

General Certificate of Education
June 2006
Advanced Subsidiary Examination



GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS
Unit 1 Electoral Systems and Voting Behaviour

GOV1

Tuesday 6 June 2006 1.30 pm to 2.30 pm

For this paper you must have:

- an 8-page answer book

Time allowed: 1 hour

Instructions

- Use blue or black ink or ball-point pen.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book. The *Examining Body* for this paper is AQA. The *Paper Reference* is GOV1.
- Answer **one** question from Section A and **one** question from Section B.
In Section A, answer **either** Question 1 **or** Question 2.
In Section B, answer **either** Question 3 **or** Question 4.
- Do all rough work in the answer book. Cross through any work you do not want marked.

Information

- The maximum mark for this paper is 60.
- The marks for part questions are shown in brackets.
- You are reminded of the need for good English and clear presentation in your answers. All questions should be answered in continuous prose. Quality of Written Communication will be assessed in all answers.

Advice

- You are advised to read through the examination paper before you attempt the questions.
- You are advised to spend the same amount of time on each question.

Answer **one** question from Section A and **one** question from Section B.

SECTION A

Answer **either** Question 1 **or** Question 2.

Each question carries 30 marks.

EITHER

- 1 Study the extract below and answer parts (a) and (b) which follow.

Election Turnout

As well as varying over time, turnout in Britain varies geographically – from constituency to constituency – and also from person to person. In broad terms, constituencies which are more middle class, contain more owner occupiers and are generally more affluent than average, tend to have higher turnouts. In contrast, more deprived and working class constituencies tend to have lower turnouts, especially in inner-city areas. Also varying electoral contexts – in particular the marginality of the seat concerned – affect turnout levels. Probably because parties campaign harder in them, more marginal seats tend to have higher turnouts than *safe seats*.

Source: adapted from D DENVER, 'Elections and Voting' in J FISHER *et al.*,
Central Debates in British Politics, Pearson Education, 2003

- (a) Explain the term *safe seats* used in the extract. (8 marks)
- (b) 'Many factors affect electoral turnout.'
Analyse the factors which most affect the level of turnout. (22 marks)

OR

- 2 Study the extract below and answer parts (a) and (b) which follow.

Voting Behaviour

Much attention has been focused on the impact of class dealignment on voting behaviour since the 1970s. However, there has also been a change in the association between age and voting. It has been argued that for most people property and wealth increase as they grow older, and as their families grow up, so aspects of the welfare state become less important to them, resulting in a greater likelihood to vote Conservative. However, the Conservative lead among these 'grey' voters fell between the 1997 and 2001 general elections; in 1997 Conservatives enjoyed a 10 point lead over Labour whereas in 2001 it had shrunk to 5 points.

Source: adapted from B COXALL *et al.*, *Contemporary British Politics*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2003

- (a) Explain the term 'grey' voters used in the extract. (8 marks)
- (b) 'Contemporary voting behaviour is largely issue-based.' Discuss. (22 marks)

Turn over for the next Section

SECTION B

Answer **either** Question 3 **or** Question 4.

Each question carries 30 marks.

EITHER

- 3 Study the extract below and answer parts (a) and (b) which follow.

Electoral Reform

France abandoned the second ballot system for parliamentary elections in 1985, switching to a regional list system, but reintroduced the second ballot for the 1993 election. In 1994, while New Zealand adopted proportional representation in place of the *first-past-the-post* (FPTP) system, Italy moved in the opposite direction, replacing the party list with the less proportional additional member system (AMS). In the UK, although the FPTP system continues to be used for general elections, a number of more proportional systems have been introduced since 1999 for elections to the devolved bodies in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, the Greater London Assembly and the European Parliament.

Source: adapted from A HEYWOOD, *Politics*, Palgrave Macmillan, 2002

- (a) Explain the term *first-past-the-post* (FPTP) used in the extract. (8 marks)
- (b) 'The debate about electoral reform suggests that there is no single system which is better than all the others.' Discuss. (22 marks)

OR

- 4 Study the extract below and answer parts (a) and (b) which follow.

Referendums and Democracy

The theory of representative government emphasises that citizens elect representatives to take decisions on their behalf. This is preferable to the *direct democracy* of referendums because representatives are more skilled at making decisions, more likely to pursue the national interest rather than simple self-interest, more likely to take the interests of unpopular minorities into account and to seek compromises which will satisfy as many people as possible. Referendums also appear to undermine a fundamental element in the British Constitution – the sovereignty of Parliament. Nevertheless, the theoretical case for using referendums is relatively straightforward – they are democratic.

Source: adapted from D DENVER, 'Referendums' in J FISHER *et al.*,
Central Debates in British Politics, Pearson Education, 2003

- (a) Explain the term *direct democracy* used in the extract. (8 marks)
- (b) 'Referendums represent a more democratic form of participation than the opportunity to vote in elections.' Discuss. (22 marks)

END OF QUESTIONS

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