



Rewarding Learning

**General Certificate of Secondary Education
2025**

Government and Politics

Unit 1

Democracy in Action

[GGP11]

TUESDAY 3 JUNE, MORNING

**MARK
SCHEME**

General Marking Instructions

Introduction

Mark Schemes are intended to ensure that the GCSE examinations are marked consistently and fairly. The mark schemes provide examiners with an indication of the nature and range of candidates' responses likely to be worthy of credit. They also set out the criteria which they should apply in allocating marks to candidates' responses. The mark schemes should be read in conjunction with these general marking instructions.

Assessment Objectives

Below are the assessment objectives for GCSE Government and Politics.

- AO1** Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of political concepts, institutions, processes, terms and issues.
- AO2** Apply knowledge and understanding of political information to contexts and actions.
- AO3** Analyse and evaluate a range of evidence, including differing viewpoints, relating to political issues, debates and actions to construct reasoned arguments and make substantiated judgements.

Quality of candidate's 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 16 year old which is the age at which the majority of candidates sit their GCSE 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 16-year-old GCSE 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 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

Questions requiring candidates to respond in extended writing are marked in terms of 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.

Instructions for examiners:

For questions which are assessed using three levels of response the following QWC descriptors are to be used:

Level 1

Writing communicates ideas using a limited range of political terminology and demonstrates basic skills of selection of material, but the response lacks clarity, structure and organisation of ideas. Candidates spell, punctuate and use the rules of grammar with limited accuracy.

Level 2

Writing communicates ideas using political terms mostly accurately and demonstrates some skills of selection and organisation of material in a structured way. Candidates spell, punctuate and use the rules of grammar with some accuracy.

Level 3

Writing communicates ideas effectively, using a range of precisely selected political terms and organises information clearly and coherently. Candidates spell, punctuate and use the rules of grammar with consistent accuracy.

For questions which are assessed using four levels of response the following QWC descriptors are to be used:

Level 1

Writing communicates ideas using a limited range of political terminology and demonstrates basic skills of selection of material, but the response lacks clarity, structure and organisation of ideas. Candidates spell, punctuate and use the rules of grammar with limited accuracy.

Level 2

Writing communicates ideas using political terms mostly accurately and demonstrates some skills of selection and organisation of material in a structured way. Candidates spell, punctuate and use the rules of grammar with some accuracy.

Level 3

Writing communicates ideas using political terms accurately and demonstrates skills of selection and organisation of material. Candidates spell, punctuate and use the rules of grammar mostly accurately.

Level 4

Writing communicates ideas effectively, using a range of precisely selected political terms and organises information clearly and coherently. A clear and substantiated judgement is made. Candidates spell, punctuate and use the rules of grammar with consistent accuracy.

Section A

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**

Target AO1: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of political concepts, institutions, processes, terms and issues.

<p>1 Give one way citizens can participate in a democracy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voting • Join a political party • Join a pressure group • Petitions • Lobbying politicians • Violent or direct-action campaigns <p>Any other valid way</p>	[1]	1
<p>2 Name one left-wing political party in the UK parliament.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Labour Party • Green Party <p>Any other valid party</p>	[1]	1
<p>3 Give one cause of low voter turnout.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of interest • Lack of knowledge • Disillusionment • Negative views of politicians <p>Any other valid cause</p>	[1]	1
<p>4 Name the elected house of the UK parliament.</p> <p>House of Commons</p>	[1]	1
<p>5 What does the term 'MLA' stand for?</p> <p>Member of Legislative Assembly</p>	[1]	1
<p>6 Give one example of a country which is a democracy.</p> <p>UK, USA, Ireland, Norway, Iceland, Sweden, New Zealand, Finland, Canada, Denmark, Australia, Switzerland</p> <p>Any valid democratic country will be rewarded</p>	[1]	1

			AVAILABLE MARKS
7	Give one area of disagreement between political parties in Northern Ireland.		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Brexit/NI protocol • Irish Unity • Climate change • Shared education • Legacy issues 		
	Any other valid area of disagreement	[1]	1
8	Give one area of agreement between political parties in Britain.		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of a strong economy • The need for strong national defence • Funding for public healthcare 		
	Any other valid area of agreement	[1]	1
9	What is the name for a pressure group that works with the government?		
	Insider Group	[1]	1
10	Give one advantage of the Single Transferable Vote (STV) electoral system.		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • There are several successful candidates all of whom have a high degree of support • There are many fewer wasted votes • More voters will feel they are represented • Smaller parties will be treated more fairly • Across the whole country the result is proportional: share of seats won reflects share of the vote gained 		
	Any other valid advantage	[2]	2
11	What is meant by the term ' scrutiny '?		
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Holding the government to account • Examining and questioning policies and actions • Scrutiny methods include: questions, debates, committees, the Opposition 		
	Any other reasonable explanation	[2]	2

12 Give **one** difference between an election and a referendum.

- Elections are held at regular intervals (4/5 years) whereas referenda are only held when required
- No representatives are elected in a referendum
- In an election lots of issues are involved, only one issue is voted on in a referendum
- Voters have a choice between candidates in an election but in a referendum they have a choice between yes and no

Any other valid difference

[2]

13 Match the correct term in the list below to the description in the grid provided.

Local Council	Northern Ireland Assembly	Houses of Parliament	European Parliament
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The 90-member body which makes laws on devolved issues.	Northern Ireland Assembly
The law-making body which represents 27 member states.	European Parliament
A body of local representatives which is responsible for issues like bins and recycling.	Local Council
The law-making body of the United Kingdom.	Houses of Parliament

[4]

14 Read the statements below. Tick [✓] the correct box to show if the arguments are **For** or **Against** greater media regulation.

	For	Against
The media has behaved very irresponsibly in the past.	✓	
Regulation would protect individuals' privacy.	✓	
Too much control of the media is bad for democracy.		✓
Media organisations have too much power.	✓	
Regulation may undermine the independence of the media.		✓

[5]

Section A

AVAILABLE MARKS

2

4

5

24

Target AO2: Apply knowledge and understanding of political information to contexts and actions.

- 15 Using **Source A** and your own knowledge, describe some of the features of a democratic society.

Award **[0]** for an answer not worthy of credit.

Level 1 ([1])

A basic answer with limited description of source content or a weak attempt to describe some of the features of a democratic society.

Writing communicates ideas using a limited range of political terminology and demonstrates basic skills of selection of material, but the response lacks clarity, structure and organisation of ideas. Candidates spell, punctuate and use the rules of grammar with limited accuracy.

Level 2 ([2]–[3])

A satisfactory answer which attempts to describe some of the features of a democratic society. Attempts to develop the information drawn from the source or own knowledge.

Writing communicates ideas using political terms mostly accurately and demonstrates some skills of selection and organisation of material. Candidates spell, punctuate and use the rules of grammar with some accuracy.

Level 3 ([4]–[5])

A very good answer with a developed description of source content and own knowledge of some of the features of a democratic society.

Writing communicates ideas effectively, using a range of precisely selected political terms and organises information clearly and coherently. Candidates spell, punctuate and use the rules of grammar with consistent accuracy.

An answer that fails to refer to the Source can be awarded a maximum of Level 2.

Answers may include some of the following:

From source:

- Elections are free and fair
- The will of the people was upheld

From own knowledge:

- Free and fair elections to choose those who govern society. Most people can vote; all can stand for election; the election system is fair and free from corruption
- Rights are protected by law for all citizens. Freedom of religion, sexuality, speech, protest and other rights are guaranteed
- The media is free from control by those in power

- There is a high degree of consent from the population
 - Pressure Groups can operate freely
- Any other valid point

[5]

AVAILABLE
MARKS

5

16 Explain the responsibilities of the media in a democratic society.

Award **[0]** for an answer not worthy of credit.

Level 1 ([1]–[2])

A basic response with limited knowledge and understanding of the responsibilities of the media in a democratic society. Answer may list some rather than explain some of the responsibilities of the media.

Writing communicates ideas using a limited range of political terminology and demonstrates basic skills of selection of material, but the response lacks clarity, structure and organisation of ideas. Candidates spell, punctuate and use the rules of grammar with limited accuracy.

Level 2 ([3]–[4])

A more developed answer with some explanation of the responsibilities of the media in a democratic society. Answers may include examples.

Writing communicates ideas using political terms mostly accurately and demonstrates some skills of selection and organisation of material. Candidates spell, punctuate and use rules of grammar with some accuracy.

Level 3 ([5]–[6])

A very good explanation of the responsibilities of the media in a democratic society. Relevant support is provided in the form of examples. To achieve Level 3, answers must include at least one example.

Writing communicates ideas effectively, using a range of precisely selected political terms and organises information clearly and coherently. Candidates spell, punctuate and use the rules of grammar with consistent accuracy.

Answers may include some of the following:

- Accurate reporting
- Respectful when reporting crimes
- Informing and influencing public opinion
- Holding those in power to account
- Respecting people’s privacy and dignity

Any other valid point

[6]

6

- 17 Using **Source B** and your own knowledge, explain some of the disadvantages of using the Single Transferable Vote (STV) system in elections.

Award **[0]** for an answer not worthy of credit.

Level 1 ([1]–[2])

A basic response which tends to focus on the source and/or provides basic knowledge of some of the disadvantages of using the STV system in elections.

Writing communicates ideas using a limited range of political terminology and demonstrates basic skills of selection of material, but the response lacks clarity, structure and organisation of ideas. Candidates spell, punctuate and use the rules of grammar with limited accuracy.

Level 2 ([3]–[4])

A more developed answer that explains the material in the source and begins to consider some of the disadvantages of using the STV system in elections.

Writing communicates ideas using political terms mostly accurately and demonstrates some skills of selection and organisation of material. Candidates spell, punctuate and use the rules of grammar with some accuracy.

Level 3 ([5]–[6])

A very good explanation of some of the disadvantages of using the STV system in elections, using both the source and own knowledge. Relevant support is provided in the form of examples.

Writing communicates ideas effectively, using a range of precisely selected political terms and organises information clearly and coherently. Candidates spell, punctuate and use the rules of grammar with consistent accuracy.

An answer that fails to refer to the Source can be rewarded a maximum of Level 2.

Answers may include some of the following:

From the source:

- Can lead to coalition governments
- Can lead to instability

From own knowledge:

- Difficult for voters to use/understand
- Method of counting is complicated and can lead to delayed results
- Does not give a clear winner
- Some voters will not rank all candidates meaning that votes are still wasted
- Difficult for parties to work together in coalitions

Any other valid point

[6]

6

- 18 Using **Source C** and your own knowledge, explain some of the ways by which pressure groups can try to achieve their aims.

Award **[0]** for an answer not worthy of credit.

Level 1 ([1]–[3])

A basic response which tends to focus on the source and/ or provides basic knowledge of some of the ways in which pressure groups can try to achieve their aims.

Writing communicates ideas using a limited range of political terminology and demonstrates basic skills of selection of material, but the response lacks clarity, structure and organisation of ideas. Candidates spell, punctuate and use the rules of grammar with limited accuracy.

Level 2 ([4]–[6])

A more developed answer which explains the material in the source and begins to consider some of the ways in which pressure groups can try to achieve their aims.

Writing communicates ideas using political terms mostly accurately and demonstrates some skills of selection and organisation of material. Candidates spell, punctuate and use the rules of grammar with some accuracy.

Level 3 ([7]–[8])

A very good explanation of some of the ways in which pressure groups can try to achieve their aims, using both the source and own knowledge. Relevant support is provided in the form of examples.

Writing communicates ideas effectively, using a range of precisely selected political terms and organises information clearly and coherently. Candidates spell, punctuate and use the rules of grammar with consistent accuracy.

An answer that fails to refer to the Source can be awarded maximum of Level 2.

Answers may include some of the following:

From source:

- Gained a lot of media attention
- Protests have included pitch invasions

From own knowledge:

- Direct action has been used more often over the last 20 years, with environmental and animal welfare groups being particularly fond of it
- Some pressure groups will go on marches and demonstrations to show their views for example, the '*Stop the War*' marches against the Iraq War, and, the more recent, '*Black Lives Matter*' marches
- Trade Union pressure groups may go on strike
- Pressure groups, such as '*Extinction Rebellion*', used disruptive stunts
- Pressure groups may cause an illegal/inconvenient obstruction by blocking roads or transport links. For example, '*Fathers4justice*' often brought traffic to a halt illegally and '*Plane Stupid*' occupied a Heathrow runway and a motorway leading to the airport
- Petitions are used to raise awareness among politicians of public feeling

- about a specific issue
 - Media advertising may be used to sway public opinion and this may help the pressure group to influence the government
- Any other valid point

[8]

Section B

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**

8

25

Target AO3: Analyse and evaluate a range of evidence relating to political issues, debates and actions including differing viewpoints to construct reasoned arguments and make substantiated judgements.

19 “The voting age in UK general elections should be lowered from 18 years to 16 years.”

Make a case in **support** of this statement.

Award **[0]** for an answer not worthy of credit.

Level 1 ([1]–[3])

A basic response with limited development of the view that the voting age in UK general elections should be lowered from 18 years to 16 years.

Writing communicates ideas using a limited range of political terminology and demonstrates basic skills of selection of material, but the response lacks clarity and organisation. Candidates spell, punctuate and use the rules of grammar with limited accuracy.

Level 2 ([4]–[7])

A more developed response which attempts to support the points made. Support for the view that the voting age in UK general elections should be lowered from 18 years to 16 years, is more sustained.

Writing communicates ideas using political terms accurately and demonstrates some skills of selection and organisation of material. Candidates spell, punctuate and use the rules of grammar with some accuracy.

Level 3 ([8]–[10])

A very good response which makes use of developed examples to provide a well formed and sustained argument in support of the view that the voting age in UK general elections should be lowered from 18 years to 16 years.

Writing communicates ideas effectively, using a range of precisely selected political terms and organises information clearly and coherently. Candidates spell, punctuate and use the rules of grammar with consistent accuracy.

Answers may include:

- Lowering the voting age would help to develop early voting habits in the next generation
- 16 and 17-year olds are able to vote in Welsh and Scottish devolved and local elections, so there is now inequality across the UK on the basis of voting age
- The decisions politicians make today should be influenced by the people whose lives are most affected by them
- If 16-year olds were able to vote, politicians would have to come up with ideas that appeal to them
- It would boost the size of the electorate, so winning governments would represent the views of more voters
- Many 16-year olds are working and pay taxes so they should be able to decide who is in charge of spending them

- Young people have shown that they have a commitment to drive positive change, they should be able to do this within the democratic process

Any other valid point

[10]

AVAILABLE
MARKS

10

- 20** Evaluate the following statement: “Referenda are an excellent way of making changes to the law.”

In your answer you should include:

- arguments **in support** of the statement; and
- arguments **against** the statement.

Answers which fail to address both sides of the argument will be unable to access the mark range beyond Level 2.

Award **[0]** for an answer not worthy of credit.

Level 1 ([1]–[4])

A limited attempt to evaluate the view that referenda are an excellent way of making changes to the law. There are significant gaps in knowledge.

Writing communicates ideas using a limited range of political terminology and demonstrates basic skills of selection of material, but the response lacks clarity, structure and organisation of ideas. Candidates spell, punctuate and use the rules of grammar with limited accuracy.

Level 2 ([5]–[8])

A more developed response which attempts to evaluate the view that referenda are an excellent way of making changes to the law. The answer may be one sided or imbalanced.

Writing communicates ideas using political terms mostly accurately and demonstrates some skills of selection and organisation of material in a structured way. Candidates spell, punctuate and use the rules of grammar with some accuracy.

Level 3 ([9]–[12])

A good response which shows a clear understanding of the view that referenda are an excellent way of making changes to the law. There is an attempt to judge the validity of the statement by making use of evidence to evaluate other viewpoints.

Writing communicates ideas using political terms accurately and demonstrates skills of selection and organisation of material. Candidates spell, punctuate and use the rules of grammar mostly accurately.

Level 4 ([13]–[16])

An excellent response which provides a clear and coherent evaluation of the viewpoint that referenda are an excellent way of making changes to the law. Use is made of a wide range of evidence that shows awareness of differing viewpoints and a clear and substantiated judgement is made on the validity of the statement.

Writing communicates ideas effectively, using a range of precisely selected political terms and organises information clearly and coherently. Candidates spell, punctuate and use the rules of grammar with consistent accuracy.

Answers may include some of the following:

Arguments in support of the statement:

- True democracy: the people get to decide, not the politicians. For example, in relation to the decision on Scottish independence referendum in 2014, 55% of the people of Scotland voted “No” to independence
- Voters make an informed choice on an issue. In 1998, a copy of the Good Friday/Belfast Agreement was posted to every house in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland for people to read, before a referendum was held when they could vote on it
- Voters make a clear and simple YES/NO decision
- A referendum campaign raises public awareness of political issues
- A referendum is an important check on the government. It cannot go ahead without public approval on an issue. For example, the referendum to create a Welsh Assembly gave the institution legitimacy
- A referendum can settle an issue that divides society
- A referendum can increase support for the political system as people become involved in the debate and understanding how institutions work. In Switzerland, the great majority of decisions are still taken through their system of representative democracy. Switzerland has held over 300 referenda

Arguments against the statement:

- Low turnout and a close result could mean a minority decides what happens. Is this democratic? For example, In Colombia with a low 38% turnout, it was voted to reject a peace deal to end its 52-year civil conflict
- Most voters are not well informed or interested and are open to manipulation – their interests are best safeguarded by representative democracy – government by politicians
- The public may be misled by the media, by propaganda and manipulation, for example, the ‘Leave Campaign’ claimed that the UK sent the EU £350 million a week, money which could have been used to fund the NHS. This figure was not accurate
- There are no clear criteria as to when a referendum should be held. Some constitutional issues have been put to the voters, but not others. A government can decide if a referendum is held, when it happens, what the question put to voters will be
- A referendum campaign may be very divisive, and a close result may not settle an issue. The UK/EU referendum in 2016 proved this
- They are very costly – a national referendum cost more than £120m and so frequent referendums would be very expensive
- It is not always clear what the result means for example, the 2011 Alternative Vote (AV) referendum was partly a vote of no confidence in Nick Clegg, as much as a clear expression as to whether voters wanted the electoral system changed

Any other valid point

[16]

16

Section C

26

Total

75

**AVAILABLE
MARKS**