



General Certificate of Education

Government and Politics
5151/6151

GOV4 **Comparative UK/USA**
Government

Mark Scheme

2008 examination – June series

Mark schemes are prepared by the Principal Examiner and considered, together with the relevant questions, by a panel of subject teachers. This mark scheme includes any amendments made at the standardisation meeting attended by all examiners and is the scheme which was used by them in this examination. The standardisation meeting ensures that the mark scheme covers the candidates' responses to questions and that every examiner understands and applies it in the same correct way. As preparation for the standardisation meeting each examiner analyses a number of candidates' scripts: alternative answers not already covered by the mark scheme are discussed at the meeting and legislated for. If, after this meeting, examiners encounter unusual answers which have not been discussed at the meeting they are required to refer these to the Principal Examiner.

It must be stressed that a mark scheme is a working document, in many cases further developed and expanded on the basis of candidates' reactions to a particular paper. Assumptions about future mark schemes on the basis of one year's document should be avoided; whilst the guiding principles of assessment remain constant, details will change, depending on the content of a particular examination paper.

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CRITERIA FOR MARKING AS/A2 GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS

Introduction

AQA's revised Government and Politics specification has been designed to be objectives-led in that questions are set which address the assessment objectives published in the specification. The assessment objectives for A Level and AS are the same, but the weightings are different at AS and A2. Details of the weightings are given in paragraphs 7.2 and 8.4 of the specification.

The schemes of marking reflect these objectives. The mark scheme which follows is of the *levels of response* type showing that candidates are expected to demonstrate their mastery of the skills required in the context of their knowledge and understanding of Government and Politics. Mark schemes provide the necessary framework for examiners but they cannot cover all eventualities. Candidates should be given credit for partially complete answers. Where appropriate, candidates should be given credit for referring to recent and contemporary developments in Government and Politics.

Consistency of marking is of the essence in all public examinations. It is therefore of vital importance that assistant examiners apply the mark scheme as directed by the Principal Examiner in order to facilitate comparability with the marking of other options.

Before scrutinising and applying the detail of the specific mark scheme which follows, assistant examiners are required to familiarise themselves with the general principles of the mark scheme as contained in the Assessment Matrix.

Using a levels of response mark scheme

Good examining is about the **consistent** application of judgement. Mark schemes provide a framework within which examiners exercise their judgement. This is especially so in subjects like Government and Politics which in part rely upon analysis, evaluation, argument and explanation. With this in mind, examiners should use the Assessment Matrix alongside the detailed mark scheme for each question. The Assessment Matrix provides a framework ensuring a consistent, generic source from which the detailed mark schemes are derived. This supporting framework ensures a consistent approach within which candidates' responses are marked according to the Level of demand and context of each question.

Examiners should initially make a decision about which Level any given response should be placed in. Having determined the appropriate Level the examiners must then choose the precise mark to be given within that Level. In making a decision about a specific mark to award, it is vitally important to think first of the mid-range within the Level, where that Level covers more than two marks. Comparison with other candidates' responses to the same question might then suggest whether the middle mark is unduly generous or severe.

In making decisions away from the middle of the Level, examiners should ask themselves questions relating to candidate attainment, including the quality of language. The more positive the answers, the higher should be the mark awarded.

We want to avoid “bunching” of marks. Levels mark schemes can produce regression to the mean, which should be avoided. A candidate’s script should be considered by asking “Is it:

- precise in its use of factual information?
- appropriately detailed?
- factually accurate?
- appropriately balanced or markedly better in some areas than others?
- generally coherent in expression and cogent in development (as appropriate to the Level awarded)?
- well presented as to general quality of language?”

The overall aim is to mark positively, giving credit for what candidates know, understand and can do.

**A2 GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS, EXCLUDING SYNOPTIC UNIT
(GOV4, GOV5, GOV6, GOV7)**

GENERIC MARK SCHEME for Question 1 part (a) (Total: 8 marks)

	Knowledge and Understanding: Recall, Select & Deploy	Skills: Analysis & Evaluation	Communication
	AO1	AO2	AO3
	Levels 3–4 (2 marks) The candidate demonstrates a good to excellent knowledge and understanding of political data, concept(s) or term(s). Where appropriate, the candidate produces accurate and/or relevant examples to illustrate points made.	Levels 3–4 (3 – 4 marks) The candidate applies a good to excellent range of developed concepts and uses appropriate political theory to construct a clear and cogent explanation or argument.	Levels 3–4 (2 marks) The candidate communicates clearly and effectively using appropriate political vocabulary. The answer has a clear sense of direction, is focused on the question and, where appropriate, has a conclusion which flows from the discussion.
	Levels 1–2 (1 mark) The candidate demonstrates limited knowledge and understanding of political data, concept(s) or term(s). The candidate produces few or inaccurate examples and/or limited evidence to illustrate points made.	Levels 1–2 (1 – 2 marks) The candidate applies a limited range of concepts and makes little or limited use of political theory or ideas in developing an explanation or argument.	Levels 1–2 (1 mark) The candidate communicates explanations or arguments with limited clarity and effectiveness using limited political vocabulary. The answer may lack either a clear focus on the question or a sense of direction. A conclusion, where appropriate, may be offered but its relationship to the preceding discussion is modest or implicit.

**A2 GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS, EXCLUDING SYNOPTIC UNIT
(GOV4, GOV5, GOV6, GOV7)**

GENERIC MARK SCHEME for Question 1 part (b) (Total: 12 marks)

	Knowledge and Understanding: Recall, Select & Deploy	Skills: Analysis & Evaluation	Communication
	AO1	AO2	AO3
	<p>Level 4 (5 – 6 marks)</p> <p>The candidate demonstrates a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of political concepts, institutions and processes. The candidate fully addresses the requirements of the question and provides developed and effective to comprehensive interpretation. The answer also provides clear to accurate evidence and, where appropriate, good to excellent examples to illustrate points made.</p>	<p>Levels 3–4 (3 – 4 marks)</p> <p>The candidate applies a good to excellent range of developed concepts and uses appropriate political theory to construct a clear and cogent explanation or argument.</p>	<p>Levels 3–4 (2 marks)</p> <p>The candidate communicates clearly and effectively using appropriate political vocabulary. The answer has a clear sense of direction, is focused on the question and, where appropriate, has a conclusion which flows from the discussion.</p>
	<p>Level 3 (3 – 4 marks)</p> <p>The candidate demonstrates sound knowledge and understanding of political concepts, institutions and processes. The candidate clearly addresses the requirements of the question and provides sound interpretation and contextual awareness. The answer includes good examples to illustrate points made.</p>		
	<p>Levels 1–2 (1 – 2 marks)</p> <p>The candidate demonstrates slight to basic knowledge and understanding of political concepts, institutions and processes. The candidate makes a very limited attempt to address the requirements of the question and provides little to partial and reasonably effective interpretation. Answers offer limited or little evidence and few or inaccurate examples to illustrate points made.</p>	<p>Levels 1–2 (1 – 2 marks)</p> <p>The candidate applies a limited range of concepts and makes little or limited use of political theory or ideas in developing an explanation or argument.</p>	<p>Levels 1–2 (1 mark)</p> <p>The candidate communicates explanations or arguments with limited clarity and effectiveness using limited political vocabulary. The answer may lack either a clear focus on the question or a sense of direction. A conclusion, where appropriate, may be offered but its relationship to the preceding discussion is modest or implicit.</p>

**A2 GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS, EXCLUDING SYNOPTIC UNIT
(GOV4, GOV5, GOV6, GOV7)**

GENERIC MARK SCHEME for Question 1 part (c) (Total: 20 marks)

	Knowledge and Understanding: Recall, Select & Deploy	Skills: Analysis & Evaluation	Communication
	AO1	AO2	AO3
	<p>Level 4 (7 – 8 marks) The candidate demonstrates a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of political concepts/theories/institutions and processes and the relationships between them. The answer fully addresses the requirements of the question and demonstrates excellent contextual awareness.</p> <p>The answer includes excellent examples to illustrate points made.</p>	<p>Level 4 (7 – 8 marks) The candidate displays excellent awareness of the implications and demands of the question. There is an excellent focus on the specific question asked. There is a clear evaluation of political institutions, processes and behaviour which displays a sophisticated awareness of viewpoints and issues.</p> <p>Appropriate parallels and connections are clearly identified together with comparisons. A wide range of concepts is used.</p>	<p>Level 4 (4 marks) The candidate communicates arguments, explanations and conclusions with clarity. Excellent use is made of political vocabulary to construct cogent and coherent arguments. The answer has a clear sense of direction, culminating in a conclusion that flows from the preceding discussion.</p>
	<p>Level 3 (5 – 6 marks) The candidate demonstrates sound knowledge and understanding of political concepts/theories/institutions and processes and the relationships between them. The answer clearly addresses the requirements of the question and demonstrates sound contextual awareness.</p> <p>The answer includes good examples to illustrate points made.</p>	<p>Level 3 (5 – 6 marks) The candidate displays sound awareness of the implications and demands of the question. There is a clear focus on the question. There is a sound evaluation of political institutions, processes and behaviour which displays good awareness of viewpoints and issues. There is good recognition of parallels and comparisons. Appropriate concepts are used.</p>	<p>Level 3 (3 marks) The candidate communicates arguments, explanations and conclusions well. Good use is made of political vocabulary to construct clear arguments and explanations.</p> <p>The candidate produces an answer with a conclusion linked to the preceding discussion.</p>

GENERIC MARK SCHEME for Question 1 part (c) (continued)

	Knowledge and Understanding: Recall, Select & Deploy	Skills: Analysis & Evaluation	Communication
	AO1	AO2	AO3
	<p>Level 2 (3 – 4 marks) The candidate demonstrates outline knowledge and understanding of political concepts/theories/institutions and processes and some awareness of the relationships between them. The answer makes a limited attempt to address the question and demonstrates contextual awareness covering part of the question.</p> <p>The answer includes simple examples to illustrate points made.</p>	<p>Level 2 (3 – 4 marks) The candidate displays limited awareness of the implications and demands of the question resulting in a restricted focus. There is a limited evaluation of political institutions, processes and behaviour which displays partial awareness of viewpoints and issues.</p> <p>There is some recognition of basic parallels and comparisons with a limited use of concepts.</p>	<p>Level 2 (2 marks) The candidate communicates arguments and conclusions adequately with a limited use of political vocabulary.</p> <p>A conclusion is offered but its relationship to the preceding discussion may be modest or implicit.</p>
	<p>Level 1 (1 – 2 marks) The candidate demonstrates a slight and incomplete knowledge and understanding of political institutions and processes and a limited awareness of the relationships between them. There is little attempt to address the requirements of the question.</p> <p>The answer includes few, if any, examples which may be inaccurately reported or inappropriately used.</p>	<p>Level 1 (1 – 2 marks) The candidate displays little awareness of the implications and demands of the question and focus is lacking. Evaluation of political institutions, processes and behaviour is superficial, with little awareness of viewpoints and issues.</p> <p>There is little, if any, recognition of parallels and comparisons. The use of concepts is superficial and naïve.</p>	<p>Level 1 (1 mark) The answer relies upon narrative, which is not fully coherent. There is little or no use of political vocabulary.</p> <p>A conclusion, if present, is not adequately related to the preceding discussion.</p>

**A2 GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS, EXCLUDING SYNOPTIC UNIT
(GOV4, GOV5, GOV6, GOV7)**

GENERIC MARK SCHEME for Questions 2, 3 and 4 (Total: 40 marks)

	Knowledge and Understanding: Recall, Select & Deploy	Skills: Analysis & Evaluation	Communication
	AO1	AO2	AO3
	<p>Level 4 (13 – 16 marks) The candidate demonstrates a comprehensive knowledge and understanding of political concepts/theories/institutions and processes and the relationships between them. The answer fully addresses the requirements of the question and demonstrates excellent contextual awareness.</p> <p>The answer includes excellent examples to illustrate points made. The answer includes detailed and comprehensive interpretations or explanations as well as accurate evidence and relevant examples to illustrate points made.</p>	<p>Level 4 (13 – 16 marks) The candidate displays excellent awareness of the implications and demands of the question. There is an excellent and sustained focus on the specific question asked. There is clear and full evaluation of political institutions, processes and behaviour which displays a sophisticated awareness of differing viewpoints and recognition of issues.</p> <p>Appropriate parallels and connections are clearly identified together with well-developed comparisons. A wide range of concepts is used and developed.</p>	<p>Level 4 (7 – 8 marks) The candidate communicates arguments, explanations and conclusions with clarity. Excellent use is made of political vocabulary to construct cogent and coherent arguments and explanations. The answer has a clear sense of direction, culminating in a conclusion that flows from the preceding discussion.</p>
	<p>Level 3 (9 – 12 marks) The candidate demonstrates sound knowledge and understanding of political concepts/theories/institutions and processes and the relationships between them. The answer clearly addresses the requirements of the question and demonstrates sound contextual awareness.</p> <p>The answer includes developed and effective interpretations or explanations and also clear evidence and good examples to illustrate points made.</p>	<p>Level 3 (9 – 12 marks) The candidate displays sound awareness of the implications and demands of the question. There is a clear focus on the question. There is a sound evaluation of political institutions, processes and behaviour which displays good awareness of differing viewpoints and recognition of issues. There is good recognition of parallels and comparisons. Appropriate concepts are used and developed.</p>	<p>Level 3 (5 – 6 marks) The candidate communicates arguments, explanations and conclusions well. Good use is made of political vocabulary to construct clear arguments and explanations.</p> <p>The candidate produces an answer with a conclusion linked to the preceding discussion.</p>

GENERIC MARK SCHEME for Questions 2, 3 and 4 (continued)

	Knowledge and Understanding: Recall, Select & Deploy	Skills: Analysis & Evaluation	Communication
	AO1	AO2	AO3
	<p>Level 2 (5 – 8 marks) The candidate demonstrates outline knowledge and understanding of political concepts/theories/institutions and processes and some awareness of the relationships between them. The answer makes a limited attempt to address the question and demonstrates contextual awareness covering part of the question.</p> <p>The answer includes a partial and reasonably effective attempt at interpretation or explanation with some examples to illustrate points made.</p>	<p>Level 2 (5 – 8 marks) The candidate displays little awareness of the implications and demands of the question resulting in a restricted focus. There is a limited evaluation of political institutions, processes and behaviour which displays a partial awareness of differing viewpoints and issues.</p> <p>There is some recognition of basic parallels and comparisons. Arguments and explanations are undeveloped with a limited use of concepts.</p>	<p>Level 2 (3 – 4 marks) The candidate communicates arguments and conclusions adequately with a limited use of political vocabulary.</p> <p>A conclusion is offered but its relationship to the preceding discussion may be modest or implicit.</p>
	<p>Level 1 (1 – 4 marks) The candidate demonstrates a slight and incomplete knowledge and understanding of political institutions and processes and a limited awareness of the relationships between them. There is little attempt to address the requirements of the question. There is only superficial awareness, if any, of the context of the question, with little interpretation and few, if any, examples often inaccurately reported or inappropriately used.</p>	<p>Level 1 (1 – 4 marks) The candidate displays little awareness of the implications and demands of the question and focus is lacking. Evaluation of political institutions, processes and behaviour is superficial.</p> <p>Analysis shows little awareness of differing viewpoints and issues. There is little, if any, recognition of parallels and comparisons. Arguments, explanations and use of concepts are superficial and naïve.</p>	<p>Level 1 (1 – 2 marks) The answer relies upon narrative, which is not fully coherent. There is little or no use of political vocabulary.</p> <p>A conclusion, if present, is not adequately related to the preceding discussion.</p>

1**Total for this question: 40 marks**

(a) Explain the term *independent judiciary* used in the extract.

(8 marks)

This term refers to the fact that in the liberal democracies of the UK and US the judicial branch of government cannot be controlled or influenced by the executive or legislative branches of government when exercising their judicial functions. In the US the constitutional separation of powers keeps the Supreme Court separate from the other two branches and Justices cannot be removed after appointment other than by impeachment for reasons of behaviour. At the higher level of response candidates understand that judicial independence is maintained through security of tenure. Similarly in the UK judges are independent through security of tenure (removal only through an Act of Parliament) although the present position of the Law Lords (and how they are selected) within the legislative branch of government may be raised by candidates at the higher level of response. This concept should not be confused with judicial impartiality or neutrality, but may be at the bottom level of response.

(b) Using the extract and your own knowledge, critically assess the appointment processes of senior judges in the UK and US.

(12 marks)

Candidates should be familiar with the way in which judges are selected in the two countries and be aware of the criticisms of these processes. The process is seen as highly 'political' in the US but less so in the UK. In the US nomination is by the President who may seek out 'liberal' or 'conservative' justices depending on his ideology, and confirmation is by the Senate with a simple majority using its 'Advice and Consent' powers. Both will have a 'political agenda' and problems may arise when there is divided government in Washington, eg Bork's rejection in 1987 or even when not, eg when Bush's nomination of Harriet Miers had to be withdrawn in 2006 after allegations of 'cronyism' and lack of judicial experience made the confirmation problematic. Well informed candidates may be aware of the controversies surrounding the appointments of Roberts and Alito.

In the UK the selection of judges at the higher level is done by the PM using the patronage powers of the royal Prerogative, which is likely to be well understood at the higher level of response. The Lord Chancellor has been involved in the past, which has led to accusations of 'politicisation', 'cronyism' and the secrecy of the process and the 'soundings' within it. However, candidates at the highest level of response should be aware of the changes to the process and the new Judicial Appointments Commission to recommend appointments to the PM which may lessen the criticisms. Candidates may legitimately refer to the TYPES of candidates chosen to be judges in both countries and at the higher levels of response about the judicial philosophies (US) which may influence the selection process such as strict and loose constructionist views which are to do with constitutional interpretation and judicial activism/restraint.

- (c) Explain the 'centrality of the judges' in the US system of government compared with their position in the UK. (20 marks)

Candidates are invited to examine the 'centrality' of judges in both systems of government and to evaluate the differences between the two systems. In the US it will be recognised that the Supreme Court (Article 3) has powers of constitutional interpretation over the codified constitution and therefore, is regarded as the 'guardian of the Constitution'. This makes it 'central' to the US with its constitutional system of government and its codified principles and the constant need for interpretation and judicial review. This brings the Supreme Court into the heart of the constitutional and political system and gives it a role unlike that of the Law Lords in the UK where they cannot play a 'central role' because of the constitutional principle of Parliamentary Sovereignty and the absence of a codified constitution needing interpretation. These two factors need analysis from candidates at the higher levels of response with evidence and examples of 'centrality' of the Supreme Court in the US (eg landmark cases of constitutional interpretation in the US and judicial activism and the use of judicial review since 1803 to determine the 'constitutionality' of both Acts and actions) and lack of 'centrality' in the UK (eg no challenge to Acts of Parliament other than declarations of incompatibility under the HRA, and a much weaker form of judicial review known as Ultra Vires). However, at the higher level of response candidates may argue that the SC may not be as 'central' as suggested as it has no power to enforce its decisions and relies on the elected branches of government and its decisions may be overturned by constitutional amendment. They may also suggest that at times the SC is unwilling to enter the 'political thicket' in controversial areas of policy especially in periods of Judicial Restraint. Also it could be argued that in the UK judges are becoming more 'central' with the growing rights culture and judicial activism, clashes with the executive and the issuing of 'declarations of incompatibility' using the European Convention of Human Rights now incorporated into UK law under the Human Rights Act (1998) (with evidence from recent cases) and recent judicial inquiries such as Hutton. It will be up to the candidates to present a case as to the 'centrality' of the judges and their roles in both countries backed up by relevant evidence and examples from both countries.

2**Total for this question: 40 marks**

Consider the extent to which political power is still centralised and concentrated in the UK system of government and still decentralised and dispersed in the US. *(40 marks)*

Candidates should offer an evaluation of the federal system in the US and the unitary system found in the UK and discuss whether these two countries are still operating under centralised or de-centralised systems with concentrated or dispersed power within them or whether there have been significant changes in both countries to their constitutions and the way they operate. Most candidates should be able to identify what federalism means in the context of the US and explain the principle of divided power between federal and state levels of government using some evidence and examples of the principle at work. For higher marks expect references to reserved and implied powers and the significance of the 10th amendment and 'States Rights' with examples. At the very highest responses expect references to the fact that federalism is an ever-changing principle with 'new' federalism or 'creative' federalism for example being introduced and reference also to the trend either towards or away from states rights or federal dominance.

In the UK candidates should be aware, to a greater or lesser extent, of the movement in the UK towards the devolution of power in 1998 (to Scotland and Wales although with differences) and to Northern Ireland at times. At the higher levels of response expect analysis of the difference between devolution and federalism and the fact that because of parliamentary sovereignty it is power that has been devolved (to different degrees) NOT sovereignty and that the Sovereign Parliament can take back that power (as it has done with Stormont and the imposition of direct rule from Westminster) making the UK very different from the US. A good discriminator in the answer is the word STILL, which should be addressed by higher level candidates in their answers. Well informed candidates may speculate on the possibility of the break-up of the UK's unitary state with an independent Scotland in the future or introduce arguments concerning the setting up of an English Parliament. Answers will be distinguished by the use of evidence and examples from both countries to illustrate analysis and evaluation of the precise question.

3**Total for this question: 40 marks**

'A major function of any legislature is scrutiny and control of the executive.' Compare the extent to which this function is carried out effectively by the US Congress and the UK Parliament.

(40 marks)

The main focus of this question is the scrutiny and oversight functions of Congress (both chambers) and Parliament (both chambers) over their respective executives and how effectively these are carried out. Expect arguments with regard to the UK Parliament of 'Executive dominance' and 'elective dictatorship' but these terms should be fully explained in terms of their **causes** (Fusion of power, government control of Parliament through the use of the parliamentary majority, party discipline, control of the timetable and information and the backing of the Whitehall Civil Service, for example) and their **effects** (weak scrutiny from the floor of the House, in Question time, in Select and Standing Committees and the reasons **why**).

Candidates should demonstrate that although scrutiny seems weak in the UK it is relatively stronger in the US and again explain the **causes** (the separation of powers and the constitutional checks and balances, the strength of Congress and its constitutional position, the weakness of party discipline, the strength of the Congressional committee and sub-committee system and their powers of legislation and oversight in hearings on Capital Hill illustrated by examples) and the **consequences** (the difficulties of passing executive initiated legislation, gridlock, executive weakness at times in both domestic and foreign policy with examples). Candidates for higher marks should demonstrate familiarity with the scrutiny **procedures** of both Houses of both legislatures. For marks at the very highest level expect arguments that suggest the effectiveness of scrutiny in both countries legislatures over their executives depends **on variables** in both countries and that in the UK scrutiny CAN BE effective at times (with examples of when and why) and that in the US Congress is not always seen as exercising effective oversight over the actions of the executive DESPITE its constitutional powers such as since 9/11 and the Bush Presidency, particularly until 2006. Answers will be judged according to the evidence and examples presented analysing the weakness or strength of oversight/scrutiny with REASONS for the differences in effectiveness. The focus should be on, and remain on, legislatures and not executives.

4**Total for this question: 40 marks**

'Both the terms "prime-ministerial government" in the UK and "presidential government" in the US are over-simplistic descriptions of the realities of executive power in both countries.'

Discuss.

(40 marks)

The focus of the question is on the **realities** of the exercise of executive power in both countries rather than a straightforward description of executive power as exercised by the PM and the President within the respective systems of government (presidential and parliamentary) that they lead. Both terms are used to describe executive power but both are not accurate at all times and under all circumstances and the reality is far more complicated as higher level candidates will discuss. It will be recognised at the higher level of response that **how** executive power can be actually exercised is dependent on a number of key variables and that both the PM and the President **may** be powerful at times, but not others. It will be up to candidates to identify these key variables and discuss them in context. In the UK, although the term 'prime-ministerial' government is frequently used by many commentators, the reality is more complex. Candidates should recognise that the UK has 'Cabinet Government' constitutionally and the position of the PM is 'Primus inter Pares' within Cabinet although it should be recognised that in modern conditions of government the reality is that the PM **can be** far more powerful than that given the right conditions (several) that candidates should be able to recognise and give examples of. It should be recognised at higher levels of response that, unlike the PM (who as majority party leader exercises the prerogative powers of the monarch) the US President has defined constitutional powers of his own (Chief executive, chief diplomat and commander in chief) but that these (because of the separation of powers and the checks and balances) are in reality, often hard to **actually** exercise given the constitutional constraints, especially from Congress and examples should be given either from the legislative or scrutiny processes. It would also be legitimate for candidates to identify **other** constraints on the actual exercise of presidential power, eg from the Supreme Court or from public opinion to suggest that the term 'presidential government' is **over-simplistic** especially at a time of divided government and a 'lame duck' presidency. At the higher levels of response evidence and examples should be presented of the fact that at times **both** presidents and prime ministers can be weak, eg Thatcher in 1990, Bush after the 2006 mid-terms, Blair in 2007 or Brown now or can be more powerful (eg with a strong mandate or united party backing) and either unable or able to get their way, with necessary analysis of the reasons **why** at the higher levels. The analysis and evaluation should be around the term 'over-simplistic' with reference to the actual exercise of executive power in both countries.