mandate for the constitutional reforms. Elections since 1998 have bolstered the democratic credentials of the devolved assemblies and strengthened the sense of separate Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish political identities
- analysis and evaluation of the extent to which First Ministers, such as Nicola Sturgeon, have ‘led the way’ on policy for example, lockdown strategy 2020. There is greater political distance between the devolved assemblies and Westminster, with regional parties playing a more significant role in their executive branches, such as the SNP majority administration 2011–2016. Some have labelled Boris Johnson as the ‘PM of England’ due to policy divergence over lockdown strategy 2020
- analysis and evaluation of the extent to which ultimate power or sovereignty resides at the centre, for example in legal terms (‘de jure’) Parliament remains sovereign. There are limits on the legislative powers of the devolved assemblies as Westminster retains ‘reserved powers’ that remain the sole responsibility of Westminster, such as the UK constitution, defence, foreign affairs and national security
- analysis and evaluation of the extent to which the concept of the unitary state has been emphasised further since the EU referendum 2016, such as the Supreme Court Miller case in January 2017. Judges ruled that there was no obligation for the UK government to consult the devolved assemblies before triggering Article 50 and the Sewel Convention, whereby UK legislation on matters normally dealt with by the Scottish Parliament are subject to its approval, was not considered a legally enforceable obligation
- analysis and evaluation of the impact of ‘asymmetrical devolution,’ such as in England where there is no English Parliament and sovereignty more clearly lies at Westminster. The union and unitary state is still intact and Parliament’s authority continues, such as during the suspension of the Northern Ireland Assembly when power sharing arrangements broke down (2002–2007) and Northern Ireland was governed from Westminster

- analysis and evaluation of how the 2016 EU referendum has highlighted how awkwardly the UK's 'quasi-federal state' can work in practice, such as while majorities in England (53.3%) and Wales (52.5%) voted to leave, larger majorities voted to remain in both Scotland (62%) and Northern Ireland (55.8%). There exists widening differences between the devolved administrations and the UK Government over Brexit.

Synoptic links may be found in areas such as federalism in the USA, political parties and the impact of minor parties, electoral systems, Parliament, the European Union, referendums, the judiciary, the constitution. 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.

0 6

'Political parties fulfil valuable roles and functions within the UK political system.' Analyse and evaluate this statement.

[25 marks]**Indicative content**

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

- analysis and evaluation of the important role played by political parties with the operation of government relying upon political parties in many ways, such as governments at Westminster being formed by one of the two major parties, with the other playing the role of the official opposition. Coalitions have been formed with other political parties, such as in 2010 and 2017. Governing within the devolved regions is dominated by political parties, such as SNP in Scotland and PC/Labour in Wales. Criticisms may be made of the lack of opportunities for minor parties and/or independents in the governing process and/or the roles played by unelected advisers in the operation of government who need not be members of the political party that employs them, such as Dominic Cummings
- analysis and evaluation of the role played by parties in policy development and formulation, such as providing election manifestos, initiating policy and formulating coherent sets of policy options that provide the electorate with choice. However, influence over policy has gradually moved towards party leadership, with criticisms regarding internal party democracy and the lack of consultation involving ordinary party members.
- analysis and evaluation of the extent to which parties fulfil their role of representing the ideology and views of their members for example, MPs largely 'toe the party line' when voting and party discipline is strong in accordance with the mandate model. Almost all MPs and other elected representatives, such as those in the devolved assemblies and elected mayors, are representatives and members of political parties. MPs are elected not for their personal beliefs and qualities but because they represent a political party, such as Dominic Grieve in 2019 who stood as an Independent and lost against his Tory opponent. In comparison, a lesser role is played by parties in the House of Lords with more cross benchers and independents and Peers behaving more as trustees in accordance with the Burkean model
- analysis and evaluation of the extent to which parties fulfil their role of encouraging political engagement and participation, such as encouraging members to canvass at election time, attend political meetings, attend and participate at party conferences and in electing party leaders. However, party membership is declining and pressure groups such as the National Trust have larger memberships than the major political parties combined. Voters' loyalty and levels of partisan alignment have declined. Criticisms may be made of the role played by party members in electing leaders, such as Boris Johnson being elected by fewer than 100,000 voters, who are unrepresentative of the wider electorate or Theresa May who was declared leader without the requirement of a vote from party membership
- analysis and evaluation of and the extent to which parties play an important role in recruitment, such as the executive and opposition shadow cabinet being appointed from the ranks of the two major parties. Parties control the candidate selection process for MPs, with candidates for the main parties vetted, approved and placed upon central lists. There have been attempts by parties to control who stands, such as Labour's all-women shortlists and the Conservative Party's A List. Criticisms may be made regarding there being too many career politicians who aim to 'climb the greasy pole of promotion' and are referred to as the 'payroll vote'. This can affect the representative role played by parties, with the House of Commons having been accused of being 'male, pale and stale'. Reference may be made to the experimental use of open primary elections, such as in Totnes in 2010 where Sarah Wollaston became the first Conservative candidate chosen to stand for Parliament by the public. Primaries were used by the Labour and Conservative parties for the 2016 London Mayoral election.

Synoptic links may be found in areas such as the organisation and roles of parties in the USA, pressure groups, electoral systems, ideology, Parliament, the executive.

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.