

GCSE



Chief Examiner's Report
Government
and Politics

Summer Series 2022



Foreword

This booklet outlines the performance of candidates in all aspects of this specification for the Summer 2022 series.

CCEA hopes that the Chief Examiner's and/or Principal Moderator's report(s) will be viewed as a helpful and constructive medium to further support teachers and the learning process.

This booklet forms part of the suite of support materials for the specification. Further materials are available from the specification's microsite on our website at www.ccea.org.uk.

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GCSE GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

Chief Examiner's Report

Subject Overview

This year saw the addition of an optional Controlled Assessment Task which was offered in place of the Unit 1 for those candidates in Year 12. A significant number of candidates took this opportunity and the standard of responses submitted for moderation was exceptionally high. The standard for the award overall remains very high and in line with previous series. There was some disparity between the Unit 1 and the Unit 2 with evidence of academic maturity and more developed exam technique in the Year 12 candidates who sat Unit 2. One such difference was the marks increased in the use of examples or evidence in responses. Candidates for the Unit 2 rarely missed an opportunity to provide an example thereby removing a potential cap to their marks. Candidates for Unit 1 were more likely to submit responses with no examples or evidence and this incurred a mark cap and limited their overall attainment.

Assessment Unit 1

Democracy in Action

Overview

The number of candidates entered for this unit has seen a year-on-year increase since the subject was first offered for examination in 2017. This increase is heartening and reflects the accessibility and interest in the subject in centres and with candidates. The wider range of candidates and centres has resulted in more of a spread in results which is to be expected especially with new centres coming on board who are still developing their knowledge of the application of the specification and mark schemes and we would encourage those centres in the good work they are clearly undertaking. More candidates this year left question responses blank, with no attempt to provide an answer. Overall, the standard was good with some identifiable common mistakes which resulted in lower marks being awarded as noted in the more detailed report which follows.

Section A

Candidates performed well in this section with no evidence of difficulty in interpreting questions or judging the correct amount of depth to give in responses to questions. As in other series the final two questions in this section were amongst the most successful even with those candidates who struggled with the earlier knowledge recall questions. This would indicate that having some stimulus material available is helpful to candidates when selecting between different options. This series saw a marked increase in the number of candidates who left questions completely unanswered. Centres would be advised to encourage candidates to attempt a response rather than leave a question response blank as marks can be picked up for partial responses or for responses not anticipated by the examining team but which nonetheless fulfill the question criteria. Common mistakes in this section have been highlighted below.

- Q1** This question asked candidates to identify the electoral system used in Westminster elections and while most correctly identified the First Past the Post or Simple Majority system some incorrectly identified PR-STV.
- Q2** This question asked candidates to identify one tactic used by pressure groups and the vast majority of candidates had no difficulty selecting an appropriate tactic.

- Q3** This question asked candidates to explain the term for 'government by the people' and while the majority correctly identified this as democracy, a small number left the response unanswered.
- Q4** This question asked candidates to give the term for the transfer of powers from Westminster to the Northern Ireland Assembly and while most candidates correctly identified this as transferred or devolved powers some struggled and either left the response blank or provided an incorrect response.
- Q5** This question asked candidates to identify an issue on which British parties disagree and this was exceptionally well answered with a range of appropriate and accurate responses given.
- Q6** This question asked candidates to state at what age young people can vote in Northern Ireland. Most candidates correctly identified the voting age as eighteen with a small number stating that it was sixteen.
- Q7** This question asked candidates to give one way that politicians can use the media. The responses were of a very high calibre and focused on the use of social media as a way of promoting themselves or their party.
- Q8** This question asked candidates to identify one insider pressure group and the majority of candidates were able to identify high profile insider groups such as the British Medical Association or the Confederation of British Industry others however named outsider groups such as Green Peace or Friends of the Earth. A very small minority left this response blank.
- Q9** This question asked candidates to give one feature of a democracy. This was one of the best answered questions with a range of accurate features identified and often accompanied by unnecessary elaboration. It was clear that candidates were well prepared for a question of this type.
- Q10** This question asked candidates to identify one role of a political party in a democracy and a good range of responses were provided with a small number of candidates leaving this question unanswered.
- Q11** This question asked candidates to explain what is meant by the term 'opposition party'. This was exceptionally well answered with most candidates providing a detailed response with an appropriate example.
- Q12** This question asked candidates to give one disadvantage of referenda. A small number of candidates left this question blank, however those that answered provided solid responses with appropriate levels of explanation and examples.
- Q13** This question provided candidates with a grid and asked them to match the correct term to the appropriate definition. The majority of candidates scored maximum marks in this task however a small number confused the terms 'lobbying' and 'direct action' resulting in a loss of marks.
- Q14** This question required candidates to identify which services or areas of government local councils and the NI assembly are responsible for. Nearly all candidates scored at least 4/5 in this question with a small number incorrectly attributing the registration of births, deaths and marriages to the NI Assembly rather than local councils.

- Q15** This question required candidates to utilize the source to identify how MPs can represent their constituents. Two possible ways are given in the source and the majority of candidates identified these with better candidates developing their responses to give more explanation of how this happens. A failure to utilize the source resulted in some candidate's responses being capped at Level 2. If candidates did not offer any additional methods beyond those given in the source their marks were capped at Level 2 as the question gave clear instructions that they needed to add additional information from their own knowledge. There was no need for additional evidence in this response and therefore marks were not deducted for failing to provide additional evidence or examples.
- Q16** Marks were awarded for a wide range of ways MPs can support their party although it was noted that most candidates focused on extra-parliamentary activities such as campaigning or using social media rather than voting or other parliamentary methods. Top marks went to those candidates who provided a wide range of relevant methods with explanation and some supporting evidence. As in other questions in this paper there was a tendency for candidates to fail to provide evidence which resulted in their mark being capped at a top Level 2. Centres are encouraged to make it clear to candidates that they should be able to provide at least one example for their answers to avoid any reduction in marks. Candidates who focused on one way or method were also capped at the top of Level 2.
- Q17** Candidates were required to explain why laws are important in a democracy with reference to the source provided. The source gave two reasons; to protect people and to prevent those in authority from abusing their power. Those candidates who failed to refer to the source or only provided one reason why laws are necessary were capped at the top of Level 2. The majority of candidates relied heavily on the source and in this case some found their marks were capped at the top of Level 2 for failing to provide any additional information of their own.
- Q18** This question required candidates to explain some of the features of a dictatorship with reference to the source provided. The source gives several features; rule by one person or party, a tendency to have ruling dynasties and the lack of opportunity for the people to challenge those in power. Many candidates dealt competently with these features and provided two or more additional features from their own knowledge. The responses to this question were amongst the best across the whole paper. Candidates presented a range of valid features, with some explanation and most also provided examples beyond that mentioned in the source. A very small minority of candidates had their marks capped at the top of Level 2 for failing to refer to the source, not providing examples beyond that in the source or for not giving a feature from their own knowledge.
- Q19** In this question, candidates are asked to present a one-sided argument which challenges the proposition put forward in the question. The majority of candidates dealt competently with this question, presenting a range of valid points with relevant evidence and good explanation of the points made. Scrutiny methods ranged across both parliamentary and extra-parliamentary and all were well explained. Those who failed to give any supporting evidence or who failed to go beyond one method were capped at the top of Level 2. The best answers were able to clearly identify core scrutiny methods such as debating, select committees, voting, asking questions and making use of mainstream and social media.

Q20 This was the most challenging question on the paper as it required a balanced, evaluative response with a range of points on both sides of the argument and supporting evidence. A small number of candidates compared the policies of the two biggest UK political parties instead of the NI political parties and this considerably limited the marks available for these responses. Other candidates focused only on the two biggest Northern Ireland political parties and these responses were capped at a top Level 3. The key to achieving top level marks in this response was a solid, accurate knowledge of the main policies of the parties being compared. For the majority of candidates, the policy knowledge was good however a small number failed to accurately attribute policies to the correct parties, and this reduced the marks they could attain. Some candidates provided excellent responses with specific and wide-ranging policy comparisons and reference not only to the five main parties but also smaller parties such as People Before Profit and the Green Party. Those who provided a one-sided response or a response with no examples attained a maximum level 3.

Assessment Unit 2 International Politics in Action

Overview

The standard of candidate performance in this unit continues to be very high. Centres are to be commended for the work they have done to ensure solid coverage of the specification and development of exam skills. There was considerable evidence that centres have a growing confidence in their delivery which is reflected in the skilled approach, particularly in the more evaluative questions, of candidate's responses. At the top level many candidates are scoring nearly full marks in Section A which shows solid revision and sets these candidates up for a higher grade overall. Some candidates left responses blank, and centres are advised to make it clear to candidates that they should attempt to answer every question as often unconventional responses can still pick up some marks. Overall, the standard of candidate's work was high with some exceptional centres doing very well indeed.

Section A

Candidates performed well in this section with no evidence of difficulty in interpreting questions or judging the correct amount of depth to give in responses to the two-mark questions. As in other series the final two questions in this section were amongst the most successful even with those candidates who struggled with the earlier knowledge recall questions. This would indicate that having some stimulus material available is helpful to candidates when selecting between different options. Common mistakes in this section have been highlighted below.

- Q1** The vast majority of candidates correctly answered this question.
- Q2** This question was exceptionally well answered and while most candidates cited 'The Good Friday/Belfast Agreement' in their response a number referred to other appropriate agreements such as St Andrews and Hillsborough.
- Q3** This was an exceptionally well answered question with candidates having little difficulty in identifying appropriate responses.
- Q4** The vast majority of candidates clearly identified one of the aims of the United Nations. It is clear that candidates have been well prepared by centres on this area of the specification.

- Q5** A number of candidates provided an example of a conflict where the United Nations has been considered successful as opposed to NATO or in some cases provided an example of a conflict where NATO has been considered a failure.
- Q6** Some of the answers to this question were innovative but nonetheless admissible, for example the existence of Peace Walls. Overall, the question was well answered.
- Q7** A number of candidates provided an example of a conflict where the United Nations has been considered a failure as opposed to NATO or in some cases provided an example of a conflict where NATO has been considered a success.
- Q8** The vast majority of candidates had no difficulty in identifying one reason for the formation of NATO and were able to offer some additional explanation therefore accessing the full two marks available for this question.
- Q9** A small number of candidates left this question unanswered. Those who did provide an answer were able to explain the term fully.
- Q10** This was an exceptionally well answered response with candidates providing thorough and detailed definitions of the term 'asylum seeker'.
- Q11** This question produced a range of responses with some candidates providing incorrect attempts at identifying the role of the North Atlantic Council while others provided thorough and accurate answers.
- Q12** This was a very well answered question with the vast majority of candidates explaining the term 'collective defence' accurately and with some elaboration.
- Q13** A small number of candidates incorrectly identified two benefits of migration as opposed to immigration in this question. The majority had no difficulty in identifying two benefits of immigration.
- Q14** The majority of candidates correctly matched the definitions to the terms provided. A small number failed to correctly assign one or two definitions with the most commonly confused definitions being those for NGO and the Equality Commission.
- Q15** This question required candidates to refer to the source provided in order to describe the ways the Equality Commission of Northern Ireland can protect the rights of citizens. A failure to refer to the source or to utilize the information provided resulted in some candidate's responses being capped at a Level 2. If only one way was provided the marks were capped at a Level 2. There was no need for additional evidence in this response and therefore marks were not deducted for failing to provide additional evidence. In the main candidates performed well in this question and were able to use the information in the source and draw on their own knowledge to outline numerous ways the Equality Commission for Northern Ireland can protect citizens rights.
- Q16** This question required candidates to explain how the United Nations Commissioner for Refugees (UNHCR) attempts to help refugees. Marks were awarded for a wide range of methods and most candidates provided several valid points. Top marks went to those who were able to give more than one way and made use of relevant supporting examples. Those who provided no examples or who only provided one method were capped at the top of Level 2.

- Q17** This question required candidates to describe some of the factors which can cause conflict between countries with reference to the source provided. The source described how conflict can arise over trade if countries increase import duties. Those who failed to identify at least one other factor, failed to refer to the source or did not provide examples were capped at the top of Level 2. For the most part candidates were able to make reference to two or more factors and give a brief explanation of each with relevant examples resulting in a Level 3 mark being awarded.
- Q18** This question required candidates to explain why flags and parades are such divisive issues in Northern Ireland. The responses offered a wide range of diverse reasons including cultural differences, historical traditions, ongoing disputes over parade routes and the varying views of the Parades Commission. Those who failed to provide examples or give more than explanation were capped at the top of Level 2.
- Q19** This question required candidates to make a case in support of the statement that membership of the European Union has many benefits for its members. The responses to this question stood out for both their depth and clarity and it was clear that centres were well prepared for a question on this topic. The vast majority of candidates provided a wide range of points with solid explanation and specific examples. A very small number of candidates failed to provide supporting evidence or failed to give more than one benefit and in both cases answers of this nature were capped at a top Level 2.
- Q20** This was the most challenging question on the paper as it required a balanced, evaluative response with a range of points on both sides of the argument and supporting evidence. It was very pleasing to note that the majority of candidates coped well with this question with some outstanding responses which provided detailed, wide ranging and well-structured arguments. The best responses clearly explored the links between poverty and migration and then went on to identify and explain other factors which cause migration such as war, human rights abuses and persecution and natural disasters. Those who provided a one-sided response or a response which lacked explanation or examples attained a maximum Level 3.

Principal Moderator's Report

Controlled Assessment

Overview

The provision of a controlled assessment task was part of the COVID mitigations put in place for Government and Politics GCSE. Approximately 180 candidates chose to complete the task and the corresponding standard of responses was very high overall.

Administration

The vast majority of centres had all the relevant documentation attached to the candidates work and completed correctly in preparation for moderation. Since gaps in paperwork or incomplete records cause delays in the moderation process the attention to detail by centres was much appreciated by the team. Internal standardisation records varied in style from centre to centre with some of the clearest attaching a document which demonstrated each candidate and the marks given by each of the moderators in the centre with the final mark awarded indicated. We would encourage centres to include a clear record of the internal moderation process where possible.

Marking

The vast majority of centres demonstrated a good understanding of the assessment objectives and marking was consistently within an acceptable range. No centre required adjustment which is commendable and reflects the good work being done in centres to adhere to guidelines and advice issued by CCEA.

Work Produced

Candidates' tasks were of a high standard with much evidence of the good work being undertaken in centres. The specialism of teachers and their growing familiarity with the specification and assessment objectives was reflected in the standard of work candidates produced. It was particularly evident that those centres who have been entering candidates for GCSE Government and Politics since its inception have developed the skills and techniques required to help students attain the highest grades. A range of responses were seen by the moderation team however there were very few at the lower end of the marking scale.

Assessment Unit 1 Democracy in Action

Overview

- Q1** This question was designed to focus on testing AO1 and consisted of a definition matching exercise with a grid provided. Candidates scored full or near full marks in the vast majority of cases with evidence that weaker candidates were helped by the grid matching formula.
- Q2** This question was designed to focus on the testing of A02 as it required candidates to use a source to help answer the question which followed. A small number of candidates failed to develop their responses beyond the source resulting in their mark being capped at a top Level 2. Others made good use of the source, added extra relevant information of their own but did not provide an example beyond that given in the source which again resulted in a cap in marks available. Those candidates who made good use of the source, provided additional relevant information and an example beyond the source accessed the top level and attained the highest marks available for the question. Answers displayed a good understanding of the roles of the media in a democratic society with some innovative admissible responses and excellent examples provided.
- Q3** This question was designed to focus on testing A03 and required candidates to present a one-sided argument in support of the view that pressure groups are successful because of the tactics they employ. This requires candidates to present a range of valid points with solid explanation of how these relate to the case being made and to support some of these with relevant evidence. The majority of candidates approached this question with competence and there were some outstanding examples of exemplary responses with candidates providing four or five main points all thoroughly explained with supporting evidence. Weaker candidates either provided a narrower range of points or failed to explain the valid points being made. Candidates who failed to provide evidence could not get into the top level for this question.

Contact details

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