



National
Qualifications
2026

X849/76/12

**Modern Studies
Paper 2**

TUESDAY, 19 MAY
11:15 AM – 12:30 PM

Total marks — 28

Attempt **ALL** questions.

Write your answers clearly in the answer booklet provided. In the answer booklet you must clearly identify the question number you are attempting.

Use **blue** or **black** ink.

You must leave your answer booklet on your desk; if you do not, you could lose all the marks for this paper.



Total marks — 28
Attempt ALL questions

Question 1

Study Sources A, B and C then attempt the question which follows.

Source A

2024 UK General Election

The 2024 General Election result ended fourteen years of Conservative rule, with the Labour Party winning a large majority of seats in Parliament and Sir Keir Starmer becoming Prime Minister. Following the election, political scientists began analysing the outcome, focusing on patterns in voting behaviour across the electorate.

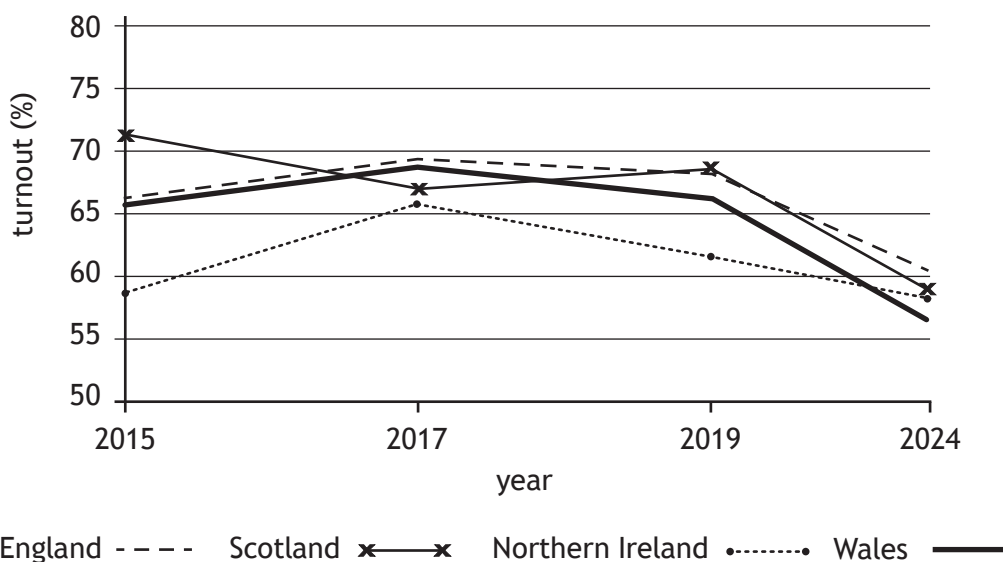
The influence of social class is an often analysed factor. Social class is based on people's jobs and income. Those in social classes A, B and C1 usually have higher-paying jobs, while those in C2, D and E earn less or are unemployed. In most general elections this century, voters in classes A and B tended to support the Conservatives, while those in D and E were more likely to vote Labour. In the 2024 election, Labour won most votes in all social class categories for the first time.

Political parties often target specific groups of voters in an attempt to win their support. In the 2024 election, as in all recent general elections, younger voters were more likely to vote Labour due to their policies, unlike older voters who gave their support to the Conservatives. In 2024, Reform UK's strongest support came from those aged 45 and over.

The media plays an important role in influencing how people vote. In the past, newspapers were the main form of media consumed by voters, but now social media and television dominate. Political parties use a wide range of campaign methods to try to increase voter participation in the electoral process and win support. In the 2024 election, according to the Electoral Commission, political parties spent £94.5 million on campaigning, compared to £72.6 million in 2019.

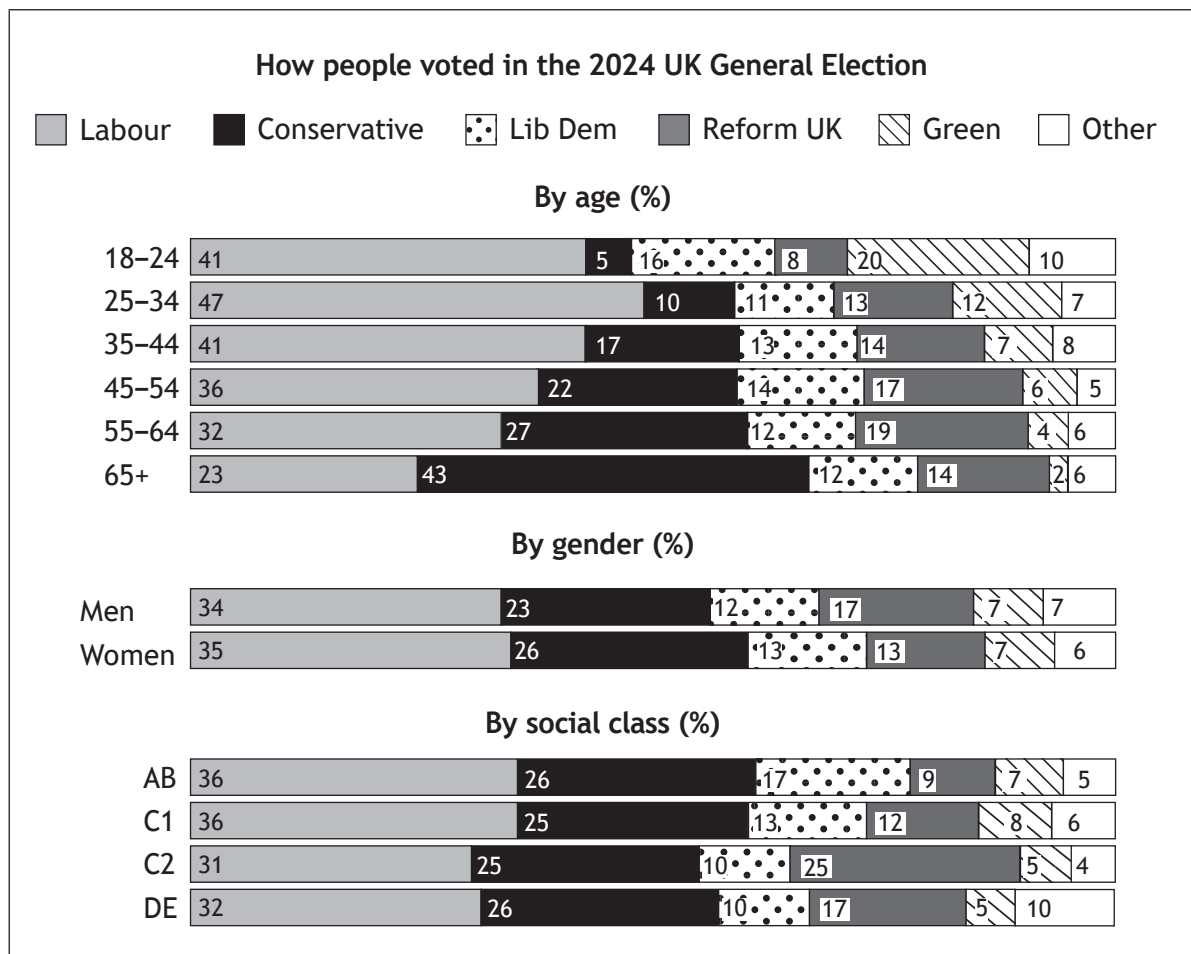
Source B

Voter turnout in UK general elections by nation, 2015–2024



Question 1 (continued)

Source C



Attempt the following question, using only the information in Sources A, B and C on page 02 and above.

What conclusions can be drawn about voting in the 2024 UK General Election?

You must draw conclusions about:

- the influence of age on voting behaviour compared to previous elections
- the influence of social class on voting behaviour compared to previous elections
- the link between campaign spending and voter turnout

You should make an overall conclusion on which factor **most** influenced voting behaviour in the 2024 UK General Election.

10

[Turn over]

Question 2

Study Sources A, B and C then attempt the question which follows.

Source A

Firearms in the USA

According to the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC), there were 46,728 gun-related deaths in the United States in 2023. Around 60% of these deaths were classed as suicides. Each of the fifty individual states in the USA have very different levels of gun violence. Some states argue that strict gun ownership laws reduce the problem, whilst other states favour lenient gun laws claiming that the ownership of firearms should be protected as a constitutional right, central to American identity and freedom. The right to carry arms is protected by the Second Amendment to the US Constitution. Some states, such as California and Illinois, have strict laws regulating the possession of guns. Others, for instance Alabama, take a weaker approach and allow citizens much easier access to the same types of weapons.

The largest group campaigning for stronger gun laws is called Everytown. Each year, Everytown gives every state a score out of 100 based on how strict their gun laws are. States with the strictest gun laws receive the highest scores. In 2024, they rated Mississippi as a 'national failure' due to having the weakest laws and highest rate of gun-related deaths.

The CDC estimates that citizens of the USA use firearms defensively to protect themselves between half a million and three million times each year. Groups such as the National Rifle Association (NRA), which is the largest pro-gun organisation in the USA, argue that being able to own, carry and conceal weapons is a right that citizens should have. They point to mental illness as the major cause of gun-related deaths and claim most homicides and suicides are mainly mental health related.

Source B

Selected state statistics

State	Population	Poverty rate (%)	Urban population (%)	Gun ownership (% of population)	Gun-related deaths (per 100,000 people)	Everytown gun law strength score
Alabama	5,108,658	15.6	57.7	55.5	24.0	16.0
California	39,431,263	12.0	94.2	28.3	7.1	91.0
Florida	23,372,215	12.3	91.5	35.3	13.2	25.5
Maine	1,395,722	10.4	38.6	46.8	12.0	33.0
Mississippi	2,939,690	18.0	46.3	55.8	28.1	4.0
Illinois	12,710,158	11.6	86.9	27.8	12.6	87.0
Texas	31,290,831	13.7	83.7	45.7	14.3	14.0

Question 2 (continued)

Source C

Gun-related deaths in the USA

A recent Gallup poll found that 57% of Americans want stricter gun laws. Public opinion on guns and gun laws often reflects political views. Republican voters generally believe that more gun ownership would reduce gun-related deaths, while Democrat voters tend to think the opposite. In general, states that vote Republican have higher rates of gun-related deaths.

A major concern in the United States is the rise of mass shootings. These are shootings that are carried out in public places in which four or more people are killed or injured. According to the Gun Violence Archive, Texas was the state with the most mass shootings in 2023 with 64 incidents, while California had the second most. President Trump claimed that such tragedies were not caused by weak gun laws, but by untreated mental illness.

Easy access to firearms is often blamed for the high levels of gun-related deaths, but many Americans point to other social factors as the main explanation. They argue that high rates of poverty and gun-related deaths go hand in hand.

In the USA, police officers are usually armed while on duty, and some police departments require officers to also carry weapons while off-duty. In 2024, Texas police shot and killed 144 people, compared to 114 in California and nine in New Hampshire.

Attempt the following question, using only the information in Sources A, B and C on page 04 and above.

To what extent is it accurate to state that weak gun laws are the biggest cause of gun-related deaths in the USA?

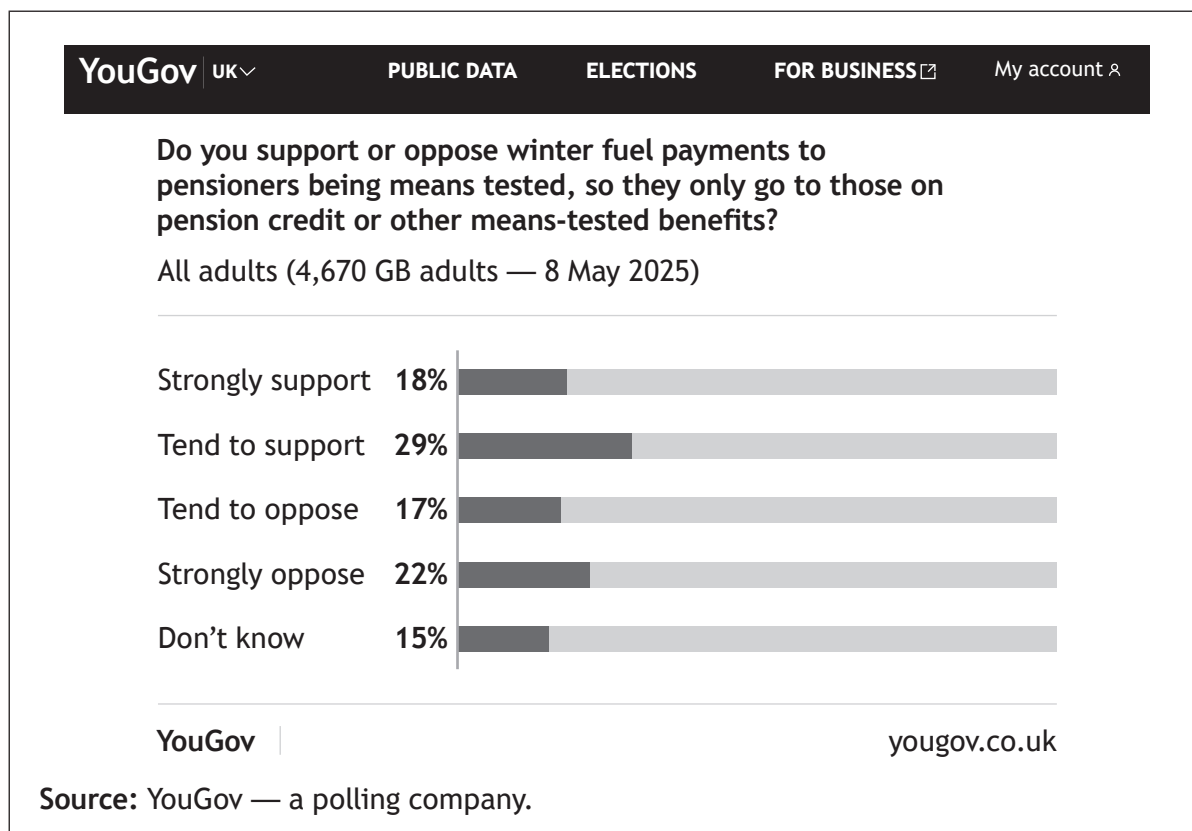
10

[Turn over

Question 3

Study Sources A, B and C then answer the question which follows.

Source A



Source B

 **Daily Mail**  

Winter fuel payment axe is PASSED by the Commons despite Keir Starmer suffering Labour revolt - with MPs warning pensioners face riding on buses all day to stay warm

By JAMES TAPSFIELD, POLITICAL EDITOR FOR MAILONLINE
10 September 2024

Source: The Daily Mail online — a UK national newspaper.

Question 3 (continued)

Source C

ageUK Age UK @age_uk Follow

Our new report released today reveals that a shockingly high number of pensioners living below or just above the poverty line will lose their Winter Fuel Payment.

Help us protect older people this winter – sign our petition today: bit.ly/3yj228F

ageUK

4 in 5 pensioners
living below or just above
the poverty line will lose
their Winter Fuel Payment.

Help us protect older people. Sign our petition.

ALT

9 October 2024 · 14.2K Views

Source: Age UK — a charity that campaigns on behalf of older people.

Attempt the following question, using only the information in Sources A, B and C on page 06 and above.

To what extent are Sources A, B and C reliable?

You must provide an overall conclusion on the most reliable source of information.

8

[END OF QUESTION PAPER]

[BLANK PAGE]

DO NOT WRITE ON THIS PAGE

Acknowledgement of copyright

Question 3 Source A Mock-up of YouGov webpage is adapted from www.yougov.com.

Qualifications Scotland has made every effort to trace the owners of copyright of this item and seek permissions. We are happy to discuss permission requirements and incorporate any missing acknowledgement. Please contact question.papers@qualifications.gov.scot.

Question 3 Source B Webpage and headline are adapted from Daily Mail Online, 10th September 2024. Reproduced by permission of dmg media licensing.

Question 3 Source C Screenshot is adapted from Age UK social media page, 9th October 2024. Reproduced by kind permission of Age UK.