

GCSE



Chief Examiner's Report
Government
and Politics

Summer Series 2023



Foreword

This booklet outlines the performance of candidates in all aspects of this specification for the Summer 2023 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

The standard for the award overall remains very high and in line with previous series. Candidates largely produced high quality responses across both Units. Advance Information was provided for Sections B and C of both Units and candidates made good use of this as responses were, on the whole, of a high standard. Nevertheless, the use of supporting evidence remains an ongoing issue and candidates who failed to provide examples beyond those referenced in the source incurred a mark cap which limited their overall attainment.

Assessment Unit 1

Democracy in Action

Unit 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. We are pleased to see new centres taking the qualification and were encouraged by the impressive standard of responses from candidates. The Summer 2023 series saw a wide spread of marks, but it was noteworthy that fewer candidates were scoring lower marks or leaving questions blank this year. However, there were some identifiable common mistakes which are outlined in the more detailed report below. Nevertheless, centres and candidates should be commended for the preparation undertaken for this Unit and should be encouraged by the groundwork that has been laid for success in Unit 2.

Section A

No Advance Information was provided for Section A, but candidates largely performed well in this section with little evidence of difficulty in interpreting questions or judging the appropriate amount of depth to give in responses. As in previous 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** This question asked candidates to identify the unelected House of the UK Parliament. Whilst most candidates correctly identified the House of Lords, some candidates incorrectly stated the Labour Party or Opposition which were not valid responses.
- Q2** This question asked candidates to identify one role of laws in society and candidates had no difficulty selecting an appropriate role, such as maintaining law and order.
- Q3** This question asked candidates to identify one party in the Northern Ireland Assembly. The vast majority of candidates answered this question correctly, however, a small minority identified British political parties who do not hold seats in Stormont.
- Q4** This question asked candidates to give the term for a Bill that has been passed. Candidates were rewarded for identifying 'Act' as the correct term but were also rewarded for correctly identifying a specific Act, such as the Carrier Bags Act.
- Q5** This question asked candidates to explain what is meant by the term 'constituency' and this was exceptionally well answered with a range of appropriate and accurate responses given.

- Q6** This question asked candidates to provide another name for the legislature. Surprisingly, candidates struggled with the interpretation of this question with many misreading the key term as 'legislator' which resulted in incorrect responses.
- Q7** This question asked candidates about a specific type of pressure group. The responses were of a very high calibre and almost all correctly identified sectional pressure groups.
- Q8** This question asked candidates to identify one feature of a dictatorship with a range of answers being rewarded. Responses to this question were accurate and succinct. It was clear that candidates were well prepared for a question of this type.
- Q9** This question asked candidates to give one type of media in a democracy. This was answered well with candidates being rewarded for stating both generic and specific types of media such as social media or Twitter.
- Q10** This question asked candidates about the roles of local councils. This was one of the best answered questions on the examination paper and nearly all candidates correctly identified health and hospitals as not being a role of local councils.
- Q11** This question asked candidates to name one way MPs can challenge the government. Candidates provided excellent responses with many explaining how scrutiny of the government can be attained, although this was not necessary to achieve full marks.
- Q12** This question asked candidates to give one advantage of lowering the voting age. Again, responses were excellent and well-informed.
- Q13** This question provided candidates with a range of policies and asked them to identify which were those of the Labour Party or Conservative Party. There was a mixed response to this question with some candidates scoring full marks and others confusing the two parties. The policy of scrapping Universal Credit was the most common area of confusion with a number of candidates incorrectly identifying this as a Labour policy.
- Q14** This question provided candidates with a grid and asked them to match the correct term to the definition. Candidates scored well in this question although a small minority confused Simple Majority and PR-STV.

Section B

Advance Information was provided for this section. Candidates are required to make use of Source material and their own knowledge to provide responses in this section. Whilst the vast majority of candidates continue to adhere to these instructions, some candidates failed to provide evidence beyond that given in the Source which incurred a cap on the marks awarded. Candidates are encouraged to use the Source material as stimulus, but further development is required from candidates' own knowledge of additional material to access the full range of marks.

- Q15** This question required candidates to utilise the source to identify how MLAs can influence legislation. Two possible ways were given in the source and the majority of candidates identified these with better candidates developing their responses to give more explanation of how MLAs can influence legislation. A failure to utilise the source resulted in some candidates' 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. This question requires additional information from a candidate's own knowledge to be provided. There was no need for additional evidence in this response and therefore marks were not deducted for failing to provide evidence or examples. Some candidates addressed this question from a British perspective, which was deemed valid as there are strong similarities between the methods MPs and

MLAs use to influence legislation and candidates could therefore still access the full range of marks.

- Q16** Marks were awarded for a wide range of ways MLAs can scrutinise the Executive although it was noted that most candidates focused on Question Time and Committees. 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 supporting evidence which saw marks being capped at the top of Level 2. Centres are encouraged to make it clear to candidates that they should be able to provide at least one specific example in their answers. Candidates who focused on one way or method were also capped at the top of Level 2. Candidates who addressed this question from a British perspective were able to access the full range of marks in line with the guidance provided for Question 15.
- Q17** Candidates were required to explain how citizens can take action in a democracy with reference to the source provided. The source gave two ways; through the use of petitions and via celebrity endorsements. Those candidates who failed to refer to the source or only provided one way citizens can take action were capped at the top of Level 2. Some candidates relied heavily on the source for both content and evidence and in this case their marks were capped at the top of Level 2 for failing to provide any additional information of their own. On the other hand, some candidates wrote extensive answers, which was not a requirement for accessing the full range of marks available. However, on the whole this question was answered very well with a range of points and evidence.
- Q18** This question required candidates to explain how participation in elections can be increased with reference to the source provided. The source focused on lowering the voting age as the main method. Many candidates dealt very well with this method 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 minority of candidates had their marks capped at the top of Level 2 for not providing examples beyond that in the source.

Section C

Advance Information was provided for this section. Candidates are required to produce more detailed and analytical responses in this section. Examiners noted that many candidates wrote extensive responses which are not required to access the full range of marks as these responses often contained a substantial degree of irrelevant material and digression. Candidates should be encouraged to read the question carefully before responding to ensure they focus on the key terms and content.

- Q19** In this question, candidates were asked to present a one-sided argument which supports 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. However, a significant number of candidates digressed into discussion of other types of pressure groups, particularly outsider groups. Unless this was directly linked to the question, candidates could not be rewarded for this content as it was outside the remit of the question. Those who failed to give any supporting evidence or who failed to go beyond one method were capped at the top of 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. This question was not answered as well as other questions on the paper as candidates tended to focus on the bullet points in the question rather than the main statement itself. This resulted in responses that were heavily based on evidence with little analysis or content on how the media holds those in power to account. For example, many candidates provided extensive commentary on the 'Partygate' scandal. There was also evidence of digression into accountability of the media which was not directly related to the question. Some good responses discussed how the media can report on issues that are relevant to the public or act as a deterrent to the abuse of power. 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

Unit Overview

The standard of candidate performance in this Unit continues to be very high. Centres are to be commended on the preparation that was undertaken to ensure candidates were fully prepared for the more challenging questions on the examination paper. There was considerable evidence that candidates had an in-depth knowledge of case studies and supporting evidence. At the top level, many candidates scored close to full marks in Section A which shows solid knowledge of the specification content for this Unit. However, candidates should be encouraged to read questions in Section A carefully to ensure the responses they provide are worthy of credit.

Section A

Candidates performed well in this section with no evidence of difficulty in interpreting questions or judging the appropriate amount of depth to give in responses to the two-mark questions. The availability of a grid for Question 14 allowed most candidates to score full marks which 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; however, a small minority cited the United Kingdom as a member state of the European Union which is not creditworthy post Brexit.
- Q2** This question was largely well answered with most candidates referring to welfare reform or financial support. Several candidates offered very vague responses that could not specifically be attributed to the Stormont House Agreement and were therefore not creditworthy.
- Q3** This was an exceptionally well answered question with candidates having little difficulty in identifying appropriate push factors. A very small minority identified pull factors which were not creditworthy.
- Q4** The vast majority of candidates clearly identified the correct response to this question as the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation.
- Q5** This question was answered very well with both contemporary and more historic examples being creditworthy.

- Q6** Like the previous question, responses were accurate, and many provided current examples, such as Russia.
- Q7** This question was very well answered with many candidates citing land or religious disputes as valid responses.
- Q8** The vast majority of candidates answered this question well, showing a good understanding of the historic context of the formation of the United Nations. Some responses were vague, which meant only one mark out of a possible two could be awarded.
- Q9** Candidates had an excellent knowledge of the term and provided precise and accurate definitions.
- Q10** Likewise for this question, candidates produced sophisticated answers which focused on the standard of living for migrants.
- Q11** This question was largely answered well with many candidates selecting terrorism or climate change as valid responses. A minority of candidates misread the question and provided responses that were not creditworthy.
- Q12** This question proved more difficult for candidates. The best answers were able to identify that this term refers to the United Nations Security Council. Some candidates gave generic answers in relation to legislation that were wide of the mark and did not adequately address the nature of the question.
- Q13** The majority of candidates had no difficulty in identifying two groups protected by the Equality Commission, however, a small number identified essentially the same group twice which was not valid for two marks.
- Q14** The majority of candidates correctly matched the definitions to the terms provided. A very small number failed to correctly assign one or two definitions with the most commonly confused definitions being those for independence and consociationalism.

Section B

Advance Information was provided for this section. Candidates are required to make use of Source material and their own knowledge to provide responses in this section. Whilst the vast majority of candidates continue to adhere to these instructions, some candidates failed to provide evidence beyond that given in the Source which incurred a cap on the marks awarded. Candidates are encouraged to use the Source material as stimulus, but further development is required from candidates' own knowledge of additional material to access the full range of marks.

- Q15** This question required candidates to refer to the Source to describe the ways the UK contributes to NATO. A failure to refer to the Source or to utilise the information provided resulted in some candidate's responses being capped at Level 2. If only one way was provided the marks were capped at Level 2. There was no need for additional evidence in this response and therefore marks were not deducted for failing to provide examples. 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 UK contributes to NATO with some candidates providing excellent and contemporary responses.
- Q16** This question required candidates to explain the non-military measures used by NATO. Marks were awarded for a wide range of methods and most candidates provided several valid points, however, there was a number of candidates who provided generic or vague responses with little specific reference to measures. Top marks went to those candidates who were able to give more than one measure 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 terms of the Good Friday Agreement with reference to the Source provided. The Source described how the release of political prisoners was a key term of the Agreement and further referenced paramilitary support. Those candidates 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 explain two or more factors with relevant examples resulting in a Level 3 mark being awarded.
- Q18** This question required candidates to explain some of the legacy issues that remain divisive in Northern Ireland. The responses offered a wide range of diverse issues including the definition of a victim and ongoing disputes over parade routes and the flying of flags. Some candidates referred to the Northern Ireland Protocol which is not a legacy issue and therefore not creditworthy. Those who failed to provide examples were capped at the top of Level 2.

Section C

Advance Information was provided for this section. Candidates are required to produce more detailed and analytical responses in this section. Examiners noted that many candidates wrote extensive responses which are not required to access the full range of marks as these responses often contained a substantial degree of narrative material and digression. Candidates should be encouraged to read the question carefully before responding to ensure they focus on the key terms and content.

- Q19** This question required candidates to make a case in support of the statement that migration has many social and economic benefits. This question was answered exceptionally well, 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 the top of 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, expansive and well-structured arguments. The best responses clearly referred to the question about the arguable effectiveness of the United Nations in resolving conflict and supported their answers with relevant knowledge of case studies. However, a number of candidates simply provided narrative responses on examples of conflicts they had studied with limited reference to the question which was not deemed adequate to achieve a Level 4 mark. Those who provided a one-sided response or a response which lacked explanation or examples attained a maximum Level 3.

Contact details

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