



A-Level **Politics**

7152/1 The Government and Politics of the UK

Report on the examination

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Question 1

Students had been well prepared for the Section A questions, with nearly all responses clearly structured in three paragraphs with supporting evidence. The majority of students were able to consider the impact of the European Union on parliamentary sovereignty, on the use of referendums and on political parties in the UK. The most successful responses analysed specific events throughout the UK's membership of the EU (such as the Factortame case, the 1975 referendum, schisms within Labour and Conservatives as well as the formation of Eurosceptic parties).

There was notable confusion about the status of the European Convention of Human Rights in relation to EU membership. Less successful responses commonly asserted that the ECHR was an EU law and went on to make links to the Human Rights Act.

Question 2

This was the best answered of the Section A questions. Students were able to explore a range of powers of the Prime Minister and give supporting evidence (the tenures of Blair and Thatcher were particularly well covered). Students mentioned powers such as calling elections and patronage powers in the Lords. Students had strong knowledge on the appointment and dismissal of cabinet ministers.

Students were aware that the political context, such as party unity, impacted the extent to which these powers could be used. Less successful responses tended to be imprecise about the nature of powers (such as 'proroguing parliament') or referred to powers of party leaders more generally (such as writing election manifestos). Students frequently asserted that the Prime Minister was Commander in Chief and that Blair had not sought Commons' approval for the invasion of Iraq in 2003.

Question 3

This question required students to consider judicial impartiality, and the best answers focused on the anonymity of judges, training, appointment process and the need for legal justifications when making rulings with relevant examples. There was some good analysis on how these have been challenged by the Daily Mail 'Enemies of the People' headline in 2016 and the relative high-profile of Lady Hale during the Miller cases. Many lower-scoring answers drifted into independence rather than impartiality, describing the awarding of pay or the establishment of the Supreme Court.

Question 4

Students had been well prepared in the exam technique required for this question and the most successful responses considered the authority of Curtice as an academic (some identifying his role at the BBC requiring impartiality) and the campaigning stance of the Electoral Reform Society.

Most students used the extract as the basis for arguments on the merits of First Past the Post, the most successful responses were able to extend this to its impact on the party system.

Most answers considered the arguments of the Electoral Reform Society and gave evidence of

how FPTP favours the Conservative and Labour parties (such as disproportionate results for UKIP in 2015 and Reform in 2024).

The strongest responses were able to develop on Curtice's arguments that FPTP has allowed parties with regionally concentrated votes (such as the SNP in 2015, the Liberal Democrats in 2024) to challenge the two-party system in the Commons. There were some excellent responses which were able to compare the extracts in the light of the question, students considering whether the UK has a multi-party system, two and a half party system or two-party system.

Less well-prepared students were unable to expand upon the extracts, such responses were descriptive, with some merely copying parts of the extract without much further development. The least successful answers drifted into an examination of proportional electoral systems, rather than the party system in the question.

Question 5

This was the most popular of the Section C questions.

The best answers balanced positive and negative democratic impacts of constitutional reform since 1997; such as the removal of most hereditary peers from the Lords but that reform of the chamber remains incomplete. Students drew on a wide range of reforms in their responses (devolution, the Lords, Human Rights Act, Brexit, Freedom of Information Act, the Recall of MPs Act, the Fixed Term Parliaments Act). There was awareness of how some reforms may have contributed to a democratic deficit in the UK (such as the West Lothian Question) or have been unsuccessful (with reference to the short-lived FTPA).

Lower-level responses were narrowly focused on a limited number of reforms and lacked balanced analysis of whether these had enhanced democracy in the UK.

Question 6

This question required students to consider the relative importance of the different roles of MPs. A majority of responses included some examination of the mandate/delegate/trustee models of representation, and some drew on a range of examples to develop their analysis. The most successful responses considered the democratic value of each role and were aware of how the political context (size of majority, party unity, votes of conscience) changes their relative importance.

Less successful responses tended to be descriptive in nature and lacked supporting evidence, focusing on why MPs should represent their constituents. There was notable confusion regarding the convention of collective responsibility, with lots of students asserting that this applied to all MPs.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

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