



Rewarding Learning

**ADVANCED
General Certificate of Education
2024**

Government and Politics

Assessment Unit A2 1

Comparative Government

[AGP11]

FRIDAY 24 MAY, AFTERNOON

**MARK
SCHEME**

General Marking Instructions

Introduction

The main purpose of the mark scheme is to ensure that examinations are marked accurately, consistently and fairly. The mark scheme provides examiners with an indication of the nature and range of candidates' responses likely to be worthy of credit. It also sets out the criteria which they should apply in allocating marks to candidates' responses.

Assessment objectives

Below are the assessment objectives for GCE Government and Politics.

Candidates should be able to:

- AO1** Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of political institutions, processes, concepts, theories and debates.
- AO2** Analyse and evaluate political information, arguments and theories; identify parallels, connections, similarities and differences between the political systems studied.
- AO3** Construct and communicate coherent arguments making use of a range of appropriate political vocabulary.

Quality of candidates' responses

In marking the examination papers, examiners should be looking for a quality of response reflecting the level of maturity which may reasonably be expected of a 17 or 18-year-old which is the age at which the majority of candidates sit their GCE examinations.

Flexibility in marking

Mark schemes are not intended to be totally prescriptive. No mark scheme can cover all the responses which candidates may produce. In the event of unanticipated answers, examiners are expected to use their professional judgement to assess the validity of answers. If an answer is particularly problematic, then examiners should seek the guidance of the Supervising Examiner.

Positive marking

Examiners are encouraged to be positive in their marking, giving appropriate credit for what candidates know, understand and can do rather than penalising candidates for errors or omissions. Examiners should make use of the whole of the available mark range for any particular question and be prepared to award full marks for a response which is as good as might reasonably be expected of a 17 or 18-year-old GCE candidate.

Awarding zero marks

Marks should only be awarded for valid responses and no marks should be awarded for an answer which is completely incorrect or inappropriate.

Types of mark schemes

Mark schemes for tasks or questions which require candidates to respond in extended written form are marked on the basis of levels of response which take account of the quality of written communication.

Other questions which require only short answers are marked on a point for point basis with marks awarded for each valid piece of information provided.

Levels of response

In deciding which level of response to award, examiners should look for the 'best fit' bearing in mind that weakness in one area may be compensated for by strength in another. In deciding which mark within a particular level to award to any response, examiners are expected to use their professional judgement.

The following guidance is provided to assist examiners.

- **Threshold performance:** Response which just merits inclusion in the level and should be awarded a mark at or near the bottom of the range.
- **Intermediate performance:** Response which clearly merits inclusion in the level and should be awarded a mark at or near the middle of the range.
- **High performance:** Response which fully satisfies the level description and should be awarded a mark at or near the top of the range.

Quality of written communication

Quality of written communication is taken into account in assessing candidates' responses to all questions that require them to respond in extended written form. These questions are marked on the basis of levels of response. The description for each level of response includes reference to the quality of written communication.

For conciseness, quality of written communication is distinguished within levels of response as follows:

Level 1: Quality of written communication is inadequate.

Level 2: Quality of written communication is limited.

Level 3: Quality of written communication is satisfactory.

Level 4: Quality of written communication is good.

Level 5: Quality of written communication is of a high standard.

In interpreting these level descriptions, examiners should refer to the more detailed guidance provided below:

Level 1 (Inadequate): The candidate makes only a very limited selection and use of an appropriate form and style of writing. The organisation of material may lack any clarity and coherence. There is very little use of specialist vocabulary. Presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar may be such that intended meaning is consistently unclear.

Level 2 (Limited): The candidate makes only a limited selection and use of an appropriate form and style of writing. The organisation of material may lack clarity and coherence. There is little use of specialist vocabulary. Presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar may be such that intended meaning is not clear in places.

Level 3 (Satisfactory): The candidate makes a reasonable selection and use of an appropriate form and style of writing. Relevant material is organised with some clarity and coherence. There is some use of appropriate specialist vocabulary. Presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar are sufficiently competent to make meaning clear.

Level 4 (Good): The candidate makes a good selection and use of an appropriate form and style of writing. Relevant material is organised with a good standard of clarity and coherence. There is good use of appropriate specialist vocabulary. Presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a sufficiently good standard to make meaning clear.

Level 5 (High Standard): The candidate successfully selects and uses the most appropriate form and style of writing. Relevant material is organised with a high degree of clarity and coherence. There is widespread and accurate use of appropriate specialist vocabulary. Presentation, spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a sufficiently high standard to make meaning clear.

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

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**

Section A: The Government and Politics of the USA

- 1** A lame duck president is one who is approaching the end of their term in office and whose successor may already have been appointed. The term usually suggests that a President has lost most of their power to influence Congress, individual states and even the Supreme Court. When a President becomes a lame duck any policy initiatives they still wish to pursue will almost certainly fail. Obama was considered to be a lame duck in the last years of his second term, even before the election of Trump.

If no supporting example is given, a maximum of [3] marks can be awarded.

Level 1 ([1])

The candidate offers a basic explanation of what is meant by the term “lame duck president”.

Level 2 ([2]–[3])

The candidate offers a more developed explanation of what is meant by the term “lame duck president”. An example may be included to support the response. If no supporting example is given, a maximum of [3] marks can be awarded.

Level 3 ([4]–[5])

The candidate provides a full explanation of what is meant by the term “lame duck president”. A relevant example will be used to support the response.

(AO1: 5 marks)

Any other valid information will be rewarded appropriately.

5

2 Background

The Source identifies one consequence of gridlock as Congress being unable to set a budget and this has occurred several times in recent years. It occurs when the two Houses of Congress are controlled by different parties or when the president and one or both Houses are controlled by different parties. With no budget being agreed federal government departments have been forced to shut down and employees not paid. Other ways in which gridlock can affect the work of Congress are in it carrying out its legislative role, in its role in approving presidential appointments, in its scrutiny of executive treaties and in other ways.

Any other valid way.

If there is no reference to the Source, a maximum of [6] marks can be awarded.

If there is no relevant example, a maximum of [8] marks can be awarded.

Level 1 ([1])

The candidate identifies a valid way with little or no development.

Level 2 ([2]–[3])

The candidate identifies a valid way and offers a more developed explanation. An example may be included to support the response.

Level 3 ([4]–[5])

The candidate identifies a valid way and provides a full explanation of a valid way. A relevant example is included.

Apply criteria for each valid way. One of the ways identified must come from the

Source, the other from own knowledge.

(AO1: 5 marks × 2)

Any other valid information will be rewarded appropriately.

3 Background

Part of US political culture is that the president should have greater freedom to conduct foreign affairs than should be the case with domestic matters, perhaps a legacy of US isolationism. This would be a valid reason. A second would be that re-election for members of Congress comes from a focus upon the domestic needs of those they represent rather than upon what happens elsewhere. The Constitution also gives the president greater freedom to conduct foreign affairs. The mechanisms of the US political system operate to restrict a president's domestic policies much more so than their foreign policies.

Any other relevant reason.

If only one reason is given, a maximum of Level 3 can be awarded.

An answer that contains no evidence can be awarded a maximum of Level 3.

Level 1 ([1]–[3])

The candidate demonstrates limited knowledge and understanding of why presidents have greater freedom to act over foreign than domestic policy and makes little attempt to answer the question. The answer is ill-informed and/or has a high degree of irrelevant material. The response contains general statements and/or includes no evidence or examples. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are inadequate. An argument or explanation, if present, is ill-informed and poorly constructed. The level of communication and use of political vocabulary are both limited.

Level 2 ([4]–[6])

The candidate demonstrates outline knowledge and understanding of why presidents have greater freedom to act over foreign than domestic policy but there are major gaps in this knowledge and understanding and only a limited attempt is made to answer the question. The response contains some relevant material but also significant irrelevant or general material. Some relevant evidence or examples are provided. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar are limited. An argument or explanation is constructed although communication and structure tend to be narrative or descriptive. There is some use of appropriate political vocabulary.

Level 3 ([7]–[9])

The candidate demonstrates satisfactory and understanding of why presidents have greater freedom to act over foreign than domestic policy but there are some gaps in this knowledge and understanding. The response makes a reasonable attempt at answering the question and contains relevant material along with some more general material. Relevant evidence or examples are provided. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar is satisfactory. A structured argument is constructed, displaying effective communication and presentation of ideas. There is good use of appropriate political vocabulary.

Level 4 ([10]–[12])

The candidate demonstrates sound knowledge and understanding of why presidents have greater freedom to act over foreign than domestic policy and uses this to fully address the requirements of the question. Accurate evidence

AVAILABLE
MARKS

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and examples are deployed to illustrate points made. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are generally good. A cogent and coherent argument is constructed which displays clear communication and presentation of ideas. There is extensive use of appropriate political vocabulary.

Level 5 ([13]–[15])

The candidate demonstrates accurate, detailed and comprehensive knowledge and understanding of why presidents have greater freedom to act over foreign than domestic policy and deploys this to produce an exemplary answer to the question. The most relevant and accurate evidence and examples are deployed to illustrate points made extremely effectively. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a consistently high standard. A thoroughly convincing and logical argument is constructed which displays highly effective communication and presentation of ideas. There is precise and wide-ranging use of appropriate political vocabulary.

[15]

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AVAILABLE
MARKS

4 Background

The view that Congress has become an increasingly ineffective institution has become more widely expressed in recent years. Divided government is nothing new in the US, but the growth of partisanship and polarisation has meant that divided government is more likely to lead to inertia and gridlock. As the Source suggests, crucial issues are not addressed because there is no consensus in Congress on if and what should be done. For many in the rest of the world, the inability of the US to tackle the issue of mass shootings is inexplicable but is a logical outcome of Congress' ineffectiveness.

This analysis takes a narrow view of the functions of Congress. The representative function is clearly an essential role of Congress and there is no evidence that members are failing in this area. Scrutiny of the executive is also central to the operation of Congress and there is little doubt that presidents remain rigorously held to account. If anything, it could be argued that Congressional scrutiny has become even more intense. The legislative function is an area where Congress is seen to be failing but, here again, Bills do get passed in numbers not dissimilar to the past.

Weaker answers will tend to rely upon the Source and provide little further evidence. Better answers will be balanced and will offer a range of argument and evidence.

Level 1 ([1]–[6])

The candidate demonstrates limited knowledge and understanding of the extent to which Congress is increasingly ineffective and makes little attempt to answer the question. The answer is ill-informed and/or has a high degree of irrelevant material and/or makes general statements and/or contains no evidence or examples. There is little analysis and evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are inadequate. An argument or explanation, if present, is ill-informed and poorly constructed. The level of communication and use of political vocabulary are both limited.

Level 2 ([7]–[12])

The candidate demonstrates outline knowledge and understanding of the extent to which Congress is increasingly ineffective but there are major gaps in this knowledge and understanding and only a limited attempt is made to answer

the question. The response contains some relevant material but also significant irrelevant or general material. Some relevant evidence or examples are provided. There is limited analysis and simple evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar are limited. An argument or explanation is constructed although communication and structure tend to be narrative or descriptive. There is some use of appropriate political vocabulary.

Level 3 ([13]–[18])

The candidate demonstrates satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the extent to which Congress is increasingly ineffective but there are some gaps in this knowledge and understanding. The response makes a reasonable attempt at answering the question and contains relevant material along with some more general material. Relevant evidence or examples are provided. There is sound analysis and evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar is satisfactory. A structured argument is constructed, displaying effective communication and presentation of ideas. A suitable conclusion is reached and there is good use of appropriate political vocabulary.

Level 4 ([19]–[24])

The candidate demonstrates sound knowledge and understanding of the extent to which Congress is increasingly ineffective and uses this to fully address the requirements of the question. Accurate evidence and examples are deployed to illustrate points made. There is clear and full analysis and evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are generally good. A cogent and coherent argument is constructed which displays clear communication and presentation of ideas. There is extensive use of appropriate political vocabulary and a reasoned conclusion is reached.

Level 5 ([25]–[30])

The candidate demonstrates accurate, detailed and comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the extent to which Congress is increasingly ineffective and deploys this to produce an exemplary answer to the question. The most relevant and accurate evidence and examples are deployed to illustrate points made extremely effectively. There is exceptionally thorough and clear analysis and evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a consistently high standard. A thoroughly convincing and logical argument is constructed which displays highly effective communication and presentation of ideas. There is precise and wide-ranging use of appropriate political vocabulary and a clear and logical conclusion is reached.

An answer that is totally unbalanced can be awarded a maximum of Level 4.

An answer that fails to refer to the Source can be awarded a maximum of Level 3.

An answer that contains no examples beyond the Source can be awarded a maximum of Level 3.

[30]

AVAILABLE
MARKS

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

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**

5 Background

The focus of answers to this question should be upon the mechanisms available to the Senate and the Lords as the question directly asks for “how”. It is not enough to state that the Senate enjoys greater status and powers: there must be direct contrast in how this is done in relation to executive legislation, appointments or actions. For example, a legitimate point would be that the Senate has the power to subpoena members of the executive, something not available to the Lords.

Any other valid difference.

If there is no evidence provided, a maximum of [8] marks can be awarded.

Level 1 ([1])

The candidate identifies a valid difference with little or no development.

Level 2 ([2]–[3])

The candidate identifies a valid difference and offers a more developed explanation which may include supporting evidence.

Level 3 ([4]–[5])

The candidate identifies a valid difference and provides a full explanation of the difference with supporting evidence.

Apply criteria for each valid way.

(AO1: 5 marks × 2)

Any other valid information will be rewarded appropriately.

An answer that is totally unbalanced can be awarded a maximum of Level 4.

An answer that contains no examples can be awarded a maximum of Level 3.

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6 (a) Background

The long-standing assumption was that political parties mattered a lot less in the US than they did in the UK. In Britain an MP owed their position to their party and there was little chance of election outside a party. As a result, party loyalty and discipline were both very strong and the party in power was able to count on both to pursue its policy objectives. Disraeli’s famous advice to “damn your principles, stick to your party” was the rule in the UK. By contrast, in the US party loyalty and discipline were much less significant. Members of Congress were much more independent and willing to put the interests of their area and of organised lobby groups before those of party.

These assumptions have been challenged by the growth of partisanship in the US over the past 25 years. As US politics has become more ideologically polarised, the significance of party has increased and members of Congress are often party loyalists first. Votes in Congress are marked by high levels of party voting. Members of Congress are also closely tied to the many lobby groups that use their considerable ‘muscle’ to determine the direction of policy. Whether Members of Congress are ‘prisoners’ of organised interests is a matter of debate, although many believe this to be the case. The ability of the NRA to frustrate attempts at greater gun control is seen by many as proof that the ‘prisoners’ title is deserved.

Weaker answers will display limited understanding of the question, provide limited evidence and make limited comparisons. Better answers will have a clear understanding of the question, be balanced, offer a range of argument and evidence and will make effective comparisons.

Level 1 ([1]–[6])

The candidate demonstrates limited knowledge and understanding of the significance of party and lobby groups in the USA and UK and makes little attempt to answer the question. The answer is ill-informed and/or has a high degree of irrelevant material. The response contains general statements and/or includes no evidence or examples. There is little analysis and evaluation of information, arguments and explanations. There is little recognition of basic similarities and differences between political systems. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are inadequate. An argument or explanation, if present, is ill-informed and poorly constructed. The level of communication and use of political vocabulary are both limited.

Level 2 ([7]–[12])

The candidate demonstrates outline knowledge and understanding of the significance of party and lobby groups in the USA and UK but there are major gaps in this knowledge and understanding and only a limited attempt is made to answer the question. The response contains some relevant material but also significant irrelevant or general material. Some relevant evidence or examples are provided. There is limited analysis and simple evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. There is some recognition of basic similarities and differences between political systems. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar are limited. An argument or explanation is constructed although communication and structure tend to be narrative or descriptive. There is some use of appropriate political vocabulary.

Level 3 ([13]–[18])

The candidate demonstrates satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the significance of party and lobby groups in the USA and UK but there are some gaps in this knowledge and understanding. The response makes a reasonable attempt at answering the question and contains relevant material along with some more general material. Relevant evidence or examples are provided. There is some analysis and evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. There is a reasonable attempt at comparing political systems. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar are satisfactory. A structured argument is constructed, displaying effective communication and presentation of ideas. A suitable conclusion is reached and there is good use of appropriate political vocabulary.

Level 4 ([19]–[24])

The candidate demonstrates sound knowledge and understanding of the significance of party and lobby groups in the USA and UK and uses this to fully address the requirements of the question. Accurate evidence and examples are deployed to illustrate points made. There is clear and full analysis and evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. There is effective comparison of political systems. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are generally good. A cogent and coherent argument is constructed which displays clear communication and presentation of ideas. There is extensive use of appropriate political vocabulary and a reasoned conclusion is reached.

Level 5 ([25]–[30])

The candidate demonstrates accurate, detailed and comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the significance of party and lobby groups in the USA and UK and deploys this to produce an exemplary answer to the question. The most relevant and accurate evidence and examples are deployed to illustrate points made extremely effectively. There is exceptionally thorough and clear analysis and evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. There is highly effective comparison of political systems. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a consistently high standard. A thoroughly convincing and logical argument is constructed which displays highly effective communication and presentation of ideas. There is precise and wide-ranging use of appropriate political vocabulary and a clear and logical conclusion is reached. [30]

AVAILABLE
MARKS

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(b) Background

The context of this question is that, while the president is the head of a much more powerful state, within that state their powers may be more constrained. The British PM heads a less powerful state but arguably has more power over the direction of that state. How far is this true?

Many candidates will respond to this question by comparing the powers of the US president with those of the British prime minister and this is a perfectly acceptable approach. Better responses will consider how the powers of both have evolved and this would involve looking at ideas such as the Prime Ministerial power thesis and the debate about the Imperial/Imperilled president, although it is not required that candidates use those terms. The best responses will consider the factors that affect the freedom of presidents and prime ministers to act and this requires knowledge and understanding of how the two systems work in practice.

Weaker answers will display limited understanding of the question, provide limited evidence and make limited comparisons. Better answers will have a clear understanding of the question, be balanced, offer a range of argument and evidence and will make effective comparisons.

Level 1 ([1]–[6])

The candidate demonstrates limited knowledge and understanding of the freedom of presidents and prime ministers to act within their respective systems and makes little attempt to answer the question. The answer is ill-informed and/or has a high degree of irrelevant material. The response contains general statements and/or includes no evidence or examples. There is little analysis and evaluation of information, arguments and explanations. There is little recognition of basic similarities and differences between political systems. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are inadequate. An argument or explanation, if present, is ill-informed and poorly constructed. The level of communication and use of political vocabulary are both limited.

Level 2 ([7]–[12])

The candidate demonstrates outline knowledge and understanding of the freedom of presidents and prime ministers to act within their respective systems but there are major gaps in this knowledge and understanding and only a limited attempt is made to answer the question. The response contains some relevant material but also significant irrelevant or general

material. Some relevant evidence or examples are provided. There is limited analysis and simple evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. There is some recognition of basic similarities and differences between political systems. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar are limited. An argument or explanation is constructed although communication and structure tend to be narrative or descriptive. There is some use of appropriate political vocabulary.

Level 3 ([13]–[18])

The candidate demonstrates satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the freedom of presidents and prime ministers to act within their respective systems but there are some gaps in this knowledge and understanding. The response makes a reasonable attempt at answering the question and contains relevant material along with some more general material. Relevant evidence or examples are provided. There is some analysis and evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. There is a reasonable attempt at comparing political systems. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar are satisfactory. A structured argument is constructed, displaying effective communication and presentation of ideas. A suitable conclusion is reached and there is good use of appropriate political vocabulary.

Level 4 ([19]–[24])

The candidate demonstrates sound knowledge and understanding of the freedom of presidents and prime ministers to act within their respective systems and uses this to fully address the requirements of the question. Accurate evidence and examples are deployed to illustrate points made. There is clear and full analysis and evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. There is effective comparison of political systems. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are generally good. A cogent and coherent argument is constructed which displays clear communication and presentation of ideas. There is extensive use of appropriate political vocabulary and a reasoned conclusion is reached.

Level 5 ([25]–[30])

The candidate demonstrates accurate, detailed and comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the freedom of presidents and prime ministers to act within their respective systems and deploys this to produce an exemplary answer to the question. The most relevant and accurate evidence and examples are deployed to illustrate points made extremely effectively. There is exceptionally thorough and clear analysis and evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. There is highly effective comparison of political systems. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a consistently high standard. A thoroughly convincing and logical argument is constructed which displays highly effective communication and presentation of ideas. There is precise and wide-ranging use of appropriate political vocabulary and a clear and logical conclusion is reached.

An answer that is totally unbalanced can be awarded a maximum of Level 4. An answer that contains no examples can be awarded a maximum of Level 3.

[30]

Total

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**

30

100

Option B: A Comparative Study of the Government and Politics of the Republic of Ireland and the United Kingdom

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**

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

1 Background

A coalition government is usually formed after a general election that fails to give one party an absolute majority of seats in the Dáil. This has been the norm in the Republic of Ireland for over 30 years. In order to form a government, it is usual for the largest party to enter into negotiations with other parties in an attempt to create a majority. The leading party will have to offer Cabinet and ministerial positions to the party, or parties, it is hoping to entice. If this is agreed then a coalition government is formed, with the minority parties having control over the allocation of the ministerial posts it commands.

If no supporting example is given, a maximum of [3] marks can be awarded.

Level 1 ([1])

The candidate offers a basic explanation of what is meant by the term “coalition government”.

Level 2 ([2]–[3])

The candidate offers a more developed explanation of what is meant by the term “coalition government”. An example may be included to support the response. If no supporting example is given, a maximum of [3] marks can be awarded.

Level 3 ([4]–[5])

The candidate provides a full explanation of what is meant by the term “coalition government”. A relevant example will be used to support the response.

(AO1: 5 marks)

Any other valid information will be rewarded appropriately.

5

2 Background

The Source identifies the increasingly fractured nature of Irish politics as a cause of the large number of Independent TDs in the Dáil. Candidates should identify and explain this reason. Other possible reasons include the declining popularity of the parties that have dominated government in the Irish Republic; the continuing relevance of localism and brokerage in Irish electoral politics; the impact of the Single Transferable Vote electoral system.

Any other relevant reason.

If there is no reference to the Source, a maximum of [6] marks can be awarded.

If there is no relevant example, a maximum of [8] marks can be awarded.

Level 1 ([1])

The candidate identifies a valid reason with little or no development.

Level 2 ([2]–[3])

The candidate identifies a valid reason and offers a more developed explanation. An example may be included to support the response.

Level 3 ([4]–[5])

The candidate identifies a valid reason and provides a full explanation of the reason. A relevant example is included.

Apply criteria for each valid reason. One of the reasons identified must come from the Source, the other from own knowledge.

(AO1: 5 marks × 2)

Any other valid information will be rewarded appropriately.

[10]

AVAILABLE
MARKS

10

3 Background

Backbench TDs have the power to introduce their own piece of legislation in the form of a private Bill. They are able to influence government legislation through debating and voting in the Dáil. TDs may belong to an Oireachtas committee that considers legislation and will be able to influence committee output. TDs may be able to influence their party's position on legislation through informal conversations or through a backbench revolt.

Any other relevant means.

If only one reason is given, a maximum of Level 3 can be awarded.

An answer that contains no evidence can be awarded a maximum of Level 3.

Level 1 ([1]–[3])

The candidate demonstrates limited knowledge and understanding of the means by which backbench TDs can influence legislation and makes little attempt to answer the question. The answer is ill-informed and/or has a high degree of irrelevant material. The response contains general statements and/or includes no evidence or examples. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are inadequate. An argument or explanation, if present, is ill-informed and poorly constructed. The level of communication and use of political vocabulary are both limited.

Level 2 ([4]–[6])

The candidate demonstrates outline knowledge and understanding of the means by which backbench TDs can influence legislation but there are major gaps in this knowledge and understanding and only a limited attempt is made to answer the question. The response contains some relevant material but also significant irrelevant or general material. Some relevant evidence or examples are provided. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar are limited. An argument or explanation is constructed although communication and structure tend to be narrative or descriptive. There is some use of appropriate political vocabulary.

Level 3 ([7]–[9])

The candidate demonstrates satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the means by which backbench TDs can influence legislation but there are some gaps in this knowledge and understanding. The response makes a reasonable attempt at answering the question and contains relevant material along with some more general material. Relevant evidence or examples are provided. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar are satisfactory. A structured argument is constructed, displaying effective communication and presentation of ideas. There is good use of appropriate political vocabulary.

Level 4 ([10]–[12])

The candidate demonstrates sound knowledge and understanding of the means by which backbench TDs can influence legislation and uses this to fully address the requirements of the question. Accurate evidence and examples are deployed to illustrate points made. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are generally good. A cogent and coherent argument is constructed which displays clear

communication and presentation of ideas. There is extensive use of appropriate political vocabulary.

AVAILABLE
MARKS

Level 5 ([13]–[15])

The candidate demonstrates accurate, detailed and comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the means by which backbench TDs can influence legislation and deploys this to produce an exemplary answer to the question. The most relevant and accurate evidence and examples are deployed to illustrate points made extremely effectively. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a consistently high standard. A thoroughly convincing and logical argument is constructed which displays highly effective communication and presentation of ideas. There is precise and wide-ranging use of appropriate political vocabulary.

[15]

15

4 Background

Coalition is now an accepted fact of life in the government of Ireland having been the norm for the past forty years. In the past, this fact gave rise to questions about how coalition affected the capacity of Irish governments to govern effectively. However, recent years have witnessed some new arrangements to enable governments to be formed and operate. The confidence and supply agreement was one such arrangement. However, as the Source notes, the formation of a Fianna Fáil-Fine Gael coalition and the deal that led to the handover of power in the autumn of 2022 were two quite remarkable developments. The Source notes that these arrangements were a consequence of the increasingly “fractured” nature of Irish politics that have required innovative solutions if governance was to take place. The fact that the Fianna Fáil-Fine Gael coalition has survived is evidence that effective government is possible.

The alternative view is that there is no effective government. The divisions between Fianna Fáil and Fine Gael are so great that they are unable to agree on policies, with the result that major issues are not being addressed. Accusations of ‘do nothing government’ are common as is the suggestion that the two parties are only in government together in order to keep Sinn Féin out.

Weaker answers display limited understanding of the question, will tend to rely upon the Source and provide little further evidence. Better answers will have a clear understanding of the question, will be balanced and will offer a range of argument and evidence.

Level 1 ([1]–[6])

The candidate demonstrates limited knowledge and understanding of the debate about whether effective government is possible in Ireland and makes little attempt to answer the question. The answer is ill-informed and/or has a high degree of irrelevant material and/or makes general statements and/or contains no evidence or examples. There is little analysis and evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are inadequate. An argument or explanation, if present, is ill-informed and poorly constructed. The level of communication and use of political vocabulary are both limited.

Level 2 ([7]–[12])

The candidate demonstrates outline knowledge and understanding of the debate about whether effective government is possible in Ireland but there are major gaps in this knowledge and understanding and only a limited attempt is made to answer the question. The response contains some relevant material but also significant irrelevant or general material. Some relevant evidence or examples are provided. There is limited analysis and simple evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar are limited. An argument or explanation is constructed although communication and structure tend to be narrative or descriptive. There is some use of appropriate political vocabulary.

Level 3 ([13]–[18])

The candidate demonstrates satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the debate about whether effective government is possible in Ireland but there are some gaps in this knowledge and understanding. The response makes a reasonable attempt at answering the question and contains relevant material along with some more general material. Relevant evidence or examples are provided. There is sound analysis and evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar are satisfactory. A structured argument is constructed, displaying effective communication and presentation of ideas. A suitable conclusion is reached and there is good use of appropriate political vocabulary.

Level 4 ([19]–[24])

The candidate demonstrates sound knowledge and understanding of the debate about whether effective government is possible in Ireland has changed in recent years and uses this to fully address the requirements of the question. Accurate evidence and examples are deployed to illustrate points made. There is clear and full analysis and evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are generally good. A cogent and coherent argument is constructed which displays clear communication and presentation of ideas. There is extensive use of appropriate political vocabulary and a reasoned conclusion is reached.

Level 5 ([25]–[30])

The candidate demonstrates precise, exhaustive and almost flawless knowledge and understanding of debate about whether effective government is possible in Ireland and deploys this to produce an exemplary answer to the question. The most relevant and accurate evidence and examples are deployed to illustrate points made extremely effectively. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are excellent throughout. A thoroughly convincing and logical argument is constructed which displays highly effective communication and presentation of ideas. There is precise and wide-ranging use of appropriate political vocabulary.

An answer that is totally unbalanced can be awarded a maximum of Level 4.

An answer that fails to refer to the Source can be awarded a maximum of Level 3.

An answer that contains no examples beyond the Source can be awarded a maximum of Level 3.

[30]

30

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

AVAILABLE MARKS

5 Background

One similarity in Question Time in both systems is that it provides an opportunity for the main opposition parties to scrutinise executive policy by directly questioning the Prime Minister, Taoiseach or other ministers. As Question Time is televised in both systems it enables outsiders to observe the performance of party leaders. Ordinary MPs and TDs also have an opportunity to represent constituents by questioning a minister. In both systems, Question Time allows the government an opportunity to boast of its policy successes.

Any other valid difference.

If there is no evidence provided, a maximum of [8] marks can be awarded.

Level 1 ([1])

The candidate identifies a valid similarity with little or no development.

Level 2 ([2]–[3])

The candidate identifies a valid similarity and offers a more developed explanation, which may include supporting evidence.

Level 3 ([4]–[5])

The candidate identifies a valid similarity and provides a full explanation of the similarity, with supporting evidence.

(AO1: 5 marks × 2)

Any other valid information will be rewarded appropriately.

An answer that is totally unbalanced can be awarded a maximum of Level 4.

An answer that contains no examples can be awarded a maximum of Level 3.

10

6 (a) Background

As the Irish system of government is based upon the Westminster model, scrutiny of the executive follows very similar lines in both Parliament and the Oireachtas. It is anticipated that the core of any response to this question will be an explanation of the scrutiny mechanisms in both systems and of the similarities and differences. The received wisdom is that, while the Oireachtas does have considerable powers to hold the executive to account, these powers are not fully exercised. One reason for this is that backbench TDs spend so much time performing their representative role and are prepared to leave governments to get on with things. In the UK, Parliament is much more concerned with scrutinising the executive and MPs see this as central to their role.

The alternative view is that, in recent years, TDs have become much more active in holding the executive to account, especially those from the 'new' parties. Gone are the days when "no questions asked" was the practice. In the UK, there are many restrictions on the capacity of MPs to hold the government to account, if the government makes effective use of the powers it holds.

Weaker answers will display limited understanding of the question, provide

limited evidence and make limited comparisons. Better answers will have a clear understanding of the question, be balanced, offer a range of argument and evidence and will make effective comparisons.

AVAILABLE
MARKS

Level 1 ([1]–[6])

The candidate demonstrates limited knowledge and understanding of the scrutiny records of Parliament and the Oireachtas and makes little attempt to answer the question. The answer is ill-informed and/or has a high degree of irrelevant material. The response contains general statements and/or includes no evidence or examples. There is little analysis and evaluation of information, arguments and explanations. There is little recognition of basic similarities and differences between political systems. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are inadequate. An argument or explanation, if present, is ill-informed and poorly constructed. The level of communication and use of political vocabulary are both limited.

Level 2 ([7]–[12])

The candidate demonstrates outline knowledge and understanding of the scrutiny records of Parliament and the Oireachtas but there are major gaps in this knowledge and understanding and only a limited attempt is made to answer the question. The response contains some relevant material but also significant irrelevant or general material. Some relevant evidence or examples are provided. There is limited analysis and simple evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. There is some recognition of basic similarities and differences between political systems. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar are limited. An argument or explanation is constructed although communication and structure tend to be narrative or descriptive. There is some use of appropriate political vocabulary.

Level 3 ([13]–[18])

The candidate demonstrates satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the scrutiny records of Parliament and the Oireachtas but there are some gaps in this knowledge and understanding. The response makes a reasonable attempt at answering the question and contains relevant material along with some more general material. Relevant evidence or examples are provided. There is some analysis and evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. There is a reasonable attempt at comparing political systems. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar are satisfactory. A structured argument is constructed, displaying effective communication and presentation of ideas. A suitable conclusion is reached and there is good use of appropriate political vocabulary.

Level 4 ([19]–[24])

The candidate demonstrates sound knowledge and understanding of the scrutiny records of Parliament and the Oireachtas and uses this to fully address the requirements of the question. Accurate evidence and examples are deployed to illustrate points made. There is clear and full analysis and evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. There is effective comparison of political systems. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are generally good. A cogent and coherent argument is constructed which displays clear communication and presentation of ideas. There is extensive use of appropriate political vocabulary and a reasoned conclusion is reached.

Level 5 ([25]–[30])

The candidate demonstrates accurate, detailed and comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the scrutiny records of Parliament and the Oireachtas and deploys this to produce an exemplary answer to the question. The most relevant and accurate evidence and examples are deployed to illustrate points made extremely effectively. There is exceptionally thorough and clear analysis and evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. There is highly effective comparison of political systems. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a consistently high standard. A thoroughly convincing and logical argument is constructed which displays highly effective communication and presentation of ideas. There is precise and wide-ranging use of appropriate political vocabulary and a clear and logical conclusion is reached. [30]

AVAILABLE MARKS
30

(b) Background

The context of this question is that, over the past forty years, Irish Taoisigh have had to operate coalition governments. This has meant that they have had to compromise and negotiate with coalition partners and their powers have been reduced as a result. By contrast, British PMs have usually presided over a government made up solely of members of their own party. This has meant they have not had to make the same concessions as their Irish counterpart and have, therefore, been able to fully exercise their powers.

While there is some substance to this analysis, the reality is more complicated. Recent British PMs have not been able to wield their powers freely. All have been constrained by their Cabinets, their colleagues and by circumstances. Those, like Johnson, who sought to fully exercise their powers came unstuck. At the same time Irish Taoisigh have often been able to control their governments and maintain a considerable degree of cabinet unity.

Weaker answers will display limited understanding of the question, provide limited evidence and make limited comparisons. Better answers will have a clear understanding of the question, be balanced, offer a range of argument and evidence and will make effective comparisons.

Level 1 ([1]–[6])

The candidate demonstrates limited knowledge and understanding of the powers of, and constraints upon, the Prime Minister and Taoiseach and makes little attempt to answer the question. The answer is ill-informed and/or has a high degree of irrelevant material. The response contains general statements and/or includes no evidence or examples. There is little analysis and evaluation of information, arguments and explanations. There is little recognition of basic similarities and differences between political systems. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are inadequate. An argument or explanation, if present, is ill-informed and poorly constructed. The level of communication and use of political vocabulary are both limited.

Level 2 ([7]–[12])

The candidate demonstrates outline knowledge and understanding of the powers of, and constraints upon, the Prime Minister and Taoiseach but there are major gaps in this knowledge and understanding and only a limited attempt is made to answer the question. The response contains

some relevant material but also significant irrelevant or general material. Some relevant evidence or examples are provided. There is limited analysis and simple evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. There is some recognition of basic similarities and differences between political systems. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar are limited. An argument or explanation is constructed although communication and structure tend to be narrative or descriptive. There is some use of appropriate political vocabulary.

Level 3 ([13]–[18])

The candidate demonstrates satisfactory knowledge and understanding of the powers of and constraints upon, the Prime Minister and Taoiseach but there are some gaps in, this knowledge and understanding. The response makes a reasonable attempt at answering the question and contains relevant material along with some more general material. Relevant evidence or examples are provided. There is some analysis and evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. There is a reasonable attempt at comparing political systems. The quality of spelling, punctuation and grammar are satisfactory. A structured argument is constructed, displaying effective communication and presentation of ideas. A suitable conclusion is reached and there is good use of appropriate political vocabulary.

Level 4 ([19]–[24])

The candidate demonstrates sound knowledge and understanding of the powers of, and constraints upon, the Prime Minister and Taoiseach and uses this to fully address the requirements of the question. Accurate evidence and examples are deployed to illustrate points made. There is clear and full analysis and evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. There is effective comparison of political systems. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are generally good. A cogent and coherent argument is constructed which displays clear communication and presentation of ideas. There is extensive use of appropriate political vocabulary and a reasoned conclusion is reached.

Level 5 ([25]–[30])

The candidate demonstrates accurate, detailed and comprehensive knowledge and understanding of the powers of, and constraints upon, the Prime Minister and Taoiseach and deploys this to produce an exemplary answer to the question. The most relevant and accurate evidence and examples are deployed to illustrate points made extremely effectively. There is exceptionally thorough and clear analysis and evaluation of political information, arguments and explanations. There is highly effective comparison of political systems. Spelling, punctuation and grammar are of a consistently high standard. A thoroughly convincing and logical argument is constructed which displays highly effective communication and presentation of ideas. There is precise and wide-ranging use of appropriate political vocabulary and a clear and logical conclusion is reached.

An answer that is totally unbalanced can be awarded a maximum of Level 4. An answer that contains no examples can be awarded a maximum of Level 3.

[30]

Total

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**

30

100