



General Certificate of Education

Government and Politics 5151

GOV1 Electoral Systems and Voting Behaviour

Mark Scheme

2006 examination – June series

Mark schemes are prepared by the Principal Examiner and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation meeting attended by all examiners and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation meeting ensures that the mark scheme covers the candidates' responses to questions and that every examiner understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for the standardisation meeting each examiner analyses a number of candidates' scripts: alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed at the meeting and legislated for. If, after this meeting, examiners encounter unusual answers which have not been discussed at the meeting they are required to refer these to the Principal Examiner.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of candidates' 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.

CRITERIA FOR MARKING AS/A2 GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

Introduction

AQA's revised Government and Politics specification has been designed to be objectives-led in that questions are set which address the assessment objectives published in the specification. The assessment objectives for A Level and AS are the same, but the weightings are different at AS and A2. Details of the weightings are given in paragraphs 7.2 and 8.4 of the specification.

The schemes of marking reflect these objectives. The mark scheme which follows is of the *levels of response* type showing that candidates are expected to demonstrate their mastery of the skills required in the context of their knowledge and understanding of Government and Politics. Mark schemes provide the necessary framework for examiners but they cannot cover all eventualities. Candidates should be given credit for partially complete answers. Where appropriate, candidates should be given credit for referring to recent and contemporary developments in Government and Politics.

Consistency of marking is of the essence in all public examinations. It is therefore of vital importance that assistant examiners apply the marking scheme as directed by the Principal Examiner in order to facilitate comparability with the marking of other options.

Before scrutinising and applying the detail of the specific mark scheme which follows, assistant examiners are required to familiarise themselves with the general principles of the mark scheme as contained in the Assessment Matrix.

Using a levels of response mark scheme

Good examining is about the **consistent** application of judgement. Mark schemes provide a framework within which examiners exercise their judgement. This is especially so in subjects like Government and Politics which in part rely upon analysis, evaluation, argument and explanation. With this in mind, examiners should use the Assessment Matrix alongside the detailed mark scheme for each question. The Assessment Matrix provides a framework ensuring a consistent, generic source from which the detailed mark schemes are derived. This supporting framework ensures a consistent approach within which candidates' responses are marked according to the level of demand and context of each question.

Examiners should initially make a decision about which Level any given response should be placed in. Having determined the appropriate Level the examiners must then choose the precise mark to be given within that Level. In making a decision about a specific mark to award, it is vitally important to think first of the mid-range within the Level, where that Level covers more than two marks. Comparison with other candidates' responses to the same question might then suggest whether the middle mark is unduly generous or severe.

In making decisions away from the middle of the Level, examiners should ask themselves questions relating to candidate attainment, including the quality of language. The more positive the answers, the higher should be the mark awarded. We want to avoid "bunching" of marks. Levels mark schemes can produce regression to the mean, which should be avoided. A candidate's script should be considered by asking "Is it:

- precise in its use of factual information?
- appropriately detailed?
- factually accurate?
- appropriately balanced or markedly better in some areas than others?
- generally coherent in expression and cogent in development (as appropriate to the level awarded)?
- well presented as to general quality of language?"

The overall aim is to mark positively, giving credit for what candidates know, understand and can do.

AS GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS (GOV1, GOV2, GOV3)**GENERIC MARK SCHEME for part (a) questions (Total: 8 marks)**

	Knowledge and Understanding: Recall, Select & Deploy	Skills: Analysis & Evaluation	Communication
	AO1	AO2	AO3
	<p>Levels 3–4 (3–4 marks) The candidate successfully demonstrates accurate or generally accurate knowledge and understanding of political data, concept(s) or term(s).</p> <p>Where appropriate, the candidate is able to illustrate his/her answer with relevant evidence/example(s).</p>	<p>Levels 3–4 (2 marks) The candidate provides an appropriate analysis of political data, concept(s) or term(s) showing an awareness of differing viewpoints where appropriate.</p>	<p>Levels 3–4 (2 marks) The candidate communicates clearly and effectively using appropriate political vocabulary.</p>
	<p>Levels 1–2 (1–2 marks) The candidate demonstrates slight or basic knowledge and understanding of political data, concept(s) or term(s).</p> <p>The candidate may illustrate his/her answer with evidence/example(s) of limited relevance.</p>	<p>Levels 1–2 (1 mark) The candidate provides a superficial or partial analysis of political data, concept(s) or term(s).</p>	<p>Levels 1–2 (1 mark) The candidate communicates with limited clarity and effectiveness using a limited political vocabulary.</p>

AS GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS (GOV1, GOV2, GOV3)

GENERIC MARK SCHEME for part (b) questions (Total: 22 marks)

	Knowledge and Understanding: Recall, Select & Deploy	Skills: Analysis & Evaluation	Communication
	AO1	AO2	AO3
	<p>Level 4 (10–11 marks) The candidate successfully demonstrates accurate knowledge and understanding of political concepts/theories/institutions and processes and the relationship between them, producing an answer that deploys relevant knowledge and understanding to address the requirements of the question and that demonstrates significant contextual awareness.</p> <p>The candidate's answer includes relevant evidence and/or examples to substantiate and illustrate points made.</p>	<p>Level 4 (7 marks) The candidate evaluates political institutions, processes and behaviour, applying appropriate concepts and theories.</p> <p>The candidate provides analysis which displays sound awareness of differing viewpoints and a clear recognition of issues. Parallels and connections are identified, together with valid and precise comparisons. The answer includes relevant and convincing interpretations or explanations.</p>	<p>Level 4 (4 marks) The candidate communicates clear arguments and explanations using accurate political vocabulary. The candidate produces answers with a clear sense of direction leading towards a coherent conclusion.</p>
	<p>Level 3 (7–9 marks) The candidate demonstrates generally accurate knowledge and understanding of political concepts/theories/institutions and processes and the relationship between them, producing an answer that addresses the requirements of the question and demonstrates adequate contextual awareness.</p> <p>The answer provides evidence backed up by clear examples to illustrate points made.</p>	<p>Level 3 (5–6 marks) The candidate evaluates political institutions, processes and behaviour, applying some concepts or theories.</p> <p>The candidate provides clear arguments and explanations and demonstrates awareness of differing viewpoints and a recognition of issues. Parallels and connections are identified, together with some sound comparison.</p>	<p>Level 3 (3 marks) The candidate communicates arguments and explanations using some political vocabulary. A conclusion is linked to the preceding discussion.</p>

GENERIC MARK SCHEME for part (b) questions (continued)

	Knowledge and Understanding: Recall, Select & Deploy	Skills: Analysis & Evaluation	Communication
	AO1	AO2	AO3
	<p>Level 2 (4–6 marks) The candidate demonstrates basic knowledge and understanding of political concepts/theories/institutions and processes and some awareness of the relationship between them. He/she makes a limited attempt to address the requirements of the question.</p> <p>The candidate may demonstrate contextual awareness covering part of the question, and may produce limited evidence and/or few examples.</p>	<p>Level 2 (3–4 marks) The candidate offers a simplistic evaluation of political institutions, processes and behaviour and begins to construct arguments which contain basic explanation.</p> <p>The candidate shows some awareness of differing viewpoints. There is recognition of basic parallels or simplistic comparisons.</p>	<p>Level 2 (2 marks) The candidate attempts to develop an argument using basic political vocabulary. Where a conclusion is offered, its relationship to the preceding discussion may be modest or implicit.</p>
	<p>Level 1 (1–3 marks) The candidate demonstrates slight and/or incomplete knowledge and understanding of political concepts/theories/institutions and processes and limited awareness of the relationship between them.</p> <p>The candidate makes a very limited attempt to address the requirements of the question. Only superficial awareness of the context of the question is evident and the few examples cited are often inaccurately reported or inappropriately used.</p>	<p>Level 1 (1–2 marks) The candidate makes a partial attempt to evaluate political institutions, processes and behaviour. Arguments offered are superficial. There is very limited awareness of parallels or comparisons.</p>	<p>Level 1 (1 mark) The answer relies upon narrative which is not fully coherent and which is expressed without using political vocabulary. A conclusion is either not offered or it is not related to the preceding material.</p>

1**Total for this question: 30 marks**

(a) Explain the term *safe seats* used in the extract.

(8 marks)

Candidates define safe seats as those where the sitting candidate is expected to be returned at the impending election because of the strength of party support in his/her constituency. Although opinion polls may indicate a swing, the member sitting in the safe seat is seen as invulnerable to such a swing. By-elections, however, can temporarily lose parties their 'safe' seats. Candidates provide examples of safe seats. Some may refer to marginal seats in their explanations.

(b) 'Many factors affect electoral turnout.'

Analyse the factors which most affect the level of turnout.

(22 marks)

Candidates select and assess factors which have most impact on the level of turnout. Weaker responses may simply list possible factors without analysis and assessment, and are rewarded accordingly. In selection of significant criteria for assessments candidates may refer to the popular significance of elections (local or Euro compared with general); the state of the major parties with close contests generally producing higher turnout levels than foregone results (2001); social capital type of arguments which may be triggered by the stimulus extract and some may contrast turnouts in Winchester and Liverpool Riverside, apathy/hapathy/contentment arguments concerning the impact of rising affluence on the old class divisions based on scarcity; alienation of some potential voters who are disaffected by politics/politicians, feel estranged from the political system or possibly participate in new forms of political behaviour; volatility resulting from declining class alignment and partisan attachment including periodic abstention. Some candidates might include remedies to reverse recent trends in turnout in their conclusion (electoral reform, postal and e-voting, etc). Some candidates may refer to the influence of social factors on turnout, such as age, class, gender and ethnicity.

2

Total for this question: 30 marks

(a) Explain the term '*grey*' voters used in the extract.

(8 marks)

Candidates may note that since the phrase is in quote marks, it is a journalistic concept rather than a formal political scientific one. It is taken to mean the elderly, or possibly retired, voter whose voting behaviour differs from the younger electorate. The association between age and increasing Conservative support with, in 2001, the 65+ year olds being the only age group to give Tories more support than Labour. High turnout. Generational voting – values, attitudes and opinions.

(b) 'Contemporary voting behaviour is largely issue-based.' Discuss.

(22 marks)

Candidates might explore briefly the type of factors which influence voting behaviour, noting that long-term (primacy) factors include class and age (referred to in the extract) as well as gender, ethnicity and religion. They may mention the influence of socialisation or the Chicago model. In contrast are relatively short-term (recency) factors, particularly the influence of issue preferences on voting behaviour. Some might refer to the 'consumer' or 'supermarket' model of voting behaviour, the importance of the 'rational' individual in the context of voting, or the work of Himmelweit. Some candidates might argue that issue-based voting is the most useful explanation of contemporary voting behaviour. As an example they might refer to the 'collectivist' trinity of issues championed by Labour during the 1970s and 1980s – public ownership, trade union power and social welfare which drove many traditional Labour voters away from the party. Other candidates might argue that the evidence concerning issue-voting is contradictory or ambiguous – for example, in the 1987 and 1992 election campaigns Labour issues were the electorate's most important issues, yet the party lost to the Conservatives. Another example which might be cited is 2001, when Labour's issues were the most salient in the electorate's thinking (health and education), whilst Conservative issues (asylum seekers and keeping sterling) were less important issues, and consistent with the outcome of the election. Candidates may argue the 'feelgood' or 'pocketbook' element as a form of issue voting, or an undermining factor. The conclusion should evaluate the usefulness of the issue-voting model in explaining voting behaviour.

3

Total for this question: 30 marks

- (a) Explain the term *first-past-the-post (FPTP)* used in the extract. (8 marks)

Candidates may refer to FPTP as a system involving a ‘simple majority’ or ‘single member simple plurality’. Although the winner in a constituency may not win on more than half of all votes cast, it is usually seen as a ‘majoritarian’ system. Used in the US, Canada and India as well as for general and local elections in Great Britain. Details of the FPTP system may be provided in terms of an advantage (simplicity, strong constituency link) or disadvantage (disproportionality which exaggerates the lead of the winning party).

- (b) ‘The debate about electoral reform suggests that there is no single system which is better than all the others.’ Discuss. (22 marks)

Based on the thrust of the stimulus extract, this question invites candidates to construct arguments which assess the pros and cons of selected electoral systems. Some might argue in general terms regarding proportional representation, majoritarian systems and, possibly, hybrid systems, whilst others specify particular systems as examples in their answers. These might include examples drawn from AMS, AV, AV+, List, STV, Second Ballot, FPTP and supplementary. The criteria for assessment might be attributed to Plant (supplementary), Jenkins (AV+) or the Democratic Audit. In reaching evaluations, comparisons or conclusions candidates might refer to what they identify as the most important ‘democratic values’: equal value of all votes; simplicity of operation; constituency representation; accuracy in reflecting electoral opinion; produces effective and stable government; nature of mandate; encourages minority representatives/representation or other plausible criteria. Conclusions should address the set question and offer support for the thrust of the quotation or provide plausible arguments which challenge.

4

Total for this question: 30 marks

(a) Explain the term *direct democracy* used in the extract.

(8 marks)

Candidates might discuss direct democracy in general terms of direct participatory democracy in which the final authority rests with the people as a whole. Some will refer to referendums as an example, whilst others might refer to the Athenian model. Decision-making is direct and unmediated, unlike representative democracy which might be cited as a contrasting model/theory.

(b) ‘Referendums represent a more democratic form of participation than the opportunity to vote in elections.’ Discuss.

(22 marks)

Candidates will evaluate referendums and elections in terms of democratic criteria. Some may argue that referendums represent popular sovereignty and popular participation in decision-making whereas voting at all levels of elections still facilitates only indirect democracy. The frequency of the voting act at different levels does not alter the indirect process by which politicians make decisions when compared with the direct, if infrequent, involvement of the electorate through referendums. Some might elaborate this argument by examining the different electoral systems which operate at different levels and comment on the differences which result. Others may argue that referendums are radical and may result in policies which are authoritarian or threatening to minorities. It is probable that some candidates will challenge the terms of the set question and argue that referendums and elections are not in competition but supplement each other. Certain decisions require legitimation by the electorate in a way that a general election rarely can accomplish. Examples of referendums in Britain might include the 1975 EC membership, devolution referendums of 1979 and 1997 and the Good Friday Agreement of 1998, London government in 1998 and the various local referendums for directly-elected mayors and the NE Assembly. There may be referendums of future possible referendums on European issues. Some might draw from the examples, or make part of their conclusion, that referendums have been held only on constitutional arrangements. This would have different implications if referendums were held on a wide number of policy issues and alter assessments vis-à-vis representative democracy.