

General Certificate of Education
January 2003
Advanced Subsidiary Examination



GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS **GOV1**
Unit 1 Electoral Systems and Voting Behaviour

Friday 10 January 2003 Afternoon Session

In addition to this paper you will require:
a 12-page answer book.

Time allowed: 1 hour

Instructions

- Use blue or black ink or ball-point pen. Pencil should only be used for drawing.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book. The *Examining Body* for this paper is AQA. The *Paper Reference* is GOV1.
- Answer **one** question from Section A **and one** question from Section B.
In Section A answer **either** Question 1 **or** Question 2.
In Section B answer **either** Question 3 **or** Question 4.

Information

- The maximum mark for this paper is 60.
- Mark allocations are shown in brackets.
- You will be assessed on your ability to use an appropriate form and style of writing, to organise relevant information clearly and coherently, and to use specialist vocabulary, where appropriate. The degree of legibility of your handwriting and the level of accuracy of your spelling, punctuation and grammar will also be taken into account.

Advice

- You are advised to spend approximately 10 minutes reading the examination paper before you attempt the questions.
- You are advised to spend the same amount of time on each question.

Answer **one** question from Section A **and one** question from Section B.

SECTION A

Answer **either** Question 1 **or** Question 2.

Each question carries 30 marks.

EITHER

1 Study the extract below and answer parts (a) and (b) which follow.

Political Culture

A recent report into race riots in three towns in northern England found that white and ethnic minority communities were polarised. There was segregation and a lack of contact between races which fuelled suspicion and which could easily be exploited by *political extremists*. The report found that individuals from different ethnic backgrounds led “parallel lives”.

- (a) Explain what is meant by *political extremists*. (8 marks)
- (b) Does Britain have a single political culture or a number of distinctive political cultures? (22 marks)

OR

- 2 Study the extract below and answer parts (a) and (b) which follow.

Public Opinion

During the 2001 general election campaign, political commentators described the *opinion polls* as “flat lining”. By this, they meant that there were no major gains or losses for either of the major parties. Labour entered the campaign with polls showing a 50% level of support and ended with 48%. At both the outset and conclusion of the election campaign, support for the Conservatives was at 32%. The exception was support for the Liberal Democrats, which showed a small increase in the opinion polls.

- (a) Explain the term *opinion polls*. (8 marks)
- (b) Assess the impact of campaigns on voting behaviour in general elections. (22 marks)

TURN OVER FOR THE NEXT QUESTION

SECTION B

Answer **either** Question 3 **or** Question 4.

Each question carries 30 marks.

EITHER

3 Study the extract below and answer parts (a) and (b) which follow.

The Electoral System

Some political scientists argue that biases in the electoral system, which used to work in favour of the Conservatives, now favour Labour. In the 2001 General Election these included factors such as constituency boundary changes and the distribution of each party's vote. Conservative support was concentrated in the South, thus wasting many votes. One political scientist argued that even if the Conservatives had won the same *share of the popular vote* as Labour on election day, they would still have ended up with a hundred fewer seats.

- (a) Explain what is meant by *share of the popular vote*. (8 marks)
- (b) 'The case for reforming the electoral system used in general elections is overwhelming.' Discuss. (22 marks)

OR

- 4 Study the extract below and answer parts (a) and (b) which follow.

Referendums

The few govern on behalf of the many. The people cast their votes at election time giving the government a *mandate*, but in between they have little say. In these circumstances, it may be seen as particularly important that those who exercise power are representative of the popular will and are responsive to the views of those who elected them. Electoral reform and referendums are two means by which elected politicians have been put more closely in contact with public opinion and made more accountable to it.

Source: adapted from D. WATTS, "Towards a more responsive democracy", in L. ROBINS & B. JONES (eds), Debates in British Politics Today MUP (2000)

- (a) Explain the term *mandate*. (8 marks)
- (b) Analyse the extent to which referendums make government more responsive to public opinion. (22 marks)

END OF QUESTIONS

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