



GCE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS AS/Advanced

SUMMER 2013

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AS Level

General Comments:

It is pleasing to report that more candidates than in previous series were able to cope with the demands of the papers, and complete all their answers in the time given. In particular, there was a noticeable improvement in the quality of answers to the part (b) questions in this series, with many candidates developing at least two aspects to their answer with exemplification. Candidates' answers to the part (a) have been improving steadily and continued to do so in this series. The part (c) remains challenging to some candidates who struggle to answer the specific question set, rather than simply present rote-learned class notes. However, there were examples of excellent part (c) answers that demonstrated a wide-ranging understanding of the topic with specific and relevant knowledge.

The main issues across both the AS papers in general in this series were:

- A lack of correct numbering of candidates' answers.
- A lack of paragraphing.
- Weak literacy, for example the persistent use of 'gotten', and 'would of'.
- Disorganised responses that provide a sentence on one thing, then a sentence on something else with no factors really being developed, or that repeat points already made.
- Generalised responses, lacking depth and detail, and without relevant and up-to-date examples.
- Exemplification by showing what something is *not*, a counterfactual exemplification. On the whole, these earn few marks.
- Responses to parts (b) and (c) that deal with examples as though they are points in answer to the question.
- A lack of understanding that there is a requirement to write in a specific text type for each part – 'information text' for part (a), 'explanation text' for part (b), and 'discussion text' for part (c).
- A higher incidence of practically illegible scripts. Candidates are reminded that examiners can only award marks for text they can read and be certain about, they cannot guess what the candidate may be trying to say. Teachers and centres must deal with this matter to ensure fair marking.

Teachers are advised to ensure that they and the candidates are familiar with the assessment objectives, their weightings, and the generic markscheme for the AS examination. This will help candidates to ensure that everything they write earns marks under the pressure of the examination. AS level candidates need plenty of practice at producing well-structured and exemplified answers within the time constraints of the examination. Candidates are reminded that success at the top levels in the AS level examination is unlikely if they rely on class notes and a reasonable memory. Candidates that perform well have clearly revised, done some independent work, and do not waste time in the examination struggling to recall the material.

Part (a) responses continue to show a pleasing improvement. Most candidates score well on both their part (a) answers. The target Assessment Objective is AO1, so candidates need to demonstrate their specific knowledge of the term in a few sentences, and many are now doing this.

Part (b) answers showed a significant improvement this series. The skill being assessed is 'explanation', and the mark scheme rewards range, depth, structure and focus of explanations. Teachers are advised to consult the Teachers' Guide for advice on how candidates might achieve these things succinctly under the time pressures of the examination. Candidates are reminded that the extract will help them, but that they need to demonstrate understanding beyond the extract to access the top marks. Candidates need to demonstrate the skill of 'explanation' in this part. They need to firstly identify, and then develop several 'ways in which....' or 'reasons why' that answer the question set. As assessment objectives AO1 and AO2 are equally weighted in this question, lists of undeveloped reasons will not score well for AO1, whereas lists of examples will not score well for AO2. There are still responses that provide a discussion to this part – 2 sides on this issue in the question. This is not required for part (b). If the question asks for the disadvantages of something, candidates are simply wasting valuable time by providing the advantages as well. They will not score for this. Candidates do not need to provide an introduction or a conclusion for the part (b) answer.

Part (c). The part (c) response should be in the form of an essay; a clearly two-sided answer (a discussion) with an introduction and a conclusion, and where the paragraphs flow from one to another logically. A suitable approach would be to build a case 'for' the proposition in the question, and then a case 'against' it, and then reach a conclusion in the last paragraph, although this is not the only approach available to candidates. Some candidates begin to write without having adequately thought about exactly what the question is asking them. They are required to demonstrate depth and range of knowledge and arguments to access the top levels of the mark scheme. It follows, therefore, that a narrow range of arguments and generalised development of and support for points made will probably score level two marks at best. Candidates need to show their understanding of the topic as a whole, by selecting and deploying what they know to answer the specific question set. It is likely that some arguments will need to be developed in detail whilst other aspects will need to be 'broad-brushed', but candidates should be wary of leaving out whole chunks of the topic altogether as this is likely to restrict the mark ranges that they can be awarded. Candidates are advised to actually reach a judgement on the question set in their conclusion, and not to sit on the fence and simply repeat, in summary, all that they have already said on both sides.

Whilst more candidates are managing to provide at least one part (c) response that meets the criteria for the top levels of the mark scheme, the main issues with the part (c) responses in this series, not already referred to above are:

- Too many responses lapse easily into narrative description of processes and institutions without applying this (often accurate and detailed) knowledge to the question set.
- Quite a number of part (c) answers are essentially two long paragraphs – one 'for' and one 'against'.
- It is not always clear to the examiner what point is being made that answers the question set, nor whether that candidate is providing an argument 'for' or 'against' the question. Candidates are advised to consider a 'PEEL' approach to paragraph writing which would make this clear to the reader, instead of leaving it to be inferred. Candidates are taking a risk if they simply leave their arguments as implied or hinted at. Examiners cannot, and should not, try to 'read minds'.
- Some candidates do not score well because they make sweeping generalisations that are unsustainable, or because they make assertions which they fail to back up with any evidence.

- Weaker candidates do not show an awareness of the practical application of the theory and description they may have learned from class notes to the political situation today.

Teachers are reminded about the availability of item-level data for all papers on the WJEC secure website.

It is recommended that teachers refer to the question paper and read the published mark scheme, in conjunction with the comments in the Examiner's Report.

GOVERNEMENT AND POLITICS
General Certificate of Education
Summer 2013
Advanced Subsidiary/Advanced
GP1

Principal Examiner: Alison Denton

Unit Statistics

The following statistics include all candidates entered for the unit, whether or not they 'cashed in' for an award. The attention of centres is drawn to the fact that the statistics listed should be viewed strictly within the context of this unit and that differences will undoubtedly occur between one year and the next and also between subjects in the same year.

Unit	Entry	Max Mark	Mean Mark
1401/01	134	80	50.9

Grade Ranges

A	58
B	52
C	46
D	40
E	34

N.B. The marks given above are raw marks and not uniform marks.

1401 (GP1)

On GP1 question 1 was the most popular, with questions 2 and 4 being almost equally popular after that. Fewer candidates attempted question 3. The mean mark for questions 1, 2 and 4 were very similar whereas question 3 had a lower mean mark and proved less accessible to candidates. The other three questions were all equally accessible for candidates.

- Q.1 (a) Most candidates developed and exemplified this term well, although definitions overlapped with swing seats and floating voters.
- (b) The extract was used well here. Some candidates went beyond the extract to explain the influence of the media in the televised debates in 2010. Few candidates explored the influence of new media.
- (c) Most candidates were able to argue the case 'for' quite well, citing links between region, class and ethnicity and partisanship. However, the counter-argument was argued less well with few candidates using the whole topic content to argue that other factors are more important. Genuine two-sided debate that focused only on partisan identification was credited.
- Q.2 (a) This question was well done on the whole, with only a few candidates focusing on 'coalition' which was not the term required in the question.
- (b) The majority of candidates scored well on this question, using the prompts in the extract and moving beyond it with good exemplification of the 2010 UK coalition and the 2007 coalition in Wales. Some candidates wasted their time writing about coalition strengths.
- (c) A significant number of candidates confined their answer to just FPTP, or simply trawled through descriptions of a number of UK electoral systems. On the whole the quality of answers was, therefore, disappointing.
- Q.3 (a) The term was well-defined and developed, with candidates understanding specific Green Party policy or naming Caroline Lucas.
- (b) Some candidates struggled to explain reasons beyond the extract here. UKIP was used as an example of a minor party with a strong policy platform. Some candidates cited the Liberal Democrats as a minor party.
- (c) This question caused problems for candidates. Few could sustain a debate on the internal structures and processes of parties in the UK, although party structure and candidate selection are mentioned in the specification. Some candidates wrote about electoral systems and these responses did not score.
- Q.4 (a) This caused the most problems of the part (a)'s for candidates, with many equating 'special interests' with cause groups who use direct action.
- (b) The extract prompts were well used and many candidates were able to go beyond the extract to explore use of direct action or insider status as well. Some provided a two-sided response which is not required and wastes time in the examination.

- (c) Most responses argued how the use of the media helps pressure groups quite well, citing examples such as the Gurkha campaign and Fathers 4 Justice. However, counter-arguments based on 'other factors' were quite thin, and overall candidates made little use of examples, even though examples are always plentiful for this topic. Few candidates addressed the 'more significant' aspect to the question.

GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS
General Certificate of Education
Summer 2013
Advanced Subsidiary/Advanced
GP2

Principal Examiner: Alison Denton

Unit Statistics

The following statistics include all candidates entered for the unit, whether or not they 'cashed in' for an award. The attention of centres is drawn to the fact that the statistics listed should be viewed strictly within the context of this unit and that differences will undoubtedly occur between one year and the next and also between subjects in the same year.

Unit	Entry	Max Mark	Mean Mark
1402/01	189	80	47.6

Grade Ranges

A	57
B	51
C	46
D	41
E	36

N.B. The marks given above are raw marks and not uniform marks.

1402 (GP2)

Question 1 was the most popular, with questions 2 and 3 being almost equally popular after that. A very small number of candidates attempted question 4. The mean mark for questions 2 and 3 was practically identical, with the mean for question 1 only slightly lower. As in most previous series, candidates found question 1 slightly less accessible than questions 2 and 3, although there was little real difference.

- Q.1 (a) This was very accessible to candidates and definitions, development and examples were good in many cases.
- (b) Most candidates used the prompts in the extract well about the ease of amendment through statute. Many were able to go beyond the extract and comment on the unentrenched nature of the constitution and the flexibility of conventions.
- (c) There were some reasonable responses for and against the constitutional role of judges. Fewer candidates were able to weigh up the significance of judicial decisions in the development of the constitution against other sources. Some candidates were unclear about what was meant by sources of the constitution. Surprisingly, little mention was made of the Supreme Court. Some candidates still write about the role of judges in the criminal law, which is not what is being tested here.
- Q.2 (a) This term posed no problems for candidates, the majority of whom described the role and named the current Presiding Officer with accuracy.
- (b) Most candidates used the prompts in the extract well, and are aware that there are committees that scrutinise the Welsh government. However, many used the same names as in the UK parliament and few candidates could name any of the committees in Wales. Some candidates knew about the committee that questions the First Minister. There was some usage of legislation committees as a method of scrutiny (even though they are really to do with the function of legislation).
- (c) This question was generally answered well, with many candidates being aware of the main functions of the UK Parliament and able to analyse the effectiveness of a range of methods used to carry those functions out. Some candidates wrote at length about Wales which was not required in answer to this question.
- Q.3 (a) There was some reference to collective responsibility here, but many candidates defined the cabinet only, as opposed to cabinet *system*. Most candidates scored reasonably well, nevertheless.
- (b) Most candidates were able to explain a reasonable range of the powers of the Prime Minister from the extract and beyond it. There was little appreciation that taking the country to war is part of the Prime Minister's prerogative powers.
- (c) Responses to this question were disappointing because many candidates either turned it into a question on Prime Ministerial power, or asserted that the role of the Cabinet is to make decisions and run the country. Few candidates really tackled the nature of the modern core executive, with its diverse personnel and institutions and the shifting and symbiotic power relationships within it.

Q.4 The responses to this question were so few that trends are meaningless. On the whole, responses to parts (a) and (b) were reasonably good, but responses to part (c) were poor. Most part (c) answers became lists of the advantages and disadvantages of the UK's membership of the EU, which missed the point of the questions set. In a few cases the answers deteriorated into political diatribe with little relevance to the question set.

A2 Level

General Comments:

The quality of responses across the papers in this series showed signs of improvement compared to previous series. In particular, many candidates were able to provide two complete answers in the time limit, and many part (b) responses were focused and well-structured with introductions and conclusions that addressed the question set. There appeared to be fewer candidates relying on model answers than in previous series. Most candidates are providing a response to part (a) that is succinct and gets straight to the matter in hand without the need for an introduction or a conclusion, and this is helping them in timing their responses to the part (b) questions as well. As with AS level, candidates need to understand that there is an expectation that they will write an 'explanation text' in answer to part (a), and a 'discussion text' in answer to part (b). There is evidence that more and more candidates are grasping this.

However, there remain some general issues at A2 that need attention:

- Many candidates know generally about the topic. At A2 level, this is not good enough. There is an expectation at this level that candidates will have revised, and that they will have done sufficient independent work to have a good working understanding of the topics, in some depth.
- Weaker candidates provide a lot of correct description of processes and institutions that is unapplied to the question set, and scores minimal marks.
- At this level, every sentence and paragraph needs to count. Teachers and candidates would benefit from analysing answers to see where the response is scoring, and why.
- Some candidates still struggle with the selection and explanation of relevant examples. It is not particularly convincing to claim that the US electoral college can be defended because it usually produces a clear winner, and yet cite the 2000 result as the example.
- There were many more practically illegible scripts than in previous series. Candidates are reminded that examiners can only award marks for text they can read and be certain about, they cannot guess what the candidate may be trying to say. Teachers and centres must address this issue with their students prior to examinations.

Teachers are advised to ensure that they and the candidates are familiar with the assessment objectives, their weightings, and the generic mark scheme for the A2 examination, especially as there is a higher weighting towards skills at A2 compared to the AS examination. Candidates are advised to ensure that they are well-informed about recent developments, and that they have a depth of knowledge they can call on easily under pressure in the examination. There is too little evidence that candidates are doing this.

Part (a) responses showed a general improvement this series. However, some candidates score lower marks than they would like because:

- They describe and list. They need to choose 2 or 3 'ways in which...' or 'reasons why...' and develop each one ensuring that they apply their knowledge and understanding to the specific question set, and that they provide an explanation.
- Their answers lack depth and detail. Generalised knowledge with no actual, relevant detail or examples will score AO1 level 1/ 3 marks (total 6 marks possible).

- They provide introductions and conclusions – this just wastes time as these are not required for part (a).
- They deviate from the question set. If the question asks for ‘disadvantages...’, there will be no marks for exploring the ‘advantages...’.

Part (b) is a discussion or debate around a proposition or an issue. Some candidates score lower marks than they would like because:

- They list but do not analyse. Some candidates provide a paragraph describing one factor, then a paragraph describing another, and so on, with no attempt to link them to each other or the question and no attempt to prioritise or evaluate them. At this level examiners need to see candidates discussing the merits of the factor and reaching judgements, not just describing it.
- There is a lack of balance in their response, 5 points ‘against’ but only 1 ‘for’, for example. It is unlikely that these answers can meet the criteria for the top level of the mark scheme, which demands ‘range’. The requirement for part (b) is a two-sided debate.
- There is a lack of specific evidence in support of arguments. It is unlikely that these answers can meet the criteria for the top level of the mark scheme, which demands ‘depth’. This is particularly, but not exclusively, noticeable on GP3b and GP4b which are more theoretical papers, but where candidates do need to exemplify the theories.
- They struggle to cover the correct topic content for the question. This is a particular problem on GP3a, topics 1 and 3. The only overlapping factors are candidates and issues. Examiners cannot give credit when the wrong topic material is used, and especially where candidates hope to use it twice.
- They struggle to discuss, analyse or argue. Many responses lapse too easily into narrative description of processes and factors, and do not focus enough on engaging with the question set. Description alone scores few marks. Description scores well when used as support for a clear argument.
- Where candidates do engage, and can argue relevant factors, they often fail to support them. They provide assertions but little else.
- They do not paragraph effectively and it is not at all clear to the examiner what point is being made, or whether they are arguing ‘for’ or ‘against’ the question set.

The examination places high demands on candidates’ literacy skills. It is very unlikely that they will be able to perform consistently well without plenty of guidance and practice beforehand. Teachers are advised to explore ways in which information gathering can be done by pupils outside lessons, freeing lesson time for the acquisition and practice of skills. Teachers are reminded of the value of marked scripts from previous series as a tool to help candidates evaluate the features of good responses. Item-level data for all papers is available on the WJEC secure website. The Teacher Guide provides useful advice on preparing for the examinations and the skills required.

It is recommended that teachers refer to the question paper and read the published mark scheme, in conjunction with the comments in the Examiner’s Report.

GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS
General Certificate of Education
Summer 2013
Advanced Subsidiary/Advanced
GP3a/b

Principal Examiner: **Alison Denton**

Unit Statistics

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Unit	Entry	Max Mark	Mean Mark
1403/01	101	80	50.4
1403/02	40	80	49.6

Grade Ranges

A	57
B	51
C	45
D	39
E	34

N.B. The marks given above are raw marks and not uniform marks.

1403 GP3a/b

1403/01 GP3a: questions 1 and 3 were a popular combination, as usual. The mean marks, and facility factors, for questions 1,2 and 3 were very similar. Question 4 had a slightly lower mean mark and was slightly less accessible to candidates, but there was only a small number that attempted it.

1403/02 GP3b: questions 1 and 3 were more popular than 2 and 4. Question 4 had only a small number of responses. Question 3 proved more challenging for candidates than the other questions.

1403/01 The Politics of the USA

- Q.1 (a) Many candidates responded well to this question and explained a range of sensible reasons.
- (b) Many candidates were able to provide a sound counter-argument, exploring such factors as money and issues. However, detailed analysis of the impact individual candidates have made in specific elections was thin. There was little mention of the 'ticket', and candidates were mainly discussed in relation to their appearance in the media. Few candidates explored the personal qualities and experience candidates might bring.
- Q.2 (a) Most candidates were able to provide valid reasons which included the two-party system and dominance, as well as lack of central control in US parties. Some answers became descriptions of factions.
- (b) Many answers gave a reasonable survey of the party decline and renewal theses. However, exemplification was a bit thin, and the impact of the Tea Party was not much discussed, surprisingly.
- Q.3 (a) This question was well done, with candidates explaining a variety of valid reasons including registration problems and disillusionment. Exemplification was not always consistent. There was good discussion of whether turnout is, indeed, low depending on how it is measured in the US.
- (b) The aspect of region was well-explained by most candidates, and often linked to religion. There was less breadth of discussion on religion with many answers confined to Protestants and Catholics amongst the white population in the US. Some answers lacked range, with the counter-argument of 'other factors' being restricted mainly to race/ ethnicity.
- Q.4 (a) Most candidates were able to say how pressure groups lobby, and were aware of the different access points in a federal system. Fewer focused specifically on the question of why this is important to pressure groups.
- (b) There were many good responses to this question, with candidates showing knowledge of a range of US pressure groups.

1403/02 Ideologies

- Q.1 (a) Many candidates were able to explain different liberal views of individualism and their importance.
- (b) Some candidates were able to debate the central issues of positive and negative freedom and ideas of the enabling state to good effect. However, some answers were little more than a narration of the different strands of liberal thinking.
- Q.2 (a) The standard of answers to this question was high, with many candidates able to explain valid reasons in some depth and detail.
- (b) There were some excellent responses to this question, and many candidates did well with it. There was only a general understanding of what the core values and goals of socialism are, though.
- Q.3 (a) Most candidates could explain the Conservative belief in natural inequality but found it more difficult to explain why there is this belief within the ideology.
- (b) Most candidates were able to develop the argument that Conservatism is a radical ideology through the ideas of the New Right, although few went beyond this. The counter-arguments were less well-developed and analysed. Some candidates answered by discussing whether Conservatism is an ideology at all, which was not the thrust of this question, exactly. Some asserted that traditional conservatism is radical, a position that was difficult to sustain.
- Q.4 (a) There were only a small number of responses to question 4, but they were of a high quality. Candidates were able to explain the distinctions between nationalism and racialism well.
- (b) Answers to this question were wide-ranging and well-argued with some good examples.

GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS
General Certificate of Education
Summer 2013
Advanced Subsidiary/Advanced
GP4

Principal Examiner: Alison Denton

Unit Statistics

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Unit	Entry	Max Mark	Mean Mark
1404/01	66	80	48.8
1404/02	17	80	46.7

Grade Ranges

A	56
B	50
C	44
D	39
E	34

N.B. The marks given above are raw marks and not uniform marks.

1404 GP4

1404/01 GP4a: question 1 was the most popular, followed by question 4, but fewer candidates than in the past answered these as a combination. Question 3 was the least popular and had the lowest mean mark. Question 4 had the highest facility factor, with 2 and 3 also being accessible to candidates.

1404/02 GP4b: candidate numbers for this paper were small. No candidates answered question 1, and very few attempted question 2. Questions 3 and 4 were about equally popular. Question 2 proved slightly more accessible, and the means were very similar for all 3 questions.

1404/01 the Government of the USA

- Q.1 (a) Most candidates were able to identify ways in which the US constitution is flexible but some struggled to explain how these features make it flexible. There was little explanation of exactly how the vagueness of it ensures flexibility for instance. Many candidates said the formal amendment process makes it flexible, but the evidence would tend to undermine this argument.
- (b) There were good discussions of the importance of federalism within the constitution with precise exemplification of where the constitution upholds the principle. Most candidates supplied separation of powers as a counter-argument. There was little mention of the principles of limited government / checks and balances, or of rights.
- Q.2 (a) Most answers criticised gridlock and its effects on legislation, which is entirely valid. Few answers went much beyond this. Some candidates appreciated that gridlock can improve government by forcing greater compromise and co-operation.
- (b) Many answers were a two-sided debate on the legislative function only. The question asks for other functions too, but few candidates analysed the performance of Congress in representation or its oversight function.
- Q.3 (a) This question was done well, with most candidates able to explain the significance of the veto as a threat and as part of the system of checks and balances.
- (b) This question was done poorly overall, with candidates mainly having a generalised understanding of the federal bureaucracy's structure and scope. Some candidates turned it into a question on the imperial or imperilled presidency instead, and recycled model answers.
- Q.4 (a) This question has appeared on previous papers, and was done better this time. Most candidates could explain the importance of judicial review and interpretation.
- (b) Candidates found this part more tricky than part (a). Many answers analysed the Supreme Court's record in championing rights as a whole rather than the rights of citizens (as opposed, say, to the rights of the states or of the federal government). The listing of 3 landmark cases, in a paragraph each, does not constitute the creation of an argument 'for' this question.

1404/02 Challenges in Contemporary Politics

- Q.1 No candidates answered question 1.
- Q.2 (a) Many candidates explained well how environmentalism opposes anthropocentrism by explaining the place of humans within nature and shallow/ deep green thinking.
- (b) Many candidates produced a detailed and convincing 'for' argument, but really struggled to argue that environmentalism has been at all successful operating inside conventional party politics, through such things as summits and targets, the 'greening' of parties and policies. Where the answer was only one-sided it could attract no better than level 1 marks (see published mark scheme).
- Q.3 (a) This question was done very well, with most candidates providing a reasoned explanation.
- (b) Many answers were narrations of the different strands of feminism and their thinking on a number of issues, some were not even up-to-date. Few candidates were able to let the 'common ideas and thinking' of the question drive their answer and make comparisons and contrasts across the strands in this way. It was very difficult to distinguish genuine two-sided debate on the question set in the more narrative answers.
- Q.4 (a) Answers to this question were good, with candidates arguing that positive discrimination can redress past wrongs and ensure full participation for minorities, amongst other factors.
- (b) There were good discussions of the efficacy of language and culture as means of promoting multiculturalism, with particular reference to Wales and Quebec. Counter-arguments about 'other methods', as in the question, were less well-developed. Little attention was given to the effectiveness of legislation, for instance.



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