



A-Level **Politics**

7152/3 Political ideas

Report on the examination

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General

Students in general coped well with the demands of the paper, managing their time appropriately. A minority of students will either wrote disproportionate amount on Section A or Either Section B or C, this almost always led to students performing less successfully on sections they did not write as much for (and presumably spent less time on). Each section carries a very similar number of marks, and it is strongly recommended that time is managed accordingly.

Section A

In general answers were well structured, with 3 clear paragraphs. A common approach was to use the ideas of a key thinker as the focus for each paragraph. Whilst there is no recommended or preferred way of answering a question, and this approach can be very effective, a significant proportion of students chose thinkers that held very similar beliefs. Frequently this meant that answers became repetitive in nature, and in the extreme meant that points were repeated, and therefore could not be fully credited as a separate point.

Question 1

Most students were able to identify that revolution was method to achieve the aims of socialism. Students that did well were often able to make a clear distinction between Luxemburg and Marx, though less successful responses tended to repeat the similarities between them, that a revolution was required to completely eradicate capitalism as an economic system. Students who scored high marks often also developed the ideas of Webb (evolutionary socialism), Crossland (Social Democracy) and Giddens (the Third Way) well. Answers that scored less well tended repetitively focus on the need for equality rather than the method of achieving it.

Question 2

This question was generally done less well than question 1. Answers that scored in the highest level had a clear understanding of capitalism as an economic system. Answers at middle or lower levels of response, either did not demonstrate a clear grasp of what capitalism was or tended to repeat that liberals liked capitalism without nuance. For those students chose to write about Mill and Locke, there was a tendency to repeat arguments about laissez-faire economics. A common feature of the less successful responses was that students suggested that liberals were anti-capitalist.

Question 3

This question was least successfully answered in general, in section A. The responses that scored well often referred to a range of thinkers' ideas on private property such as Nozick and Rand (and the idea that private property is a freedom to be preserved) Burke (as source social order and continuity) Oakeshott (that a pragmatic empirical approach should be by the state towards private property that could enhance social cohesion) and Hobbes (that private property is inherently insecure in the state of nature). Students at middle and lower levels either repeated the ideas of Nozick and Rand. Explanations of Hobbes ideas on property were

often inaccurate at middle and lower levels or tended to simply assert that all conservatives favoured private property without nuance.

Section B

Question 4

Most students identified that Nozick believed that society was a collection of individuals and that Burke considered it to be comprised of “little platoons.” Responses at higher level discussed provenance in a meaningful way, recognising one as a Guardian obituary (more reflective, less theoretical), the other from a conservative website. Responses that scored well also used the extracts as a springboard, referring to key ideas of Nozick and Burke beyond the text as well as other thinkers, such as Rand’s atomism. This question has 3 command words; Analyse Evaluate and Compare, the final one of which is often a feature of the highest scoring answers. Answers at middle levels often compare in an implicit fashion, giving 2 parallel accounts of the extracts. Less successful answers had misconceptions, such as mistaking Nozick for a liberal, neglecting to situate him within the New Right, or simply paraphrased the extracts without providing significant analysis or evaluation of their own.

Section C

The familiar pattern of a very high proportion of students answering the Feminism Nationalism and Anarchism essays, with far fewer Ecologism and Multiculturalism responses, continued this year. The best answers in general focused on the key debate in the question, rather than giving a narrative account of the ideas of the thinkers (although this was still credited at middle or lower levels, depending on the quality of the discussion). Evaluations at higher levels often made a clear judgement on the proposition (it did not matter whether it agreed with the statement or not), and gave clear reasons for that judgement, answers at middle levels tended to summarise arguments made.

Question 5

Students who scored highly analysed whether self-determination was a shared goal or not, then explored different justifications across cultural, civic, and expansionist nationalisms. Student who scored at lower levels often misunderstood the question, focusing on whether each thinker had some principles, rather than whether the thinkers had principles in common.

Question 6

Most students were able to identify that liberal feminist tended to focus on legal equality in society whereas radical feminists were concerned with ending patriarchy in all aspects of life, including in the home. Students who argued that whilst legal equality is always necessary, it is not always sufficient to achieve the goals of feminism. Answers at lower and middle levels, tended to give narrative accounts of the ideas of key thinkers (to varying degrees of accuracy) without evaluating the extent to which gender distinctions should be removed.

Question 7

This question was done by a very small number of students. The quality of answers was better this year with some responses reaching higher levels. Those that did score well typically addressed a range of thinkers focusing on the tensions between individual liberty and tolerance, citing thinkers such as Berlin, and recognition of groups, citing thinkers such as Kymlicka.

Question 8

Most students were able to identify some thinkers thought violence was essential to the removal of the state, citing thinkers such as Kropotkin. Students who cited other libertarian thinkers were credited, such as Rothbard, and received higher levels if this was in addition to discussion of key thinkers. However, as was the case last year, a small but significant number of students who only relied on the ideas of thinkers that were outside the specification were limited to level 2 as per the rubric in the mark scheme. Students who scored marks at lower and middle levels often misrepresented the attitude Stirner towards violence or wanted to try and argue that individualists' thinkers all had one view, and the collectivists another. Students that scored the highest level evaluated the extent to which violence was a requirement of anarchism.

Question 9

This question was rarely successfully answered; however, those students who scored highly avoided a narrative account of the environmental of key thinkers and directly interrogated the potential contradiction between growth and ecological protection. Strong answers often cited Bookchin on capitalism, analysing the extent to which the pursuit of increased economic output will be detrimental to the environment. The least successful responses tended to give an account of ecological issues.

Mark Ranges and Award of Grades

Grade boundaries and cumulative percentage grades are available on the [Results Statistics](#) page of the AQA Website.