

General Certificate of Education
January 2004
Advanced Level Examination



GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS
Unit 5 The Politics of the USA

GOV5

Tuesday 27 January 2004 Afternoon Session

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

Time allowed: 1 hour 30 minutes

Instructions

- Σ Use blue or black ink or ball-point pen. Pencil should only be used for drawing.
- Σ Write the information required on the front of your answer book. The *Examining Body* for this paper is AQA. The *Paper Reference* is GOV5.
- Σ Answer **Question 1** and **one** other question.

Information

- Σ The maximum mark for this paper is 80.
- Σ Mark allocations are shown in brackets.
- Σ 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

- Σ You are advised to read through the examination paper before you attempt the questions.
- Σ You are advised to spend the same amount of time on each question.

Answer **Question 1** and **one** other question.

1

Total for this question: 40 marks

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

THE BLACK VOTE IN THE USA

“Most black people don’t think alike, they just vote alike” says J. C. Watts, a black Republican congressman from Oklahoma, and it is the lack of consistency between the variety of black views and the near-unanimous support for the Democrats that led Republican nominee George W. Bush to address the National Association for the Advancement of Colored People (NAACP), the largest black political organisation in the USA, before the 2000 election. Bush was seeking a reconciliation between his party and black voters by conceding that racism still exists in the party of Lincoln. He argued that his “compassionate conservatism” offered a better alternative to poor black voters than the traditional big-government programmes associated with the Democrats.

Republicans consistently get a mere 10% of the black vote, plus or minus 5%. Dole’s showing among black voters in 1996, a mere 13%, was still the best the Republicans have managed since the 1950s. Black voters’ long identification with the Democratic Party has had some consequences, not all good. Democratic candidates can make token promises to black voters, which can then be set aside as they attempt to win the support of the middle ground *swing voters*. Republican candidates, reading the polls, never bother to make any promises in the first place.

On paper, Republicans have much to offer some black voters, who often describe themselves as more conservative than white voters on a range of issues such as school vouchers, abortion and school prayer. They could also gain black votes by stressing ‘pocketbook’ (economic self-interest) issues. Since 1970 around 2 million black families have moved into the higher earning middle classes. It is hard to see why they should be more enthusiastic about poverty programmes than their white suburban neighbours. The Republicans may be the party of Lincoln but the Democrats became the party of Roosevelt and the New Deal. Three decades later in the 1960s the Democrats’ support for civil rights strengthened their black voter support. The Republican Party in 2000 may have hoped for some modest realignment, but will it ever manage to prise black voters away from their support for the Democratic party?

Source: adapted from *The Economist* 15 July 2000 © The Economist Newspaper Ltd, London (15/7/2000)

- (a) Explain the term *swing voters* used in the extract. (8 marks)
- (b) Using the extract and your own knowledge, explain the high level of the black vote for the Democratic Party. (12 marks)
- (c) Consider factors, other than race and ethnicity, that are significant in explaining voting behaviour in the USA. (20 marks)

Answer either **Question 2** or **Question 3** or **Question 4**.

- 2 How far is it true that third parties and independent candidates in the USA have little political significance and are destined to fail? *(40 marks)*

- 3 Examine the view that at state level political issues should be decided by elected representatives rather than by voters in the initiative and referendum processes. *(40 marks)*

- 4 Evaluate the claim that within the US political system pressure groups and their associated Political Action Committees (PACs) now have greater power and influence than parties. *(40 marks)*

END OF QUESTIONS