



GCE AS MARKING SCHEME

SUMMER 2025

**AS
GOVERNMENT & POLITICS – UNIT 2
2160U20-1**

About this marking scheme

The purpose of this marking scheme is to provide teachers, learners, and other interested parties, with an understanding of the assessment criteria used to assess this specific assessment.

This marking scheme reflects the criteria by which this assessment was marked in a live series and was finalised following detailed discussion at an examiners' conference. A team of qualified examiners were trained specifically in the application of this marking scheme. The aim of the conference was to ensure that the marking scheme was interpreted and applied in the same way by all examiners. It may not be possible, or appropriate, to capture every variation that a candidate may present in their responses within this marking scheme. However, during the training conference, examiners were guided in using their professional judgement to credit alternative valid responses as instructed by the document, and through reviewing exemplar responses.

Without the benefit of participation in the examiners' conference, teachers, learners and other users, may have different views on certain matters of detail or interpretation. Therefore, it is strongly recommended that this marking scheme is used alongside other guidance, such as published exemplar materials or Guidance for Teaching. This marking scheme is final and will not be changed, unless in the event that a clear error is identified, as it reflects the criteria used to assess candidate responses during the live series.

GCE GOVERNMENT & POLITICS
UNIT 2 – LIVING AND PARTICIPATING IN A DEMOCRACY
SUMMER 2025 MARK SCHEME

Marking guidance for examiners

Summary of assessment objectives for Unit 2

The questions in Section A assess AO1. The questions in Section B assess both AO1 and AO2. The questions in Section C assess both AO1 and AO3. The assessment objectives focus on the ability to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of relevant institutions, processes, political concepts, theories and issues (AO1); the ability to interpret and apply political information to identify and explain relevant similarities, differences, and connections (AO2), and the ability to analyse and evaluate the areas of government and politics studied to construct arguments, make substantiated judgements and draw conclusions (AO3).

The structure of the mark scheme

The mark scheme for each question has two parts:

- an assessment grid advising bands and associated marks that should be allocated to responses which demonstrate the characteristics needed in AO1, AO2 and AO3.
- advice outlining indicative content which can be used to assess the quality of the specific response. The content is not prescriptive, and candidates are not expected to mention all the material referred to. Examiners should seek to credit any further admissible evidence offered by the candidates.

Deciding on the mark awarded within a band

- The first stage for an examiner is to use both the indicative content and the assessment grid to decide the overall band.
- The second stage is to decide how firmly the characteristics expected for that band are displayed.
- Thirdly, a final mark for the question can then be awarded.

Organisation and communication

This issue should have bearing if the standard of organisation and communication is inconsistent with the descriptor for the band in which the answer falls. In this situation, examiners may decide not to award the highest mark in the band.

Level Descriptors

Using 'best fit', decide first which set of level descriptors best describes the overall quality of the answer. The following grid should inform your decision as to which band the answer belongs. (N.B. The majority of questions follow a four-band structure. However, when the question has three bands 'Adequate' as a descriptor has been removed.)

Stamps and annotations used for GCE Government and Politics

Stamp	Annotation	Meaning/use
	Application	<u>Application</u> of political knowledge. Used for AO2
	Correct	Where the comment is correct and/or demonstrates understanding of the factual and/or political material expressed
	Development	Where the argument being presented has gone beyond assertion and utilises supporting material. Used for AO3
	Incorrect	Where the comment is incorrect and/or misunderstands the factual and/or political material expressed.
	Narrative	Valid information is deployed ineffectively – it does not answer the set question
	Not relevant	Invalid information is deployed – it is irrelevant to the set question
	Question mark	The information presented is unclear or vague and/or it is difficult to follow the logic used
	Supported judgement	Notes a clear and supported judgement. Also used for effective summative judgement. Used for AO3
	Underline – Green	Green underline AO1 (knowledge and understanding). Use vertical line for larger areas.
	Underline – Blue	Blue underline AO2 (similarities, differences and connections). Use vertical line for larger areas.
	Underline – Yellow	Yellow underline AO3 (analysis and evaluation). Use vertical line for larger areas.
	Comment box	Using mark scheme terminology provide a brief summative comment for the final mark awarded for each question

	AO1	AO2	AO3
Thorough	- Aware of a wide range of detailed and accurate knowledge. - Demonstrates fully developed understanding that shows relevance to the demands of the question. - Evidence/examples are well chosen. - Precision in the use of terminology.	- Knowledge and understanding are consistently applied to the context of the question. - Is able to form a clear, developed and convincing interpretation of evidence that is fully accurate. - Is able to fully identify and explain similarities, differences and connections where relevant.	- Analysis and evaluation skills are used in a consistently appropriate and effective way. - An effective and balanced argument is constructed. - Detailed and substantiated evaluation that offers secure judgements leading to rational conclusions.
Reasonable	- Has a range of detailed and accurate knowledge. - Demonstrates well developed understanding that is relevant to the demands of the question. - Evidence/examples are appropriate. - Generally precise in the use of terminology.	- Knowledge and understanding are mainly applied to the context of the question. - Is able to form a clear and developed interpretation of evidence that is mostly accurate. - Is partially able to identify and explain similarities, differences and connections where relevant.	- Analysis and evaluation skills are mostly used in a suitable way and with a good level of competence and precision. - An accurate and balanced argument is constructed. - Detailed evaluation that offers generally secure judgements, with some link between rational conclusions and evidence.
Adequate	- Shows some accurate knowledge. - Demonstrates partial understanding that is relevant to the demands of the question. - Evidence/examples are not always relevant. - Some use of appropriate terminology.	- Knowledge and understanding are partially applied to the context of the question. - Is able to form a sound interpretation of evidence that shows some accuracy. - Makes some attempt to identify and explain similarities, differences and connections where relevant.	- Analysis and evaluation skills are used in a suitable way with a sound level of competence but may lack precision. - An imbalanced argument is constructed. - Sound evaluation that offers generalised judgements and conclusions, with limited use of evidence.
Limited	- Limited knowledge with some relevance to the topic or question. - Little or no development seen. - Evidence/examples are not made relevant. - Very little or no use of terminology.	- Knowledge and understanding are applied in a weak manner to the context of the question. - Can only form a simple interpretation of evidence, if at all, with very limited accuracy. - Makes weak attempt to identify and explain similarities, differences and connections where relevant.	- Analysis and evaluation skills are used with limited competence. - Unsupported evaluation that offers simple or no conclusions.

Section A**Mark bands for Question 1 and Question 2**

Band	Marks	A01
3	5–6	Thorough knowledge and understanding shown, using a range of relevant evidence/examples.
2	3–4	Reasonable knowledge and understanding shown with some use of evidence/examples.
1	1–2	Limited knowledge and understanding shown with limited evidence/examples.
	0	Response not creditworthy or not attempted.

01 Using examples, briefly describe features of political party manifestos. [6]

In briefly describing features of political party manifestos candidates are expected to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of manifestos. In demonstrating this knowledge and understanding candidates are required to give an answer that is focused on features of manifestos.

Response may include, but are not limited to the following points:

- Manifestos are issued by political parties before an election, for example the 2019 Conservative Party manifesto launched with the slogan “Get Brexit done”.
- They contain a set of policies that the party stand for at a specific time.
- A manifesto will set out what policies would be implemented if the party wins power.
- They can promote new ideas and attempt to influence voters.
- They reflect party ideology, for example the Labour Party manifesto of 2019: “For the many not the few”.

02 Using examples, briefly outline methods used by social movements. [6]

In briefly describing methods used by social movements, candidates are expected to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of social movements within the United Kingdom or globally. In demonstrating this knowledge and understanding candidates are required to give an answer that is focused on the methods of social movements.

Responses may include but are not limited to the following points:

- Social movements can use collective action, usually with a common cause or agenda.
- They can use direct action, protests and often large demonstrations.
- They can use media, to gain interest, to react to an issue, or can be triggered by events.
- The use of celebrities has increased in recent years to maximise the movements’ exposure.

Section B
Mark bands for Question 3 and Question 4

Band	Marks	AO1	Marks	AO2
4	7–8	• Thorough knowledge and understanding of the set question. • Evidence/examples used are well-chosen. • Depth and range to material used. • Effective use of terminology.	13–16	• Thorough application of political knowledge to the source. • Thorough interpretation of the issue raised in the set question. • Thorough explanation of relevant connections within the set question.
3	5–6	• Reasonable knowledge and understanding of the impact of the set question. • Evidence/examples used are appropriate. • Depth and range to material used, but not in equal measure. • Good use of terminology.	9–12	• Reasonable application of political knowledge to the source. • Reasonable interpretation of the issue raised in the set question. • Reasonable explanation of relevant connections within the set question.
2	3–4	• Adequate knowledge and understanding of the impact of the set question. • Evidence/examples used are not always relevant. • Depth or range to material used. • Some appropriate use of terminology.	5–8	• Adequate application of political knowledge to the source. • Adequate of the impact of the issue raised in the set question. • Adequate explanation of relevant connections within the set question.
1	1–2	• Limited knowledge and understanding of the impact of the set question. • Evidence/examples used are not made relevant. • Very little use of terminology.	1–4	• Limited application of political knowledge to the source. • Limited interpretation of the issue raised in the set question. • Limited explanation of relevant connections within the set question.
	0	Response not creditworthy or not attempted.		

03 Read the extract below and answer the question that follows.

Extract A

A report on political participation in the UK

People are politically disengaged if they do not know, value or participate in the democratic process. In the UK, political disengagement takes different forms and is more frequent among certain groups than others. Young people and people from ethnic minority groups are less likely to register to vote or be elected.

Experts have different interpretations of why political engagement varies among different groups of people. Many experts highlight how people in different groups may not have the same opportunities and resources to get involved in political activities. There is also a risk that unequal engagement creates a vicious circle: people may not participate because they feel disaffected by the political system, which leads to further withdrawal. Further, the long-term unemployed were more politically disengaged than employed people.

[Adapted from "Political disengagement in the UK: Who is disengaged?", a *House of Commons Library Research Briefing*, November 2022, <https://researchbriefings.files.parliament.uk/documents/CBP-7501/CBP-7501.pdf> – accessed 17 October 2024]

Using Extract A as well as your own knowledge, explain the impact of non-participation on democracy. [24]

In explaining the impact of non-participation on democracy, candidates are expected to demonstrate the ability to interpret and apply political information of non-participation and the impact on democracy. In demonstrating this, candidates are required to give an answer that is focused on any relevant connections between them.

Responses may include, but are not limited to the following points:

- The extract indicates that non-participation in democracy affects some groups more than others, and this differentiated voter disenfranchisement may be self-perpetuating.
- A declining trend in turnout in general elections under the First-past-the-post (FPTP or FPP) system could indicate that voting is seen as less important to certain groups, for example younger people as compared to older citizens, which has a significant impact on democracy.
- Socio-economic structures can influence engagement with evidence showing people from disadvantaged backgrounds being less likely to vote (35% of young people from disadvantaged backgrounds voted in the 2017 election). This could lead to elitism and policies based on vested interests.
- Issues of participation can have a significant impact on decisions affecting democracy, for example the impact of referendums on issues such as Brexit and devolution.
- Alongside age, gender and race can be examined as factors for disengagement.
- Voting restrictions, for example, the inability of 16 to 17-year-olds and prisoners to vote means that they have few chances to participate in political processes.
- Abstention due to the lack of faith in politicians has also had an impact, for example that caused by the COVID enquiry and MPs' scandals, which all weaken democracy.

04 Read the extract below and answer the question that follows.

Extract B

Reform of the Human Rights Act

The Government set up an Independent Review of the Human Rights Act (HRA).

The Committee have found that there is no compelling case for reform of the HRA and found that the legislation:

- respects parliamentary sovereignty
- does not draw the UK courts into making decisions which should be made by Parliament and Government
- provides an important mechanism which allows individuals to enforce their rights
- improves the work of the criminal justice system by instilling [inspiring] a “human rights culture”.

Evidence to us confirms that the Human Rights Act has worked well. Our message to the Government Review of the Human Rights Act is “If it ain’t broke, don’t fix it!”.

[Adapted from the article “No case for reform of the Human Rights Act, says Joint Committee on Human Rights”, 4 March 2021]

Using Extract B as well as your own knowledge, explain the impact of the Human Rights Act 1998 on the protection of human rights in the UK. [24]

In explaining the impact of the Human Rights Act (1998) on the protection of human rights in the UK, candidates are expected to demonstrate the ability to interpret and apply ideas about the impact of the Human Rights Act. In demonstrating this, candidates are required to give an answer that is focused explaining the impact the Human Rights Act on the protection of human rights in the UK.

Responses may include, but are not limited to the following points:

- In the extract, the independent review believes that the HRA is sufficient in protecting rights and acting on behalf of citizens.
- The extract states that the review believes overall that the HRA is a success, so does not need radical reform, whereas the Conservative government has been in favour of replacing it with a British Bill of Rights.
- The extract states that the HRA does not undermine parliamentary sovereignty; however, the counter view is that it gives too much power to the judiciary.
- The extract states that the HRA has embedded a rights-based culture, which some have criticised for slowing down processes, such as those regarding deportation.
- The Human Rights Act makes the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) enforceable in the UK and allows appellants in the UK to use the British courts.
- Public bodies across the UK are legally required to respect Human Rights. Further, laws in the UK can be reviewed by courts, which can declare the law to be incompatible, thus pressuring Parliament to amend that law.

Section C
Mark bands for Question 5, Question 6 and Question 7

Band	Marks	AO1	Marks	AO3
4	9–10	• Thorough knowledge and understanding of the set question. • Evidence/examples used are well-chosen. • Depth and range to material used. • Effective use of terminology.	10–12	• Thorough analysis and evaluation of the issues raised in the set question. • Thorough discussion with well-developed and balanced arguments. • Structure is logical. • Writing demonstrates accurate grammar, punctuation and spelling. • An appropriate conclusion is reached based on evidence presented.
3	6–8	• Reasonable knowledge and understanding of the set question. • Evidence/examples used are appropriate. • Depth and range to material used, but not in equal measure. • Good use of terminology.	7–9	• Reasonable analysis and evaluation of the issues raised in the set question. • Reasonable discussion with well-developed and balanced arguments. • Structure is mostly logical. • Writing demonstrates reasonably accurate grammar, punctuation and spelling. • A reasonable conclusion is reached based on evidence presented.
2	3–5	• Adequate knowledge and understanding of the set question. • Evidence/examples used are not always relevant. • Depth or range to material used. • Some appropriate use of terminology	4–6	• Adequate analysis and evaluation of the issues raised in the set question. • Adequate discussion with well-developed and balanced arguments. Or Reasonable discussion with only one side of the argument. • Structure is adequate. • Writing demonstrates some errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling. • A superficial conclusion is reached.
1	1–2	• Limited knowledge and understanding of the set question. • Evidence/examples used are not made relevant. • Very little use of terminology.	1–3	• Limited analysis and evaluation of the issues raised in the set question. • Limited discussion. • Answer lacks structure. • Writing demonstrates many errors in grammar, punctuation and spelling. • No conclusion.
	0	Response not creditworthy or not attempted.		

05 How successful have different electoral systems been in improving fairness and proportionality? [22]

In explaining how successfully the different election systems used in the UK have been in improving fairness and proportionality, candidates are expected to demonstrate the ability to analyse and evaluate relevant evidence in order to construct arguments, make substantiated judgements and to draw conclusions. In demonstrating this, candidates are required to give an answer that is focused on evidence from both sides of the argument.

Responses may include, but are not limited to the following points:

- The Additional Member System (AMS) in Wales has led to coalition and minority governments, and this has increased proportionality and the representation of smaller parties such as Plaid Cymru and the Liberal Democrats.
- Single Transferable Vote (STV) in Northern Ireland has led to power sharing and a range of political parties being represented, giving a better allocation of votes and a fairer outcome.
- STV and AMS have fewer wasted votes, so could be seen to be a fairer representation of citizens' views.
- Electoral reform in Wales is seeking to improve representation of women by gender quotas.
- AMS has led to minority, coalition, and majority governments in Scotland, which was seen as unexpected due to the proportional list element.
- First-past-the-post (FPTP/FPP) can be seen as unfair to smaller parties (Reform, the Greens) unless their vote is concentrated (the SNP, the DUP)
- However, systems can be seen as maintaining dominance by larger parties, AMS and Labour in Wales, and the dominance of the SNP in Scotland.

06 “Pressure groups need substantial membership in order to exert influence.” [22]
Discuss.

In discussing whether pressure groups need substantial memberships in order to exert influence, candidates are expected to demonstrate the ability to analyse and evaluate relevant evidence in order to construct arguments, make substantiated judgements and to draw conclusions. In demonstrating this, candidates are required to give an answer that is focused on evidence from both sides of the argument.

Responses may include, but are not limited to the following points:

- In a pluralist society pressure groups are essential for protecting and promoting the rights of minorities or those with competing views.
- Pressure groups can hold government to account and ensure that legalisation is properly implemented, for example the Equality Act 2010.
- LGBTQ+ groups have successfully petitioned government on issues such as equalisation of the age of consent, adoption and serving in the military.
- Groups such as Liberty safeguard citizens against restriction of rights and campaign for justice and a fairer society.
- Pressure groups can protect workers’ rights, for example the impact of pressure from groups such as the National Union of Rail, Maritime and Transport Workers (the RMT), those representing, for example, nurses and postal workers, and the consequent rise in strike action.
- However, parliamentary legislation has been more significant in protecting citizens’ rights, for example, the Human Rights Act, and the Equality Act.
- Government implements legislation to protect rights, such as data protection and privacy rights.
- The Supreme Court could be argued as being more significant in protecting rights.

07 “Party leaders determine voting behaviour at elections.” To what extent do you agree with this statement? [22]

In discussing whether party leaders determine voting behaviour at elections candidates are expected to demonstrate the ability to analyse and evaluate relevant evidence in order to construct arguments, make substantiated judgements and to draw conclusions. In demonstrating this, candidates are required to give an answer that is focused on evidence from both sides of the argument.

Responses may include, but are not limited to the following points:

For

- In the 2019 election, Boris Johnson promoted himself as the face of “Get Brexit Done” and the only leader committed to carrying out the referendum outcome.
- There has been an increased emphasis on individual characteristics of party leaders since 2010 with the advent of televised debates.
- Leaders are often compared as potential prime ministers, with Jeremy Corbyn being portrayed as being unsuitable as a statesperson due to his radical politics, and Sir Keir Starmer as a man lacking charisma.
- The media’s focus on party leaders being incompetent also has an impact. Leaders such as Ed Miliband, Theresa May, Gordon Brown, Liz Truss and Rishi Sunak discovered this through their respective portrayals in the media.
- The media also tends to focus on negatives, for example Miliband’s consumption of a bacon sandwich and Brown’s “bigoted woman” comment.

Against

- Policy can be seen as being more important, as evidenced with Brexit and the collapse of the Red Wall in the 2019 election.
- Class, age, region, race and gender all play a part in influencing voters – more than the party leader – as seen with safe seats.
- The popularity of the leader may not reflect voting outcomes, Cleggmania in 2010, only gained 1% increase in votes cast.
- While for many, Nigel Farage is a charismatic figure, he was unable to capitalise on this and guide Reform to substantial gains in elections until 2024.
- An unpopular incumbent government – rather than leader – may have a more detrimental impact. For example, the Conservatives in 1997 and 2024, and Labour in 2010 lost voters who wanted change.