



A-level POLITICS 7152/2

Paper 2 Government and politics of the USA and comparative
politics

Mark scheme

June 2025

Version: 1.0 Final



Mark schemes are prepared by the Lead Assessment Writer and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation events which all associates participate in and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation process ensures that the mark scheme covers the students' responses to questions and that every associate understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for standardisation each associate analyses a number of students' scripts. Alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed and legislated for. If, after the standardisation process, associates encounter unusual answers which have not been raised they are required to refer these to the Lead Examiner.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of students' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

No student should be disadvantaged on the basis of their gender identity and/or how they refer to the gender identity of others in their exam responses.

A consistent use of 'they/them' as a singular and pronouns beyond 'she/her' or 'he/him' will be credited in exam responses in line with existing mark scheme criteria.

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Level of response marking instructions

Level of response mark schemes are broken down into levels, each of which has a descriptor. The descriptor for the level shows the average performance for the level. There are marks in each level.

Before you apply the mark scheme to a student's answer read through the answer and annotate it (as instructed) to show the qualities that are being looked for. You can then apply the mark scheme.

Step 1 Determine a level

Start at the lowest level of the mark scheme and use it as a ladder to see whether the answer meets the descriptor for that level. The descriptor for the level indicates the different qualities that might be seen in the student's answer for that level. If it meets the lowest level then go to the next one and decide if it meets this level, and so on, until you have a match between the level descriptor and the answer. With practice and familiarity you will find that for better answers you will be able to quickly skip through the lower levels of the mark scheme.

When assigning a level you should look at the overall quality of the answer and not look to pick holes in small and specific parts of the answer where the student has not performed quite as well as the rest. If the answer covers different aspects of different levels of the mark scheme you should use a best fit approach for defining the level and then use the variability of the response to help decide the mark within the level, ie if the response is predominantly level 3 with a small amount of level 4 material it would be placed in level 3 but be awarded a mark near the top of the level because of the level 4 content.

Step 2 Determine a mark

Once you have assigned a level you need to decide on the mark. The descriptors on how to allocate marks can help with this. The exemplar materials used during standardisation will help. There will be an answer in the standardising materials which will correspond with each level of the mark scheme. This answer will have been awarded a mark by the Lead Examiner. You can compare the student's answer with the example to determine if it is the same standard, better or worse than the example. You can then use this to allocate a mark for the answer based on the Lead Examiner's mark on the example.

You may well need to read back through the answer as you apply the mark scheme to clarify points and assure yourself that the level and the mark are appropriate.

Indicative content in the mark scheme is provided as a guide for examiners. It is not intended to be exhaustive and you must credit other valid points. Students do not have to cover all of the points mentioned in the Indicative content to reach the highest level of the mark scheme.

An answer which contains nothing of relevance to the question must be awarded no marks.

Section A

Levels of response mark scheme for 9-mark questions

0 1	Explain and analyse three informal powers of the president.	[9 marks]
0 2	Explain and analyse three factions within the Democratic Party.	[9 marks]
0 3	Explain and analyse three ways that rational theory could be used to study the relationships that US presidents and UK prime ministers have with their respective legislatures.	[9 marks]

Target AO1: 6 marks, AO2: 3 marks

Level	Marks	Descriptors
3	7–9	- Detailed knowledge of relevant political concepts, institutions and processes is demonstrated and appropriate political vocabulary is used (AO1). - Thorough explanations and appropriate selection of accurate supporting examples demonstrate detailed understanding of relevant political concepts, institutions and processes (AO1). - Analysis of three clear points is structured, clearly focused on the question and confidently developed into a coherent answer (AO2).
2	4–6	- Generally sound knowledge of political concepts, institutions and processes is demonstrated and generally appropriate political vocabulary is used (AO1). - Some development of explanations and generally appropriate selection of supporting examples demonstrate generally accurate understanding of relevant political concepts, institutions and processes, though further detail may be required in places and some inaccuracies may be present (AO1). - Analysis is developed in most places, though some points may be descriptive or in need of further development. Answers, for the most part, are clearly expressed and show some organisation in the presentation of material (AO2). Students who only make two relevant points will be limited to this level.
1	1–3	- Limited knowledge of political concepts, institutions and processes is demonstrated and little or no appropriate political vocabulary is used (AO1). - Limited development of explanations and selection of supporting examples demonstrate limited understanding of relevant political concepts, institutions and processes, with further detail required and inaccuracies present throughout (AO1). - Analysis takes the form of description for the most part. Coherence and structure are limited (AO2). Students who only make one relevant point will be limited to this level.
0	0	Nothing worthy of credit.

0	1
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Explain and analyse three informal powers of the president.

[9 marks]**Indicative content**

In their explanations and analysis, students may be expected to cover areas such as the following:

- explanation and analysis of the informal powers of the president. Students are likely to refer to the fact that they are the implied and political rather than the formal enumerated or inherent powers found in article 2 of the Constitution
- explanation and analysis of executive influence and bureaucratic power. Students may refer to the ideas of Richard Neustadt (eg 'Presidential power is the power to persuade'). Presidents seek to use their personal influence, the authority of the office and any political capital they have to win support for policies and proposals. Presidents can also use the vice president and other members of the executive to lobby Congress, this is particularly important during periods of divided government. Students may also refer to presidents and agenda setting. Because presidents have such a high media profile, they can determine what issues are discussed by journalists, politicians and the wider public (eg Trump's tweets)
- explanation and analysis of the fact that the president is de facto party leader. This power is at its most effective during periods of congressional united government, such as in 2009–11 when Obama was able to get his party to pass the Affordable Care Act, 2010
- explanation and analysis of the fact that the president is seen as the 'leader of the free world'. The US dominates global politics and institutions such as NATO, the G7 and the WTO. Presidents having high international profiles (eg Obama, Paris Agreement 2015; Biden, Cornwall 2021)
- explanation and analysis of how presidents have used their direct authority and stretched their implied powers by making increasing use of executive orders, signing statements and executive agreements (eg FDR signed 3721 executive orders, GW Bush following 9/11, Trump signed more in his first three years in office than Obama did in the same period of his presidency).

Students are required to consider only three informal sources of presidential power. If a student exceeds this number reward only the best three. However, some may include relevant points not listed above and these should be credited. If a student gives only one or two examples, they will receive a maximum of three and six marks respectively.

0 2

Explain and analyse three factions within the Democratic Party.

[9 marks]**Indicative content**

In their explanations and analysis, students may be expected to cover areas such as the following:

- explanation and analysis of the range of ideological intra-party factions within the Democratic Party. Students must be clear that these divisions are based on differences over economic, social, and foreign policy
- explanation and analysis of the liberal democrat faction who have links to the party leadership and include figures such as Joe Biden, Nancy Pelosi, and Chuck Schumer. These Democrats represent more liberal states such as California or states and districts in New England. This faction argues for a more interventionist government role in regulating and managing the economy, higher taxes, increased Federal government spending and support for social welfare programmes and healthcare. This group is also socially liberal and believe in and support a pro-choice stance on abortion, same-sex marriage, and wider equal rights programmes
- explanation and analysis of progressive democrats on the left of the party such as Elizabeth Warren and Ed Markey who hold very liberal views on social and fiscal policy positions and identity politics. This group is also concerned with environmental issues and supported the Green New Deal legislation in 2019. This faction is represented in the House of Representatives by the Congressional Progressive Caucus and includes members such as Alexandria Ocasio-Cortez, Ilhan Omar, and Rashida Tlaib. The new Minority Leader in the House of Representatives, Hakeem Jeffries, is a member of the Progressive Caucus. Responses may also refer to Bernie Sanders who votes with the progressives
- explanation and analysis of conservative democrats often referred to as 'Blue Dog Democrats' or DINOS (Democrats in name only) who tend to have both fiscally and socially conservative views such as low taxes and spending and anti-abortion or pro-gun views. These Democrats tend to represent more conservative states or districts. This faction was established in 1995
- explanation and analysis of centrists (also called New Democrats, such as Hilary and Bill Clinton), who take a more moderate and pragmatic position on most policy issues. Until 2011 these views were found in the Democratic Leadership Council and today by The Moderate Democrats PAC, which includes members such as Tim Kaine (running mate of Hilary Clinton in 2016) and West Virginia Senator Joe Manchin.

Students are required to consider only three factions within the Democratic Party. If a student exceeds this number reward only the best three. However, some may include relevant points not listed above and these should be credited. If a student gives only one or two examples, they will receive a maximum of three and six marks respectively.

0	3
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Explain and analyse three ways that rational theory could be used to study the relationships that US presidents and UK prime ministers have with their respective legislatures.

[9 marks]

Indicative content

In their explanations and analysis, students may be expected to cover areas such as the following:

- explanation and analysis of rational theory and how it can be applied to understanding relationships that US presidents and UK prime ministers have with their respective legislatures. This approach emphasises the role of the individual and assumes they will normally act or make political choices in a logical way to maximise positive outcomes for themselves or their cause
- explanation and analysis of the constitutional context US presidents and UK prime ministers operate in. The fusion of powers in the UK in theory gives UK prime ministers significant power within Parliament if they enjoy a majority (eg Thatcher 1983 or Blair 1997). However, if they lack an overall majority or have a small majority they adopt rational strategies to govern and pass legislation. Because of the separation of powers presidents are not part of Congress and enjoy executive power, but they too will need to consider rational strategies when trying to get legislation passed (even when their party controls Congress) and deal with national emergencies such as 9/11
- explanation and analysis of rational strategies used by presidents and prime ministers to govern. If a president is faced with a divided government, then the rational approach is to use executive orders and agreements as Obama was forced to in 2010 after losing the House and in 2014 when he lost the Senate. David Cameron from 2010 to 2015 lacked a majority so formed a coalition government with the Liberal Democrats based on set of agreed policies. This coalition agreement was a rational decision. Students may also refer to the agreement between Theresa May's government and the DUP between 2017–19 which kept the government in office
- explanation and analysis of using a rational approach to passing legislation. Presidents often find it difficult to pass legislation through Congress therefore they have to use their executive influence and powers of persuasion (eg Obamacare). Presidents seek to use their personal influence, the authority of the office and any political capital they have to win support for policies and proposals. Presidents can also use the vice president and other members of the executive to lobby Congress, this is particularly important during periods of divided government. In comparison, in the UK there is a national manifesto to follow and party discipline is strong, with the whips wielding power in terms of 'carrots and sticks'. Therefore, prime ministers will use their powers of patronage to reward loyalty and maintain control of their party.

Students are required to consider only three ways that rational theory could be used to study the relationships that US presidents and UK prime ministers have with their respective legislatures. If a student exceeds this number reward only the best three. However, some may include relevant points not listed above and these should be credited. If a student gives only one or two examples, they will receive a maximum of three and six marks respectively.

Section B

Levels of response mark scheme for 25-mark extract-based essay

0	4	Analyse, evaluate and compare the arguments in the above extracts regarding the extent to which Congress is broken.
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[25 marks]

Target AO1: 5 marks, AO2: 10 marks, AO3: 10 marks

Level	Marks	Descriptors
5	21–25	- Detailed and accurate knowledge and understanding of relevant political concepts, institutions and processes are used to support analysis of the issue under discussion (AO1). - Analysis of the extract is balanced and confidently developed (AO2). - Comparisons are well explained, are focused on the question and fully supported with relevant and developed examples (AO2). - Evaluation of the above leads to well substantiated conclusions that are consistent with the preceding discussion (AO3). - Relevant perspectives and/or the status of the extract are successfully evaluated in the process of constructing arguments (AO3). - The answer is well organised, coherent and has a sustained analytical focus on the question (AO2).
4	16–20	- Accurate knowledge and understanding of relevant political concepts, institutions and processes are used to support analysis of the issue under discussion, though further detail may be required in places (AO1). - Analysis of the extract is balanced and developed, though some elements of the analysis could be expanded and/or developed further (AO2). - Comparisons are relevant to the questions as set, and supported with examples (AO2). - Evaluation leads to conclusions that show some substantiation and are consistent with the preceding discussion (AO3). - Relevant perspectives and/or the status of the extract are evaluated in constructing arguments, although in some places there could be further development (AO3). - The answer is well organised, analytical in style and is focused on the question as set (AO2).
3	11–15	- Generally sound knowledge and understanding of relevant political concepts, institutions and processes are used to support points made, though inaccuracies will be present (AO1). - Analytical points relating to the extract are made and developed in places, showing some balance, though some points are descriptive rather than analytical (AO2). - Comparisons are made and may be supported by examples (AO2). - Evaluation leads to conclusions that are consistent with the preceding discussion, but that lack substantiation (AO3). - Relevant perspectives and/or the status of the extract are commented on in constructing arguments, though evaluation is lacking depth (AO3). - The answer is organised, occasionally analytical and focused on the question as set (AO2).

2	6–10	• Some knowledge and understanding of relevant political concepts, institutions and processes are used to support points made, though these contain inaccuracies and irrelevant material (AO1). • Analysis of the extract takes the form of description in most places, with some attempt at balance, though many points are unsupported assertions (AO2). • Comparisons tend to be limited and unsupported by examples (AO2). • Some attempt to draw conclusions is made, but these lack depth and clear development from the preceding discussion (AO3). • Relevant perspectives are identified and some awareness of the status of the extract is shown in the process of constructing arguments, though evaluation will be superficial (AO3). • The answer shows some organisation and makes some attempt to address the question (AO2).
1	1–5	• Limited knowledge and understanding of relevant political concepts, institutions and processes, with inaccuracies and irrelevant material present throughout (AO1). • Analysis of the extract takes the form of description and assertion, with little or no attempt made at balance (AO2). • Comparisons tend to be superficial and undeveloped (AO2). • Conclusions, when offered, are asserted and have an implicit relationship to the preceding discussion (AO3). • Little or no evaluation of relevant perspectives and the status of the extract is present (AO3). • The answer shows little organisation and does not address the question (AO2).
0	0	• Nothing worthy of credit.

0 4

Analyse, evaluate and compare the arguments in the above extracts regarding the extent to which Congress is broken.

[25 marks]

Indicative content

In the analysis and evaluation of Congress and the extent to which it is broken, as made in the extracts, students should be expected to cover areas such as the following:

- analysis and evaluation of the framers' aims for the Congress and its bicameral structure of a co-equal House and Senate. The framers of the Constitution vested all legislative power in the Congress and intended it to be representative of the people via the House and the states via the Senate. Students are likely to note that Congress has three broad functions; to represent, to legislate and to perform oversight and these are referred to in both Extracts 1 and 2
- analysis and evaluation of the legislative process and the role played by congressional committees. Students are likely to compare the positive views expressed in Extract 1 regarding the quality of the process, particularly 'floor debates' with the critique of the filibuster and 'other obstruction tactics' referred to in Extract 2. When evaluating the filibuster students may note that it has no constitutional footing. Students may refer to the argument made in Extract 2 that 'Senate dysfunction undermines the proper operation of our government'. Evidence to support this position could include the Democrats in 2022 not being able to pass voting-rights legislation, pass the Biden Build Back Better Bill and end the filibuster itself. The views expressed in Extract 2 can be reinforced by the fact that Congress is a very unproductive legislature with only between 2–3% of bills ever becoming law. However, students could argue the counter-point expressed in Extract 1 that members of Congress are 'elected individually and are likely to bicker', which is a good thing because it produces 'compromise', which was one of constitutional framers' aims
- analysis and evaluation of how Congress performs oversight and the role played by standing and select committees in both chambers. Both extracts take different positions on how well Congress performs oversight. Students are likely to argue that the quality and effectiveness of oversight is often dependent on divided government when there is often a greater willingness to hold the executive to account, such as in the last two years of the George W Bush administration. However, in comparison Extract 2 notes when Congress is 'controlled by the opposition, partisan investigations often focus more on scoring political points than on uncovering the truth'. Students may use examples such as the House Select Committee on the January 6 Attack and the House Benghazi select committee of 2014 as evidence of congressional partisanship and that Congress is broken
- analysis and evaluation of the representational function of Congress and why Extract 1 argues that the idea that Congress is 'broken' is misleading and 'it is Congress that collectively reflects the diversity of the nation', in comparison to Extract 2 which argues US democracy can't work without a functioning Congress and why the US government was 'meant to function with three branches, not two'.

The analysis and evaluation of any political information is affected by:

- who the author is – their position or role
- the type of publication – newspaper, academic journal, electronic media
- the overt or implicit purpose of the author – to inform, persuade or influence
- the relevance of the extract to a political issue or concern, and how representative the extract is of a particular viewpoint.

Students will be expected to address some of these factors in their analysis and evaluation of the extracts:

- evaluation of relevant perspectives within the extracts concerning the extent to which it is accurate to describe Congress as the broken branch of US government. Extract 1 offers a positive view of Congress and rejects the view that it is broken. Students are likely to note that it is written by two academic experts who are countering a popularly held view of Congress. Extract 2 offers instead a highly critical analysis of Congress and urges significant reform as in its current state it undermines US democracy
- comparisons can be made between the strong criticisms of Congress expressed in Extract 2 with the defence of Congress made in Extract 1. Students may refer to the fact that there is some agreement between the extracts (eg Extract 1 acknowledges some of the concerns raised in Extract 2, such as the Senate filibuster) but that Extract 1 views the Congress as highly democratic and that it performs a valuable representational function for US citizens.

Students are required to analyse and evaluate the arguments presented in the extracts. Students who identify which arguments support which of the different views regarding the extent to which Congress is broken may be awarded marks for analysis (AO2). To gain marks for evaluation (AO3) students must assess the relative strengths of the differing arguments and whether arguments about Congress being broken are more or less convincing. The analysis and evaluation must clearly focus on the arguments presented in the extracts.

Students would not need to cover each and every one of the above points to gain high marks; equally, some may introduce further relevant points, and these should be credited. The conclusion should clearly focus on the issue in question. In their evaluation, it does not matter what view students reach. However, their position must be supported by their arguments and examples. Students who fail to focus their discussion on the arguments in the extracts, however complete their answer may otherwise be, cannot achieve above Level 2.

Section C

Levels of response mark scheme for 25-mark essay

0	5	'Both the US and UK constitutions are outdated and in need of significant reform.' Analyse and evaluate this statement.	[25 marks]
0	6	'US pressure groups are more effective than those in the UK in promoting and protecting civil rights and liberties.' Analyse and evaluate this statement.	[25 marks]

Target AO1: 5 marks, AO2: 10 marks, AO3: 10 marks

Level	Marks	Descriptors
5	21–25	- Detailed and accurate knowledge and understanding of relevant political concepts, institutions and processes are used to support analysis of the issue under discussion (AO1). - Analysis is balanced and confidently developed (AO2). - Synoptic links are well explained, are focused on the question and fully supported with relevant and developed examples (AO2). - Evaluation leads to well substantiated conclusions that are consistent with the preceding discussion (AO3). - Relevant perspectives are successfully evaluated in the process of constructing arguments (AO3). - The answer is well organised, coherent with a sustained analytical focus on the question (AO2).
4	16–20	- Accurate knowledge and understanding of relevant political concepts, institutions and processes are used to support analysis of the issue under discussion, though further detail may be required in places (AO1). - Analysis is balanced and developed, though some elements of the analysis could be expanded and/or developed further (AO2). - Synoptic links are relevant to the questions as set, and supported with examples (AO2). - Evaluation leads to conclusions that show some substantiation and are consistent with the preceding discussion (AO3). - Relevant perspectives are evaluated in the process of constructing arguments, although in some places there could be further development of the evaluation (AO3). - The answer is well organised, analytical in style and is focused on the question as set (AO2).

3	11–15	• Generally sound knowledge and understanding of relevant political concepts, institutions and processes are used to support points made, though inaccuracies will be present (AO1). • Analytical points are made and developed in places, showing some balance, though some points are descriptive rather than analytical (AO2). • Synoptic links will be made, though explanation will lack depth (AO2). • Evaluation leads to conclusions that are consistent with the preceding discussion, but that lack substantiation (AO3). • Relevant perspectives are commented on in the process of constructing arguments, though evaluation lacks depth (AO3). • The answer is organised, occasionally analytical and focused on the question as set (AO2).
2	6–10	• Some knowledge and understanding of relevant political concepts, institutions and processes are used to support points made, though these contain inaccuracies and irrelevant material (AO1). • Analysis takes the form of description in most places, with some attempt at balance, though many points are unsupported assertions (AO2). • Synoptic links tend to be limited and undeveloped (AO2). • Some attempt to draw conclusions is made, but these lack depth and there is no clear development from the preceding discussion (AO3). • Relevant perspectives are identified, though evaluation is superficial (AO3). • The answer shows some organisation and makes some attempt to address the question (AO2).
1	1–5	• Limited knowledge and understanding of relevant political concepts, institutions and processes, with inaccuracies and irrelevant material present throughout (AO1). • Analysis takes the form of description and assertion, with little or no attempt made at balance (AO2). • Few if any synoptic links are offered (AO2). • Conclusions, when offered, are asserted and have an implicit relationship to the preceding discussion (AO3). • Little or no evaluation of relevant perspectives is present (AO3). • The answer shows little organisation and does not address the question (AO2).
0	0	• Nothing worthy of credit.

0 5

'Both the US and UK constitutions are outdated and in need of significant reform.'
Analyse and evaluate this statement.

[25 marks]**Indicative content**

In the analysis and evaluation of the statement students may be expected to cover areas such as the following:

- analysis and evaluation of the extent to which either constitution can be labelled as outdated and in need of significant reform. Students may focus their responses around the benefits and drawbacks of codification and entrenchment in the US versus the UK's uncoded constitutional arrangements. The entrenched nature of the US Constitution means its key principles (eg the separation of powers, limited government, positive rights for citizens, federalism) have endured since ratification in 1789 and therefore it is not in need of reform. Students may argue that the UK constitution, which is not codified and is described as being more flexible and evolving, is therefore not outdated. The New Labour constitutional reforms proposals (designed to modernise institutions, protect the rights of its citizens, decentralise decision-making and enhance democracy by adopting more proportional electoral systems) between 1997 and 2010 show how easily the UK constitution can be updated
- analysis and evaluation of the fact that the UK lacks a single text and can be described as 'partly written and wholly uncoded' unlike the US Constitution. Instead, the UK's constitutional arrangements are located within multiple sources (statute, common law, conventions, and the royal prerogative). Students are likely to argue the consequences of not having a codified constitution is that there is no entrenched body of higher, judicable provisions setting out the powers, responsibilities, rights, and relationships of the state and that this is proof that the UK constitution is indeed outdated. On the other hand, students may challenge the idea that entrenchment is a good thing by focusing on the argument that the US Constitution written in the eighteenth century is not fit for purpose in the twenty-first century as it is too rigid and outdated. Students may reference examples of failed proposals that have achieved broad consensus in Congress, such as the Equal Rights Amendment. Some students may identify these as so-called zombie amendments
- analysis and evaluation of the benefits of the US having an entrenched codified constitution and the UK having the opposite. Students may argue that the UK's constitutional arrangements allow for evolutionary change. The benefits surrounding the UK's uncoded constitution can be linked to concerns that codification along US lines would mean the principle of parliamentary sovereignty would be undermined, that any growth in the power of the judicial branch would be detrimental to democracy and that the benefits of constitutional flexibility outweigh those of entrenchment
- analysis and evaluation of how adaptable each constitution is. The amendment process in the US is set out in Article 5 and reflects the framers' fear of hasty, ill-thought-out change. On the other hand, students may argue that the US Constitution can be updated through the Supreme Court using its power of judicial review (the so-called informal amendment process) and judicial activism (eg the *Obergefell v. Hodges* same sex marriage equality decision) which means significant reforms are not needed and therefore the US constitution is not outdated. Conversely, the UK's unentrenched constitution is seen as being flexible enough to accommodate popular wishes, such as referendums to gain a mandate for constitutional change (eg EEC membership 1975, EU 2016); adaptable enough to absorb substantial political shifts (eg devolution) and responsive enough to provide greater protection for rights and to enhance freedoms when change is felt to be needed, such as with the Human Rights Act and the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013
- analysis and evaluation of elements of the UK and US constitutions that do need reforming. Students may argue the Electoral College and how it works (eg in 2000 and 2016, the winner of the popular vote was not elected president) and the 2nd Amendment are evidence that the US constitution is outdated, alongside the amendment process itself. The need for two-thirds

majorities in both houses of Congress to propose a constitutional amendment plus the need for ratification by three-quarters of the state legislatures is too high a hurdle. In the UK, Parliament is dominated by the executive (as seen by the repeal of the Fixed-term Parliaments Act following the passing of the Dissolution and Calling of Parliament Act 2022. This returned the power to dissolve Parliament and call a general election to the prime minister, reinstating the power of the executive). Students may argue rights are inadequately protected (such as the possible repeal of the HRA) and the uncertain status of the devolved regions (eg in November 2022, the UK Supreme Court ruled that the Scottish Parliament does not have the power to legislate for a referendum on Scottish independence and the UK government's veto of the Scottish Parliament's Gender Recognition Reform Bill in January 2023) risks breaking up the UK. Students may also focus on how the lack of a clear constitutional framework for the UK's withdrawal from the EU led to clashes between government and Parliament. The relationships between the branches of government are often unclear and characterised by increasing political conflict, such as the decision to prorogue Parliament in September 2019 being overturned by the Supreme Court. These examples could be used as proof the UK needs a codified constitution.

Synoptic links may be found in areas such as codified and uncoded constitutions, federalism and devolution, executives, legislatures, judiciaries, and rights. Any response that does not include synoptic points cannot achieve above Level 4.

Students would not need to cover each and every one of the above points to gain high marks; equally, some may introduce further relevant points, and these should be credited. The conclusion should clearly focus on the issue in question. In their evaluation, it does not matter what view students reach. However, their position must be supported by their arguments and examples.

0 6

'US pressure groups are more effective than those in the UK in promoting and protecting civil rights and liberties.' Analyse and evaluate this statement.

[25 marks]

Indicative content

In the analysis and evaluation of the statement students may be expected to cover areas such as the following:

- analysis and evaluation that the fundamental aims of pressure groups in both countries are the same; to influence public policy making at all levels of government in the interests of their cause, and to protect/promote the interests of their members. Students may argue that civil rights and liberties in both countries are promoted by pressure groups and such rights are expansive and designed to protect individuals from unfair treatment or discrimination
- analysis and evaluation of the key theme that while groups have much in common, they operate in very different political and governmental systems. Students may overall agree with the statement because the US has a codified constitution based on a formalised system of a separation of powers, checks and balances including the Bill of Rights, and federalism. The right of citizens to form pressure groups is an important civil liberty and is protected and promoted by the First Amendment. The UK on the other hand has an uncoded constitution, an executive fused with the legislature and fewer access points which students may conclude makes UK pressure groups less effective than their US counterparts in promoting and protecting civil rights and liberties
- analysis and evaluation of the methods used by pressure groups in the US and UK to promote and protect civil rights. Students are likely to argue that some methods are similar such as marches and rallies, lobbying politicians and using the legal system. However, students should argue that US groups use the courts more frequently and effectively because their Supreme Court can strike down legislation as unconstitutional and make interpretative amendments to the Constitution such as the NAACP and the Brown case
- analysis and evaluation of campaigns in the US and UK to promote and protect civil liberties following national emergencies and terror attacks such as 9/11. Students may focus on debates surrounding the Patriot Act in the US and prevention of terrorism legislation in the UK. Students could refer to the campaigns of the ACLU in the US and Liberty in the UK
- analysis and evaluation of campaigns in the US and UK to promote gender rights, particularly pro-choice campaigns. Students may also refer to #MeToo and #TimesUp campaigns
- analysis and evaluation of campaigns in the US and UK to promote rights of ethnic minorities through groups such as the NAACP and Black Lives Matter. Students are likely to discuss the Civil Rights campaigns of the 1960s in the US and recently in the UK the legal case surrounding the toppling of the Edward Colston statue. Students may also refer to campaigns in the US and UK to promote the rights of immigrants
- analysis and evaluation of campaigns in the US and UK to promote the rights of LGBTQ+ people through legal cases and political pressure to legislate against discrimination. Students may refer to the US Supreme Court's decision Obergefell v Hodges 2015 and the Marriage (Same Sex Couples) Act 2013
- analysis and evaluation of campaigns in the US and UK to promote religious rights. In the UK the Christian Institute supported the right of a bakery in Northern Ireland not to bake a cake with a pro-gay marriage on it and the UK Supreme Court ruled in their favour in 2018. In the US similar cases have also upheld the rights of Christian bakers not to make a cake promoting same-sex marriage
- analysis and evaluation of gun rights in the US and the absence of such a debate in the UK.

Synoptic links may be made in areas such as Liberalism and the ideas of John Locke, constitutions, judiciaries, federalism, entrenched rights, representative democracy and participation. Any response that does not include synoptic points cannot achieve above Level 4.

Students would not need to cover each and every one of the above points to gain high marks; equally, some may introduce further relevant points, and these should be credited. The conclusion should clearly focus on the issue in question. In their evaluation, it does not matter what view students reach. However, their position must be supported by their arguments and examples.