



GCE EXAMINERS' REPORTS

**GOVERNMENT & POLITICS (New)
AS/Advanced**

SUMMER 2009

Introduction

Summer 2009 is the first award of the new AS. For all specifications there have been changes to the content of the units, and in many new marking criteria have been introduced and unit weightings altered. Also in some subjects there has been the withdrawal of internal assessment. However, the biggest change in most subjects has been the reduction from a three to a two unit assessment.

In moving to the new specification awarding bodies have sought to maintain the overall United Kingdom standard for AS, as measured by the proportion of candidates achieving grade A and by the proportion achieving a pass grade in each subject. Comparability between 'old' and 'new' specifications is measured in terms of the overall subject outcome and not in terms of unit outcomes. Many of the units in the new specifications will bear little relation to those in the old specifications. Even where they are very similar, it is quite likely that outcomes will be different. The expectation is that the number of A grades at unit level will decrease in a specification where the number of units is reduced, whilst the number of passes will increase. The overall cash-in outcome, however, will be maintained. These same principles will apply to the new A level where a six unit assessment is reduced to a four unit assessment.

Statistical Information

This booklet contains summary details for each unit: number entered; maximum mark available; mean mark achieved; grade ranges. *N.B. These refer to 'raw marks' used in the initial assessment, rather than to the uniform marks reported when results are issued.*

Annual Statistical Report

The annual *Statistical Report* (issued in the second half of the Autumn Term) gives overall outcomes of all examinations administered by WJEC.

Unit	Page
GP1	2
GP2	5
General Comments	7

GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

General Certificate of Education 2009

Advanced Subsidiary

Chief Examiner: Alison Denton, B.A. (Hons); P.G.C.E., Croesyceiliog School,
Cwmbran

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
GP1	100	80	50.3

Grade Ranges

A	58
B	52
C	46
D	41
E	36

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

GP1 - People, Politics and Participation

General

All four questions on the paper proved accessible to candidates. Fewer candidates attempted Q3, whilst Q4 was attempted by the majority of candidates.

Part a) answers were generally well done, with candidates defining the term and giving some development of it, which often earned them 3 or 4 marks. However, development of the context by citing relevant examples was weaker and 5 mark responses were rare.

Part b) answers generally tried to develop a range of points, or reasons, and this approach is to be encouraged. Candidates who used the prompts in the extract and then went beyond it obviously earned the best marks. Examples from beyond the extract were rare, but some candidates produced very comprehensive 10 mark responses in a succinct and focused way. Candidates and teachers are reminded that the focus of this question is 'explain' and not 'describe'. Narrative answers will not score top level marks. There needs to be clear explanation for marks awarded at level 4.

Part c) answers were generally well done with most candidates appreciating the need to evaluate the issue in the question and show an appreciation of differing viewpoints to score the higher ranges of marks. There was a relatively high proportion of 'model answers' though, where candidates produced learned responses rather than answering the question as it appeared on the paper, or where the focus was on issues other than those posed in the question. The range and relevance of examples were disappointing, with candidates citing historical examples from 100 years ago, or examples from contexts such as Italian or German politics, when contemporary Welsh or British examples were appropriate.

- Q.1 (a) Most candidates were able to focus an answer on the unpredictability of voting behaviour from election to election.
- (b) The prompts in the extract were developed well and recent examples such as Crewe and Nantwich were mentioned, but many candidates did not fully address the issue of the *importance* of by-elections (or, indeed, their non-importance).
- (c) There were some comprehensive answers to this question, but many candidates unloaded class notes on models of voting behaviour, or concentrated on factors other than the media. Where the media was dealt with, it tended to be as a factor in politics without reference to the outcome of any named elections, which was the focus of the question. The 1992 General Election was cited as an example by some, but very few candidates were able to cite more recent examples of the influence of the media in elections and there was little mention of Welsh elections.
- Q.2 (a) Many candidates produced good answers to this question and were able to give an example of a system of PR. Many cited the example of elections to the National Assembly for Wales as an example with some PR.
- (b) The strengths and weaknesses of coalitions were described well in general but explanations were a bit 'thin'. Examples included Weimar Germany, modern Italy, and the National Government of the 1930s, all of which merited little credit. Some candidates gave details of the coalition in Scotland in 2003, but surprisingly few candidates pointed out that Wales has had a coalition government since 2007. Little use was made of the prompts in the extract.

- (c) Candidates knew the main arguments well for this question, but tended to restrict their answers to the counter-argument only i.e. the strengths of FPTP and the weaknesses of PR. Few candidates managed to produce a balanced answer that addressed the full requirements of the question.
- Q.3 (a) Answers to this question tended to provide a definition of socialism with little reference to the context of 'old-style' as mentioned in the question. Few answers pointed out that the Labour party's ideas of socialism have changed.
- (b) Answers to this question tended to rely heavily on the extract. Whilst some responses developed the extract prompts well, others did not. Top mark answers needed to go beyond the extract to develop a fuller appreciation of why Labour party ideology changed e.g. the need to win an election.
- (c) Few candidates really tackled this question 'head-on'. Answers tended to focus on issues other than political ideas that shape parties today, or interpreted 'political ideas' as 'party policies'. Discussion of the extent to which political ideas and ideologies underpin political parties today was disappointing, especially in relation to the Conservative and Liberal Democratic parties, though some candidates tackled Plaid Cymru well and the extract provided some prompts on Labour which candidates were able to use.
- Q.4 (a) Generally this question was done extremely well, with candidates clearly understanding what defines such groups and able to provide current examples from the Welsh and/or UK perspective. Historical examples such as the Suffragettes did not score highly. Some candidates confused protest groups with sectional interest groups.
- (b) Although answers to this question demonstrated clear understanding of the methods used by these groups, many candidates exploited the extract only by explaining the need for publicity and failed to go beyond this to explore reasons such as resourcing or 'outsider' status.
- (c) Answers to this question tended to be very well done with candidates producing balanced 'for and against' type responses that scored well. However, whilst knowledge of pressure groups was good, that of protest movements was less comprehensive. Answers seldom brought the debate up-to-date with relevant current examples such as Plane Stupid. Some answers contained relevant examples from the politics of Wales.

GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

General Certificate of Education 2009

Advanced Subsidiary

Chief Examiner: Alison Denton, B.A. (Hons); P.G.C.E., Croesyceiliog School,
Cwmbran

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
GP2	99	80	48.7

Grade Ranges

A	59
B	53
C	47
D	42
E	37

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

GP2 - Governing Modern Wales

General

The first three questions on the paper proved accessible to candidates. Most candidates answered question 1, and then opted for either 2 or 3 in roughly equal numbers. No candidates answered question 4.

Part a) answers were generally well done, with candidates defining the term and giving some development of it, which generally earned them 3 or 4 marks. However, development of the context by citing relevant examples was weaker and 5 mark responses were rare, but more numerous than on GP1.

Part b) answers generally tried to develop a range of points, or reasons, and this approach is to be encouraged. Candidates who used the prompts in the extract and then went beyond it earned the best marks. Examples from beyond the extract were rare, but some candidates produced very comprehensive 10 mark responses in a succinct and focused way. Candidates and teachers are reminded that the focus of this question is 'explain' and not 'describe'. Narrative answers will not score top level marks. There needs to be clear explanation for marks awarded at level 4.

Part c) answers overall were done moderately well, with most candidates appreciating the need to evaluate the issue in the question and show an appreciation of differing viewpoints to score the higher ranges of marks. The answers to part c) on GP2 were not as comprehensive and balanced as the equivalent answers on GP1. Candidates found it more difficult to focus on the precise requirements of the question. The attention of centres is drawn to the details in the specification for each topic.

Welsh examples featured well in candidates' answers on this unit, with relevant detail, knowledge and understanding shown of the workings of the National Assembly and the role and work of the First Minister in particular.

- Q.1 (a) Candidates were well aware of what an unwritten constitution is and most defined the term well. A sizeable number of candidates then over-concentrated on describing the US constitution as a contrast, and failed to develop much on the actual question asked. There was a general lack of examples of unwritten parts of the constitution such as conventions.
- (b) This question was done reasonably well, with most candidates opting to explore the prompts in the extract of its unwritten nature and ease of change by Parliament. Relatively few candidates went beyond the extract to mention other aspects, such as conventions or the Royal Prerogative, and the quality of explanation was not high.
- (c) Most candidates tackled this question well, providing a balanced list of reasons for and against. Many answers were restricted to level 3 by the lack of relevant examples to illustrate these points, however. This is an area that has changed a great deal recently and candidates are to be encouraged to keep up-to-date with developments such as judges' decisions that effectively limit ministerial powers, the operation of the Human Rights Act, proposals about the future of the Royal Prerogative etc.

- Q.2 (a) The term was defined and developed well, with candidates making good use of the prompts in the extract on this occasion. Many 4 mark answers simply lacked an example of an AM.
- (b) The extract proved very useful to candidates here and was exploited well by the majority. Many candidates were also able to add examples from their own knowledge of political representation, such as petitions and social representativeness, though the latter was not always as accurate as it could be.
- (c) Responses to this question were disappointing on the whole. Candidates tended to produce poorly structured answers that criticised Parliament on a variety of levels, such as unsocial hours, antiquity of procedure etc and did not really focus on the demand in the question to evaluate Parliament's carrying out of its functions. These are listed in the specification and the attention of centres is drawn to them.
- Q.3 (a) Unfortunately a large number of candidates confused the WAG with the NAFW and did not score highly on this question. Some candidates were able to define the term well and develop it with knowledge of GOWA and recent developments and they were well-rewarded.
- (b) This question was answered moderately well. Candidates knew and described a range of powers. Most candidates struggled to explain the First Minister's powers though, and very few mentioned the context within which he works as an explanation of the extent of his power, i.e. a coalition.
- (c) Responses to this question tended to be disappointing, with many candidates providing a model answer on how far the Prime Minister has become Presidential, which was not precisely the focus of the question. Many candidates used examples from Thatcher and Major, whilst more recent trends under Blair and Brown, such as the centralisation of power in the Cabinet Office and Number 10, did not feature highly.
- Q.4 There were no responses to this question.

General Comments: AS

The Awarding Committee were pleased with the overall performance of candidates at this first AS Examination in Government and Politics. In both Units the general standard of answers was high. Few candidates disobeyed the rubric by attempting more than two questions, and few candidates failed to answer all parts of the two questions they chose.

The political context since 1997, and especially post-Blair, is not well-known to many candidates. Examples from more than about 20 years ago have to be particularly pertinent and important to gain credit. Welsh examples featured in some candidates' answers but were more developed on GP2.

Summary of recommendations on how to improve.

- **Students:**

1. Time management skills.
2. Understanding of command terms.
3. Specific requirements of the skills required by the questions.
4. Examination practice.

- **Teachers:**

1. INSET - see details online.
2. Use this Examiner's Report.
3. If in doubt, ask.

Contact details: Dr. Alison George, Subject Officer
Email: alison.george@wjec.co.uk
Telephone: 029 2026 5302

Ellen Chichester, Subject Support Officer
Email: ellen.chichester@wjec.co.uk
Telephone: 029 2026 5094



WJEC
245 Western Avenue
Cardiff CF5 2YX
Tel No 029 2026 5000
Fax 029 2057 5994
E-mail: exams@wjec.co.uk
website: www.wjec.co.uk