



General Certificate of Education

Government and Politics 5151/6151

GOV5 The Politics of the USA

Mark Scheme

2005 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.

Government and Politics

CRITERIA FOR MARKING AS/A2

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>		
	<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 a 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 is 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 but 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 a 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>

The Politics of the USA GOV5

1.

Total for this question: 40 marks

- (a) Explain the term *political action committees* (PACs) used in the extract. (8 marks)

Recognition that these are the fundraising arms of US pressure groups, with increasing importance since the FECA reforms of the 70's restricted the use of direct contributions to candidates and parties and opened a loophole for the growth of these financial sponsors. They raise electoral finance and avoid the restrictions of FECA. Limited to \$5000 contributions, but often 'bundle' contributions to increase influence. Numerous examples of PACs in US politics and their contributions to candidates.

- (b) Using the extract and your own knowledge, account for the growth of pressure group activity since the 1960s. (12 marks)

Growth of pressure group activity influenced by various factors. In the extract, growth of single issues/increasing pluralism/public interest groups/weakness of political parties/changes in **ways** of influencing the political system/competition has grown.

Other factors could include the openness of the system to pressure group influence, more and more issues to lobby on the growth of countervailing groups, the complexity of political issues today, the growth of government intervention, therefore more groups form to protect interests. Increasing importance of lobbying activities in Washington and State capitals.

- (c) Consider the reasons for the variable influence and success of pressure groups within the US political system. (20 marks)

The key argument is that not all pressure groups are equally influential and successful in their aims and it is necessary to evaluate various factors which may lead to either **success** or **failure**. Answers should focus on the methods and tactics used by pressure groups in their activities in gaining **access** (through 'access points') to the decision-makers **or** influencing **public opinion** in favour of their interests and/or causes (through campaigning activities and public education on the issues). Other variables such as their membership (size and type) finance, even insider or outsider status (although the terms are not identical to those used in the UK) and lobbying. Examples would be needed of either 'success' (getting legislation passed or blocked) or failure (not convincing legislators, executives or judiciaries of the merits of their arguments). Also, examples of 'strong' pressure groups such as the NRA and their influence over gun policy and 'weak' pressure groups such as the more extremist movements such as environmental, pro-choice and pro-life groups, or any groups forced into possibly counter-productive direct action. Answer should be fully illustrated with evidence and examples to back up arguments.

2.

Total for this question: 40 marks

‘Two broad coalitions of interests, beliefs and values with more differences within than between.’
Evaluate this view of US political parties. (40 marks)

The question is asking for a critical evaluation of these characteristics of US political parties. The notion of the parties being broad coalitions involves the analysis of US parties being pragmatic, catch all ‘umbrella parties’ and very ‘big tents’. This should be demonstrated by evidence referring to the different interests represented by the parties (eg urban versus rural/suburban) or their beliefs and values (eg liberal and conservative intervention versus non-intervention) with specific examples of differences. Candidates may also indicate the arguments referring to the similarities between the parties and the reasons for these. The focus of the question leads candidates to discuss the thesis that because of the nature of US parties it can be argued that there are more differences **within** them (intra) rather than **between** (inter). This would demand analysis of the factionalised nature of US parties with the Democratic party for examples containing different kinds of democrat according to both ideology and region, eg North East liberal democrats and southern (what is left of them) conservative democrats. There is also the Clintonian ‘New democrats’ as a result of changes in the 90s under the DLC and ‘3rd way’ ideas. Similarly, the Republican Party is internally factionalised with ‘moderate’ (often North Eastern) republicans, ‘compassionate conservatives’; the more conservative (often southern) republicans, along with the ‘neo-cons’; and the radical and Christian right. Many candidates at the top of Level 4 will be familiar with specific groupings built around these different views especially in Congress. Arguments can be constructed which show that there are greater similarities **between** parties rather than **within** them with evidence drawn from studies. At the top level candidates will be aware of recent changes to the parties suggesting that there is greater cohesion within them in an ideological sense.

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

‘Too long, too expensive, too dominated by media image whilst failing to select the best candidate for the job.’ Critically assess this view of presidential primary elections in the USA. *(40 marks)*

The likely focus of an answer to this question would be a critique of the primary selection process through a discussion of the major criticisms of primaries in terms of presidential selection. Nevertheless, the question does not preclude a defence of primaries, possibly in terms of their highly democratic nature and involvement of the voters in the process unlike the undemocratic nature of the previous machine politics era and the dominance of the party bosses in ‘smoke-filled rooms’. Candidates may also point out to the purpose of the primaries in weeding out unsuitable candidates, and showing who can win the States. Particular importance may be attached to the New Hampshire primary and ‘Super Tuesday’ southern primaries and the development of ‘momentum’ and ‘name recognition’. Reference should be made to the ‘too long’ aspect of the quote with the development for example, of the ‘invisible primary’ and the fact that the process starts almost as soon as the last election is over. The fact that primaries give an advantage to well financed candidates will also be picked up in the ‘too expensive’ part of the quote with the process becoming dominated by well funded candidates, therefore ‘squeezing out’ other (perhaps ‘better’) less well funded candidates. Similarly the argument today is that the primaries are now dominated by certain kinds of ‘media friendly’ even media ‘created’ candidates who perform well on TV but who may not make ‘good’ candidates in the presidential election, or even ‘good’ presidents. It is argued that candidates with money, media image (style rather than substance ‘arguments’) and even those who project their ‘Washington Outsider’ characteristics may win over other (perhaps) more able candidates. The characteristics of the primaries may therefore, work to reduce turnout and increase the cynicism about the US electoral process. There is also the argument likely to be picked up by the better candidates that the primary voters are not representative of American voters generally, with Republican primary voters being more to the right and Democrats to the left. This forces candidates to perhaps adopt more extreme platforms to win the primaries which must be abandoned as the general election campaign begins. Analysis will be backed up by evidence from specific presidential primary contests and the candidates that won (and those that lost).

4.

Total for this question: 40 marks

‘One of the continuing paradoxes of US voting behaviour is the willingness of many voters to split their ticket.’ Consider the causes and effects of such electoral behaviour. *(40 marks)*

The ‘paradoxical’ nature of Split Ticket Voting (STV) is that voters are voting for different things on the ballot paper by voting for different and separate parties. The extent of this varies from election to election, but it is always there. It is sometimes related to long or short presidential coat-tails, but its real cause lies in the de-aligned and volatile nature of the American electorate. There is also the argument that US voters split their ticket because **they can** (federalism and the separation of powers). There is decline of partisan alignment and the rise of **issue** and **candidate** voting whereby, for all sorts of different reasons, voters vote one party for President and another for Congress. Other factors such as the importance of incumbency, the records of congressional candidates in ‘bringing home the bacon’, the weakness of parties and the ‘all politics is local’ arguments, whether there is an ‘open’ contest or not and the varying expenditure of the different candidates may all be legitimately introduced. Examples may be given of STV from recent elections and evidence presented from different contests; eg ‘Reagan Democrats’ and Union Republicans.

It will be recognised that such electoral behaviour has a number of consequences not the least being the prevalence of divided government in Washington for much of the modern period, with ‘gridlocked government’ often the outcome when the executive branch is held by one party with the legislative branch controlled by the other. It is up to candidates to speculate whether this was really the wish of the split ticket voters in a kind of ‘cognitive Madisonianism’ with each branch acting as a more effective check and balance on the other or whether it was simply an outcome of the way that the voters voted in that particular election. Very good candidates may present the argument that in a sense STV may bring the voters the best of both worlds as, for example, divided government in DC may bring lower taxes (Republican presidency) along with high public spending (Democratic domination of the Congress), ie Rational Choice Theory.

Candidates should address both parts of the question clearly, ie causes and consequences, although the amount written on each area need not be equal.

3.

Total for this question: 40 marks

‘Executive dominance over Parliament prevails in the UK, but congress dominates in the USA.’ Discuss.
(40 marks)

The question is looking for knowledge and understanding of the variable powers and influence of the UK Parliament compared to the US Congress in their respective systems of government. The answer should contain an analysis of the term ‘executive dominance’ and the relationship between the executive and Parliament in the UK which is affected by the size of the parliamentary majority, party discipline through the whips, the initiation of legislation through the executive (manifestos and mandates) and other factors. This can be argued leads to ‘elective dictatorship’, a ‘lobby fodder’ analysis of MP’s and the idea that Parliament is simply a ‘rubber stamp’ for the wishes of the executive with weak scrutiny and little control over executive actions. However, candidates may argue that this is **not** always the case and there are many examples of back bench rebellions, House of Lords obstruction and executive weakness in the face of these, particularly in conditions of ‘Hung Parliament’ or small majority. Norton’s ‘policy-making/’policy influencing’ distinction may be referred to in order to illuminate the degrees of executive dominance.

In contrast, the US Congress is certainly ‘powerful’ with the Constitutional powers given by Article 1 arguably making Congress the most powerful legislature in the world with legislative power and oversight power over the executive branch and the ‘power of purse’ (which extends its power into foreign policy). Party discipline is weak and the executive has no power which would allow it to ‘control’ Congress because of the separation of powers and the checks and balances laid down by the constitution.

Of course candidates may challenge this analysis also by indicating that Congress may not always ‘dominate’ the political process and may often ‘defer’ to the executive branch. The presidential veto and pocket veto powers of the President and the power of judicial review held by Supreme Court may also challenge the idea of congressional ‘dominance’.

The broad nature of the question allows the strong candidates to draw evidence from the decision making processes of both countries and a clear comparative approach is evident in the answer at the top level.

4.

Total for this question: 40 marks

‘The only similarity between the UK and US Cabinets lies in the name.’ Discuss. (40 marks)

The question demands an analysis of the role of the Cabinet in the UK and the USA and the reasons for the differences in their constitutional positions and powers. Crucial to understanding is that the USA has presidential not cabinet government, and the cabinet has **no** constitutional status (operates by convention) and there is **no** collective decision making and **no** collective responsibility. The cabinet **does** have functions (policy advice, co-ordination of the executive branch) and Presidents use it in different ways (numerous examples) depending on circumstances and personalities. There may be reference to the growing power of EXOP and President’s preference for policy advice from here to avoid what has been called ‘going native’ and the power of the ‘iron triangles’ of American government.

In the UK the constitutional status of the cabinet gives it a clear role in theory at least, and the notion of ‘Cabinet Government’ should be clearly understood. However, recent developments within the ‘Core executive’ and the increasing role and power of the PM with arguments relating to the ‘presidentialisation’ of UK politics may lead to arguments that there may be similarities between the two cabinets in terms of political weakness and lack of influence. The key factor however, relates to the variables involved, particularly the relationships involved, and the events and circumstances of the time. Analysis and evaluation should be backed up by the use of relevant and perceptive evidence and examples from both countries.