



National
Qualifications
2026

2026 Politics Paper 1

Higher

Question Paper Finalised Marking Instructions

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General marking principles for Higher Politics

Always apply these general principles. Use them in conjunction with the detailed marking instructions, which identify the key features required in candidates' responses.

- (a) Always use positive marking. This means candidates accumulate marks for the demonstration of relevant skills, knowledge and understanding; marks are not deducted for errors or omissions.
- (b) If a candidate response does not seem to be covered by either the principles or detailed marking instructions, and you are uncertain how to assess it, you must seek guidance from your team leader.
- (c) Where a candidate does not comply with the rubric of the paper and answers more than one optional question, mark both responses and record the better mark.
- (d) Marking must be consistent. Never make a hasty judgement on a response based on length, quality of handwriting or a confused start.
- (e) Use the full range of marks available for each question.
- (f) The detailed marking instructions are not an exhaustive list. Award marks for other relevant points.
- (g) Award marks only where points relate to the question asked. Where candidates give points of knowledge without specifying the context, award marks unless it is clear that they do not refer to the context of the question.
- (h) To gain knowledge/understanding marks, points must be:
 - i. relevant to the issue in the question
 - ii. developed (by providing additional detail, exemplification, reasons or evidence)
 - iii. used to respond to the demands of the question (for example, evaluate, analyse)

Marking principles for each question type

For each of the question types the following provides an overview of marking principles.

The types of questions used in this paper are:

- Statement or given view. Discuss . . . [20-mark extended-response]
- To what extent . . . [20-mark extended-response]
- Analyse . . . [12-mark extended-response]
- Evaluate . . . [12-mark extended-response]
- Compare . . . [12-mark extended-response]

Extended-response questions (12 or 20 marks)

For 12-mark responses: award up to a **maximum of 8 marks** for knowledge and understanding (description, explanation and exemplification); award the remaining marks for demonstration of the higher-order skill of analysis. Where a candidate makes more analytical points than are required to gain the maximum allocation of **4 marks**, these can be awarded as knowledge and understanding marks provided they meet the criteria for this.

For 20-mark responses: award up to **8 marks** for knowledge and understanding (description, explanation and exemplification); award the remaining marks for demonstration of the higher-order skills of analysis **and** evaluation **and** structured argument. Where a candidate makes more analytical/evaluative points than are required to gain the maximum allocation of marks, these can be awarded as knowledge and understanding marks provided they meet the criteria for this.

Analyse questions

- Candidates identify parts of an issue, the relationship between these parts and their relationships with the whole; draw out and relate implications.

Compare questions

- Candidates identify differences and/or similarities.

Evaluate questions

- Candidates make a judgement based on criteria; determine the value of something.

Discuss questions

- Candidates communicate ideas and information on the issue in the statement; candidates gain marks for analysing and evaluating different views of the statement/viewpoint.

To what extent questions

- Candidates analyse the issue in the question and come to a conclusion or conclusions which involve an evaluative judgement which is likely to be quantitative in nature.

General marking guidelines for 20-mark extended responses

	1 mark	2 marks	3 marks	4 marks	5 marks	6 marks
Knowledge and understanding scope Award up to 5 marks .	One aspect with some description.	Two aspects, each with some description. OR One aspect with Detailed description.	Three aspects, each with some description. OR Two aspects with detailed description.	Four aspects covered, each with some description. OR Three aspects with detailed descriptions.	Four aspects with detailed descriptions.	
Knowledge and understanding development Award up to 5 marks . A total of 8 marks overall awarded for knowledge and understanding.	One aspect is developed with some explanations and/or exemplification.	Two aspects are developed, each with some explanation and/or exemplification. OR One aspect is developed with detailed explanation and/or exemplification.	Three aspects are developed, with some explanation and/or exemplification. OR Two aspects developed, one with detailed explanation and/or exemplification.	Three or more aspects are developed, with extended explanation and relevant exemplification.	Three or more aspects are developed, with extended and accurate explanations and development of points (showing where relevant a high level of theoretical/ conceptual understanding) with relevant exemplification.	
Analysis* Award up to 6 marks .	Award 1 mark for each analytical statement which analyses the aspects in terms of the question. Award up to a maximum of 2 marks for an analytical statement with supporting justification or evidence. Award a maximum of 4 marks for multiple comments which only focus on an individual aspect.					

	1 mark	2 marks	3 marks	4 marks	5 marks	6 marks
Structure Award up to 2 marks.	Clear structure that addresses the issue identified in the question.	Structure that clarifies the issue, presents evidence and develops a clear and consistent line of argument.				
Conclusions* Award up to 4 marks.	A straightforward conclusion that deals with the central issue in the question.	A straightforward conclusion that deals with and evaluates the central issue in the question.	A developed conclusion that directly addresses and provides an evaluation of the central issue(s) in the question.	A developed and well-argued conclusion with justifications that directly address and evaluate the central issue(s) in the question		

*Where a candidate makes more analytical/evaluative points than are required to gain the maximum allocation of marks, you may award these as knowledge and understanding marks provided they meet the criteria for this.

General marking guidelines for 12-mark extended responses

	1 mark	2 marks	3 marks	4 marks
Knowledge and understanding Scope Award up to 4 marks.	One aspect, with some description.	Two aspects, each with some description. OR One aspect, with detailed description.	Three aspects, each with some description. OR Two aspects, one with detailed description.	Three aspects, two with detailed description. OR Two aspects, each with detailed description – these should include the key points.
Knowledge and understanding Development Award up to 4 marks. A total of 8 marks overall awarded for knowledge and understanding.	One aspect is developed, with some explanation and/or exemplification.	Two aspects are developed, each with some explanation and/or exemplification. OR One aspect is developed with detailed explanation and/or exemplification.	Three aspects are developed, with some explanation and/or exemplification. OR Two aspects developed, one with detailed explanation and/or exemplification.	Three aspects developed, two with detailed explanation and/or exemplification. OR Two aspects are developed, with extended explanation and relevant exemplification.
Analysis Comments that identify relationships/implications/make judgements. Award up to 4 marks. Where a candidate makes more analytical points than are required to gain the maximum allocation of 4 marks , you may award these as knowledge and understanding marks provided they meet the criteria for this.	One relevant and accurate analytical comment.	Two different relevant and accurate analytical comments. OR One extended and/or justified/exemplified relevant analytical comment.	Three different relevant and accurate analytical comments. OR Two different relevant and accurate analytical comments, at least one of which is extended and/or justified/exemplified.	Three relevant and accurate analytical comments, at least one of which is extended and/or justified/exemplified. OR Two different relevant and accurate analytical comments, both of which are extended and/or justified/exemplified.

Marking instructions for each question

Section 1 – Political theory

Question			General marking instructions	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
1.	(a)		Candidates must demonstrate knowledge and understanding of key features of political concepts, ideologies or theories as appropriate to the question, and any links between them. Candidates must refer to the works of appropriate theorists to gain full marks; otherwise award no more than 13 marks. Knowledge and understanding Award marks for knowledge and understanding based on: - the breadth of knowledge covered - the level of detail and description of these points - the accuracy of descriptions and explanations - how these points are developed, taking into account the use of exemplification and the levels of explanations provided Award up to a maximum of 8 marks for knowledge and understanding.	20	Knowledge and understanding Award marks where candidates refer to the following aspects of the question: - definitions of power - Lukes' three faces of power (decision-making, non-decision-making and shaping desires) - Weber's three types of authority (traditional, charismatic, legal-rational) - definition of the concept of legitimacy Award marks for any other relevant points. Possible responses The following response would be worth 1 mark as it contains one aspect with some description. <i>Steven Lukes' first face of power (open face) is frequently evident in politics. The public are able to access voting records of their MPs and can also see reports and recommendations from parliamentary committees.</i> The following response would be worth 2 marks as it contains one aspect with some description (1 mark) and limited development with some exemplification or explanation (1 mark). <i>Steven Lukes' first face of power (open face) is frequently evident in 21st century politics. The public are able to access voting records of their MPs and can also see reports and recommendations from parliamentary committees. Due to committee business being published regularly on the UK Government website, members of the public are able to see what is being discussed. For example, the Health and Social Care Committee scrutinising the 10-year plan for the NHS in November 2024.</i>

Question			General marking instructions	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
			Analysis Analysis involves identifying parts, the relationship between them, and their relationships with the whole. It can also involve drawing out and relating implications. Award an analysis mark where a candidate uses their knowledge and understanding/a source to identify relevant components (for example of an idea, theory, argument) and clearly shows at least one of the following: • links between different components • links between component(s) and the whole • links between component(s) and related concepts		The following response would be worth 4 marks as it contains one aspect with detailed descriptions (2 marks) with a high degree of development based on highly relevant exemplification and detailed explanations (2 marks). <i>Steven Lukes' first face of power (open face) is evident in politics frequently. The public are able to access voting records of their MPs and can also see reports and recommendations from parliamentary committees. Due to committee business being published regularly on the UK Government website, members of the public are able to see what is being discussed. For example, the Health and Social Care Committee scrutinising the 10-year plan for the NHS in November 2024. This committee invited experts and government officials to give oral evidence on the topic. This evidence can be viewed on the UK Parliament website and is therefore very transparent. The committee examined how public funds would be allocated and spent, especially as the NHS is constantly requiring more funding due to the ageing population, increased cost of new medicines and replacing buildings such as hospitals and doctors' surgeries. As part of this, Change NHS was launched and the government received over a quarter of a million contributions from the public and other stakeholders.</i> Analysis Award up to 6 marks for answers that provide a high degree of analytical commentary, for example: The following would be awarded 1 mark as it is a straightforward analytical statement. <i>The very nature of charismatic authority means that it is heavily reliant on the personality of the individual, however there is a danger that voters can be overly swayed by this.</i> The following would be awarded 2 marks due to additional justification and supporting evidence. <i>The very nature of charismatic authority means that it is heavily reliant on the personality of the individual, however there is a danger that voters can be overly swayed by this. This can result in a form of 'style over substance' in politics, where voters are influenced by how candidates and politicians dress and speak, as opposed to the content of their policies and ideas. This then means that some</i>

Question			General marking instructions	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
			• similarities and contradictions • consistency and inconsistency • different views/interpretations • possible consequences/implications • the relative importance of components • understanding of underlying order or structure Where a candidate makes more analytical/evaluative points than are required to gain the maximum allocation of marks, you may award these as knowledge and understanding marks provided they meet the criteria for this. Conclusion(s) Candidates must reach a conclusion(s), make a judgment(s) or evaluative comment(s) about the issue in the question. Evaluation involves making judgments and/or drawing conclusions on: • the extent to which a view is supported by the evidence • the relative importance of factors • counter-arguments, including possible alternative interpretations • the overall impact/significance of the factors when taken together		<i>voters are unable to make a fully informed decision about what would be best for them when it comes to casting their vote. Charismatic authority has risen in prominence in recent years, notably with the media coverage comparing Gordon Brown with Tony Blair, or Boris Johnson with Jeremy Corbyn.</i> Conclusion Award up to 4 marks for a conclusion(s) based on the candidate's attempts to address the issue framed in the question. Candidates must also provide an evaluation/judgement of the issue addressed in the question. The following would be awarded 1 mark as it provides a straightforward, if limited, conclusion which attempts to deal with the central issue as identified by the question. <i>In conclusion, power, authority and legitimacy all continue to be relevant in 21st century politics as all three need to be evident in the decision-making process.</i> The following would be awarded 3 marks as it provides a straightforward conclusion which deals with the central issue and also attempts to evaluate the statement in the question.

Question			General marking instructions	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
			Although some candidates may offer a summative conclusion, many candidates develop detailed conclusions throughout their answers, and you should award marks to these accordingly.		<i>In conclusion, power, authority and legitimacy all continue to be relevant in 21st century politics as all three need to be evident in the decision-making process. Although there has been a change in the relevance of some of these aspects in recent times, for example the decreasing relevance of traditional authority as opposed to the increasing relevance of charismatic authority, all three concepts are relevant as power relates to the ability to achieve objectives, authority is the right to rule (in its broadest terms) and legitimacy is what transforms the power into authority. Interestingly, the concept of legitimacy has come under particular scrutiny in the 21st century. For example, when Theresa May called an early general election in 2017 as her position of prime minister had been called into question due to her taking over the role from David Cameron following the Brexit referendum result the previous year.</i> The following response would be awarded 4 marks as it provides a developed and well-argued conclusion with justifications that directly address and evaluate the key issue in the question. <i>In conclusion, power, authority and legitimacy all continue to be relevant in 21st century politics as all three need to be evident in the decision-making process. Although there has been a change in the relevance of some of these aspects in recent times, for example the decreasing relevance of traditional authority as opposed to the increasing relevance of charismatic authority, all three concepts are relevant as power relates to the ability to achieve objectives, authority is the right to rule (in its broadest terms) and legitimacy is what transforms the power into authority. Interestingly, the concept of legitimacy has come under particular scrutiny in the 21st century. For example, when Theresa May called an early general election in 2017 as her position of prime minister had been called into question due to her taking over the role from David Cameron following the Brexit referendum result the previous year. However, this backfired as the support for the Conservative Party fell and no party achieved an overall majority. This then led to the Conservatives having to rely on backing from other parties to be able to pass legislation. Ultimately, power and authority both continue to be relevant in present day politics, with legitimacy being less relevant as there have been numerous examples in politics where legitimacy seems to be lacking.</i>

Question			General marking instructions	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
					Structure Award up to 2 marks for structure as well as development of a line of argument throughout the candidate's response. For example, award high marks to answers which define the central issues(s) in the introduction, and have a clear structure with a developed line of argument. Award low or 0 marks to answers which do not explicitly identify or address the key issue in the question, or which are poorly structured, jumping between different parts of the question and therefore failing to develop a coherent line of argument.

Question		General marking instructions	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
	(b)	Candidates must demonstrate knowledge and understanding of key features of political concepts, ideologies or theories as appropriate to the question, and any links between them. Knowledge and understanding Award marks for knowledge and understanding based on: - the breadth of knowledge covered - the level of detail and description of these points - the accuracy of descriptions and explanations - how these points are developed, taking into account the use of exemplification and the levels of explanations provided Award up to a maximum of 8 marks for knowledge and understanding. Candidates must refer to the works of appropriate theorists to gain full marks; otherwise award no more than 13 marks.	20	Knowledge and understanding Award marks where candidates refer to the following aspects of the question: - key features of direct democracy, such as: it heightens the control of citizens, the public can express a view and interest without having to rely on self-serving politicians, it creates a better informed and more politically knowledgeable group of citizens, it ensures rule is legitimate – decisions will be accepted since the people made them - key features of representative democracy, such as: more practical than direct democracy, ordinary citizens don't have to be directly involved, allows government to be in the hands of those with expert knowledge, voters choose representatives to make legitimate decisions on their behalf - the work of appropriate theorists, such as Schumpeter, Plato, Madison, Rousseau, Landemore, Pateman and Arendt Award marks for any other relevant points. Possible responses The following response would be worth 1 mark as it contains one aspect with some description. <i>Direct democracy gives people the chance to be educated on the issues that they will be voting on, so that they can make an informed decision. It is the people who decide the result, so it is important that they understand the different arguments and viewpoints so they can make the best decision.</i> The following response would be worth 2 marks as it contains one aspect with some description (1 mark) and limited development with some exemplification or explanation (1 mark). <i>Direct democracy gives people the chance to be educated on the issues that they will be voting on, so that they can make an informed decision. It is the people who decide the result, so it is important that they understand the different arguments and viewpoints so they can make the best decision. This was especially noticeable in the 2014 Scottish independence referendum where many citizens researched both sides of the argument in depth before deciding whether or not to vote for Scotland becoming independent from the rest of the United Kingdom.</i>

Question			General marking instructions	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
			Analysis Analysis involves identifying parts, the relationship between them, and their relationships with the whole. It can also involve drawing out and relating implications. Award an analysis mark where a candidate uses their knowledge and understanding/a source to identify relevant components (for example of an idea, theory, argument) and clearly shows at least one of the following: • links between different components • links between component(s) and the whole • links between component(s) and related concepts		The following response would be worth 4 marks as it contains one aspect with detailed descriptions (2 marks) with a high degree of development based on highly relevant exemplification and detailed explanations (2 marks). <i>Direct democracy gives people the chance to be educated on the issues that they will be voting on, so that they can make an informed decision. It is the people who decide the result, so it is important that they understand the different arguments and viewpoints so they can make the best decision. This was especially noticeable in the 2014 Scottish independence referendum where many citizens researched both sides of the argument in depth before deciding whether or not to vote for Scotland becoming independent from the rest of the United Kingdom. Many people were engaging with debates, both watching on television and reading online, as well as in newspapers. People were influenced by different arguments, especially those related to the economy and whether or not it would be stronger in the future. This can be further shown in 2024 when Swiss voters educated themselves on the arguments of new pension initiatives, including whether the retirement age should increase. Overall, nearly 75% rejected the Swiss Government proposals.</i> Analysis Award up to 6 marks for answers that provide a high degree of analytical commentary, for example: The following would be awarded 1 mark as it is a straightforward analytical statement. <i>The nature of direct democracy often results in higher participation from citizens. This means that the decisions made have a greater mandate as they have a higher level of support.</i> The following would be awarded 2 marks due to additional justification and supporting evidence. <i>The nature of direct democracy often results in higher participation from citizens. This means that the decisions made have a greater mandate as they have a higher level of support. The fact that participation results in a high turnout means that more views are taken account of. This was evident in the 2014 Scottish independence referendum where the overall turnout was nearly 85%, a significant increase on the typical turnout rates for general elections.</i>

Question			General marking instructions	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
			• similarities and contradictions • consistency and inconsistency • different views/interpretations • possible consequences/implications • the relative importance of components • understanding of underlying order or structure Where a candidate makes more analytical/evaluative points than are required to gain the maximum allocation of marks, you may award these as knowledge and understanding marks provided they meet the criteria for this. Conclusion(s) Candidates must reach a conclusion(s), make a judgment(s) or evaluative comment(s) about the issue in the question. Evaluation involves making judgments and/or drawing conclusions on: • the extent to which a view is supported by the evidence • the relative importance of factors • counter-arguments, including possible alternative interpretations • the overall impact/significance of the factors when taken together Although some candidates may offer a summative conclusion, many candidates develop detailed conclusions throughout their answers, and you should award marks to these accordingly.		Conclusion Award up to 4 marks for a conclusion(s) based on the candidate's attempts to address the issue framed in the question. Candidates must also provide an evaluation/judgement of the issue addressed in the question. The following would be awarded 1 mark as it provides a straightforward, if limited, conclusion which attempts to deal with the central issue as identified by the question. <i>In conclusion, direct democracy is more effective than representative democracy to a large extent.</i> The following would be awarded 3 marks as it provides a straightforward conclusion which deals with the central issue and also attempts to evaluate the statement in the question. <i>In conclusion, direct democracy can indeed be considered more effective than representative democracy to a large extent as it provides a mechanism for all citizens to be involved in making decisions, as opposed to the 'chosen few'. This means that people have a greater awareness of political issues and as such, will engage in discussion and debate. A further consequence of this is greater accountability as people have been more actively involved. This has been seen to be successful in many places across the world, from the Swiss cantons to New</i>

Question			General marking instructions	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
			Structure Award up to 2 marks for the structure of the essay as well as the development of a line of argument throughout the candidate's.		<i>England in the USA, where direct democracy has provided the opportunity for heightened participation from citizens. It has also been evident in the UK in recent times, including referenda on the voting system (2011) and leaving the European Union (2016).</i> The following response would be awarded 4 marks as it provides a developed and well-argued conclusion with justifications that directly address and evaluate the key issue in the question. <i>In conclusion, direct democracy can indeed be considered more effective than representative democracy to a large extent as it provides a mechanism for all citizens to be involved in making decisions, as opposed to the 'chosen few'. This means that people have a greater awareness of political issues and as such, will engage in discussion and debate. A further consequence of this is greater accountability as people have been more actively involved. This has been seen to be successful in many places across the world, from the Swiss cantons to New England in the USA, where direct democracy has provided the opportunity for heightened participation from citizens. It has also been evident in the UK in recent times, including referenda on the voting system (2011) and leaving the European Union (2016). Notwithstanding this, although direct democracy is indeed more effective as it provides legitimacy through high turnouts of educated citizens, the fact remains that even though it is the most effective it is simply not practical for most political decisions.</i> Structure Award up to 2 marks for structure as well as development of a line of argument throughout the candidate's response. For example, award high marks to answers which define the central issues(s) in the introduction, and have a clear structure with a developed line of argument. Award low or 0 marks to answers which do not explicitly identify or address the key issue in the question, or which are poorly structured, jumping between different parts of the question and therefore failing to develop a coherent line of argument.

Section 2 – Political systems

Question			General marking instructions	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
2.	(a)		Candidates must demonstrate knowledge and understanding of key features of two political systems, as appropriate to the question, and any links between them. Knowledge and understanding Award marks for knowledge and understanding based on: - the breadth of knowledge covered - the level of detail and description of these points - the accuracy of descriptions and explanations - how these points are developed, taking into account the use of exemplification and the levels of explanations provided Award up to a maximum of 8 marks for knowledge and understanding.	20	Knowledge and understanding Award marks where candidates refer to the following aspects of the question: For example, if a candidate chooses the UK and the US: - origin of legislation: government bills, private members' bills, bills sponsored by senators and representatives - the process for passing legislation: first reading, second reading, report stage, debating - executive influence on the legislative process, including party discipline and the role of whips - role of committees - role of the upper House - position of the head of state in the legislative process Award marks for any other relevant points. Possible responses The following response would be awarded 1 mark as it contains one aspect with some description. <i>In the US, the majority of the legislation comes from the legislative branch: the House and Senate. Whereas in the UK, most bills come from the executive branch, which is usually is the largest party in the House of Commons.</i> The following response would be awarded 2 marks as it contains one aspect with some description (1 mark) and limited development with some exemplification or explanation (1 mark). <i>In the US, the majority of the legislation comes from the legislative branch: the House and Senate. For example, in 2023 the COVID-19 Origin Act was introduced by Josh Hawley, a senator from Missouri. In contrast, in the UK most bills come from the executive branch, which is usually the largest party in the House of Commons. For example, the Financial Assistance to Ukraine Act 2025 was introduced on the 6 November 2024 by the Labour government.</i>

Question			General marking instructions	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
			Analysis Analysis involves identifying parts, the relationship between them, and their relationships with the whole. It can also involve drawing out and relating implications. Award an analysis mark where a candidate uses their knowledge and understanding/a source to identify relevant components (for example of an idea, theory, argument) and clearly shows at least one of the following: links between different components		The following would be awarded 4 marks as it contains one aspect with detailed descriptions (2 marks) with a high degree of development based on highly relevant exemplification and detailed explanations (2 marks). <i>In the US, the majority of the legislation comes from the legislative branch: the House and Senate. For example, in 2023 the COVID-19 Origin Act was introduced by Josh Hawley, a senator from Missouri. Due to the separation of powers, the president cannot introduce legislation into Congress directly, they must rely on senators and representatives to sponsor their bills. For example, John Yarmuth a representative from Kentucky introduced Joe Biden's American Rescue Plan Act. Joe Biden would have found this otherwise impossible as the president does not sit in the legislature in the US. In contrast, in the UK the executive branch is fused with legislative branch, which allows the prime minister to initiate legislation directly. It is very difficult for backbench MPs to introduce new legislation and for this legislation to become law. The vast majority of private members' bills do not receive Royal Assent. For example, Labour MP Jim McMahon introduced a bill to lower the voting age in the UK to 16. However, this did not have the support of the Conservative government at the time so was not successfully put through Parliament. It is significantly easier for a government bill to be passed as they often have a majority in the House of Commons. For example, the Financial Assistance to Ukraine Act 2025 was introduced on the 6 November 2024 by the Labour government.</i> Analysis Award up to 6 marks for answers that provide a high degree of analytical commentary, for example: The following response would be awarded 1 mark as it is a straightforward analytical statement. <i>As the legislature in the US is separated from the executive, there is more independence in the proposal of bills, and a wider range of bills can be explored. However, the same is not true in the UK where the government drives the agenda and the majority of bills will be proposed by the government and will become law.</i> The following response would be awarded 2 marks due to additional justification and supporting evidence.

Question			General marking instructions	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
			- links between component(s) and the whole - links between component(s) and related concepts - similarities and contradictions - consistency and inconsistency - different views/interpretations - possible consequences/implications - the relative importance of components - understanding of underlying order or structure Where a candidate makes more analytical/evaluative points than are required to gain the maximum allocation of marks, you may award these as knowledge and understanding marks provided they meet the criteria for this. Conclusion(s) Candidates must reach a conclusion(s), make a judgment(s) or evaluative comment(s) about the issue in the question. Evaluation involves making judgments and/or drawing conclusions on: - the extent to which a view is supported by the evidence - the relative importance of factors - counter-arguments, including possible alternative interpretations - the overall impact/significance of the factors when taken together		<i>As the legislature in the US is separated from the executive, there is more independence in the proposal of bills and a wider range of bills can be explored. Many thousands of laws are proposed to Congress each session. In 2021-2023, 16,021 were proposed which means that an enormous range of policy has been considered by Congress. 1,234 laws were passed which amounts to 7% of the total proposed. In the UK, the government drives the agenda, and it is normal for 80% of the bills before parliament to be government bills, even the private members' bills being discussed are likely to only be successful if they are supported by the government. This means a narrower range of bills are discussed when compared to US Congress, but the majority of those proposed will become law.</i> Conclusion Award up to 4 marks for a conclusion(s) based on the candidate's attempts to address the issue framed in the question. Candidates must also provide an evaluation/judgement of the issue addressed in the question. The following would be awarded 1 mark as it provides a straightforward, if limited conclusion which attempts to deal with the central issue as identified by the question. <i>In conclusion, both the origin and passage of legislation are significantly different between the UK and the US as there is a much greater role for the executive in passing legislation in the UK.</i> The following would be awarded 2 marks as it provides a straightforward conclusion which deals with the central issue and also attempts to evaluate the statement in the question.

Question			General marking instructions	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
			Although some candidates may offer a summative conclusion, many candidates develop detailed conclusions throughout their answers, and you should award marks to these accordingly. Structure Award up to 2 marks for the structure of the essay as well as the development of a line of argument throughout the candidate's response.		<i>In conclusion, there are some similarities between the processes for passing laws in the UK and US, as laws have to be scrutinised in the legislature, and must pass through committee and debate stages. However, the scope of legislation is more limited in the US where the written Constitution strictly prevents Congress from passing laws that go against its principles, whereas in the UK there is parliamentary sovereignty, so the scope of laws is much wider.</i> The following response would be awarded 4 marks as it provides a developed and well-argued conclusion with justifications that directly address and evaluate the key issue in the question. <i>While on the face of it there are similarities in legislative processes across the two systems, in that laws are proposed to the system and then scrutinised by committees and debates, in reality the two systems have significant differences in terms of the scope of legislation and the ability of the government to dominate. The status of the legislature has an impact on the ease in which laws pass through each system. In the UK, parliament is sovereign, and is usually dominated by a majority government, this tends to mean that the government set the legislative programme, and the other parties have little ability to make laws. In the US, the Constitution sets the limits on what the legislature is able to pass laws on, and there is no expectation that the government should lead law making. In the US there is often a need to negotiate compromise between parties over each bill. Overall, with a high percentage of bills proposed passing, the UK has a system which acts as little more than a rubber stamp for the government, while in the US, the scope of legislation is limited, but each bill passed has to cover a much wider base and the Congress succeeds in demonstrating independence from government.</i> Structure Award up to 2 marks for structure as well as development of a line of argument throughout the candidate's response. For example, award high marks to answers which define the central issues(s) in the introduction, and have a clear structure with a developed line of argument. Award low or 0 marks to answers which do not explicitly identify or address the key issue in the question, or which are poorly structured, jumping between different parts of the question and therefore failing to develop a coherent line of argument.

Question		General marking instructions	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
	(b)	Candidates must demonstrate knowledge and understanding of key features of two political systems, as appropriate to the question, and any links between them. Knowledge and understanding Award marks for knowledge and understanding based on: - the breadth of knowledge covered - the level of detail and description of these points - the accuracy of descriptions and explanations - how these points are developed, taking into account the use of exemplification and the levels of explanations provided Award up to a maximum of 8 marks for knowledge and understanding.	20	Knowledge and understanding Award marks where candidates refer to the following aspects of the question: For example, if a candidate chooses the UK and the US: - position of the executive branch in respective constitutional arrangements (separation of powers, check and balances, Federalism, unitary state) - formal and informal powers available to the president and prime minister (hire and fire, patronage, use of advisors, royal prerogatives, executive orders) - control of the legislature (party leader, majority or minority status, role of the party whips, position of separate chambers) - role and importance of the Cabinet in the policy making process (primus inter pares, presidential domination, Cabinet sub-committees, collective responsibility, setting the agenda) - control over budget Award marks for any other relevant points. Possible responses The following would be awarded 1 mark as it contains one aspect with some description. <i>In the US, the president has the power to issue executive orders. These do not require congressional approval to take effect, but they have the same legal weight as laws passed by Congress. In the UK, government ministers have the ability to pass secondary legislation, which are laws which are passed with little scrutiny which help to execute larger pieces of legislation.</i> The following response would be awarded 2 marks as it contains one aspect with some description (1 mark) and limited development with some exemplification or explanation (1 mark). <i>In the US, the president has the power to issue executive orders. These do not require congressional approval to take effect, but they have the same legal weight as laws passed by Congress. If Congress wishes to stop an executive order, it must pass a law to stop it from happening. In his first 100 days in office, President Biden signed more than 40 executive orders, many of which were direct reversals of President Trump's policies. In the UK, government ministers have the ability to pass secondary legislation, which are laws which are passed with little scrutiny which help to execute bigger pieces of legislation. Some 3,500 pieces of secondary</i>

Question			General marking instructions	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
					<i>legislation, also known as statutory instruments, are passed each year. According to Hansard, each year statutory instruments outnumber bills passed through the legislative process by between two and five times.</i> The following would be awarded 4 marks as it contains one aspect with detailed descriptions (2 marks) with a high degree of development based on highly relevant exemplification and detailed explanations (2 marks). <i>In the US, the president has the power to issue executive orders. Essentially, when a piece of legislation has been passed by Congress, the executive decides how to carry out those laws, and this gives the president considerable power to decide how to implement. Executive orders do not require congressional approval to take effect, but they have the same legal weight as laws passed by Congress. Many important policy changes have occurred through executive orders. President Reagan used one to bar the use of federal funds for advocating abortion. President Clinton reversed this order when he came into office and President Trump turned it back again when he came into power. In his first 100 days in office, President Biden signed more than 40 executive orders, many of which were direct reversals of President Trump's policies.</i> <i>In the UK, significant power is given to government ministers to pass 'secondary legislation'. These are laws which are made by ministers to execute the bigger pieces of legislation which have been passed by Parliament. Some 3,500 pieces of secondary legislation are passed each year. According to Hansard, each year statutory instruments outnumber bills passed through the legislative process by between two and five times. Although committees do look at secondary legislation, there is not time to look at them in proper detail, and few are rejected (although the House of Lords rejected two on tax credits in 2015, which caused David Cameron to threaten to fill the House of Lords with Conservatives). This means that there are many laws that are being passed which are not going through the normal scrutiny process.</i>

Question			General marking instructions	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
			Analysis Analysis involves identifying parts, the relationship between them, and their relationships with the whole. It can also involve drawing out and relating implications. Award an analysis mark where a candidate uses their knowledge and understanding/a source to identify relevant components (for example of an idea, theory, argument) and clearly shows at least one of the following: • links between different components • links between component(s) and the whole • links between component(s) and related concepts • similarities and contradictions • consistency and inconsistency • different views/interpretations • possible consequences/implications • the relative importance of components • understanding of underlying order or structure Where a candidate makes more analytical/evaluative points than are required to gain the maximum allocation of marks, you may award these as knowledge and understanding marks provided they meet the criteria for this.		Analysis Award up to 6 marks for answers that provide a high degree of analytical commentary, for example: The following response would be awarded 1 mark as it is a straightforward analytical statement. <i>Executives in both systems can pass legislation. In the US, the president has been able to use executive orders to make laws, whereas in the UK, statutory instruments don't tend to deal with new legislation, but they do still have significant ability to shape policy.</i> The following response would be awarded 2 marks due to additional justification and supporting evidence. <i>Executives in both systems can pass legislation. In the US, the president has been able to use executive orders to make laws, whereas in the UK, statutory instruments do not tend to deal with new legislation, but they do still have significant ability to shape policy. In the US, the president has used executive orders more in recent years to make laws that they would not be able to get through Congress. In contrast, in the UK, parliamentary majorities and control of the agenda tend to mean the government are already able to make laws that they want to make, so the executive use secondary legislation to deal with the detail of those laws and ensure the faster passage of legislation which might otherwise be held up in committees.</i>

Question			General marking instructions	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
			Conclusion(s) Candidates must reach a conclusion(s), make a judgment(s) or evaluative comment(s) about the issue in the question. Evaluation involves making judgments and/or drawing conclusions on: - the extent to which a view is supported by the evidence - the relative importance of factors - counter-arguments, including possible alternative interpretations - the overall impact/significance of the factors when taken together Although some candidates may offer a summative conclusion, many candidates develop detailed conclusions throughout their answers, and you should award marks to these accordingly.		Conclusion Award up to 4 marks for a conclusion(s) based on the candidate's attempts to address the issue framed in the question. Candidates must also provide an evaluation/judgement of the issue addressed in the question. The following would be awarded 1 mark as it provides a straightforward, if limited conclusion which attempts to deal with the central issue as identified by the question. <i>In conclusion, the In conclusion, the Prime Minister of the UK has more power than the president of the US to make policy. of the UK has more power than the president of the US to make policy.</i> The following would be awarded 2 marks as it provides a straightforward conclusion which deals with the central issue and also attempts to evaluate the statement in the question. <i>In conclusion, although there are strict separation of powers in the US which limits the ability of the president to make policy, they do still have the ability to pass executive orders. However, the UK's prime minister is usually able to control a majority in Parliament, so is more effective than the president at being able to direct legislation.</i> The following response would be awarded 4 marks as it provides a developed and well-argued conclusion with justifications that directly address and evaluate the key issue in the question. <i>In conclusion, fundamentally there is a difference in expectations of presidents of the US and prime ministers of the UK. In the US, the executive is not seen as being responsible for passing laws as the strict separation of powers means that their role is to execute the legislation which has been passed by Congress, with a budget agreed by Congress. Presidents have pushed their powers to the limit by using executive orders to pass important policy, but this could be overturned by Congress. By contrast, in the UK there is an expectation that the government and prime minister should be able to carry out the manifesto that it has been elected on. This means that the prime minister should be able to direct the policy agenda; having a significant input into the budget, controlling a parliamentary majority, and the lack of separation of powers enables them to do this. This means that a UK prime minister with a majority is significantly more able to direct policymaking than the president of the US.</i>

Question			General marking instructions	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
			Structure Award up to 2 marks for the structure of the essay as well as the development of a line of argument throughout the candidate's response.		Structure Award up to 2 marks for structure as well as development of a line of argument throughout the candidate's response. For example, award high marks to answers which define the central issues(s) in the introduction, and have a clear structure with a developed line of argument. Award low or 0 marks to answers which do not explicitly identify or address the key issue in the question, or which are poorly structured, jumping between different parts of the question and therefore failing to develop a coherent line of argument.

Section 3 – Political parties and elections

Question			General marking instructions	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
3.	(a)		Candidates must demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the dominant ideas of a political party. Knowledge and understanding Award marks for knowledge and understanding based on: - the breadth of knowledge covered - the level of detail and description of these points - the accuracy of descriptions and explanations - how these points are developed, taking into account the use of exemplification and the levels of explanations provided Award up to a maximum of 8 marks for knowledge and understanding.	12	Knowledge and understanding Award marks where candidates refer to the following aspects of the question: If for example, New Labour was chosen as the dominant idea: - New Labour's ideas on taxation - New Labour's ideas on education - New Labour's ideas on nationalisation Award marks for any other relevant points. Possible responses The following response would be awarded 1 mark as it contains one aspect with some description. <i>New Labour's approach to taxation in the 1997 General Election was to show that it could be trusted with the economy and was no longer the party of 'tax and spend'. One of their key commitments was to match Conservative spending plans. This aimed to show that Labour would be financially prudent in government, and not the party which aimed to over tax and overspend.</i> The following response would be awarded 2 marks as it as it contains one aspect with some description (1 mark) and relevant exemplification (1 mark). <i>New Labour's approach to taxation in the 1997 General Election was to show that it could be trusted with the economy and was no longer the party of 'tax and spend'. One of their key commitments was to match Conservative spending plans. This aimed to show that Labour would be financially prudent in government, and not the party which aimed to over tax and overspend. For example, in their 1997 manifesto they promised 'no increase in the basic or top rates of income tax.'</i> The following response would be awarded 3 marks as it contains one aspect with detailed description (2 marks) and development with exemplification (1 mark). <i>New Labour's approach to taxation in the 1997 General Election was to demonstrate that it could be trusted with the economy and was no longer the party of 'tax and spend'. One of its key commitments was to match Conservative spending plans. This aimed to show that Labour would be financially prudent in government and not a party that overtaxed and overspent. They pledged no</i>

Question			General marking instructions	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
			Analysis Analysis involves identifying parts, the relationship between them, and their relationships with the whole. It can also involve drawing out and relating implications. Award an analysis mark where a candidate uses their knowledge and understanding/a source to identify relevant components (for example, of an idea, theory, argument) and clearly shows at least one of the following: • links between different components • links between component(s) and the whole • links between component(s) and related concepts • similarities and contradictions • consistency and inconsistency • different views/interpretations • possible consequences/implications • the relative importance of components • understanding of underlying order or structure Award up to a maximum of 4 marks for analysis.		<i>increases in National Insurance or VAT in addition to streamlining and modernising the tax and benefit system. For example, in its 1997 manifesto, the party promised ‘no increase in the basic or top rates of income tax’. This position aligned Labour more closely with the principles of social democracy, which focuses on equality of opportunity rather than equality of outcome.</i> Analysis Award up to 2 marks for analytical comments. To gain 4 marks candidates must make analytical comparative comments on each of the aspects covered in their answer, otherwise award a maximum of 3 marks. The following response would be awarded 1 mark as it is a straightforward analytical comment. <i>This shows that because Labour adopted a centrist approach to taxation in the 1997 election, they were able to capture the vote of middle-class voters, particularly those in the south of England. This was key to them winning their landslide victory in 1997, and these voters were willing to trust Labour as they didn’t feel like their income would be targeted.</i> The following response would be awarded 2 marks as it is a detailed analytical comment with supporting evidence provided. <i>This shows that because Labour adopted a centrist approach to taxation in the 1997 election, they were able to capture the vote of middle-class voters, particularly those in the south of England. This was key to them winning their landslide victory in 1997, and these particular voters were willing to trust Labour as they didn’t feel like their income would be targeted. This is demonstrated by Labour taking 37% of C1 voters, a 10% increase on 1992 and 50% of C2 voters, alongside a 12% increase in AB voters. This shows that due to their adopting of economic and taxation policies which appealed to middle-class voters, they substantially increased their vote share allowing them to win a landslide.</i>

Question			General marking instructions	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
			Where a candidate makes more analytical points than are required to gain the maximum allocation of marks, you may award these as knowledge and understanding marks provided they meet the criteria for this. For full marks, candidates must make analytical comments on all aspects of the issue identified in the question.		

Question			General marking instructions	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
	(b)		Candidates must demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the impact of media strategies used by political parties during election campaigns. Knowledge and understanding Award marks for knowledge and understanding based on: - the breadth of knowledge covered - the level of detail and description of these points - the accuracy of descriptions and explanations - how these points are developed, taking into account the use of exemplification and the levels of explanations provided Award up to a maximum of 8 marks for knowledge and understanding.	12	Knowledge and understanding Award marks where candidates refer to the following aspects of the question: - media advisors and spin doctors - newspapers and party strategies to gain their support - TV debates including leaders' debates - the use of social media - party election broadcasts Award marks for any other relevant points. Possible responses The following would be awarded 1 mark as this contains one relevant aspect with limited description. <i>Social media strategies have become increasingly important in recent years with political parties, such as Labour, spending a significant portion of their campaign funds on social media platforms. Parties use different platforms to appeal to key demographic groups and can target and vary their ads to appeal to specific areas of the country.</i> The following would be awarded 2 marks as this contains one relevant aspect with more detailed description. <i>Social media strategies have become increasingly important in recent years with political parties, such as Labour, spending a significant portion of their campaign funds on social media platforms. Parties use different platforms to appeal to key demographic groups and can target and vary their ads to appeal to specific areas of the country. Previously, parties would use sites, such as Facebook and X as part of their campaigns, but they have now branched out and are targeting different groups through sites, such as Instagram and TikTok. Traditionally, it was assumed that this appealed most to younger voters, however with changes in internet habits, and increased political awareness, social media is now a valuable tool to address all age groups.</i>

Question			General marking instructions	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
			Analysis Analysis involves identifying parts, the relationship between them, and their relationships with the whole. It can also involve drawing out and relating implications. Award an analysis mark where a candidate uses their knowledge and understanding/a source to identify relevant components (for example, of an idea, theory, argument) and clearly shows at least one of the following: • links between different components • links between component(s) and the whole • links between component(s) and related concepts • similarities and contradictions		The following would be awarded 4 marks as this contains one relevant aspect with detailed description (2 marks) and detailed development with explanation and exemplification (2 marks). <i>Social media strategies have become increasingly important in recent years with political parties, such as Labour, spending a significant portion of their campaign funds on social media platforms. Parties use different platforms to appeal to key demographic groups and can target and vary their ads to appeal to specific areas of the country. Previously, parties would use sites, such as Facebook and X as part of their campaigns, but they have now branched out and are targeting different groups through sites, such as Instagram and TikTok. Traditionally, it was assumed that this appealed most to younger voters, however with changes in internet habits, and increased political awareness, social media is now a valuable tool to address all age groups. During the 2024 General Election, X was the most used platform by all political parties. The Conservatives spent a significant portion of their budget on social media and produced slick content, such as a mock tax letter to highlight their criticism of Labour's tax policy. The Labour campaign was more organic with ad-hoc, on the spot videos showing their candidates campaigning. This shows the difference in approach between the two main parties.</i> Analysis Award up to 2 marks for analytical comments. To gain 4 marks candidates must make analytical comparative comments on each of the aspects covered in their answer, otherwise award a maximum of 3 marks. The following response would be awarded 1 mark as it is a straightforward analytical statement. <i>This demonstrates that social media can play an important role. Labour's more organic approach on social media of responding to events and relating them back to their core messages is likely to have helped win over swing voters in 2024, resulting in Labour winning the election.</i> The following response would be awarded 2 marks as it is a more detailed analytical comment with supporting evidence provided. <i>This demonstrates that social media can play an important role. Labour's more organic approach on social media of responding to events and relating them back to their core messages is likely to have helped win over swing voters in 2024,</i>

Question			General marking instructions	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
			• consistency and inconsistency • different views/interpretations • possible consequences/implications • the relative importance of components • understanding of underlying order or structure Award up to a maximum of 4 marks for analysis. Where a candidate makes more analytical points than are required to gain the maximum allocation of marks, you may award these as knowledge and understanding marks provided they meet the criteria for this. For full marks, candidates must make analytical comments on all aspects of the issue identified in the question.		<i>resulting in Labour winning the election. However, only 7% of voters identified social media as trustworthy, and 30% as useful in an Ofcom poll, therefore, social media is perhaps less impactful than other media strategies as it more likely acts as an echo chamber for dedicated supporters who will engage with and promote their own preferences.</i>

[END OF MARKING INSTRUCTIONS]