

General Certificate of Education
January 2008
Advanced Subsidiary Examination



GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS
Unit 1 Electoral Systems and Voting Behaviour

GOV1

Thursday 10 January 2008 1.30 pm to 2.30 pm

For this paper you must have:

- an 8-page answer book.

Time allowed: 1 hour

Instructions

- Use black ink or black ball-point pen.
- 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.
- Do all rough work in the answer book. Cross through any work you do not want to be marked.

Information

- The maximum mark for this paper is 60.
- The marks for part questions are shown in brackets.
- You will be marked on your ability to use good English, to organise information clearly and to use specialist vocabulary where appropriate.

Advice

- You are advised to read through 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.

2005 British General Election: Voting by Social Class (%)				
	AB	C1	C2	DE
Labour	28	32	40	48
Conservative	37	36	33	25
Liberal Democrat	29	23	19	18
Other	6	9	8	9

Social class has long appeared a key factor in explaining voting behaviour in Britain, although there is evidence that it is less important than previously as a result of a process referred to as *class de-alignment*. The position forty years ago was such that a political scientist, Peter Pulzer, could observe that “class is the basis of British party politics; all else is embellishment and detail”.

Source: adapted from R LEACH *et al.*, *British Politics*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2006

- (a) Explain the term *class de-alignment* used in the extract. (8 marks)
- (b) To what extent does social class explain contemporary voting behaviour? (22 marks)

OR

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

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Source: adapted from R NEGRINE, 'The Media and Politics' in J FISHER *et al.*, *Central Debates in British Politics*, Pearson Education Limited, 2003

- (a) Explain the term *sound-bites* used in the extract. (8 marks)
- (b) 'The more professional election campaigns have become, the less interest the electorate has shown in voting.' Discuss. (22 marks)

Turn over for the next section

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 Impact of New Electoral Systems

In 1999, for the first time, systems of proportional representation were introduced for elections on the British mainland. (In Northern Ireland the *single transferable vote system* had been in operation for elections to the European Parliament for some time.) The additional member system was used for the elections to the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly in May 1999 and to the Greater London Assembly in May 2000. The party list system was adopted for elections to the European Parliament in June 1999.

The impact of the new systems both on the outcome and the way people decided to vote was marked. In 1999 in Scotland, Labour was forced to enter into coalition with the Liberal Democrats. In Wales, too, proportional representation deprived Labour of the overall majority it would undoubtedly have secured in a first past the post system. The European elections provided dramatic examples of how proportional representation – in this case the regional party list – benefits smaller parties.

Source: adapted from I BUDGE *et al.*, *The New British Politics*, Pearson Education Limited, 2004

- (a) Explain the term *single transferable vote system* used in the extract. (8 marks)
- (b) ‘The possibility of electoral systems based on proportional representation producing coalition governments should be seen as a strength, not a weakness.’ Discuss. (22 marks)

OR

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

Referendums

Britain has representative rather than direct democracy. It does not require that people vote on every single issue but rather that they elect MPs who vote on their behalf.

A referendum can be very complicated for the *electorate*. Some issues are so complex and require such knowledge and understanding that an informed judgement is difficult for the average voter to make. Sometimes information is very technical and the general public might not feel able to make a simple 'yes' or 'no' decision on a referendum question. For example, making a general assessment of the performance of the government at a general election is arguably much easier than deciding on the merits of a single European currency.

Source: adapted from D WATTS, 'Towards a more responsive democracy', in L ROBINS & B JONES (eds), *Debates in British Politics Today*, Manchester University Press, 2000

- (a) Explain the term *electorate* used in the extract. (8 marks)
- (b) 'Despite criticisms, the case for making greater use of referendums is overwhelming.' Discuss. (22 marks)

END OF QUESTIONS

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