

# WORKBOOK ANSWERS

## Pearson Edexcel A-level Politics Workbook 1 UK government and politics

This Answers document provides suggestions for some of the possible answers that might be given for the questions asked in the Workbook. They are not exhaustive and other answers may be acceptable, but they are intended as a guide to give teachers and students feedback. Factual examples are current at time of going to press, but other appropriate examples are acceptable. It is always a good idea to keep up-to-date with your knowledge of politics by regularly reading news websites such as [www.theguardian.com/uk](http://www.theguardian.com/uk), [www.telegraph.co.uk](http://www.telegraph.co.uk) and [www.ft.com/politicsclass](http://www.ft.com/politicsclass).

A generic mark scheme which can be applied to the exam-style questions (in conjunction with the question-specific guidance provided here) may be found on pages 131–34 of the *AS and A level Politics Getting Started Guide*, which may be downloaded from Pearson Edexcel's website: <http://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-a-levels/politics-2017.html>

## UK politics

### Topic 1 Democracy and participation

#### Current systems of direct and representative democracy

##### Practice questions

- 1 Direct democracy is when the people/citizens decide on issues themselves without relying on representatives.
- 2 Representative democracy is a form of democracy where the people/citizens choose representatives to make decisions and express views to those in power on their behalf.
- 3 Functions of democracy include representing the people, holding those in power to account, allowing for participation in the political process, rights protection from the government and ensuring an educated public.
- 4 In the UK, direct democracy most often takes place in the form of referendums.

- 5 Four examples of referendums could include any of the following: the EU referendum, 2016; the Scottish independence referendum, 2014; the AV referendum, 2011; the Welsh devolution referendum, 1997.
- 6 Three ways in which direct and representative democracy are different include:
  - Direct democracy: decisions are made directly by the people; representative democracy: the people choose representatives to make decisions on their behalf.
  - Direct: there are votes on every major issue; representative: citizens only have to vote in scheduled elections.
  - Direct: ultimate power rests with the people; representative: power rests with the elected chamber.
- 7 Participation means taking an active part in something, in this case the political process. It requires taking action, such as voting or joining a party.
- 8 Turnout in recent elections: e.g. 2019 — 67.3%; 2017 — 68.7%; 2015 — 66.1%
- 9 Democratic legitimacy means power has been granted through a clear democratic process that is fair and meets the requirements of the democratic system.
- 10 When turnout is low in elections, it means those elected are chosen by a relatively small proportion of the population and are therefore only acting on the interests of some, which means decisions may be made that do not reflect the interests of the people.
- 11 For example, in 2001, New Labour won a significant majority with a turnout of only 59.4%, meaning that only around 26% of all possible voters had elected a government that made sweeping and major decisions, such as entering the war with Iraq and increasing student tuition fees, decisions that the majority of people may not have supported.
- 12 By making people feel like they have a direct say on an issue, people might be encouraged to participate more regularly in referendums than they do in elections, which would boost turnout and the legitimacy of the decisions being made.
- 13 For example, the turnout in the EU referendum of 2016 was 72.2%, almost 6% higher than the 2015 general election and higher than any election turnout since 1992. This suggests that people are more inclined to participate and vote if they feel their voice will be heard and not ignored by elected representatives, as was the case with EU membership when all the major parties supported remaining in the EU.
- 14 Direct democracy is only likely to increase turnout when it comes to major issues that people are passionate about, so on many issues it is likely that the voting public may be less inclined to vote, and so there might actually be a reduction in turnout if direct democracy were employed for all issues.
- 15 For example, in 2011, the AV referendum had a turnout of only 42.2%, which shows that on issues that the public are not passionate about, they are less likely to participate. This would result in even smaller numbers of the voting public making decisions that impact everyone, indicating that direct democracy may not solve the problem of low turnouts.
- 16 On many issues, the major parties tend to agree on the principles of policies, such as further devolution to Wales, which has been supported by the vast majority of parties,

meaning that people who oppose further devolution to Wales have no viable candidates to choose to represent their opinion on this issue.

- 17** In 2011, the Welsh devolution referendum gave voters the opportunity to vote for or against further devolution, which meant all those opposed to further devolution had a chance to express their opinion. They did not get this opportunity in the 2010 election when all the major parties, aside from UKIP, supported the policy of further devolution. Therefore, the referendum gave a voice to those who felt there was no difference between the parties' stances on this issue.
- 18** In order to be effective, most forms of direct democracy come down to a simple yes/no choice, which restricts the range of options the public can vote for. In the Scottish independence referendum of 2014, many voters favoured an option of devolution max, but the referendum simply asked them to make a choice between independence and remaining in the Union. This meant that voters had limited choice and there wasn't an option that allowed for greater nuance.
- 19** A number of MPs are elected by a minority of the voters, meaning that over half the constituents who voted did so against the candidate who won the election. This is problematic as it means the representative is opposed by more people than support them, undermining their democratic legitimacy in representing the constituency.
- 20** Direct democracy would be likely to ensure that all decisions are made with majority support as the options would usually be binary, or yes/no. For example, on the issue of the Manchester congestion charge in 2008, a clear majority of people in the local area rejected the proposals, ensuring a minority did not impose a decision on the majority.
- 21** Referendum results and other forms of direct democracy can come down to populist opinions, which may not be good for society as a whole. For example, in the Manchester congestion charge vote, the populist rejection meant the region did not gain access to £3 billion in additional transport funding and the associated environmental benefits of the congestion charge, which representatives supported because it was in the interests of the entire region, even if a majority of the population was opposed to it.
- 22** A clear judgement should be made — either it is better, or it is not better.
- 23** A clear line of reasoning should be presented for the answer given to Question 22. For example: 'Direct democracy is a better form of democracy because it allows people to express their opinions directly, rather than having to compromise their views or rely on the actions of an elected representative who may not make all decisions in the way an individual would choose.'
- 24** See worked example.
- 25** First-past-the-post (FPTP) is used in UK general elections.
- 26** Problems could include: safe seats, minority seats, unrepresentative results.
- 27** Electoral reform (changing the electoral system) might solve these issues.
- 28** The percentage of registered voters who actually vote in an election or a referendum.

- 29** For example: turnout in second-order elections is often as low as about 33%; turnout in general elections is below historic norms; low turnout means decisions are being made by a minority of the total population in referendums.
- 30** Compulsory voting might solve the issues with turnout.
- 31** Members of the House of Lords are nominated by the Judicial Appointments Committee and ultimately chosen by the prime minister on behalf of the monarch.
- 32** The House of Lords is unelected and unaccountable, and its composition can be influenced by the current prime minister.
- 33** There are many possibilities, but one reform would be to make the chamber elected, in full or in part.
- 34** FPTP can lead to safe seats where it is unlikely that the seat will change hands from one party to another. This makes it very difficult to hold MPs to account and for many people to express their preferences for government, which leads to wasted votes and undermines democratic representation across the UK.
- 35** Introducing a more proportional electoral system with larger, multi-member constituencies would give voters a bigger choice of representatives and a greater chance of having at least one representative who might share their preferences, ensuring more views are fairly represented in the representative chamber.
- 36** Large, multi-member constituencies might weaken the system of representation because constituencies would become too large and diverse and it would not be clear which representative should be approached, which might mean the quality of representation on offer is a lot worse than that under the current system.
- 37** Turnout is essential for engaging the public and ensuring all views are expressed and considered. Low turnout is, therefore, a problem because it means many views and voices are being ignored, which undermines the strength of democratic representation and so shows a need for reform.
- 38** A reform like compulsory voting would require all voters to vote or face a fine. This would ensure a much higher turnout in all elections and for all referendums, as in Australia, and ensure that all views would be expressed and considered when determining the result, thereby improving the quality of democratic representation across the UK.
- 39** Although compulsory voting may improve turnout, there is no guarantee that those voting would take it seriously, and they may vote for joke candidates or even spoil their papers. If this were the case, there is a chance that the quality of candidates might diminish, leading to fewer voters being engaged in the new system than in the current system.
- 40** The fact that members of the House of Lords do not answer to the public through elections means there is no way to hold them to account for their actions and the laws they pass. They do not answer to anyone, which undermines a key principle of an effective democracy — that those in positions of power should answer to the people.
- 41** Making the House of Lords an elected chamber would ensure that members had to answer to the public at a set interval. This would improve democracy by making all peers accountable and responsible for the way they act and vote.

**42** Need means 'essential' or that a thing must happen.

**43** Need means a thing has to happen or there will be a major issue or crisis, whereas desirable means it would be good for a thing to happen, but the situation would not be disastrous if it did not happen.

**44** Any opinion is valid for 1 mark, followed by up to 3 marks for the quality of justification for the judgement. For example: 'Reform is mostly desirable rather than needed, because the UK democratic system continues to operate and ensure representation and effective governance, despite the various problems with the electoral system, turnout and the House of Lords. While reform could improve all these elements and make them more democratic, the current situation is not in chaos and so reform is not needed, but rather desirable.'

**45**

- Electoral reform may make UK elections more democratic by having more representative results, but the current system does work and ensure democratic representation and accountability, so reform would be good but is not essential.
- Compulsory voting may improve turnout in the UK, but turnout in general elections has risen since 2001 and, at all levels, representatives are being elected and held to account, so the system works and reform is not needed, no matter how desirable it may be.
- Creating an elected House of Lords may improve accountability, but at the moment its lack of accountability makes it, in some ways, a more effective check on the government and allows more opinions to be expressed. There is also no sense that the public is demanding such a reform, so while it might be a good idea, it is not a reform that is needed at this stage.

## A wider franchise and debates over suffrage

**46** The right to vote.

**47** The Scottish independence referendum, 2014; in Scottish local elections since 2014; in Welsh Senedd elections since 2020.

**48** They lack the maturity to be able to vote appropriately; very few pay tax so they are not entitled to a vote; the young may be too radical and easy to influence to be trusted with the right to vote.

**49** People can work from 16 and carry out other responsibilities, like joining the military, so should be entitled to vote; increased citizenship education means many 16–17-year-olds are better informed than in the past; if voting is an absolute right, it should not be conditional on age or opinions.

**50**

- At 16, people can legally work and therefore may pay some form of tax and national insurance. If they are entitled to work, contribute to the economy and possibly pay

direct taxes, they should be entitled to choose the government that will determine how the economy is run and the money raised is spent.

- Citizenship education has ensured nearly all people by age 16 have a clear grasp of the fundamentals of politics and issues relating directly to politics. This means it can be accepted that they have the understanding and knowledge to be able to make informed decisions and cast their votes. In many cases, 16-year-olds today probably have a greater understanding than 18- and 19-year-olds of the 1970s, and they should therefore be allowed to vote.
- As voting is often considered an absolute right, the opinions and attitudes of those voting should not matter, and so it should not matter if the young are more radical than other voters. This is also an assumption and perhaps by having their opinions considered, 16- and 17-year-olds would influence the quality of political debate in the UK.

**51**

- The requirement that people remain in some form of education until they are 18 years old means that most people below the age of 18 do not contribute fully to society and the economic strength of the UK, and are therefore not entitled to and perhaps should not have a say in how the country is run.
- Despite ongoing education in politics, maturity is something that develops with age and experience, and at 16 and 17 years old, people do not have the emotional maturity to be able to make sensible decisions for the future and therefore should not be given the right to vote and make such important decisions.
- In the UK, voting is not always an absolute right, with, for example, prisoners losing the right. Therefore, people who vote should be full stakeholders who can be trusted to exercise their judgement appropriately and with greater thought, and the radical nature of many 16- and 17-year-olds suggests that they should not be given the automatic right to vote.

**52** A clear and decisive judgement should be made.

**53** A possible explanation might be: 'The arguments for giving 16–17-year-olds the right to vote are much more convincing than those against extending the franchise because they look at 16- and 17-year-olds as they are and not in some form of worst-case scenario. Sixteen- and 17-year-olds are no more radical than those aged 18–24, and whatever their opinions, they are stakeholders in society who do contribute now and will do so in the future. As such they have just as much right to vote as those older than them and the arguments for denying them the franchise are just not very convincing, especially as one rests on comparing them to prisoners, who, incidentally, by legal rulings, should also have the right to vote. Therefore, the arguments in support of extending the franchise are better thought through and much more convincing than those from the other side of the debate.'

## Pressure groups and other influences

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- a** Pressure groups: organised groups that seek to influence or put pressure on those in power
- b** Think tanks: groups that carry out research and develop policy proposals
- c** Lobbyists: political experts who sell their knowledge and access to the political process to those who pay for it
- d** Corporations: business interests or companies that seek to influence politics in order to gain an advantage for themselves and also control a significant part of the economy

55

Type of group	Supporting democracy	Hindering democracy
Pressure groups	Votes at 16 seeking to extend the franchise	Groups like the Animal Liberation Front using violent and illegal methods
Think tanks	The National Institute of Economic and Social Research scrutinising the 2020 budget	The Institute of Economic Affairs is supported by British American Tobacco and is critical of government policies to reduce smoking
Lobbyists	Major charities employ lobbyists to inform and advise government on healthcare legislation	David Cameron was hired by Greensill Capital to try to secure government financing during the Covid-19 pandemic
Corporations	Corporations, like Dyson, worked with the government to provide ventilators during the Covid-19 pandemic	Various corporations, such as HSBC, threatened to relocate their headquarters if the UK voted to leave the EU

56

- a** Pressure groups can enable minority views and interests to be brought to public attention and try to persuade public opinion to support a cause and thereby pressure the government into taking positive and popular action.
- b** Think tanks can provide expert advice and test policies that politicians may then consider and adopt with greater confidence. The research takes pressure off the civil service and can encourage a greater sense of pluralism across the UK.

- c** Lobbyists can help smaller businesses and interests gain access to politicians and inform them of the need for legislation or the consequences of proposed legislation. By creating a dialogue between those in power and smaller interests, lobbyists can help towards creating a better-informed government.
- d** Corporations can support democracy by advising government on the impact of decisions and by offering to support the government in times of crisis. Such corporations have direct knowledge of key sectors of the economy and use this knowledge to ensure a better-informed government that works in the national interest.

**57**

- a** Pressure groups with more money and resources can exert more influence and pressure than other groups. This means the groups that dominate the political debate are operating at an unfair advantage, which undermines pluralism and sees governments act under the influence of the most powerful.
- b** Think tanks can be used to provide false or misleading data to muddy the waters and undermine the public debate, such as various studies published by think tanks on the effects of tobacco or sugar, which are then used to persuade politicians against following certain courses of action, against the public interest and public good.
- c** Lobbyists offer access to those who can afford to pay. In trying to achieve political goals on behalf of a paying client, rather than the public interest, lobbyists can be seen as acting only in the interests of their clients at the expense of the taxpayer or the public good.
- d** Corporations act in their own interest and the interests of their shareholders and therefore advise government on policies that benefit them as institutions but might be indifferent or harmful to the wider public, in attempts to influence the government into making decisions that suit the corporations rather than the people.

**58** A clear judgement should be given here, followed by a developed reasoning about why this belief is held.

**59** This is a judgement, but it is likely the answer will be 'no', with an expectation that students will go on to explain that groups are not all the same and they do not all act in similar ways, meaning that while some pressure groups and other groups may undermine democracy, others will actually work to achieve a positive outcome for democracy.

## Rights in context

- 60** A right held by an individual that cannot be abridged, such as the right to free speech.
- 61** A right held in common by a group of people, such as the right of religious groups not to have their beliefs satirised or mocked.
- 62** The Human Rights Act was a piece of primary legislation that brought the European Convention of Human Rights into UK statute law to be ruled upon in UK courts.
- 63** Rights could include: rights to employment and pay, access to government services, healthcare provision.



- 64** The Supreme Court can issue a ruling of incompatibility with the Human Rights Act for legislation; it can make decisions when different rights come into conflict, such as rights over privacy and freedom of the press; it can interpret the meaning of rights in cases of common law.
- 65** There are many, but a possible example could be the ruling that different-sex couples were entitled to civil partnerships on the same basis as same-sex couples.
- 66** Pressure groups bring test cases to the Supreme Court, protest in support of key rights or lobby government for the protection of key rights, among other methods.
- 67** For example, in 2020, Liberty used legal methods to persuade a local council to remove laws that had been used to target rough sleepers.
- 68** Parliament can pass laws protecting rights, it can challenge ministers over rights issues and it can investigate cases of rights conflict through its committee system.
- 69** The passage of the Equality Act in 2010 established clear rights for many groups in many key areas in the UK.
- 70** 'Effectively' means that something is done well or to expected standards.

**71**

Institution	Explanation of how it is effective in upholding rights	Explanation of how it is not effective in upholding rights
Supreme Court	In making rulings about whether or not legislation passed by parliament is compatible with the Human Rights Act, the Supreme Court can ensure laws do not impinge on rights in the UK.	A declaration is only advisory and the Supreme Court lacks any power to compel or overrule primary legislation passed by parliament.
Pressure groups	Pressure groups can campaign for rights protections by organising protests or demonstrations, which can change public opinion and force the government to implement greater rights protections.	Pressure groups rely on public support, so when campaigning for the rights of less popular groups, such as rights for terror suspects or prisoners, they are less effective at gaining public support and influencing government.
Parliament	In passing laws that bring rights into statute law, parliament can ensure that key rights are protected and that people can use the courts for protection.	Although parliament can pass laws, it depends on the executive and the courts to ensure the rights are enforced in practice. After passing legislation, parliament has little power to make it a practical reality.

**72** A clear judgement should be made with a line of developed reasoning to justify the judgement made.

**73**

**a** The Supreme Court is effective because parliament will be reluctant to ignore a declaration of incompatibility from the Supreme Court, which makes up for the lack of legal enforcement powers.

**b** Pressure groups are effective because the public campaigns they hold shine a spotlight on what is happening and help to raise a more general rights consciousness in the UK, which compensates for any ineffective elements in some areas.

**c** Parliament is mostly effective because it passes the laws needed to ensure rights are protected, and the introduction of laws like the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010 has ensured that rights protections across a number of areas for a number of protected groups have been introduced and can be used by groups and the courts, even if parliament's other powers are less clear.

**74** See worked example.

### Exam-style questions

- 1** AO2 agreement points: parties other than Labour are not seeing a rise in membership; turnout in previous referendums has been very low; turnout in second-order elections outside Scotland is low.

AO2 disagreement: Labour Party membership increased under Jeremy Corbyn; turnout in Scottish elections and the referendum has been high; there has been increasing membership of online campaign groups, all of which suggests there is not a participation crisis.

AO3 judgement: although there are problems with the nature of participation, the evidence shows it is far from a crisis and has more to do with changing forms of participation, making the view that the UK is experiencing a participation crisis far less convincing.

- 2** AO2 agreement: governments favour well-funded, well-organised pro-capitalist groups, creating an unequal playing field; most pressure groups are dominated by the affluent middle class, making them unrepresentative of the nation; pressure groups raise unrealistic expectations, which leads to disillusionment with the political process.

AO2 disagreement: pressure groups provide representation for citizens' views on particular issues; pressure groups are more effective than parties at representing individuals; pressure groups can also address controversial issues that parties cannot.

AO3 judgement: although there may be issues, far from undermining democracy, pressure group activity seems to actually enhance democracy in the UK.

- 3** AO2 agreement: 16–17-year-olds lack the maturity to be able to cast their votes properly; under-18s are not full stakeholders in society as they are rarely in full-time employment and still mostly in some form of education; where 16- and 17-year-olds have been given the right to vote in the UK, they turn out in lower numbers than other age groups.

AO2 disagreement: levels of political education and engagement among the young mean that 16- and 17-year-olds are at least as mature and able to cast their votes as 18–24-year-olds and so should be granted the right. Some 16- and 17-year-olds are in employment and paying income tax, and many are consumers who pay other forms of tax and have a vested interest in society as stakeholders, who should be given the right to vote. The fact that 16- and 17-year-olds have been given the right to vote in parts of the UK and have done so effectively makes a compelling case that they should be given the franchise in all areas.

AO3 judgement: although there may be some concerns, there is not a compelling case to keep the franchise at its current requirements. Far from it, 16- and 17-year-olds should be granted the vote now and therefore the franchise should, in fact, be extended.

- 4 AO2 agreement: rights are effectively protected thanks to the introduction of the Human Rights Act and other legislation; the growing independence of the Supreme Court has made it more effective at protecting rights in the UK; the increasing work of pressure groups to represent rights interests and defend them publicly has increased the effectiveness of rights protections.

AO2 disagreement: the various rights-based acts are not entrenched and can therefore be repealed by hostile governments, meaning there is a lack of entrenched protection for existing rights; parliamentary sovereignty means that the Supreme Court only has limited powers when it comes to rights protection and cannot strike down primary legislation passed by parliament; pressure groups can only raise awareness of issues and lack any power to enact meaningful protections without the support of other bodies or institutions, meaning their ability to protect rights is limited.

AO3 judgement: as things stand, rights are effectively protected in the UK, thanks to rights legislation, the Supreme Court and active pressure groups. There are threats to the ability of all these elements and so rights protection could be weakened at some point in the future. However, as things stand today, rights are effectively protected in the UK.

# Topic 2 Political parties

## Features and functions of political parties

### Practice questions

- 1 Political parties seek elected office, have open membership and have a broad set of policy aims.
- 2 To get Brexit done; no increases in tax, national insurance or VAT; a points-based immigration system; extra funding for the NHS.
- 3 To increase the health budget by 4.3%; to hold a second referendum on Brexit; to raise the national minimum wage from £8.21 to £10 per hour; to stop pension age rises.
- 4 (Liberal Democrats) To stop Brexit; a penny increase on income tax for the NHS; to generate 80% of electricity from renewables; to tax frequent flyers.
- 5 Party membership totals have declined since the 1980s.
- 6 For example, the 2019 Conservative policy to get Brexit done has been achieved, while the New Labour policy for devolution was enacted by 1999.
- 7 For example, in 2005, New Labour had a policy to introduce compulsory ID cards, which failed, and following the 2010 elections, policies to reform the NHS failed to be implemented.
- 8 By contesting elections, parties offer voters choice, educate the public about issues and encourage participation by asking voters to turn out.
- 9 By fielding candidates, even in seats they do not expect to win, parties offer members of the public a choice of options which they would otherwise not have, therefore ensuring that democratic choice is at least honoured in some ways.
- 10 In many safe seats, smaller parties do not waste time or resources contesting the election, therefore allowing the dominant party to drown out all other voices, meaning voters feel there is no real alternative.
- 11 Manifestos offer a set of policy promises that a party declares it will work through and can therefore be judged by. The public knows what they are voting for and can then hold the party responsible for any policy failures or decisions that break manifesto promises.
- 12 For example, in 2019 the main parties' manifesto promises concerning Brexit gave voters a clear choice and allowed them to make up their minds as to which policy they wanted implemented. The election result confirmed democratic support for the Conservative policy of 'getting Brexit done' and ended much of the debate and controversy that had hindered the workings of parliament before the election.
- 13 Also in 2019, the Conservative Party pledged not to raise any new taxes, national insurance or VAT, but in 2021, following the Covid-19 pandemic and a need to reform social care, the Conservatives announced a new 1.25% tax. This meant they broke their

manifesto promise and therefore undermined confidence and trust in the democratic process.

- 14** If political parties do not provide candidates for political office, there is a lack of choice at elections and also a lack of clarity, as individuals campaign on a variety of issues. Putting candidates up for election means the people have someone they can vote for based on a manifesto commitment they can understand, therefore ensuring democratic choice.
- 15** For example, even in safe seats — such as East Surrey, which traditionally votes Conservative — Labour and the Liberal Democrats routinely put up candidates for elections. This means that voters are always offered a choice and have the opportunity to remove the incumbent, no matter how unlikely it may be, therefore ensuring there is democratic choice.
- 16** For example, sometimes parties have tried to impose candidates on local constituencies in order to get big names back into the House of Commons or to meet a certain demand. Imposing, say, all-female shortlists of candidates, as New Labour did in the 1990s, reduces the ability of the local party to choose the candidate they really want and forces them to accept someone approved by the central party, therefore undermining the democratic ability of the local party to select its own candidate for election.
- 17** A clear overall judgement indicating which side of the debate is favoured must be given for 1 mark. The remaining 3 marks are given for the quality of the justification that is provided.
- 18** Marks are given based on how the answers are used to support the overall judgement, with 2 marks for each mini-explanation linked to the judgement. For example, if the judgement were that parties are effective at promoting representative democracy, the answer might include something like: 'The clear choice between manifestos offered in 2019 shows that voters were given options and are able to make an informed choice, which contributes to an effective representative democracy.'

## Political party funding

- 19** Political parties need money to pay deposits to stand for election, pay for media promotions and hire advisors and other policy experts.
- 20** A private donor might give money to a political party because they believe in the policies being promoted, they hope to gain influence or access to those in power and/or they hope to be rewarded in some way, such as through an honour in the future.
- 21** Three types of state party funding that already exist in the UK are policy development grants, Short Money and Cranborne Money.
- 22** Private funding of political parties might be a positive for democracy because it helps link politicians to the people, parties with the most money may have the highest level of public support, and it ensures public money is not spent on controversial political parties.
- 23** For example, cash-for-honours, especially when Conservative donor Lord Ashcroft was given a seat in the Lords and then demanded a seat in the Cabinet.

**24**

- Private donors expect to get some form of influence or reward for their donations, which means they are effectively paying for access to the political system. Even though they might not actually get what they want, it undermines public confidence in democracy and gives the impression that politicians are only operating for the wealthy, not the people.
- It gives a distinct advantage to those parties that can raise large amounts of funds, which tend to be well-established parties, meaning new parties find it harder to make an impression as they cannot raise the funds to compete with more established parties. This creates a cycle of dominance in which private finance allows established parties to maintain a grip on the political process.
- It requires politicians to spend a lot of time on fundraising activities, such as formal dinners, events and so on, which distracts them from their representative role. As full-time politicians, it would be better if they could devote all their time to their political job rather than spending significant time persuading people to donate money.

**25** Full state party funding would remove the need for politicians to fundraise, as they would be totally reliant on the funds provided by the state and therefore could assign all their time to carrying out their representative role without distraction.

**26** There is no guarantee that equal funding would enable smaller parties to break through. For example, UKIP did receive large financial donations but never achieved major electoral success in Westminster. There are a number of factors at play and funding is only one element, so full state party funding may not solve this issue.

**27** 'Should' means that a thing really has to happen.

**28** 'Should' means a thing has to happen while 'could' means it is possible, though not essential.

**29** This is a personal judgement: 1 mark for clearly stating what your opinion is and 3 marks for the quality of the explanation relating clearly to why full state funding should or should not be introduced.

**30** See worked example.

## Established political parties

**31** New Right conservatism and One Nation conservatism.

**32** Old Labour and New Labour.

**33** Social Liberals and Orange Book Liberals.

**34**

Party	The economy	Welfare	Law and order	Foreign affairs
Conservatives	Generally, low tax and allowing for free markets with limited regulation	Welfare to support a levelling-up agenda	Tough on crime and increased prison sentences	An independent UK with bilateral trade agreements
Labour	Renationalise key industries and raise taxation to fund welfare	Increase funding on all areas of welfare	Tough on crime but also looking to rehabilitate	Isolationist, following a policy of non-intervention where possible
Liberal Democrats	Freeze prices on key commodities and use taxation to fund welfare	Increase welfare with a focus on education and providing independent opportunities for people	Focus on rehabilitation and tackling the causes of crime	Develop international co-operation and membership of supranational groups

**35**

- a** The economy: the New Right want to cut taxation and spending while One Nation conservatives want to increase taxation to provide for effective welfare.
- b** Welfare: the New Right would like to cut welfare and entitlement programmes; One Nationers want to ensure welfare provides an effective safety net for those in need.
- c** Law and order: the New Right tends to see a need for privatised prisons and extensive policing; One Nationers tend to focus on the causes of crime and look for prevention before punishment.
- d** Foreign affairs: the New Right tends to favour international free-trade agreements; One Nationers tend to value protective policies for the UK.

**36**

- a** The economy: Old Labour favours nationalisation, while New Labour prefers low taxation and public/private initiatives.
- b** Welfare: Old Labour supported extensive welfare for all; New Labour favours welfare-to-work programmes.
- c** Law and order: Old Labour focused on the causes of crime; New Labour supported being tough on crime.
- d** Foreign affairs: Old Labour tends to be isolationist; New Labour tends to favour internationalism.

**37**

- a** The economy: Social Liberals favour taxes to fund welfare, while Orange Book Liberals prefer free-market trade.
- b** Welfare: Social Liberals support extensive programmes of welfare; Orange Book Liberals favour welfare-to-work schemes.
- c** Law and order: Social Liberals tend to focus on the causes of crime; Orange Book Liberals focus on how crime relates to poverty and personal freedoms.
- d** Foreign affairs: Social Liberals favour international co-operation for human rights and social programmes; Orange Book Liberals favour free-trade agreements.

**38** A judgement should be clearly made, selecting the party based on your opinion for 1 mark. The remaining 3 marks are awarded based on how well you have been able to justify your opinion in relation to the other parties.

## Emerging and minor parties in the UK

**39**

	<b>Party 1</b>	<b>Party 2</b>
<b>Identify two emerging parties in the UK.</b>	Green Party	SNP
<b>What are the main aims of these parties?</b>	To promote environmental solutions in all areas	To promote Scottish independence
<b>Give a policy example from each party.</b>	End the UK's use of fossil fuels	Hold a second independence referendum

**40** Scotland is controlled by the SNP and Northern Ireland by a coalition of the DUP and Sinn Féin.



- 41** The Conservative and Labour parties have both adopted environmental policies based on Green Party campaigns.
- 42** Thanks to alternative electoral systems, minor and emerging parties have been able to gain some form of representation in devolved bodies and have used this to exert influence, e.g. the Green Party supporting the SNP for control of the Scottish Parliament.
- 43** In most areas of England and Wales, devolved bodies tend to be dominated by the Conservatives and Labour, which means they are perpetuating the current situation, with little opportunity for minor parties to gain power.
- 44** Emerging and minor parties have posed electoral threats that the established parties have been forced to head off by adopting some of their policies, most notably the 2015 Conservative commitment to hold an in/out referendum on Brexit as a result of the growing support for UKIP.
- 45** Despite the growth in support for the SNP, Labour and the Conservatives continue to oppose the possibility of a second independence referendum, which can only be legally granted by parliament.
- 46** Emerging and minor parties have impacted elections by taking significant votes from one of the established parties. In 2015, the Conservatives were able to win a slim majority, in part because the SNP took votes from Labour in Scotland, but also because UKIP took many votes from traditional Labour areas, which weakened their vote share and cost them seats.
- 47** Victory in Westminster depends on winning a majority of seats, and few parties outside the established two are in a position to win many seats, thanks to the FPTP electoral system. Despite receiving large percentages of votes in 2015, UKIP won only one seat, while the Green Party has only one seat, despite polling more than 2 million votes nationally.
- 48** 'Meaningful' means to have a significant or definitive impact.
- 49** This should be a clear and sensible example by which 'meaningful impact' can be considered.
- 50** A clear judgement should be given and then explained, with logical chains of reasoning to produce a reasoned judgement.

## UK political parties in context

**51**

- a** One-party: only one party can contest elections.
- b** Dominant party: only one party has a realistic chance of winning power in an election.
- c** Two-party: two parties each have a meaningful chance of gaining power in an election, with one winning and the other forming an opposition.
- d** Two-and-a-half party: two main parties contest elections with a sizeable third party forming a coalition with one of these main parties.

- e Multiparty: multiple parties have a meaningful chance of forming a government.

**52**

- a Westminster Parliament: dominant party or two-party
- b Scottish Parliament: dominant party
- c Welsh Senedd: dominant party
- d Northern Ireland Assembly: multiparty
- e Greater London Assembly: multiparty

**53** There are many parties with seats and representation in Westminster, which can give the appearance of a multiparty system.

**54** Realistically, one party usually dominates parliament with one of two parties having a realistic chance of gaining power at a general election, meaning it is inaccurate to say parliament is a multiparty system.

**55** Across the UK, many more parties are in power in some form of devolved body, meaning many parties have some degree of power and influence in the UK political system.

**56** In most areas, like Scotland and Wales, one party is clearly dominant, meaning that in these devolved areas there is no multiparty system, with many parties having the opportunity to form the executive.

**57** The introduction of the additional member system (AMS) in Wales and Scotland has enabled some parties that could not win seats under FPTP, such as the Conservatives in Scotland and UKIP in Wales, to gain representation through the top-up system.

**58** Despite the use of AMS, Labour continues to dominate the Welsh Senedd, while the SNP has been the dominant party and even managed a period of majority rule in Scotland, since 2007.

**59** 1 mark for giving a clear judgement, then up to 3 marks for explaining how this judgement best explains the situation.

**60** Marks to be awarded based on how well the evidence and previous answer are used to support the judgement made.

**61** See worked example.

## Exam-style questions

- 1** AO2 agreement: increasingly, the public are calling for debates independent of party politics; the 2017–19 Parliament saw a collapse in party discipline; the role of the media, social and traditional, is replacing parties' scrutiny function.

AO2 disagreement: increased party discipline since the 2019 general election; most elected officials come from political parties; parties remain crucial in developing policy ideas and passing legislation.

AO3 judgement: although the way in which parties matter may be changing, the evidence shows they still do matter and play an important role in the UK political process.

- 2** AO2 agreement: minor and emerging parties have had an impact through the co-option of their ideas and policies; in Scotland, the SNP has become the dominant party; far from confusing the electorate, minor and emerging parties have offered the electorate greater choice and variety in elections.

AO2 disagreement: emerging and minor parties never gain any sort of representation (the validity of which should be challenged); beyond Scotland, emerging and minor parties have not made a significant breakthrough in terms of electoral success; in Westminster elections, Labour and the Conservatives still gain the vast majority of votes and seats.

AO3 judgement: while it is hard to claim that minor and emerging parties have directly made a significant impact, they have made a significant impact in the way that they have forced their ideas upon the major parties and influenced election results, meaning overall they have had quite a significant impact on UK politics.

- 3** AO2 agreement: the current system of private donations is open to abuse, which needs to be addressed; the current system favours the established parties over new and emerging parties; the current system forces representatives to spend a great deal of time raising funds rather than doing their job.

AO2 disagreement: the current system ensures parties raise funds based on their popularity and is a sign of their success with voters, which would be undermined by a flat-funding arrangement; the system of raising funds helps to keep politicians in touch with the public and voters and is an important aspect of democratic accountability; a reformed system may see small, extremist parties qualify for state-based funding, which voters may object to as their tax money might be used to support views to which they are fundamentally opposed.

AO3 judgement: the current system has its faults and is far from perfect, so reform of the system would be beneficial. However, it does work and alternatives risk just as many issues, so the current system is not in urgent need of reform at this stage.

- 4** AO2 agreement: Westminster is dominated by the two main parties — in general elections the two main parties win more than 80% of the vote; in devolved bodies across England and Wales, the two main parties tend to contest and win elections.

AO2 disagreement: the SNP has become the dominant party in Scotland and a sizeable third party in Westminster that could hold the balance of power in a close election; between 2010 and 2019, 7 of those 9 years saw the Conservatives reliant on a third party to keep them in power (the Liberal Democrats in coalition and the DUP in a supply deal); more parties are gaining representation and power in various parts of the UK, which means they are able to shape and influence the actions of the two main parties, even if they cannot form a government.

AO3 judgement: although it is true that a variety of parties have exerted some degree of influence on the political process, it is clear that in Westminster elections, which are the most important nationally, it remains the case that one of only two parties has a realistic chance of forming a government. Therefore, the UK remains a two-party political system.

# Topic 3 Electoral systems

## Different electoral systems used in the UK

### Practice questions

1 Three functions could include to translate votes into representation, to provide a choice, to ensure fair representation.

2

- a First-past-the-post (FPTP): UK general elections
- b Additional member system (AMS): Scottish Parliament elections
- c Single transferable vote (STV): Northern Ireland Assembly elections
- d Supplementary vote (SV): London Mayor

3

- a FPTP: single-member constituencies, plurality system, single choice
- b AMS: a hybrid system, one constituency vote based on single-member constituencies, a second 'top-up vote' that is party based
- c STV: a proportional system, large multi-member constituencies, preferential voting
- d SV: a majoritarian system, a first-choice vote and a second-choice vote, used for single-member constituencies

4

System	Advantages	Disadvantages
FPTP	Quick to count; easy to understand	Many wasted votes; minority seats
AMS	Keeps small constituency representation; top-up makes the overall result more proportional	Two different types of MPs with different constituencies; the top-up elements give too much power to party bosses
STV	Most proportional system; very few wasted votes	Little chance of single-party government; preferential voting means a vote might be counted for a low choice (sixth or seventh choice)
SV	Allows votes to be cast for smaller parties while still counting to the final decision; makes it more likely a majority will have voted for the winner	Second-choice votes for parties outside the top two remain meaningless; encourages a two-party system, making it harder for minor parties to gain representation

**5**

- a** AMS: more likely to be a minority or coalition
- b** STV: much more likely to be a coalition
- c** SV: likely to be a single party

**6**

- a** AMS: a little more choice (two options)
- b** STV: a lot more choice (as many as there are seats to fill)
- c** SV: a little more choice (first and second choices)

**7**

- a** AMS: most likely to have a dominant party model or multiparty system
- b** STV: very likely to be a multiparty system
- c** SV: most likely to have a two-party system

**8** FPTP is the system most likely to secure a clear, single-party majority, which therefore means clear leadership in government and the opportunity to hold that government to account in future elections.

**9** AMS, as a hybrid system, would allow the retention of the best elements of FPTP with clear, single-member constituencies, but also provide a more proportional and therefore fairer representation through the top-up seats.

**10** As the most proportional system, STV should be used because it is the system best placed to ensure fair and representative outcomes that express the opinions of the whole nation, therefore making it the most representative and democratic of systems.

**11** The use of SV would help to reduce or eliminate the number of minority constituencies in the UK, which would ensure that pretty much all seats would be won with a majority of the constituency voting for the winning candidate, which results in better-quality representation.

**12**

- As FPTP results in minority constituencies, it means that a number of MPs are elected by fewer than half the voters, suggesting more people voted against the candidate than for them, which undermines the democratic legitimacy of the candidates elected.
- FPTP leads to safe seats, which means that seats have no real chance of changing hands. This means that many voters in the constituency are unable to use their vote to impact the overall result of an election, which means their voices are not heard and considered, undermining a key democratic principle of elections.
- FPTP leads to lots of wasted votes as any votes for losing candidates do not count towards the overall outcome, while large majorities also mean votes are wasted, as they might not impact the national result. This means that votes have less value, which can suppress turnout, therefore undermining democratic legitimacy and participation.

**13**

- a** AMS creates two different sets of representatives who answer to different constituencies, which undermines a key democratic principle that all representatives should be elected on the same basis and be held to account by the same standard.
- b** STV is overly complicated and can confuse voters, leading to many accidentally spoilt ballots, which means votes are not counted and therefore peoples' voices are not heard, leading them to be excluded from the political process.
- c** SV is likely to produce a bias toward the two main parties in a region, which would in fact make it much harder for a third- or minor-party candidate to break through and challenge for the win, actually reducing the amount of real choice voters have.

**14** A clear choice of the main function should be made and justified by an explanation.

**15** A clear choice has to be made, based on your answer to Question 14, with a clear explanation. To go above 4 marks, you should clearly compare the system to other systems in order to create a comparative judgement, showing how your chosen system is better than other systems, and not just that it is a good system.

**16** A clear judgement should be made that relates the judgement to suitability for Westminster elections and the impact it may have on general elections.

**17** See worked example.

## Referendums

**18** Three features of a referendum are that they are a form of direct democracy, they are usually single issue and they usually offer a binary yes/no choice.

**19** Three examples could include Scottish devolution in 1998, North East devolution in 2004 and the AV referendum of 2011.

**20** Three reasons for holding a referendum could include to entrench a constitutional reform, to resolve a party split and to test public opinion.

**21** The government won the Welsh devolution referendum in 2011.

**22** The government lost the Brexit referendum in 2016.

**23** The establishment of devolution in Scotland in 1998 confirmed a constitutional change.

**24** The Welsh devolution referendum in 2011 gave voters the option to reject devolution, which they had not received in the previous general election.

**25**

- a** Welsh devolution referendum, 1997: 50.1%
- b** North East England referendum, 2004: 47.7%
- c** United Kingdom Alternative Vote referendum, 2011: 42.2%

- d** Scottish independence referendum, 2014: 84.6%
- e** United Kingdom European Union membership referendum, 2016: 72.2%

**26**

- The use of referendums allows representatives to abdicate responsibility for taking difficult decisions and to pass it back to voters, which means representatives are not fulfilling their function of making decisions or legislating on behalf of the people.
- The use of referendums can make representatives act as delegates, rather than representatives, by them approving decisions made by the public and acting against their own beliefs in what is in the national interest.
- Representative democracy relies on nuance and careful consideration of a range of issues and factors in a prolonged debate, but referendums undermine this by reducing major issues to a simple yes/no choice, which is overly simplistic and does not work with the range of issues present in a modern state.

**27**

- Referendums are, legally, only advisory, which means that it is always up to the representatives to decide whether or not they will adhere to the result.
- In most cases, a referendum is simply asking the public to confirm support of a plan already drawn up by representatives (such as devolution), so in this case referendums are simply a way of confirming public support for proposals already developed by representatives.
- Referendums are only held on issues on which the representatives cannot agree and find common ground. They therefore support representative democracy by ensuring that controversial decisions do not hold up the workings of parliament.

**28**

- On some issues, like the North East Assembly, the referendum result showed that the public did not support the government's plans and therefore meant that a policy that would have been passed by representatives, but that the people did not want, was dropped.
- Referendums can be a useful tool for representatives to communicate with constituents on specific issues that may not have been clear in the mix of policies presented in party manifestos. This therefore allows the public to clearly demonstrate their views on a specific issue to their representatives.
- In confirming major constitutional changes, referendums add an additional layer of democratic legitimacy to the decisions made by representatives, helping to entrench reforms and add greater strength to those reforms.

**29** 'Undermine' means to damage or make worse.

**30** The answer here is likely to be an explanation of whether or not referendums have actually damaged the work of representatives, perhaps by forcing them to act against their conscience or beliefs.

**31** You should choose a word that covers extent, e.g. mostly, somewhat, largely, partially.

- 32** There should be a clear statement of extent (certainly not yes/no) and then a justification for that view, showing why you have settled on that degree of extent.
- 33** This depends on the judgement made, but you should be able to give a brief explanation for two separate referendums and how they support your judgement. For example, if your judgement was that referendums mostly undermine representative democracy, you might say: 'Following the EU referendum, the vast majority of MPs voted against their own belief that the UK should remain in the EU in order to follow the will of the people expressed in the referendum result.'
- 34** See worked example.

## Exam-style questions

- 1** AO2 agreement: it is traditional; it gives a quick and clear outcome (a point to be evaluated); it allows voters to pick the candidate they most want; it avoids the dangers of coalitions and minority governments.

AO2 disagreement: a majority may not support a winning candidate; the chaos of 2017–19 shows FPTP is not always effective at delivering majority governments; there is a demand for reform from 'losers' under the current system.

AO3 judgement: while there are issues and concerns with FPTP, there is no sense of a need to reform as there is a lack of public demand, and the current system does its job and is generally supported by the public.

- 2** AO2 agreement: representatives can be elected with small amounts of public support; it leads to wasted votes, which are inappropriate in a modern democracy; it can severely restrict voter choice.

AO2 disagreement: FPTP enables voters to clearly express a view on which party they think should form a government; it generally produces single-party governments; it could be argued that it encourages broad-church centrist policies and discourages extremist views.

AO3 judgement (a possible judgement): when it comes to choosing an electoral system for UK general elections, perhaps the most important point is that votes should accurately reflect the will of the public. On this basis, despite its many positive qualities, it is clear that FPTP is no longer suitable for UK general elections as it does not result in proportional representation that truly reflects the diverse range of opinions and party support in the UK.

- 3** AO2 agreement: referendums force MPs to vote as instructed rather than based on their judgement, making them delegates rather than representatives; referendums allow representatives to pass controversial decisions to the public rather than taking responsibility for these themselves; with the public making decisions, there is little point having representatives.

AO2 disagreement: referendums can actually support representative democracy by giving an extra layer of democratic legitimacy to proposals and decisions made by representatives; referendums can offer choices on key issues that may not have been offered by the main parties in an election; referendums can inspire participation in elections, as seen as a result of the Scottish independence referendum, which saw increased turnouts and engagement in all areas as a result.

AO3 judgement: while referendums have the capacity to undermine representative democracy, it all depends on how the representatives use them in the UK's system of representative democracy. In most cases, the evidence seems to support the idea that referendums, far from undermining representative democracy, actually support and encourage it, making it a positive force in the current system.



- 4 AO2 agreement: alternative systems have allowed more parties to gain some form of political representation; in Scotland, AMS has allowed the Scottish Conservatives to mount a recovery and gain seats that they would not have done under FPTP; in Northern Ireland, it has allowed nearly all parties some form of representation, which has helped to develop the ongoing peace process; arguably, alternative systems have made the UK into more of a multiparty system.

AO2 disagreement: the Conservatives and Labour still dominate most elections in England and Wales; in Scotland, the SNP has risen but has simply replaced Labour as the dominant party; in Northern Ireland, the multiparty system effectively breaks into two distinct camps: unionist and nationalist.

AO3 judgement: in many ways, alternative voting systems can appear to have impacted political representation, but the truth is that political representation more accurately reflects voters' choices rather than the method of turning votes into seats. As such, the impact of voting systems on political representation has in fact been highly limited.

# Topic 4 Voting behaviour and the media

## Case studies

### Practice questions

1

	Case study 1	Case study 2	Case study 3
<b>Chosen case study</b>	1979	1997	2019
<b>Features of the wider context</b>	The 'Winter of Discontent' and economic hardship	An economic crash in 1992 and accusations of sleaze against the Conservative government	The issue of Brexit and the form it should take, and major divisions across the main parties
<b>Key policies of the Conservative Party</b>	Right-to-buy for council tenants; to curb the power of trade unions	To cut corporation tax on small businesses; welfare-to-work	'Get Brexit done'; a 'levelling-up' agenda
<b>Key policies of the Labour Party</b>	To curb inflation; to return to full employment	To cut class sizes; to reduce NHS waiting times	Hold a second referendum on Brexit; increase funding to the NHS
<b>Campaign techniques used by the two main parties</b>	Press conferences were timed for the midday news; 'walkabouts' with party leaders were timed for the early evening news	Labour ran a tight, media-focused campaign with press conferences and soundbites, playing on hope and change; the Conservatives focused on an 'anti-Labour' message	Social media attack ads were more prevalent than ever before; Labour focused on Corbyn as leader while Johnson stepped back from the main campaign
<b>How people voted by social class</b>	AB and C1 voted Conservative; C2 and DE voted Labour	Large swings towards Labour; the Conservatives won the AB group, and C1 was tied	The Conservatives won across all social classes, doing slightly better with C2 and DE than they did with AB and C1

	Case study 1	Case study 2	Case study 3
<b>How people voted by age</b>	Labour won among the 18–24 age range; Conservatives won with all other groups	The Conservatives won among the over-65s; Labour won among all other age groups	Young voters were much more likely to vote Labour; after age 39, the trend leaned much more towards the Conservatives
<b>How people voted by gender</b>	Women had a slight preference for the Conservatives; men were evenly split between the two main parties	Men and women were equally likely to vote Labour, so there was no gender gap	Women were slightly more likely to vote Labour as a whole, but overwhelmingly so in the 18–24 age group
<b>How people voted geographically</b>	All areas swung towards the Conservatives; the swing was most pronounced in the south of England	Labour gained seats in all areas, including south-eastern England; the Conservatives lost all seats in Scotland and Wales	The Conservatives dominated southern and rural England and gained seats in the 'red wall' of northern industrial towns
<b>How people voted by race</b>	Data were not recorded for this election but it is likely that a majority of ethnic minority voters voted Labour, based on geography	Labour won with all races: 43% of white voters and 70% of ethnic minority voters	The Conservatives won with white voters and Labour won with ethnic minority voters, but Labour's votes were down for all groups on 2017's results
<b>Final result</b>	Conservative majority of 43	Labour majority of 178	Conservative majority of 80

## 2

**a** Case study 1: the 'Winter of Discontent' and ongoing economic hardship in the late 1970s meant many people had lost faith in Labour and blamed the party for its failure to deal with the trade unions. Although Jim Callaghan was personally more popular, people wanted change and so there was a swing to the Conservatives.

**b** Case study 2: the economic crash damaged the Conservative Party's reputation for economic management and the ongoing reputation of sleaze also damaged a party that had been in power for 18 years. People were willing to vote for change and turned to New Labour.

**c** Case study 3: the divisions in parliament and the repeated failure of parliament to agree to a Brexit deal meant that people were frustrated with politics and wanted the situation to be sorted, so backed the clear message of the Conservative Party over Labour's more vague messages.

**3**

- In 1979, the biggest issue was the power of the unions, and so the Conservative policy of curbing their powers was key in gaining support more broadly from those disaffected by the miners' strikes.
- In 1997, the economic policies and commitment to third-way policies appealed to a population that had grown tired of the Conservatives and wanted to trust that Labour would not bring in sweeping economic change.
- In 2019, the key issue was Brexit and the clarity of the Conservative message resonated with many voters who may in the past have been Labour supporters.

**4**

- 1979 was the first media election: politicians timed press conferences and 'walkabouts' to maximise coverage in the main TV news broadcasts.
- In 1997, Labour stepped this up with a tight media campaign, using media experts to dominate the news cycle continuously.
- In 2019, social media allowed both parties to campaign beyond traditional news outlets and reach voters directly and in ways not regulated by UK law.

**5** Across all elections, trying to gain favourable support from the print media has remained constant, as has appearing regularly on the main news channels and maintaining the focus on party leaders as prospective prime ministers.

**6** In 1979, class was a key factor in determining how people would vote, with a clear separation between AB and C1 voters and C2 and DE voters. By 2019, this had disappeared, with the Conservatives winning with all groups and gaining more support from C2 and DE than AB and C1. This suggests that class is no longer the key factor in determining how people vote.

**7** Age voting has changed a great deal in importance. Although the young were slightly more likely to vote Labour in 1979, across the age ranges there was only a limited party gap. By 2019, however, age had become the key dividing line in UK politics and by far the most important social factor in determining how people vote.

**8** Male voting has remained largely consistent across the main parties, although with a slight swing towards the Conservative Party since 1997. There has been a greater shift in female voting, with women going from being slightly more likely to vote Conservative in 1979 to more likely to vote Labour in 2019, though only by small percentages.

**9** There has been a change in ethnic minority voting, if only because it is now recorded and considered important as a factor. Largely, ethnic minority votes have remained consistently in favour of Labour, which suggests there hasn't been much of a change, although some groups, such as Asian-British groups, are becoming slightly less pro-Labour and more pro-Conservative, suggesting some degree of change, although not much.

- 10 In 1979, there seemed to be a clear geographic divide, with industrial areas voting Labour and rural and suburban areas voting Conservative. This pattern has largely remained, but has been affected at the margins, with Labour managing to pick up seats in rural and southern England in 1997, while in 2019 the Conservatives were able to make gains in northern industrial areas.
- 11 Looking at all factors, voting behaviour has changed a great deal in recent times, with a clear shift from the old class-based system of voting to one focused more on age and social attitudes.
- 12 This is a personal opinion and a clear judgement should be given and then justified for the marks.
- 13 Again, a clear judgement should be given with a developed explanation that clearly justifies the decision made.
- 14 See worked example.

## The role of the media

- 15 The *Daily Mirror* has a preference towards Labour.
  - 16 The *Daily Mail* has a preference towards the Conservatives.
  - 17 Reporting of the appointment of Nadine Dorries as culture secretary was said to reveal the left-wing bias of the BBC.
  - 18 In 2014, the *Independent* said the BBC had become too reliant on business sources, leading to it presenting a more right-wing agenda on financial matters.
  - 19 Social media platforms have enabled non-governmental organisations (NGOs) to publish information that is relayed directly to the people, enabling the voting public to make up their own minds on important issues.
  - 20 For example, foreign interference in elections, such as Russian involvement in the 2019 general election.
  - 21 Opinion polls in 2017 suggested a close contest, which potentially increased turnout figures and resulted in the highest turnout since 1997.
  - 22 In 2015, by suggesting the possibility of a Labour–SNP coalition, the polls perhaps encouraged some voters to vote tactically to prevent such a result.
- 23
- In 2009, the *Daily Telegraph* began publishing MPs' expenses claims and revealed to the public a widespread abuse of the system. This allowed the public to make up their own minds and vote against MPs who had abused the system. It also ensured that extreme cases would be prosecuted and perpetrators held to account with jail terms.
  - In 2021, the media reported on then health secretary Matt Hancock having an affair with an advisor he employed, which was a breach of the ministerial code of conduct and also revealed that he had not followed his own instructions about social distancing during the Covid-19 pandemic. As a result, he was held to account and forced to resign.

- In 2019, press coverage of the Windrush deportation scandal and the printing of evidence that then home secretary Amber Rudd was aware of targets being set for deportation revealed that she had misled a select committee investigation, resulting in her resignation from office.

## 24

- The focus on sleaze and corruption during the 1990s, which has continued into the twenty-first century, has contributed to a decline in trust and respect for politicians and politics as a whole, causing many of the public to become disillusioned and distrustful of politicians. This has further encouraged refusals to adhere to Covid-19 measures and some physical attacks on MPs.
- Following a high court ruling on parliament, rather than the prime minister, being the correct body to trigger Article 50, the *Daily Mail* ran a headline accusing the judges of being traitors. This undermined the principle of judicial neutrality and independence and was an attempt to turn public opinion against the judiciary, which further undermined the democratic process and rule of law.
- The advent of social media has allowed unregulated and outside groups to impact election campaigns in their own interests rather than that of the public good. Accusations of Russian interference via social media in the 2017 and 2019 general elections, as well as the EU referendum, suggest that hostile interests may be using social media to undermine democratic choices, debate and discussion by providing false information and attempting to manipulate voters.

## 25

- By running campaigns and promoting awareness of election campaigns, the media, in all their forms, can ensure people are aware of elections happening and can therefore drive increased turnout.
- The media, in all their forms, can present a range of views and information to improve public education and ensure the electorate are well informed when making democratic decisions.
- Audience participation shows, such as *Question Time*, allow members of the public to directly ask politicians questions and hold them to account. Going further, investigative journalism provides a means of holding politicians to account, as was shown in the expenses scandal.

## 26

- The focus on sleaze and corruption could be argued to have alienated people from politics and created a general sense of apathy, which undermines the democratic process.
- The focus on social media has meant people are more likely to come across information and opinions in an echo chamber, reducing the opportunities for them to be exposed to alternative views and be fully informed on key issues, leading to an ill-informed electorate and promoting an increasingly hostile partisan environment.
- Media moguls, such as Rupert Murdoch, have been accused of using the print media to influence politicians and the public into making decisions these interests want, rather than acting in the public interest. Though hard to substantiate, this has promoted a sense of elitism and undermined confidence in the idea that politicians are working for the people.

- 27** This is an opinion. A clear judgement should be given followed by a developed explanation justifying the response.
- 28** Again, this is an opinion, with 1 mark for a clear judgement and the following 3 marks for the quality of the justification.
- 29** This question requires you to think about how you judge impact, either through results, studies or some other method. Having made the decision for 1 mark, the remaining marks are awarded for the quality of your justification.
- 30** A clear judgement of extent is needed here with the explanation going on to justify why this opinion is better than the alternative view.
- 31** Here 2 marks are allowed for each explanation. The idea is that an example from each case study should be used to support the judgement you have given.
- 32** See worked example.

### Exam-style questions

- 1** AO2 agreement: political parties are using data to manipulate voters; political parties use social media to circumvent the UK's rules around advertising; fake news is undermining faith in the political process.

AO2 disagreement: social media are actually galvanising the young and the public in political discussions; people can share beliefs more easily than ever before; new parties can use social media to build support and awareness.

AO3 judgement: while social media have had negative impacts and can lead to negative impacts in UK politics, there have been many positive elements which have, in fact, more than made up for the negative elements, meaning social media overall have not had a critically negative impact on UK politics.

- 2** AO2 agreement: in 1997, the Conservatives lost due to the economic crisis caused by the withdrawal from the exchange rate mechanism (ERM); the air of arrogance and sleaze undermined the party's reputation, causing voters to turn against it; the divisions in the party over Europe meant people lost faith in its abilities.

AO2 disagreement: Labour's internal reforms increased confidence among voters; the removal of Clause IV increased public confidence that privatisation reforms would not be repealed; the display of party discipline and unity gave voters confidence in New Labour.

AO3 judgement: in 1997, New Labour did offer a place for voters to turn to, but only because the Conservatives had pushed so many voters away through their actions and divisions. Although 1997 may not be typical of all elections, the evidence would seem to suggest that elections are lost by governments, though the extent of the loss depends on the actions of the opposition party.

- 3** AO2 agreement: the media satire and mocking of politicians, focused on scandals and sleaze, has undermined confidence in politics and led to greater apathy; social media have allowed people to operate in echo chambers, which means they are not exposed to alternative views and see debate as an attack by an enemy; influential figures and groups have used the media to push their own agenda rather than the public interest, such as press barons and foreign interests using social media to issue fake news.

AO2 disagreement: the media have provided a key form of scrutiny, investigating issues of corruption and malpractice and using this to hold politicians to account in the public interest; social media have allowed more information and views to be independently shared without the prism of intermediaries, and enabled greater numbers of people to access more information, making for a more informed electorate; the media tend to reflect public opinion and trends rather than shaping them, which means they actually reflect the public interest and provide a useful tool for politicians to keep in touch with the public mood.

AO3 judgement: while there certainly have been negative elements in the role of the media and the way they have affected politics, mostly the media have provided positive aspects through their role in informing the public, holding those in power to account and providing a link between the government and the governed, which means the role of the media has not been mostly negative — quite the opposite, in fact.

- 4 AO2 agreement: social factors like class, race and geography still play important roles in influencing the party alignment of many voters; the media have consistently been an important tool in informing the public and helping them determine how they will cast their votes; party manifesto policies continue to play an essential part in determining how people will cast their votes.

AO2 disagreement: the nature of social factors influencing voting has changed, with women now more likely to support Labour than the Conservatives and age becoming much more important as a factor than class; the growth of TV debates and social media has meant the media play a much more dominant and influential role today than they did in the past, when they existed simply to inform the public about what was happening. Manifestos have become much more populist and reflect public wants rather than traditional ideologies.

AO3 judgement: the basic factors influencing voting have remained largely the same, but the way in which they influence the public and the significance of that impact have changed considerably in modern times, meaning that to a large extent factors affecting voting behaviour have not remained 'largely unchanged in modern times'.



# UK government

## Topic 5 The UK Constitution

### Constitutional reform since 1997

#### Practice questions

- 1 The UK Constitution is uncoded, is flexible and has many sources.
- 2 The 'twin pillars' are parliamentary sovereignty and the rule of law.
- 3 Examples of each could include:
  - a Statute laws: the Equality Act 2010
  - b Conventions: the Salisbury Convention
  - c Common law: *R v Abdul-Hussain* established that duress could be used as a justification for committing a crime
  - d Authoritative works: Walter Bagehot's *The English Constitution*
  - e Treaties: the Lisbon Treaty
- 4
  - a House of Lords reforms: to modernise
  - b Electoral reform: to improve democracy
  - c Devolution: to decentralise power from London
  - d Introduction of the Human Rights Act: to promote democracy through better rights protections
  - e Creation of the Supreme Court: to modernise the UK with a clear separation of powers
- 5
  - a House of Lords reforms: the removal of all but 92 hereditary peers; the ending of the traditional Conservative majority in the Lords
  - b Electoral reform: alternative systems would be introduced to devolved regions; an enquiry into possible reform of general elections was conducted
  - c Devolution: devolved bodies with varying degrees of power would be set up in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland; regional devolution was attempted in North East England, but failed
  - d Introduction of the Human Rights Act: brought the European Convention of Human Rights into UK law, making it justiciable; required all legislation to comply with the Human Rights Act

- e Creation of the Supreme Court: removed the Law Lords from the House of Commons, creating a clear separation of powers and raising the profile of the Court

6

- a Fixed-term Parliaments Act 2011: to ensure neither party in the coalition could trigger a general election by quitting the coalition
- b Further devolution to Wales: to standardise devolutionary powers across the UK

7

- a Fixed-term Parliaments Act 2011: it removed the prime minister's right to call an election at any time they chose; parliament had to approve any attempt to call an election before the full 5-year term
- b Further devolution to Wales: Wales would gain primary legislative powers in key areas and could progress to greater financial powers

8

- a Further devolution to Scotland: to give greater autonomy to Scotland following the vote to remain in the UK
- b Withdrawal from the EU: to show whether the British public wanted to remain in or leave the EU

9

- a Further devolution to Scotland: the Scottish Parliament gained considerable powers over raising its own finances; it gained greater legal autonomy over more legislative areas.
- b Withdrawal from the EU: the UK would leave the EU and negotiate its own trade deals; the repatriation of laws held by the EU would be determined by Westminster.

10

Reform	Explanation of one way it was successful	Explanation of one way it was not successful
House of Lords reform	The removal of nearly all hereditary peers ensured no single party controlled the Lords, allowing it to become a stronger discussion chamber with less control by any single party.	The compromise to allow 92 hereditary peers to remain was meant to be temporary, but as of 2022, they remain and so an outdated legacy remains in place.
Electoral reform	The introduction of alternative electoral systems for devolved bodies has operated successfully, allowing members of the public to get used to them and feel better represented.	Despite a manifesto promise, no attempt was made to introduce electoral reform for Westminster elections, meaning this area has remained unreformed.

Reform	Explanation of one way it was successful	Explanation of one way it was not successful
Devolution	Devolution has given those regions in which it was introduced greater control over their own area and local concerns, allowing for a variety of approaches and prioritisations that best suit local needs.	The lack of English devolution and variations in local experiences have contributed to a fracture in society and led to unequal representation, which contributes to an undermining of democracy nationally.
Human Rights Act	It has helped develop a rights consciousness among the public and allowed the Supreme Court to better defend and uphold human rights within the UK, making it more accessible to more people.	Parliament remains sovereign, so governments have been able to ignore rulings made under the Human Rights Act, such as the treatment of terror suspects and prisoner voting rights.
Creation of the Supreme Court	The creation of a separate and more independent Supreme Court has encouraged the Court to act more independently and made it more able to challenge the government through judicial review rulings, allowing for better accountability of those in power.	The Supreme Court still lacks the power of enforcement and can be ignored or overruled by parliament, meaning its powers and effectiveness are limited.

11

Reform	Explanation of one way it was successful	Explanation of one way it was not successful
Fixed-term Parliaments Act 2011	The coalition government lasted the full 5 years and prime ministers have had to ask parliament's permission to call an early election.	Whenever it has been asked, parliament has always granted permission for an early election, meaning little has changed in reality.
Further devolution to Wales	It led to the development of the Silk Commission and an increase in powers and financial responsibility for the Welsh Assembly.	It was not clear from the referendum that a majority wanted greater financial autonomy, which was imposed by act rather than through a referendum.

12

Reform	Explanation of one way it was successful	Explanation of one way it was not successful
Further devolution to Scotland	Greater powers have allowed the Scottish Parliament to take more distinct and decisive steps without having to rely on Westminster.	Although devolution-max has been introduced, the issue of Scottish independence has not gone away, with the SNP issuing continued calls for another referendum.
Withdrawal from the EU	The UK has now left the EU and powers have been repatriated to allow the UK to follow an independent path.	The nature of withdrawal seriously divided the main parties and caused political chaos across the UK.

**13** A personal opinion that requires you to consider how you will judge success, which could be by the achieving of its aims.

**14** Perhaps by considering the impact they each had, or how far they achieved their relative aims.

**15** Again, a personal choice, but it may concern how far they have achieved their goals or the impact they have had.

**16** There should be 1 mark given for a clear answer, with the other 3 marks for the quality of explanation, justifying why this is better than the others.

**17** A clear judgement of the extent of success should be given for 1 mark, with the following 3 marks given depending on the quality of the reasoning for this decision.

**18** A clear judgement of the extent of success should be given for 1 mark, with the following 3 marks given depending on the quality of the reasoning for this decision.

**19** A clear judgement of the extent of success should be given for 1 mark, with the following 3 marks given depending on the quality of the reasoning for this decision.

**20** A clear personal choice should be made for 1 mark, then up to 3 marks given for the quality of the reasoning, with comparative elements forming part of the reasoning, i.e. 'this had a bigger impact than X because'.

**21** See worked example.

## Devolution

**22** Devolution is passing of some power from a sovereign body to another body; is unequal; occurs within a unitary system.

**23** Devolution originally aimed to: decentralise power in the UK; give parts of the UK greater democracy and self-rule; reduce the calls for independence.

- 24** Andy Burnham in Greater Manchester and Sadiq Khan in London are two examples of elected mayors.
- 25** Two possible examples are North of Tyne and Sheffield City region.
- 26** The Greater London Assembly can veto the mayor's budget and mayoral appointments, and scrutinise the mayor's actions.
- 27** 'English votes for English laws' (EVEL) is a legislative stage that allows English-only MPs (or English and Welsh MPs only) to vote on an issue that Scotland and/or other devolved bodies have control over.
- 28** Three powers of the Scottish Parliament are, for example, variation of income tax, responsibility for health measures, including Covid-19 restrictions, and education policies.
- 29** Three powers of the Welsh Senedd include, for example, the power to vary some key taxes and determine healthcare restrictions, and control over education decisions.
- 30** Three powers of the Northern Ireland Assembly include, for example, education administration, policing and transport.
- 31** During the Covid-19 pandemic, different areas had different criteria for restrictions; different areas have different levels of university tuition fees; different regions have different prescription charges.
- 32**

Region	Explanation of one benefit	Explanation of one negative impact
Scotland	The Scottish Parliament was able to prioritise free prescriptions for citizens.	Devolution has led to demands for independence, which a majority of Scottish people do not currently appear to support.
Wales	The Welsh executive was able to invest in urban renewal in key industrial areas.	Wales is seen as having a 'lesser' form of devolution when compared with Scotland.
Northern Ireland	The process of devolution has helped bring peace and stability to a region that had been hurt by the Troubles.	Devolution there depends on party co-operation, which has not always worked, leading to restrictions of public spending in some areas.
Greater Manchester	It gave the mayor of Greater Manchester a platform to demand additional funding during the Covid-19 pandemic.	It made it easier for the national government to impose direct rules on key regions like Greater Manchester during the pandemic.
England	English-only issues can be prioritised in Westminster.	England as a whole lacks representation and a separate voice in the way devolved regions have.

**33**

- Devolution has benefited the UK as a whole by allowing local regions to invest in services as they see fit and, as a result, develop regeneration and economic growth in those areas.
- Devolution could also be said to have benefited party representation by allowing more parties and interests to gain a voice in political bodies that have allowed for a greater variety of views to be presented, giving more parties a chance at accessing power.

**34**

- The asymmetrical nature of devolution means different people have different amounts of devolution and are subject to different laws and situations, which has helped develop a fracture in British society.
- Far from quelling demands for independence in Scotland, devolution has exacerbated such calls and given the SNP a platform, which has raised the possibility of the break-up of the Union.

**35**

- It would give the English a voice on the same level as the other devolved nations, which would create a more uniform and standard political system across the UK.
- It would also resolve the West Lothian Question by ensuring Westminster remained as a sort of federal body, dealing only with issues that affected the whole UK, while English-only issues would be dealt with by a separate body.

**36**

- There is little demand from English people for a separate parliament, and so it is not something that is needed or wanted at this stage, which may make it a waste of time and money.
- Parts of England are already under devolved administration thanks to metro-regions, which are filling the gap in an evolutionary way that people can accept and understand, making this much more effective than imposing an English Parliament on the people.

**37** A personal opinion for judgement is needed, which may include the impact it has had, whether the aims have been met, and so on.

**38** A possible answer may be the risk it poses to the Union.

**39** A clear judgement of extent should be given, based on the criteria set out in Question 37, for 1 mark. The other 3 marks are awarded for the quality of your explanation of the extent.

**40** A clear judgement of extent should be given, based on the criteria set out in Question 37, for 1 mark. The other 3 marks are awarded for the quality of your explanation of the extent.

**41** A clear judgement of extent should be given, based on the criteria set out in Question 37, for 1 mark. The other 3 marks are awarded for the quality of your explanation of the extent.

**42** A clear judgement of extent should be given, based on the criteria set out in Question 37, for 1 mark. The other 3 marks are awarded for the quality of your explanation of the extent.

**43** A clear judgement should be given for 1 mark. The other 3 marks are awarded for the quality of your explanation.

44 See worked example.

## Further constitutional reforms

45

Area for reform	Current problem that needs reform	A reform that might solve the problem
Parliament	Unelected House of Lords	Create an elected second chamber
Devolution	West Lothian Question	An English Parliament
Elections	Unrepresentative nature of FPTP	Introduce a more proportional electoral system
Rights	Power of parliament to overturn Supreme Court rulings	Codify the Constitution

46 Three features of a codified constitution could include: it is in a single, authoritative document; it is difficult to amend; it is justiciable.

47

- a Parliamentary reform: the current composition of the Lords means that the Lords, who vote on laws that affect everyone, cannot be held to account by the public, which is not appropriate in a modern democracy.
- b Devolution: the current situation means that Scottish MPs can vote on issues in Westminster that do not affect their constituents, meaning that those affected have no way of holding them to account.
- c Elections: FPTP means governments are routinely elected with much less than 50% of the vote, meaning a majority of the voting population has not supported the winning party, which can then impose its manifesto on everyone.
- d Rights protection: the Supreme Court is limited in its ability to protect rights because parliament has sovereignty and can overrule decisions made by the Court, meaning rights are not well protected and could be subject to government abuse.

48

- a Parliamentary reform: by making the Lords elected, perhaps using a different voting system and constituency basis, the Lords would become a democratic chamber. This means that the public would be able to hold peers to account for their actions and decisions, which would greatly improve democracy.
- b Devolution: by introducing an English Parliament, all areas of local responsibility could be devolved to a separate body outside of Westminster, meaning that matters that affect England

only would be dealt with by such an English Parliament, which would also have to answer to all the people affected by its decisions.

- c Elections: if a more proportional electoral system, such as STV, were introduced, it is likely that coalition governments would be formed, which would be more likely to reflect the support of more than half the population, meaning greater consent had been given to the government formed after an election.
- d Rights protection: codifying the UK Constitution could make it sovereign, rather than parliament, which would mean that the Supreme Court could not be overruled by parliament or any other political body, except by a formal amendment, which would greatly improve the power of the Court to protect rights in the UK.

49

- a Parliamentary reform: there is no sense that the British public at large is frustrated by the Lords and is demanding the introduction of an elected Lords. Consequently, there is no sense that a reform is actually needed.
- b Devolution: the current system of metro mayors and regions is providing a form of English devolution that is beginning to address the imbalance in the system, so there is no need to introduce a sweeping new reform — rather, the current situation can be allowed to develop.
- c Elections: there is no great support for changing the voting system and it would appear that, after the chaos of the minority parliament of 2017–19, people are actually quite happy with a system that results in clear and decisive single-party majorities, even if that party doesn't have a majority of popular support.
- d Rights protection: although parliament does have the power to overrule the Supreme Court, there is little evidence of this happening and few examples. Therefore, codifying the Constitution would be acting on a theoretical problem rather than a practical one, suggesting it is not really necessary at this stage.

50

- a Parliamentary reform: an elected House of Lords would have the same rights and powers as the House of Commons and this might create legislative gridlock, where both chambers have the power to block each other, and mean that nothing gets decided, which would be worse than the current system.
- b Devolution: as England is the dominant part of the UK with an overwhelming majority of the population and economic resources, an English Parliament would create a federal system whereby English voters would have the dominant voice in the national body that remained, which would then marginalise Scottish, Welsh and Northern Irish voters, the exact problem devolution was designed to solve.
- c Elections: a more proportional system might allow more extremist parties to gain seats in the House of Commons and perhaps give them greater legitimacy, which might undermine respect for the system and damage UK politics as a whole.
- d Rights protection: codifying the Constitution would give judges a huge amount of power to interpret the meaning of the Constitution, and as the judiciary is unelected and unaccountable, there is a risk of a sort of judicial dictatorship that imposes rights the public do not support, as well as politicising the judiciary.



**51**

- Codifying the Constitution would ensure that reforms have to be undertaken by a supermajority and cannot simply occur through a simple majority in parliament, which would offer better protection to the people.
- A codified constitution would give more power to the judiciary who would be able to interpret and make rulings on it that parliament and the government would have to respect, thereby improving rights protections in the UK.
- A codified constitution could also be used to engage the people in the political process by offering a clear and easy-to-understand guide to the Constitution and the rights and responsibilities the people have.

**52**

- Codifying the Constitution would make it far more rigid and less able to adapt to changing circumstances in the way an uncoded constitution does.
- A codified constitution would give too much power to unelected judges who cannot be held accountable for their actions, which may undermine democracy.
- In the current divided climate, the process of writing a constitution might further divide the nation rather than bringing it together, as there are too many emotive issues that would need to be considered.

**53** The key is to come up with a clear method by which need can be judged, e.g. it must happen to prevent the collapse of the political system.

**54** A personal choice. You will gain 1 mark for the area chosen and then up to 3 marks for the quality of justification you provide.

**55** A clear judgement based on the idea of need and showing extent must be given and then justified.

**56** A clear answer should be given, agreeing or disagreeing with the statement, for 1 mark, with a further 3 marks being awarded based on the quality of the justification you've given.

## **Exam-style questions**

- 1** AO2 agreement: the use of the referendum shows that the Constitution is too flexible; it would remove short-term political actions and control via parliament; it would give the Supreme Court more power to check parliament.

AO2 disagreement: in giving the Supreme Court more power, it would be empowering an unelected branch of government; it would remove the old traditional elements, which are popular in the UK; the UK has come together (comparatively) since the 2019 election, showing there is no need for a codified constitution.

AO3 judgement: while there are issues with the current constitutional arrangements and a codified constitution might help resolve some of those issues, the issues have already been resolved through regular constitutional arrangements, suggesting that there is no urgent need for a codified constitution.

- 2 AO2 agreement: there have been calls for it since devolution was introduced; the Covid-19 pandemic may have accelerated calls for England to have a greater voice; metro-regions may evolve into a form of English Parliament.

AO2 disagreement: England is too large for a devolved parliament; regional devolution was rejected by voters in 2004, suggesting they do not want it; metro-regions are not obviously popular but seem to be filling the gap created by devolution.

AO3 judgement: while an English Parliament may seem like a neat solution, it is far from inevitable, partly because of the practical consideration of the size of England within the UK and also the fact that people do not seem keen on it, meaning that regional devolution is more likely and there is no inevitability about there being an English Parliament.

- 3 AO2 agreement: reforms like the removal of most hereditary peers from the Lords are a step towards modernisation. The passage of the Human Rights Act 1998 and creation of a more independent Supreme Court did improve rights protection, and the introduction of devolution and new electoral systems did help to decentralise power and improve democracy across the UK.

AO2 disagreement: the Lords remains unelected and unaccountable and the fact that 92 hereditary peers remain in place shows that modernisation and democracy only saw limited success. The weaknesses of the Human Rights Act and the Supreme Court compared to parliamentary sovereignty mean that rights are not very well protected. Devolution has caused massive imbalances across the UK and led to demands for Scottish independence, all of which suggests New Labour reforms were only of limited success.

AO3 judgement: while the New Labour constitutional reforms did see improvements in some ways, they failed to achieve all that had been promised and actually could be considered to have caused more problems than they solved, suggesting that they were, at best, only of limited success.

- 4 AO2 agreement: in order to solve the problem of unrepresentative parliaments with limited accountability, a change of the electoral system is required; to resolve the problems of the undemocratic House of Lords, a new, fully elected chamber would need to be introduced to provide for effective checks and balances; a codified constitution would need to be introduced to secure effective rights protections and resolve the issues surrounding asymmetrical devolution.

AO2 disagreement: problems with the unrepresentative nature of the Commons do not require major constitutional reform, as a change to a system like SV would keep many of the positive elements while ensuring majoritarian representation in constituencies; removal of the remaining hereditary peers would be a step towards a more reformed House of Lords and limits on new appointments and other minor reforms would improve the situation there without major reform; the position of the Human Rights Act could be entrenched, as in New Zealand, which would strengthen rights protection without the need for a fully codified constitution.

AO3 judgement: in order to improve democracy in the UK, some reforms are necessary, but they do not need to be major, and positive steps could be achieved by relatively minor reforms that improve the workings of the current system.

# Topic 6 Parliament

## The features and functions of parliament

### Practice questions

- 1 MPs sit in the House of Commons.
- 2 The three types of peer are life peers, hereditary peers and lords spiritual.
- 3

	The Commons	The Lords
<b>One way the chamber carries out its legislating function</b>	Voting on legislation	Debating legislation
<b>One example of the chamber carrying out its legislating function</b>	Passing the EU (Withdrawal) Act 2018	Debating the EU (Withdrawal) Act 2018
<b>One way the chamber carries out its scrutiny function</b>	Select committee investigations	Questioning government ministers in the Lords
<b>One example of the chamber carrying out its scrutiny function</b>	The Home Affairs select committee investigating the Windrush scandal in 2019	Asking ministers about the withdrawal from Afghanistan in 2021
<b>One way the chamber carries out its representative function</b>	Raising questions on behalf of constituents during ministerial questions	Making statements on behalf of groups
<b>One example of the chamber carrying out its representative function</b>	Tulip Siddiq repeatedly raising the case of Nazanin Zaghari-Ratcliffe, detained in Iran since 2016	Baroness Tanni Grey-Thompson raising issues relating to disability sports

- 4 Three factors that may affect the ability of the House of Commons to carry out its functions include the size of the government's majority, the popular appeal of the prime minister and the time allocated for debate and parliamentary business.
- 5 Three factors that may impact the House of Lords' ability to carry out its functions include what was in a winning party's mandate, how determined the government is to force through legislation and public opinion.
- 6 One factor that makes the Commons more powerful is the fact that it has democratic legitimacy and can therefore vote on all issues presented to it, including the annual budget which it can reject, whereas the House of Lords has to vote for it.

- 7** The House of Commons can be less successful at carrying out its legislative function when the government has a large and unified majority, which makes it less successful at defying government measures, as seen during the Covid-19 pandemic when the government was able to force through measures even though some of its own MPs objected. However, when the government does not have a clear unified majority, parliament is able to become much more effective in carrying out its legislative role in terms of questioning and challenging government proposals, as was seen with the Brexit debates in 2019.
- 8** The House of Commons can be successful at carrying out its scrutiny function through select committees because they have extensive powers to call witnesses, including ministers, and to ask questions and give statements, as occurred with Amber Rudd in 2019 when she was challenged over the Windrush scandal.
- 9** The House of Commons can be less successful at scrutiny if ministers decline to attend a hearing and provide reasons for not giving evidence, as occurred with Priti Patel and the Home Affairs select committee, which meant MPs lacked the means to scrutinise her actions.
- 10** One factor that can make the House of Commons more effective at representation is the holding of parliamentary debates, organised by the Backbench Business Committee, which allows MPs to put forward constituents' views on key issues, such as whether or not to allow then US president Donald Trump to enter the UK.
- 11** Time is a limiting factor: there are few backbench business days and so time is precious, meaning that such debates may not be heard.
- 12** The House of Lords can be more successful at carrying out its legislative role when the House of Commons is divided, as occurred in 2016 over welfare cuts. The Commons had passed the bill but the Lords sent it back, and enough Conservative MPs objected to the bill that it was dropped, showing that the Lords is more effective at legislation when the Commons is divided. The Lords is more successful at representing interests because it is not accountable and can therefore speak on controversial issues and raise all sides without fear of public rejection. The fact that it is also appointed means there is a greater range of expertise in the Lords, which can make for more effective scrutiny of the government.
- 13**
  - a** Legislative: when the Commons has a clear majority and a mandate, the Lords can be marginalised or even circumvented.
  - b** Scrutiny: most ministers do not sit in the Lords, making it difficult for the Lords to question and scrutinise them, and this gets more difficult when there are controversial issues that the ministers wish to avoid.
  - c** Representation: the majority of Lords come from similar political backgrounds, meaning that the ability of peers from different areas to represent points of view is limited.
- 14** A clear decision about how the idea will be judged is required.
- 15** A clear judgement for each function is required for 1 mark each, followed by 2 marks per function for the quality of explanation.
- 16** A clear judgement for each function is needed for 1 mark each, followed by 2 marks per function for the quality of explanation.

**17** An overall and clear judgement must be given for 1 mark, followed by developed justifications for the remaining 2 marks.

**18** See worked example.

## Comparative powers of the two chambers

- 19** Three exclusive powers of the Commons: examination and approval of financial bills; complete veto over primary legislation; to pass a vote of no confidence to dismiss the government.
- 20** Three shared powers of the Commons and Lords: debate and vote on legislation; calling government ministers to account; proposing amendments to legislation.
- 21** Three main powers of the Lords: examining secondary legislation; making recommendations for further consideration; delaying primary legislation for up to a year.
- 22** The House of Commons is too powerful because it can effectively pass any legislation it wants without checks from the House of Lords.
- 23** The House of Lords can exert power by sending bills back with proposed amendments in an attempt to raise public awareness and pressure the Commons into making a change.
- 24** In a bicameral system, the second chamber should be able to act as an effective check on the other chamber, which would require more power for the Lords.
- 25** The Lords is unaccountable, meaning that it does not have to answer to the public for its actions, unlike the House of Commons, which means it should not have the power to stop or impose laws over the Commons.
- 26** A clear judgement dealing with the concept of 'too weak' is required; perhaps by stating that weakness is, in the political sense, the inability to carry out functions.
- 27** A clear judgement of extent is required for 1 mark, and then there are up to 3 marks for the quality of the explanation given.
- 28** See worked example.

## How parliament interacts with the executive

- 29** Frontbenchers are members of the government or official opposition; backbenchers are all other MPs with no executive role.
- 30** Debate legislation; vote on legislation; scrutinise the work of the executive.
- 31** The right of MPs to say anything in the chamber without legal repercussions outside.
- 32** Departmental; the Liaison Committee; the Public Accounts Committee.
- 33** Normally around 15–20 members; membership made up in proportion to party representation in the Commons; elected chair.

- 34** To scrutinise the work of the government; to review the impact of legislation; to carry out investigations.
- 35** Made of the largest party not in government; will form a shadow government or government in waiting; will receive funding to help carry out official duties.
- 36** To provide an alternative government; to question and scrutinise the government; to develop alternative policy proposals.
- 37** A session held every week on Wednesday at midday in the Commons when parliament is sitting, during which MPs may ask the prime minister questions.
- 38** Usually held once a month; all ministers for a department are expected to attend; usually about 90 minutes in length.
- 39** For the department to report to the Commons; for MPs to scrutinise the work of the department; for MPs to represent the concerns of their constituents to government ministers.
- 40** Parliamentary privilege allows MPs to debate fully and without fear of repercussions, meaning they can express opinions and ensure all views and ideas are considered.
- 41** Backbenchers are more effective at carrying out their roles when there is a minority or weak government that cannot impose itself on them or restrict them; they are more effective when there is weak party discipline so that they are free from the influence of whips; they are more effective when there are major issues that require the whole of the Commons to be involved.
- 42** A government with a large majority can ignore and marginalise the work of backbench MPs; a popular government may feel able to ignore or miss summons to select committee hearings; if the governing party has strong party control, it can dominate the decisions and actions of a majority of backbench MPs.
- 43** Select committees can call ministers to face questioning and answer for their actions and issues relating to their department; they can request information and documents from the department and use this as part of an investigation; they can publicise their findings to put pressure on a government department or minister.
- 44** Ministers can refuse or delay attending such hearings; some information can be classed as confidential under national security; they have no power of enforcement for their recommendations.
- 45** It allows shadow ministers to develop expertise in a specific area, making the scrutiny more effective; it provides a clear spokesperson to offer an alternative view on government decisions; by providing a government in waiting, it offers the public a degree of certainty and choice at elections.
- 46** It holds no executive power; it lacks the support of the civil service that the government has; it often simply opposes rather than offering constructive alternatives.
- 47** Ministers are obliged to answer questions; issues raised can put pressure on the minister and force them into action or resignation; it is the time when they face most publicly judgement for their performance.
- 48** Ministers often evade answering questions; they are often sparsely attended; they only allow for questioning with no guarantee of any resulting action or follow-up.

- 49** A clear answer of extent should be given for 1 mark, with up to 3 marks for the quality of justification.
- 50** This is an opinion, which should show extent, for 1 mark, followed by an explanation for the answer for a further 3 marks.
- 51** A comparative judgement must be made and then a developed explanation given for it.
- 52** A clear judgement should be made for 1 mark, followed by a developed explanation for an additional 3 marks.
- 53** This should be a clearly stated opinion with a developed explanation of your opinion for the remaining marks.

## Exam-style questions

- 1** AO2 agreement: it is outdated and cannot be justified in a modern democracy; it is unelected and unaccountable; it is unrepresentative; it is too large.

AO2 disagreement: it gives the opportunity to ensure greater diversity than the Commons; Lords are able to ask the Commons to reconsider legislation and therefore they act as a check; their relative lack of power allows for the Commons to govern effectively.

AO3 judgement: in many ways, it may be worth abolishing the House of Lords, but that does not mean it should be abolished; what it offers and the positives it brings outweigh the negatives, and may be more beneficial than the alternative, so it should not be abolished.

- 2** AO2 agreement: select committees have no powers to enforce their recommendations; their composition is in line with party representation, meaning they are dominated by government members; they have no power to compel the government to respond to their recommendations.

AO2 disagreement: the chairs are elected and this has seen a rise in quality; they can decide what line to take on an issue, independently of the government; they can force the government to act by publishing their findings and causing public pressure; they have the power to compel anyone to come before them.

AO3 judgement: although there is a case for saying select committees should have more power, they already fulfil their functions within the UK's political framework, so they are powerful enough to be effective in the way they are currently used.

- 3** AO2 agreement: the reform to remove hereditary peers was largely accomplished in 1999 and the reform to reduce the size of the Lords in 2014 and 2015 did reduce the number of peers by about 100; the creation of the Backbench Business Committee has given more control over the parliamentary agenda and autonomy to backbench MPs; the election of select committee chairs has made them more independent of the government and seen an improvement in their quality and effectiveness at scrutinising the government.

AO2 disagreement: 92 hereditary peers remain, so the initial reform has still not been completed for the Lords while the size of the Lords is once again increasing; backbench MPs only control a limited number of days and still lack the power to achieve anything unless they secure government support; as a whole, the governing party still dominates select committees and they lack enforcement powers.

AO3 judgement: parliamentary reform has been successful in that it has improved the power and independence of parliament, but the reforms cannot be truly thought of as a success because the balance in power is still very much with the government, which can dominate parliament as long as it has a clear majority.

- 4 AO2 agreement: the House of Lords has a lot of influence when it comes to amending legislation and sending it to the House of Commons, especially with a small majority in the Commons; it can exercise a lot of influence through press coverage of its debates and speeches if it raises public awareness and concerns. The Lords can also influence the Commons' agenda by delaying legislation for up to a year.

AO2 disagreement: amendments from the Lords can be and often are ignored by the Commons and the Lords has no follow-up power to insist on its views; debates and speeches in the Lords rarely gain press coverage and public support; the power to delay is limited and can be circumvented by the use of the Parliament Acts and requiring bills to be considered with all due haste.

AO3 judgement: while the House of Lords does have some methods of influencing the House of Commons in legislation, these powers are severely limited and quite weak, meaning it is only to a limited extent that the Lords is able to influence the Commons in matters of legislation.



# Topic 7 The prime minister and the executive

## The structure, role and powers of the executive

### Practice questions

- 1 The executive powers of the monarch.
- 2 They must become an MP, become leader of the biggest party and then be appointed by the monarch.
- 3 To select government ministers; to chair Cabinet meetings; to be a national spokesperson.
- 4 Margaret Thatcher
- 5 Tony Blair
- 6

	Pre-1997	Post-1997
Chosen prime minister	Margaret Thatcher	Tony Blair
One successful policy	Right-to-buy	Devolution
One unsuccessful policy	Poll tax	Detention of terrorists for up to 90 days
One event that made them appear strong	Falklands War	Intervention in Sierra Leone
One event that made them appear weak	Geoffrey Howe's resignation speech	Cash for peerages
One example of them exerting control over their Cabinet	Forcing through poll tax	Forcing through the Iraq War
One example of them exerting control over parliament	Privatisation of key industries	Passing an increase to student tuition fees
One example of them failing to exert control over their Cabinet	Loss of support from her Cabinet forced her to resign	Pressure from Chancellor Gordon Brown forced him from office
One example of them failing to exert control over parliament	A second reading of the shops bill was defeated in 1986	A motion was passed in 2006 to protest the UK–US extradition treaty

- 7 Made up of MPs and peers; heads of government departments; meets in Downing Street.
- 8 In charge of an area within a department; answers to a Cabinet secretary/department chief; must comply with ministerial responsibility.
- 9 Tasked with developing policies; staffed by civil servants; decisions made by ministers.
- 10 Their reputation; their ability; their support within the party.
- 11 The level of control the prime minister has over Cabinet members; events that can either enhance or destabilise relationships; divisions within the party.
- 12 The prime minister can exert authority by using their power of patronage and threatening a minister to resign or offering a promotion or other reward to ensure their support.
- 13 The prime minister can use the whips to persuade MPs in parliament to toe the party line as set out in a manifesto or by offering incentives.
- 14 A prime minister with a larger majority will be more powerful than one with little or no majority as they can exert greater control over parliament; a prime minister with a unified party will be able to rely on more support and control over parliament than one with a divided party; a prime minister with a positive media image can use their public support to ensure the support of their Cabinet and MPs much more easily than one with a negative media image.
- 15 If a prime minister is seen as an electoral liability, their party may force them from office; a major event, such as a financial crisis, may make a prime minister look weak and cost the electorate's faith in them as a viable candidate; the presence of a major rival with a greater reputation within the party or in the public eye may weaken a prime minister who looks weak in comparison.
- 16 A prime minister may want to have an ally or friend that they can depend on to support them and offer advice; they may want a big name in the Cabinet to offer experience and add weight to the Cabinet's reputation; they may want to keep different factions of the party present in the Cabinet to maintain party unity.
- 17 A clear judgement on extent should be given.
- 18 A clear opinion should be given — probably no. You should then explain your reasoning with key details.
- 19 A clear method of judging the concept should be given.
- 20 See worked example.

## Ministerial responsibility

- 21 Collective ministerial responsibility means all members of the government must accept government policy or resign, as Boris Johnson did over Brexit in 2019.
- 22 Individual ministerial responsibility means a minister must take personal responsibility for personal failings or failings within their department, as Amber Rudd did over the Windrush scandal.

- 23** Collective responsibility was not enforced during the coalition over the AV referendum; or by Theresa May over the third runway at Heathrow and when she allowed members of her government to publicly criticise her Brexit approach without resignation.
- 24** Priti Patel was expected to resign over bullying accusations as home secretary, but did not; Gavin Williamson was expected to resign over the 2020 awarding of exam grades, but did not; Chris Grayling was expected to resign over the mistaken payment to ferry companies which cost billions, but did not.
- 25** Robin Cook resigned in 2003 as he could not support the invasion of Iraq; David Davis and Boris Johnson both resigned over opposition to Theresa May's Brexit plan.
- 26** Amber Rudd resigned over the Windrush scandal; Matt Hancock resigned after evidence of an affair with an aide emerged during the Covid-19 pandemic and social distancing regulations; Michael Fallon resigned over personal misconduct.
- 27** The concept of individual ministerial responsibility is important because it means an elected representative must take responsibility for the actions and decisions in a department as well as ensuring they meet the standards of the ministerial code of conduct.
- 28** Collective ministerial responsibility is important because it ensures that all members of the government agree and support policy publicly, giving the public a sense of unified government, but they also have the freedom to disagree and express issues in private.

**29**

- Cabinet ministers have been forced to resign over personal misconduct, especially over allegations of sexual misconduct, as was the case with Matt Hancock, or financial misconduct.
- Ministers have also been forced to resign because they refused to do as instructed by the prime minister, as occurred with then chancellor Sajid Javid when he refused to sack his special advisors at the request of Boris Johnson.
- They may also resign due to mistakes made in their department, such as Amber Rudd when it transpired she had misled the Home Affairs select committee over the Windrush scandal.

**30**

- A prime minister may not force a minister to resign because they are in a weak position and need to keep 'big beasts' within the Cabinet, as Theresa May did when battling through Brexit.
- A prime minister may not force a minister to resign because doing so would turn attention to them and put them at risk, as may have been the case with Jeremy Hunt and the investigation into phone hacking.
- A prime minister may not force a minister to resign because they want to keep them in the Cabinet as a supporter and close ally, as appears to be the case with Boris Johnson and Priti Patel.

**31**

- A prime minister may not enforce collective ministerial responsibility because they are in a coalition and need to allow both parties to publicly express opinions that may not align with the government's position.

- They may not enforce it because they do not want to lose key members from the Cabinet, as was the case with the Brexit referendum.
- A prime minister may not enforce collective responsibility if they feel it will damage a Cabinet member's standing within their local party, as occurred when Theresa May allowed London-based Cabinet ministers to stay with the announcement of a planned third runway at Heathrow.

**32**

- By not enforcing collective ministerial responsibility, a prime minister is made to look weak and as if they do not have the authority to exercise control over their Cabinet.
- It may also damage the government as it can make it appear weak and divided and cause the public to lose faith in it.

**33**

- By not enforcing individual ministerial responsibility, a prime minister may be able to keep important and capable ministers in key roles despite minor transgressions.
- This may also ensure greater loyalty towards the prime minister from those around them.

**34** This is an opinion; a clear answer should be given for 1 mark and then up to 3 marks will be awarded for the quality of your explanation.

**35** This is your own personal idea, but you should consider your answer to be along the lines of whether something is still relevant or even necessary in modern times.

**36** A clear judgement should be given for 1 mark and then the justification will be awarded up to 3 marks depending on the quality it offers.

**37** See worked example.

## Exam-style questions

**1** AO2 agreement: the way they present themselves to the media; their reliance on special advisors away from senior party figures; their role at international conferences.

AO2 disagreement: the Queen remains head of state; people still vote for a party and an MP rather than directly electing the prime minister; the Cabinet still plays a significant role in UK politics.

AO3 judgement: officially, a prime minister cannot be described as a president by name, but the reality of modern politics means that, effectively, they are presidents in all but name, as far as being at the centre of politics is concerned.

**2** AO2 agreement: the current system of accountability does not seem to apply so is in need of reform; under the current system, civil servants are reluctant to speak truth to power; the current system causes the taxpayer to lose out.

AO2 disagreement: ministers still adhere to the code of conduct and must account for the actions of their departments; civil servants are not elected and therefore cannot be held accountable by the public in the same way ministers can be; ministers are still forced to depart for misleading parliament.

AO3 judgement: while there are issues, most of the faults rest with the way in which a prime minister enforces such responsibility. Therefore, there is a case for reform, but it is not urgently needed, especially as it is important to maintain the independence of the civil service and make politicians accountable for their actions.

- 3 AO2 agreement: Cabinet members cannot set the agenda of Cabinet meetings; Cabinet members rely on the prime minister for their positions; the Cabinet has a lower media profile and popular support than the prime minister.

AO2 disagreement: the Cabinet can outvote a prime minister in meetings; Cabinet members can destabilise a prime minister by resigning or threatening to resign; some Cabinet ministers are too popular or powerful to get rid of.

AO3 judgement: it all comes down to circumstances; a strong prime minister with popular support and a clear majority is likely to be too powerful for the Cabinet to limit, but when a prime minister is weakened and lacks popular support, the Cabinet can become highly influential and limit the powers of the prime minister. Therefore, it is not accurate to say that the Cabinet is unable to limit the powers of the prime minister, but its ability does depend on the circumstances.

- 4 AO2 agreement: issues over Brexit showed collective responsibility not being enforced; individual ministers have not resigned over allegations of policy failures (e.g. Gavin Williamson) and ministers have not resigned following failings under the ministerial code of conduct.

AO2 disagreement: since Brexit, collective ministerial responsibility has been reinstated and enforced; Amber Rudd did resign for misleading parliament over the Windrush scandal; Matt Hancock did resign after allegations of an extra-marital affair with an aide during Covid-19 social distancing regulations.

AO3 judgement: the concepts do still matter, though in varying degrees depending on the position of the prime minister and the issue at hand. A stronger prime minister will enforce collective responsibility to ensure a unified government, while individual responsibility will still matter in the press and to the public, even if a prime minister ignores it.

# Topic 8 Relations between the branches

## The Supreme Court

### Practice questions

- 1 The Constitutional Reform Act 2005 led to the creation of the Supreme Court in the UK.
- 2 Twelve justices sit on the Supreme Court.
- 3 Three justices (as of 2021) could include Lord Reed, Lord Hodge, Lady Arden.
- 4 Three key functions of the Supreme Court could include to decide if government legislation complies with the Human Rights Act; to determine if public officials have acted *ultra vires*; to resolve disputes between political bodies.
- 5 'Judicial neutrality' means judges must not allow any personal opinion or prejudice to influence them.
- 6 Judicial neutrality is maintained by legal training; the requirement for judges to formally write their reasoning for a verdict; the system of appeal and peer review.
- 7 'Judicial independence' means judges must be free from any political influence or pressure.
- 8 Three ways in which judicial independence is maintained could include: an independent appointments commission; an independent pay review; security of tenure.
- 9 'Judicial review' refers to the process of judges reviewing the law and actions of officials.
- 10 '*Ultra vires*' means acting beyond the powers officially bestowed on an office.
- 11
  - a Parliament: in deciding a case on the power to cut the legal aid budget in 2016
  - b The executive: in ruling that the executive did not have the power to trigger Article 50 in 2017
  - c A devolved institution: in ruling that the Scottish and Welsh executives did not have a right to be consulted over Brexit
- 12 Judicial review can be an effective check on the government when it is used to rule that a member of the government has acted *ultra vires* and can therefore order their actions to be null and void.
- 13 When it comes to ensuring legislation complies with the Human Rights Act 1998, the Supreme Court can be ineffective because it has no power to force parliament to repeal or amend primary legislation.
- 14 The Human Rights Act 1998 has brought the European Convention on Human Rights into UK law, which means UK-based courts can make rulings on the basis of clearly defined rights, which before it had been powerless to follow.

- 15** The Human Rights Act 1998 is itself only a piece of statute law, meaning any parliament can amend or repeal it. The Act is not entrenched and can therefore be removed by a hostile parliament.
- 16** Judicial independence was threatened when the media accused High Court judges of being traitors over Brexit, which resulted in pressure being placed on the Supreme Court.
- 17** The continued appointment of Oxbridge/private school-educated justices means the Supreme Court maintains a narrow social outlook, which may impact on the neutrality of its rulings.
- 18** A clear way to reach judgement on its effectiveness must be given.
- 19** There is 1 mark for giving a clear judgement followed by up to 3 marks for explaining how your judgement relates to effectiveness.
- 20** A clear opinion should be given followed by a developed explanation and justification.
- 21** A clear judgement should be given followed by a comparative analysis that clearly compares the Supreme Court to the other branches of government, including why the Court is or is not an effective check on them.
- 22** See worked example.

## The relationship between the executive and parliament

- 23** Three ways in which parliament can act as a check on the executive include questioning ministers, select committee investigations and voting against legislation.
- 24** Three examples of parliament acting as a check on the executive include the Home Affairs committee investigation into the Windrush scandal, MPs challenging Matt Hancock over Covid-19 measures, and Theresa May's Brexit proposals being defeated.
- 25** Three ways in which the executive can control parliament include using its majority and party whips to force through legislation, ensuring the composition of legislative committees is favourable and refusing to act on select committee proposals.
- 26** Three examples of the executive controlling parliament include Boris Johnson's forcing through a tax increase for social care; his changing the system to allow Sir Bernard Jenkins to become chair of the Liaison Committee, even though he is not the chair of an existing select committee; and in 2018, the government's ignoring 22 of 25 select committee proposals relating to the expansion of Heathrow.
- 27** Three factors that affect the balance of power between the executive and parliament include the size of the government's majority, the unity of the governing party and public support of the government.
- 28**
  - a** Voting on legislation: by voting for or against legislation, parliament can force the executive to act in a particular way or force a change in policy by refusing to support proposed legislation or funding.

- b** Select committees: by examining evidence and questioning ministers, select committees force members of the executive to account for their actions and take responsibility for any issues or abuses that emerge.
- c** Ministerial questions: in asking questions that require a response, ministerial questions force ministers to answer for their actions and give accurate reports to the Commons, shining a public light on their actions.

**29**

- a** Prime minister as party leader: as leader of the largest party, often with a majority, the prime minister can use their leadership to call for party loyalty and pressurise reluctant MPs to support their position.
- b** Whips: can be used to put pressure on MPs and persuade them to vote according to a party line, as well as ensuring the executive is aware of issues and can head off any difficult situations.
- c** Patronage: allows the executive to persuade MPs to support a position by offering a possible office, honour or even the promise of support for a favoured proposal or fundraising event.

**30**

- a** Party unity: if a single party has a majority, no matter how small, then if it remains unified it can achieve whatever it wants in the House of Commons. However, if the party is divided, no matter how big the majority, it will become more difficult to pass things through the Commons.
  - b** Size of majority: with a small or no majority, a handful of MPs can threaten to rebel and force concessions from a government that will need to appease them. With a large majority, a government can afford for MPs to rebel in small numbers and not affect the result, which also makes MPs less likely to revolt because they know there is no point.
  - c** Electoral mandate: provided the government has public support, it can use it to persuade MPs, particularly of the same party, to vote for the measures that won the election while also relying on the Salisbury Convention to get these proposals through the Lords. If an electoral mandate has not been achieved, MPs and peers feel more able to oppose the government.
  - d** Public opinion: it can help the executive if the public clearly supports their position, because members of parliament will be reluctant to oppose a motion that has widespread support as doing so might cost them in a future election, whereas public opposition strengthens parliament's resolve to act against the government.
  - e** Strength of the opposition: a stronger, more organised opposition is able to co-ordinate opposition to the government and provide a clear alternative; a divided opposition that is not seen as an electoral alternative is unlikely to pressurise government.
- 31** Under May the government had no majority and so it needed to gain widespread support for its Brexit proposals, which kept being rejected. However, with a majority of 80 following the 2019 election, Johnson was able to impose Brexit legislation on parliament.
- 32** The power of patronage to persuade MPs into being loyal has remained consistent across recent prime ministers.



- 33** A personal opinion should be given, ideally stating what is meant by recent years, followed by a developed explanation and justification for your belief.
- 34** A clear judgement should be given for 1 mark and then a developed reason for that judgement should be shown to support your view for the remaining 3 marks.

## The European Union

- 35** The four freedoms of the EU: the free movement of people, capital, goods and services.
- 36** Two aims of the EU: promoting peace and creating a monetary union.
- 37** Three institutions of the EU that make policy decisions for member states: the European Commission, the Council of Ministers, the European Parliament.
- 38** Three areas where the EU holds exclusive competency: competition policy, external trade and customs.
- 39** Two EU policies that impacted the UK: the Common Fisheries Policy (CFP) and the 'Social Chapter'.
- 40** Some people felt that the EU was a foreign body that was making policies in the interests of a European elite that did not represent the concerns of the British people, and therefore it undermined British values and security.
- 41** One way in which the UK benefited from membership of the EU was access to the free-trade market along with the rest of the EU for financial services, which helped the City of London to develop into a financial powerhouse.
- 42** The CFP imposed regulations and quotas on fishing that undermined the strength of the UK's fishing industry and caused a rapid decline in its ability to operate effectively.
- 43** The 'Social Chapter' helped to bring greater protections for workers' rights, including sick pay, legally required breaks and maternity leave, which helped improve the protections and welfare standard of British workers.
- 44** A clear definition of what is meant by 'mostly' should be given.
- 45** A clear judgement should be given for 1 mark and then there are up to 3 marks for developed reasoning.

## The location of sovereignty in the UK political system

- 46** Legal sovereignty: the ultimate legal authority to make decisions in a state.
- 47** Political sovereignty: what is realistically acceptable to the public.

- 48** Three ways in which the executive can be said to hold political sovereignty include: when a party wins the popular mandate; when it enjoys the support of the House of Commons; when the monarch has granted it authority to rule.
- 49** Three ways in which parliament can be said to hold political sovereignty include: MPs are directly elected by the people; parliament has the sovereign right to make decisions; the executive has to gain support from parliament for laws and finances.
- 50** Three ways in which the Supreme Court can be said to hold political sovereignty include: it is politically independent of the other branches; it makes rulings on disputes between the other branches; it rules on constitutional laws and the Human Rights Act 1998.
- 51** Three ways in which devolved bodies can be said to hold political sovereignty include: they have a mandate from the local population; they have power over key areas of legislation and administration; for Scotland and Wales, they exist as a result of a referendum.
- 52** Three ways in which the people can be said to hold political sovereignty include: the people elect the government and MPs; the people can remove a government or parliament; the will of the people expressed in a referendum will not be overruled by parliament or the government.
- 53** Parliament remains legally sovereign because the only way to remove this would be by introducing a codified constitution, which would be binding on all future parliaments. Without such a measure, which would have to be approved by parliament, parliament will remain legally sovereign.
- 54** The executive can exert political authority by claiming a popular mandate for a winning manifesto and as the leader who won an election, which essentially means popular sovereignty has been passed to them.
- 55** The executive has no direct mandate and must rely on parliament to pass desired legislation and finance bills, meaning it only ever has limited sovereignty and must rely on parliamentary support.
- 56** Parliament can claim political sovereignty and use this to take over the agenda and enact laws requiring the executive to act, especially as it is the only body to be directly elected by the people at a national level.
- 57** Parliament requires the executive to enact legislation and policies it enacts. If the executive refuses to do this, parliament has few enforcement powers to compel the executive.
- 58** The Supreme Court can claim to be politically neutral and independent and therefore approach issues based only on the law and not through personal or political preferences, enforcing only those issues as the law is written.
- 59** The Supreme Court is unelected and unaccountable and therefore lacks the democratic or political authority to make decisions and impose them on the elected branches.
- 60** Within their own allocated powers, devolved bodies can make sweeping reforms and change the systems and measures to create a clear difference from other parts of the UK, which should be in the best interests of their immediate area.
- 61** Devolved bodies hold all power from parliament, so parliament retains legal sovereignty and devolved bodies are restricted in what they can and cannot do, such as calling a referendum.
- 62** The people are able to assert political authority through a referendum by casting their votes and deciding on a policy outcome.

- 63** Between elections the people have limited opportunities to have their voices heard.
- 64** A clear, single judgement should be given for 1 mark, with up to 3 more marks awarded for the level of support.
- 65**
- a** Body 1: a clear comparative explanation should be given for one body to gain 3 marks.
  - b** Body 2: another clear comparative explanation should be given for another body to gain the final 3 marks.
- 66** See worked example.

### Exam-style questions

- 1** AO2 agreement: legally, parliament remains sovereign; the Supreme Court has confirmed parliament's authority in triggering Article 50 above that of the executive; only parliament can allow for the calling of a referendum; any loss of sovereignty to the EU has now been returned to parliament.

AO2 disagreement: the fact that the Supreme Court made a ruling on the prorogation and the triggering of Article 50 shows that it has some degree of sovereignty; the fact that the executive could push through referendum proposals shows that the executive has a degree of sovereignty; the fact that MPs voted according with the will of the people expressed in a referendum shows that the people have some degree of sovereignty.

AO3 judgement: parliament is clearly the legally sovereign body in the UK, but there are other types of sovereignty and other bodies and political institutions hold some degree of sovereignty, making the view that sovereignty rests exclusively with parliament highly inaccurate.

- 2** AO2 agreement: the European Court of Human Rights provides scrutiny that acts as a check on the government; the European courts have played a crucial role in exposing a number of scandals that may have been suppressed and have therefore acted as an effective check on the government; they have helped the UK to extend ideas of freedom and justice to 820 million people across the world.

AO2 disagreement: 'The European Court of Human Rights exceeds its legitimate powers, usurps the role of politicians and "undermines the democratic process"'; 'The Strasbourg Court ... has become the international flag-bearer for judge-made fundamental law extending well beyond the text which it is charged with applying'; 'The right to a private life, a right originally "devised as a protection against the surveillance state by totalitarian governments", now extends "to cover the legal status of illegitimate children, immigration and deportation, extradition, aspects of criminal sentencing, abortion, homosexuality, assisted suicide, child abduction, the law of landlord and tenant, and a great deal else besides".'

AO3 judgement: while there may be criticism and some issues with the work of the European courts, overall their impact has been far more beneficial than negative because they have provided an effective check on an otherwise overly powerful UK government and this, above all else, means they have had a positive impact on UK politics.

- 3** AO2 agreement: parliament has gained some degree of power over the calling of elections due to the Fixed-term Parliaments Act 2011; the creation of the Backbench Business Committee has given parliament more control over the parliamentary agenda, driving it away from the executive;

reforms to the Lords have allowed it to be more assertive in standing up to the executive, particularly ones with large Commons majorities.

AO2 disagreement: prime ministers have still been able to call elections at the time they have chosen; backbenchers only control a small number of days and can only achieve meaningful action with executive support; the Lords remains weak, cannot defy the government and can be easily overruled.

AO3 judgement: although there have been some minor shifts in the balance of power from the executive to parliament, the executive still remains in fundamental control, especially when it has a clear majority in the Commons, so in reality, little has changed.

- 4 AO2 agreement: immigration policy within the EU became a source of contention in the UK; restrictions on fisheries compared to generous agricultural subsidies fostered a sense of resentment; the creation of the euro and monetary integration were seen as a challenge to the pound and positioned the UK outside the core power-making body.

AO2 disagreement: the decision to leave had more to do with party political decisions than EU policies; the financial crisis had a bigger impact on people's lives and led to them seeking change through leaving the EU; a growing sense of nationalism made some hostile to membership of a European political group.

AO3 judgement: EU policies certainly played a role and did exacerbate tensions within the UK, but they alone do not explain why the UK voted to leave. A combination of financial, social and cultural issues led to many seeing the EU as the source of other problems and, therefore, EU policies themselves only played a contributing factor in explaining why the UK voted to leave the EU in 2016.