

GCE 2004

June Series



Mark Scheme

Government and Politics

A2 Unit 5 – The Politics of the USA (GOV5)

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.

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CRITERIA FOR MARKING AS/A2 GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

Introduction

The 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.

A2 GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS, EXCLUDING SYNOPTIC UNIT (GOV4, GOV5, GOV6, GOV7)

GENERIC MARK SCHEME for Question 1 part (a) (Total: 8 marks)

	Knowledge and Understanding: Recall, Select & Deploy	Skills: Analysis & Evaluation	Communication
	AO1	AO2	AO3
	<p>Levels 3 - 4 (2 marks) The candidate demonstrates a good to excellent knowledge and understanding of political data, concept(s) or term(s). Where appropriate, the candidate produces accurate and/or relevant examples to illustrate points made.</p>	<p>Levels 3 - 4 (3 - 4 marks) The candidate applies a good to excellent range of developed concepts and uses appropriate political theory to construct a clear and cogent explanation or argument.</p>	<p>Levels 3 - 4 (2 marks) The candidate communicates clearly and effectively using appropriate political vocabulary. The answer has a clear sense of direction, is focused on the question and, where appropriate, has a conclusion which flows from the discussion.</p>
	<p>Levels 1 - 2 (1 mark) The candidate demonstrates limited knowledge and understanding of political data, concept(s) or term(s). The candidate produces few or inaccurate examples and/or limited evidence to illustrate points made.</p>	<p>Levels 1 - 2 (1 - 2 marks) The candidate applies a limited range of concepts and makes little or limited use of political theory or ideas in developing an explanation or argument.</p>	<p>Levels 1 - 2 (1 mark) The candidate communicates explanations or arguments with limited clarity and effectiveness using limited political vocabulary. The answer may lack either a clear focus on the question or a sense of direction. A conclusion, where appropriate, may be offered but its relationship to the preceding discussion is modest or implicit.</p>

A2 GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS, EXCLUDING SYNOPTIC UNIT (GOV4, GOV5, GOV6, GOV7)

GENERIC MARK SCHEME for Question 1 part (b) (Total: 12 marks)

	Knowledge and Understanding: Recall, Select & Deploy	Skills: Analysis & Evaluation	Communication
	AO1	AO2	AO3
	<p>Level 4 (5 - 6 marks) The candidate demonstrates a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of political concepts, institutions and processes. The candidate fully addresses the requirements of the question and provides developed and effective to comprehensive interpretation. The answer also provides clear, accurate evidence and, where appropriate, good to excellent examples to illustrate points made.</p>	<p>Levels 3 - 4 (3 - 4 marks) The candidate applies a good to excellent range of developed concepts and uses appropriate political theory to construct a clear and cogent explanation or argument.</p>	<p>Levels 3 - 4 (2 marks) The candidate communicates clearly and effectively using appropriate political vocabulary. The answer has a clear sense of direction, is focused on the question and, where appropriate, has a conclusion which flows from the discussion.</p>
	<p>Level 3 (3 - 4 marks) The candidate demonstrates sound knowledge and understanding of political concepts, institutions and processes. The candidate clearly addresses the requirements of the question and provides sound interpretation and contextual awareness. The answer includes good examples to illustrate points made.</p>		

GENERIC MARK SCHEME for Question 1 part (b) (continued)

	Knowledge and Understanding: Recall, Select & Deploy	Skills: Analysis & Evaluation	Communication
	AO1	AO2	AO3
	<p>Levels 1 - 2 (1 - 2 marks) The candidate demonstrates slight to basic knowledge and understanding of political concepts, institutions and processes. The candidate makes a very limited attempt to address the requirements of the question and provides little to partial but reasonably effective interpretation. Answers offer limited or little evidence and few or inaccurate examples to illustrate points made.</p>	<p>Levels 1 - 2 (1 - 2 marks) The candidate applies a limited range of concepts and makes little or limited use of political theory or ideas in developing an explanation or argument.</p>	<p>Levels 1 - 2 (1 mark) The candidate communicates explanations or arguments with limited clarity and effectiveness using limited political vocabulary. The answer may lack either a clear focus on the question or a sense of direction. A conclusion, where appropriate, may be offered but its relationship to the preceding discussion is modest or implicit.</p>

A2 GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS, EXCLUDING SYNOPTIC UNIT (GOV4, GOV5, GOV6, GOV7)

GENERIC MARK SCHEME for Question 1 part (c) (Total: 20 marks)

	Knowledge and Understanding: Recall, Select & Deploy	Skills: Analysis & Evaluation	Communication
	AO1	AO2	AO3
	<p>Level 4 (7 - 8 marks) The candidate demonstrates a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of political concepts/theories/institutions and processes and the relationships between them. The candidate fully addresses the requirements of the question and demonstrates excellent contextual awareness.</p> <p>The answer includes excellent examples to illustrate points made.</p>	<p>Level 4 (7 - 8 marks) The candidate displays excellent awareness of the implications and demands of the question. There is an excellent focus on the specific question asked. There is a clear evaluation of political institutions, processes and behaviour which displays a sophisticated awareness of viewpoints and issues.</p> <p>Appropriate parallels and connections are clearly identified together with comparisons. A wide range of concepts is used.</p>	<p>Level 4 (4 marks) The candidate communicates arguments, explanations and conclusions with clarity. Excellent use is made of political vocabulary to construct cogent and coherent arguments. The answer has a clear sense of direction, culminating in a conclusion that flows from the preceding discussion.</p>
	<p>Level 3 (5 - 6 marks) The candidate demonstrates sound knowledge and understanding of political concepts/theories/institutions and processes and the relationships between them. The answer clearly addresses the requirements of the question and demonstrates sound contextual awareness.</p> <p>The answer includes good examples to illustrate points made.</p>	<p>Level 3 (5 - 6 marks) The candidate displays sound awareness of the implications and demands of the question. There is a clear focus on the question. There is a sound evaluation of political institutions, processes and behaviour which displays good awareness of viewpoints and issues. There is good recognition of parallels and comparisons. Appropriate concepts are used.</p>	<p>Level 3 (3 marks) The candidate communicates arguments, explanations and conclusions well. Good use is made of political vocabulary to construct clear arguments and explanations.</p> <p>The candidate produces an answer with a conclusion linked to the preceding discussion.</p>

GENERIC MARK SCHEME for Question 1 part (c) (continued)

	Knowledge and Understanding: Recall, Select & Deploy	Skills: Analysis & Evaluation	Communication
	AO1	AO2	AO3
	<p>Level 2 (3 - 4 marks) The candidate demonstrates outline knowledge and understanding of political concepts/theories/institutions and processes and some awareness of the relationships between them. The candidate makes a limited attempt to address the question and demonstrates contextual awareness covering part of the question.</p> <p>The answer includes simple examples to illustrate points made.</p>	<p>Level 2 (3 - 4 marks) The candidate displays limited awareness of the implications and demands of the question, resulting in a restricted focus. There is a limited evaluation of political institutions, processes and behaviour which displays partial awareness of viewpoints and issues.</p> <p>There is some recognition of basic parallels and comparisons with limited use of concepts.</p>	<p>Level 2 (2 marks) The candidate communicates arguments and conclusions adequately with limited use of political vocabulary.</p> <p>A conclusion is offered but its relationship to the preceding discussion may be modest or implicit.</p>
	<p>Level 1 (1 - 2 marks) The candidate demonstrates a slight and incomplete knowledge and understanding of political institutions and processes and limited awareness of the relationships between them. There is little attempt to address the requirements of the question.</p> <p>The answer includes few, if any, examples which may be inaccurately reported or inappropriately used.</p>	<p>Level 1 (1 - 2 marks) The candidate displays little awareness of the implications and demands of the question and focus is lacking. Evaluation of political institutions, processes and behaviour is superficial, with little awareness of viewpoints and issues.</p> <p>There is little, if any, recognition of parallels and comparisons. The use of concepts is superficial and naïve.</p>	<p>Level 1 (1 mark) The answer relies upon narrative, which is not fully coherent. There is little or no use of political vocabulary.</p> <p>A conclusion, if present, is not adequately related to the preceding discussion.</p>

A2 GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS, EXCLUDING SYNOPTIC UNIT (GOV4, GOV5, GOV6, GOV7)

GENERIC MARK SCHEME for Questions 2, 3 and 4 (Maximum 40 marks)

	Knowledge and Understanding: Recall, Select & Deploy	Skills: Analysis & Evaluation	Communication
	AO1	AO2	AO3
	<p>Level 4 (13 - 16 marks) The candidate demonstrates a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of political concepts/theories/institutions and processes and the relationships between them. The candidate fully addresses the requirements of the question and demonstrates excellent contextual awareness.</p> <p>The answer includes excellent examples to illustrate points made. The answer includes detailed and comprehensive interpretations or explanations as well as accurate evidence and relevant examples to illustrate points made.</p>	<p>Level 4 (13 - 16 marks) The candidate displays excellent awareness of the implications and demands of the question. There is an excellent and sustained focus on the specific question asked. There is a clear and full evaluation of political institutions, processes and behaviour which displays a sophisticated awareness of differing viewpoints and recognition of issues.</p> <p>Appropriate parallels and connections are clearly identified together with well-developed comparisons. A wide range of concepts are used and developed.</p>	<p>Level 4 (7 - 8 marks) The candidate communicates arguments, explanations and conclusions with clarity. Excellent use is made of political vocabulary to construct cogent and coherent arguments and explanations. The answer has a clear sense of direction, culminating in a conclusion that flows from the preceding discussion.</p>
	<p>Level 3 (9 - 12 marks) The candidate demonstrates sound knowledge and understanding of political concepts/theories/institutions and processes and the relationships between them. The answer clearly addresses the requirements of the question and demonstrates sound contextual awareness.</p> <p>The answer includes developed and effective interpretations or explanations and also clear evidence and good examples to illustrate points made.</p>	<p>Level 3 (9 - 12 marks) The candidate displays sound awareness of the implications and demands of the question. There is a clear focus on the question. There is a sound evaluation of political institutions, processes and behaviour which displays good awareness of differing viewpoints and recognition of issues. There is good recognition of parallels and comparisons. Appropriate concepts are used and developed.</p>	<p>Level 3 (5 - 6 marks) The candidate communicates arguments, explanations and conclusions well. Good use is made of political vocabulary to construct clear arguments and explanations.</p> <p>The candidate produces an answer with a conclusion linked to the preceding discussion.</p>

GENERIC MARK SCHEME for Questions 2, 3 and 4 (continued)

	Knowledge and Understanding: Recall, Select & Deploy	Skills: Analysis & Evaluation	Communication
	AO1	AO2	AO3
	<p>Level 2 (5 - 8 marks) The candidate demonstrates outline knowledge and understanding of political concepts/theories/institutions and processes and some awareness of the relationships between them. The candidate makes a limited attempt to address the question and demonstrates contextual awareness covering part of the question.</p> <p>The answer includes a partial and reasonably effective attempt at interpretation or explanation with some examples to illustrate points made.</p>	<p>Level 2 (5 - 8 marks) The candidate displays little awareness of the implications and demands of the question, resulting in a restricted focus. There is a limited evaluation of political institutions, processes and behaviour which displays a partial awareness of differing viewpoints and issues.</p> <p>There is some recognition of basic parallels and comparisons. Arguments and explanations are undeveloped with limited use of concepts.</p>	<p>Level 2 (3 - 4 marks) The candidate communicates arguments and conclusions adequately with limited use of political vocabulary.</p> <p>A conclusion is offered but its relationship to the preceding discussion may be modest or implicit.</p>
	<p>Level 1 (1 - 4 marks) The candidate demonstrates a slight and incomplete knowledge and understanding of political institutions and processes and limited awareness of the relationships between them. There is little attempt to address the requirements of the question. There is only superficial awareness, if any, of the context of the question, with little interpretation and few, if any, examples often inaccurately reported or inappropriately used.</p>	<p>Level 1 (1 - 4 marks) The candidate displays little awareness of the implications and demands of the question and focus is lacking. Evaluation of political institutions, processes and behaviour is superficial.</p> <p>Analysis shows little awareness of differing viewpoints and issues. There is little, if any, recognition of parallels and comparisons. Arguments, explanations and use of concepts are superficial and naïve.</p>	<p>Level 1 (1 - 2 marks) The answer relies upon narrative, which is not fully coherent. There is little or no use of political vocabulary.</p> <p>A conclusion, if present, is not adequately related to the preceding discussion.</p>

June 2004**Unit GOV5 – The Politics of the USA****1****Total for this question: 40 marks**

- (a) Explain the importance of the *New Hampshire Primary* referred to in the extract. (8 marks)

A primary is an intra party election to select the party's nominee for the presidency, where ordinary voters vote for their preferred candidate rather than the choice being made by party bosses or activists.

New Hampshire is the first presidential primary in the season and regarded as the most important primary to win in order to achieve “momentum” or the “big mo”, i.e. name recognition, winner status and media attention (therefore more finance). It is not always necessary, however, to win here in order to win the nomination (as Clinton lost in 1992 and Bush in 2000), but it is the first real test of public opinion for the candidates and is regarded as crucial to the rest of their primary campaigns.

But it can be said that New Hampshire is a tiny unrepresentative state untypical of the USA and the number of delegates chosen here are tiny compared to other primary states. However, it is because of the significance of NH that the rest of the primaries have been “front loaded” to gain more significance in the choice of the party nominee.

- (b) Using the extract and your own knowledge, assess the functions of the National Conventions in the presidential nomination process. (12 marks)

The National Nominating Convention (NNC) is the end of the primary and nomination process. It is not as significant as it used to be in the choice of the candidate, as this is already known a long time before as a result of primary choices. In effect, the NNC is like a “coronation” not a contest as the delegates meet to confirm the primary choices.

It is the existence of the primaries that has led to a much reduced role for the NNC and the role of the activists who meet there in July/August of election year. The argument is that it is now merely a “media event” made for TV and dominated by the keynote speech of the successful candidate.

The NNC is made up of the delegates from the state parties chosen by voters in primaries and committed to voting for the candidate who has won in those states (also caucuses). There are different kinds of delegates, but mainly they are grass root supporters of the parties (and are more to the left in the Democratic party and to the right in the Republican party).

The role of the NNC is to present the party's candidate to the wider electorate after the often divisive primaries, so there would be a healing function and a unifying of the various factions.

It is at the NNC that the parties' policies or platforms (extract) are presented to the electorate, e.g. Gore's pro-choice stance. There are sometimes difficult debates over these, e.g. the Republican NNC of 1992. Also, the NNC is the place where the Vice Presidential nominee (running-mate in extract) is chosen in order to “balance the ticket” and examples of such ticket-balancing may be given.

Finally, the NNC provides “bounce” (extract) for the two candidates after the keynote speech, setting the scene for the presidential campaign proper with the platform and VP now in place, and with a unified party (unless, as candidates may specify, there has been a particularly difficult and divisive NNC such as the Republicans had in 1992, following which they subsequently lost the election).

- (c) To what extent are the Democrats and Republicans “two different coalitions with different conceptions of government and different policy objectives”? (20 marks)

Candidates may approach this question from different angles according to the view which they wish to argue. They may challenge the idea that the two US parties **are** so different, pointing to similarities in their often centrist and fudged agenda and programmes, e.g. support for low taxes, the constitution, capitalism and the dominant ideology. They could take the “tweedledum and tweedledee” view and agree with George Wallace that there is not “a dime’s worth of difference between them” (68).

Alternatively, they may present evidence, arguments and examples to show that there are many differences between the parties in both ideology policies and voter support and that these are growing. They should pick up on the “different conceptions of government” to show that the Democrats are more activist and interventionist and supportive of “big government programmes”, especially in the past with the New Deal and the Great Society (but they may also recall Clinton’s statement in 1996 that “the era of big government is over”). The Democrats have been more committed to civil rights and affirmative action programmes, and tend to emphasise the positive role of government in bringing about change and greater equality.

On the other hand, candidates may point to Republican support for more limited ideas of the role of government with a more laissez-faire and less activist approach, and believe as Reagan stated, that “government is the problem not the solution”, and that it should be removed from the backs of the people.

Democrats are more likely to support federal government action and activist government, whereas the Republicans are more in favour of States Rights. Evidence should be presented to back up such points.

The statement also refers to different policy objectives, which is a further cue to candidates to offer specific examples of policies that point to differences between the parties, such as their differing views on health care, guns, abortion and economic issues generally (fiscal and social conservatism or liberalism). Evidence should be presented from recent Republican and Democratic election campaigns, or from Democratic or Republican administrations to point to specific policy differences.

Also, candidates are invited to pick up on the idea of the US parties being “two different coalitions”, suggesting that they are internally divided and factionalised with examples given of these divisions, such as the differences within the parties between liberals and conservatives and the various groupings found within the parties. The best candidates are aware that all “big tent” parties, but especially the US ones, are highly factionalised and that there are often difficulties holding the coalitions together at times.

Finally, the coalition could refer to different voting support gained by the parties, again illustrating the differences in their ideologies and policies.

2**Total for this question: 40 marks**

Evaluate the claim that although pressure groups are vital to pluralist democracy, in effect they overwhelm the political process in the USA. (40 marks)

The question invites candidates to present both a case for, and a critique of, the role played by pressure groups in the politics of the USA and to evaluate the arguments presented.

It is likely that pressure groups are defended by an explanation of the nature of political pluralism, the need for pressure group representation of views and the presentation of these to governments where decisions will be made taking these views into account. Candidates may present evidence relating to the need for the representation of views in a democracy, the importance of the participation of citizens in a representative democracy (overcoming the problems of “blanket votes”), and the inability of parties to specifically represent the views of citizens who are divided in many ways and have many different interests.

However, the argument that pressure groups “overwhelm” the political process in the USA must also be addressed and it is likely that candidates present evidence showing the nature of this power (including the financial power of PACs who are closely linked to pressure groups).

Examples should be given of specific pressure groups to illustrate power with the methods and tactics adopted by powerful groups to gain access and influence. This may be connected to their resources (which are unequal), such as a large and active membership, finance, expertise and access, or their tactics (from insider to outsider plus examples).

Candidates should refer to the unequal representation of groups (who lack a democratic mandate) and the disproportionate influence of some highly resourced groups, such as business or corporate lobbies (Enron is likely to be a commonly used example) cf. those groups who speak on behalf of the disadvantaged – or the power of single issue lobbies to force their views onto the political agenda. At the highest levels there may be reference to the “Iron Triangles” of US government or the easy access gained by some groups with political “clout”, e.g. the gun lobby.

It is possible that the “effectively overwhelm” view may be challenged and this is acceptable if the arguments are backed up by strong evidence and examples. If candidates wish to argue for “pluralist balance” against “elite theory” this could be done.

In order to do well candidates must show that they clearly understand the concept of “pluralist democracy” and the “effectively overwhelm” part of the question must be explicitly addressed.

3**Total for this question: 40 marks**

“An outdated and antiquated device more suited to the Eighteenth Century than to the needs of the Twenty-first.” Critically assess this view of the Electoral College as a device for the election of the President of the USA. *(40 marks)*

The question calls for a critical assessment which should go well beyond a description of the workings of the Electoral College (EC) system (which should also be given, i.e. how it works) and why it was introduced by the Founding Fathers as a “compromise” device in the 18th Century.

There should be a strong critique of its workings today, covering such areas as the way that it distorts the popular vote through the “winner take all”, simple plurality system in 50 states plus DC; the possibility of minority presidents; the effects on campaigning; and the possibility (as happened in 2000 and 1888) that the candidate who wins the EC vote loses the popular vote with the consequent effect on mandates and legitimacy. Evidence of distortions should be presented, drawing from past presidential elections to substantiate the arguments.

Candidates may legitimately introduce arguments regarding the importance of certain key “swing” states and the “swing” voters within them, and the over-concentration on these states and voters, with examples given, such as the gay vote in California and the elderly vote in Florida. They may also argue that the EC system is probably a factor in very high abstention rates in States which are “safe” for one party or another. The problem of the “faithless elector” may also be introduced into the assessment. Candidates are invited to pick up on the reference to the 18th Century, when the device was written into the constitution, when conditions were very different from today where the USA is the world’s only superpower but still operating under a constitution written in the 18th Century when the country had very different needs.

Alternatively, the question also invites a possible defence of the EC system and its outcomes (which vary according to each election as the candidates should know) as, despite the numerous criticisms of its working, there is no strong movement for change (for various reasons) and any attempted change has not received the required support in the Congress for constitutional amendment. There are strong arguments in its defence, such as the stability it produces, through to problems with alternative ways of electing the president who is the only nationally elected politician, such as a nationwide popular vote of choice in the House of Representatives (which happens if there is a deadlock in the EC). Reference may be made to the fact that the USA is a federal system with jealously guarded States Rights which is always a stumbling block to change.

Marks depend on the strength of the evidence and examples provided to back up the critical assessment of the statement.

4**Total for this question: 40 marks**

“The factors that influence voter choice in the USA are varied and complex.” Discuss. (40 marks)

Candidates pick up on the importance of the words “varied” and “complex” in the question, which is implying that US voting behaviour is not straightforward to explain and that there are many different variables involved and a complex interaction of these numerous factors.

The question has a focus on **both** the long term and short term factors influencing voter choice in the situation, well documented by US psephologists, of increasing voter de-alignment and declining levels of voter identification and the corresponding rise of the “independent” voter open to persuasion in the exercise of his/her vote.

Because of the huge diversity of the USA, the factors which influence voter choice are greater than in most other liberal democracies. The large number of elections in the USA is another factor. Factors such as socio-economic status (in particular, levels of income), race and ethnicity and the different voting patterns of black, Hispanic, Asian and white voters should be discussed. The importance of religion as an independent variable could also be discussed as a person’s religion can be a factor in their voting behaviour. There could also be reference, in the context of “complexity”, to the influence of region and where the voters live, as there is well-documented evidence that voters from the South vote differently from voters in the North-East states, or in the West compared to the Mid-West.

Because of the US electoral system with different elections taking place at different levels and for the different branches of government, candidates may introduce the concept of split ticket voting to show “complexity” as voters vote for different parties and candidates on the same ticket.

Alternatively, the short term factors could be stressed, including the increasing importance of “candidate voting” relating to the important influence of the media in focusing on candidates and their image and “personalised politics”.

There is also increasing attention paid to the importance of “issues” especially salient ones, such as economic issues (“it’s the economy, stupid”) or abortion, gun control, etc. There is also what is known as “prospective” or “retrospective” voting. Voters respond to changing candidates and issues on the political agenda.

All these factors add to the complexity of voter choice in the USA and should be backed up with relevant evidence and examples, including voting statistics and reference to the way the voters voted in specific elections.