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**ADVANCED**

**General Certificate of Education**

**2024**

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# Government and Politics

Assessment Unit A2 1  
Comparative Government

**[AGP11]**



\* AGP11\*

**FRIDAY 24 MAY, AFTERNOON**

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## TIME

2 hours 15 minutes.

## INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Write your Centre Number and Candidate Number on the Answer Booklet provided.  
Choose **either Option A**: The United States of America and the United Kingdom  
**or Option B**: The Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom.

From your chosen option answer **all six** questions, the **four** in Section A and the **two** in Section B.  
Please record the question number in the Answer Booklet margin.

**Please take a new page at the start of each question.**

## INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

The total mark for this paper is 100 marks.

Quality of written communication will be assessed in Questions **3, 4, 6(a)** and **6(b)**.

Figures in brackets printed down the right-hand side of pages indicate the marks awarded to each question or part question.

## ADVICE TO CANDIDATES

You are advised to take account of the marks for each part question in allocating the available examination time. Study the Source before attempting to answer Questions 2 and 4 and refer to the Source in your answers.

## Option A: A Comparative Study of the Government and Politics of the United States of America (USA) and the United Kingdom (UK)

Answer **all six** questions, the **four** in Section A and the **two** in Section B

### Section A: The Government and Politics of the USA

Read the Source below and refer to it in your answers to Questions 2 and 4.

#### Source

In recent decades, politics in the United States has become increasingly polarised. This has significantly affected the ability of Congress to perform its functions. In the past, Congress was able to operate because of the significant degree of bipartisanship between the Republicans and Democrats. This is no longer the case and Congress has increasingly experienced 'gridlock', affecting, for example, its ability to set a budget. Divided government is now the norm in the USA and this has made it almost impossible to tackle a wide range of important issues.

- 1 What is meant by the term "lame duck president"? Support your answer with a relevant example. [5]
  
- 2 With reference to the Source and any other relevant material you have studied, identify and explain **two** ways in which gridlock has prevented Congress from carrying out its functions. [10]
  
- 3 Explain why presidents have more freedom to act over foreign policy than they do over domestic policy. [15]
  
- 4 With reference to the Source and any other relevant material you have studied, assess the view that Congress is increasingly ineffective in performing its functions. [30]

## Section B: A Comparative Study of the Government and Politics of the USA and UK

5 Identify and explain **two** differences in how US Senators and Members of the House of Lords can hold the executive to account. [10]

6 **Either**

(a) "Members of the House of Representatives are 'prisoners' of organised lobby groups. Members of the House of Commons are controlled by their parties."  
Assess the validity of this statement. [30]

**Or**

(b) "British Prime Ministers have the freedom to act in ways that US Presidents do not."  
Assess the validity of this statement. [30]

## Option B: A Comparative Study of the Government and Politics of the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom (UK)

Answer **all six** questions, the **four** in Section A and the **two** in Section B

### Section A: The Government and Politics of the Republic of Ireland

Read the Source below and refer to it in your answers to Questions 2 and 4.

#### Source

By the end of 2022, there were two new developments in the government of the Republic of Ireland that had never been seen before. Micheál Martin, the leader of Fianna Fáil, handed over the position of Taoiseach to Leo Varadkar of Fine Gael. This occurred by agreement and without a general election. The coalition government of these two traditional rival parties was the other unprecedented development. One reason for these extraordinary arrangements was the increasingly fractured nature of Irish politics, one feature of which was the very high number of Independent TDs in the Dáil.

- 1 What is meant by the term “coalition government”? Support your answer with a relevant example. [5]
- 2 With reference to the Source and any other relevant material you have studied, identify and explain **two** reasons why there are so many Independent TDs in the Dáil. [10]
- 3 Explain how members of the Dáil can influence legislation. [15]
- 4 With reference to the Source and any other relevant material you have studied, assess the view that the “increasingly fractured” nature of Irish politics has made effective government impossible. [30]

**Section B: A Comparative Study of the Government and Politics of the  
Republic of Ireland and the UK**

**5** Identify and explain **two** similarities between Question Time in the Dáil and in the House of Commons. [10]

**6 Either**

**(a)** Assess the view that Parliament is much more effective in scrutinising the executive than the Oireachtas. [30]

**Or**

**(b)** “The Irish Taoiseach has nothing like the powers of a British Prime Minister.” Assess the validity of this statement. [30]

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**THIS IS THE END OF THE QUESTION PAPER**

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