

Politics A-Level

Revision booklet



Component 2 – UK Government

- The constitution
- Parliament
- Prime minister and the executive
- Relations between the branches

Non-core political ideas

- Anarchism

Component 2 – UK Politics

2-hour paper

1 x 30-mark Source question – (choice of 2)

1x 30-mark none Source question – (choice of 2)

1 x 24 ideology – (choice of 2)

Total 84 marks

Questions

The constitution

1. Do constitutional reforms in the UK since 1997 require further change?
2. Should Britain have a codified constitution including a bill of rights?
3. Evaluate the argument that there are more advantages to having a codified constitution than remaining with an uncodified constitution.
4. Using the source, evaluate the view that the logical next step after devolution to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland is the devolution of further power to England. (Sample materials)
5. Using the source, evaluate the view that Constitutional reforms in the UK since 1997 have been weak, incomplete and require further change (Sample materials)
6. Evaluate the claim that the concept of parliamentary sovereignty no longer exists

Parliament

1. Does Parliament carry out its functions effectively?
2. Is Parliament sufficiently representative?
3. To what extent is parliament an effective legislature?
4. To what extent are the select committees the most effective form of scrutiny of the executive?
5. To what extent are backbenchers the most effective form of scrutiny of the executive?
6. To what extent is the opposition the most effective form of scrutiny of the executive?
7. Evaluate the view that Prime Ministers Questions should be abolished and replaced by other forms of parliamentary scrutiny of the executive.
8. To what extent is Parliament an effective legislature?
9. To what extent is the House of Lords effective at scrutiny of the executive?
10. Is the House of Lords becoming more dominant?

Prime minister and the executive

1. To what extent is a minister's potential ability the most important factor in determining whether a PM will appoint them?
2. To what extent is Cabinet government no longer important?
3. To what extent is the PM now presidential?
4. To what extent are the wider political and economic events the most important factor in determining a successful PM?
5. To what extent is the PM's ability to set the agenda the most important factor in determining a successful PM?
6. To what extent is the PM's popularity the most important factor in determining a successful PM?
7. To what extent is has the concept of individual responsibility been eroded?
8. To what extent is has the concept of collective ministerial responsibility been eroded?
9. Evaluate the view that the conventions of ministerial responsibility no longer adequately account for the actions of ministers.

Relations between the branches

1. To what extent does Parliament retain sole sovereignty within the UK political system?
2. To what extent has membership of the EU eroded sovereignty of UK parliament?
3. To what extent is the executive in the UK sovereign?
4. To what extent has the UK government's control over Parliament reduced in recent years?
5. To what extent is the influence exercised by the Supreme Court too excessive?
6. Evaluate the view that judges should not exercise control over the power of government
7. To what extent is the Supreme Court independent and neutral?
8. To what extent has parliament lost sovereignty as a result of the UK's membership of the EU?

Non-core political ideas

Anarchism

1. To what extent do various anarchists agree?
2. To what extent do anarchists agree about human nature?
3. To what extent do anarchists agree about the economy?
4. To what extent do anarchists agree about society?
5. To what extent do anarchists agree about individual freedom?
6. To what extent are anarchists more united than divided?

Politics check list Component 1

Constitution	Poor	Good	Excel lent
Know the historical foundations of the UK constitution including milestones like Magna Carta (1215); Bill of Rights (1689); Act of Settlement (1701); Acts of Union (1707); Parliament Acts (1911 and 1949); The European Communities Act (1972)			
Can describe the nature of the UK constitution: it is unentrenched, uncodified and unitary			
I can describe the 'twin pillars' of parliamentary sovereignty and the rule of law and how these effect UK politics			
I can describe and understand the 5 sources of the constitution, Statute Law, Common Law, Conventions, Authoritative Works, Treaties			
I can describe why there was a demand for constitutional change in the 1990s including modernisation, democratisation, decentralisation and protection of rights			
I can describe in detail constitutional changes from 1997-2010 under New Labour including House of Lords, electoral reform, Human Rights Act, Devolution and Supreme Court			
I can describe in detail constitutional changes from 2010-15 under coalition and beyond including Fixed Term Parliament Act and further devolution to Wales			
I can describe in detail constitutional changes from 2015 including and further devolution to Scotland and Wales			
I can describe as how devolution operates in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland including what are the devolved and reserved powers			
I can evaluate to what extent devolution should be extended to England			
I can evaluate to what extent devolution has really dispersed power in the UK			
I can evaluate to what extent the reforms since 1997 are effective, democratic and should be taken further			
I can evaluate the arguments surrounding whether the UK should have a codified constitutions			

Key terms
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Constitution Unentrenched (entrenched), Uncodified (codified), Unitary (federal), Parliamentary sovereignty, The rule of law, Statute law, Common law, Conventions, Authoritative works, Treaties, Devolution, devolved powers, Reserved powers

Parliament	Poor	Good	Excel lent
Know the structure of parliament			
Know a brief history of parliament			
How members of HoC and HoL are selected			
List the functions of parliament			
Describe the powers of the House of Commons			
Describe the powers of the House of Lords			
Assess whether the balance of power between the houses is appropriate			
Assess the arguments for further HoL reform			
Describe all the stages of the legislative process			
How the two houses interact during the legislative process including the Salisbury Convention and Money Bills			
Assess how effective parliament is as a legislature			
Assess how effective select committees and other committees are at challenging the executive			
Assess how effective back benchers are at challenging the executive, including the importance of parliamentary privilege			
Assess how effective the opposition are at challenging the executive			
Assess how effective questions, including PMQs are at challenging the executive			
Assess how effective select committees are at challenging the executive			
Assess how effective parliament is at its function of representing the UK			
Assess how effective parliament is as a pool for talent of ministers			

Key terms (key principles/ Tensions/ Thinkers)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Parliament, House of Commons, House of Lords, Confidence and supply, Salisbury Convention, Parliamentary privilege, Legislative bills, Public bill committees, Backbenchers, Select committees, Opposition

PM and executive	Poor	Good	Excel lent
Describe the structure of the executive, the PM, ministers and government departments			
Understand the main roles, including proposing legislation, proposing a budget, and making policy decisions within laws and budget			
Understand the main powers of the Executive, including Royal Prerogative powers, initiation of legislation and secondary legislative power.			
Understand the concept of individual ministerial responsibility with examples			
Understand the concept of individual ministerial responsibility with examples			
To evaluate whether ministerial responsibility has changed or eroded in recent decades			
Understand the factors that could govern a PMs choice of cabinet minister			
Be able to evaluate how power is balanced between PM and executive and what factors can depend on			
The power of cabinet and PM to determine policy and dictate events using examples of from one prime minster pre-1997			
The power of cabinet and PM to determine policy and dictate events using examples of from one prime minster post-1997			

Key terms (key principles/ Tensions/ Thinkers)
Executive, Cabinet, Minister, Government, department, Royal prerogative, Secondary legislation, Individual responsibility, Collective responsibility, Presidential government

Relationship between the branches	Poor	Good	Excellent
Role and composition of the Supreme Court in UK (country with no written constitution)			
To understand The key operating principles of judicial neutrality and judicial independence and difference between them			
To understand the extent of judicial neutrality and independence			
The degree to which the Supreme Court influences both the Executive and Parliament, including the doctrine of <i>ultra vires</i> and judicial review.			
The influence and effectiveness of Parliament in holding the Executive to account.			
The influence and effectiveness of the Executive in attempting to exercise dominance over Parliament.			
The extent to which the balance of power between Parliament and the Executive has changed			
To understand the structure of the EU and how it was formed			
The aims of the EU, including the 'four freedoms' of the single market, social policy, and political and economic union and the extent to which these have been achieved			
Understand the role of the EU in policy making			
Evaluate the impact of the EU, including the main effects of at least two EU policies and their impact on the UK political system and UK policy making			
Understand the distinction between legal sovereignty and political sovereignty			
Be able to evaluate the extent to which sovereignty has moved between different branches of government.			
Where sovereignty can now be said to lie in the UK			

Key terms
Supreme Court, Judicial neutrality, Judicial independence, Judicial review, Elective dictatorship, European Union (EU), Four freedoms (EU), Legal sovereignty, Political sovereignty, <i>Ultra vires</i>

Anarchism	Poor	Good	Excellent
Understand the historical context of emergence of Anarchism			
To understand how core principles of liberalism relate to:			
Rejection of the state (and why they reject it – commanding, controlling etc)			
Liberty			
Anarchy as order			
Economic freedom			
Utopian			
To have at least 2 examples of anarchism in action – Spain/ Barcelona in the 1930s/ Zapatistas/ Reclaim the Streets			
To Understand the essential difference between collectivist and individualist anarchists			
To be able to describe and understand the different branches of anarchism (A- Communist/ A- Syndicalist/ Mutualism/ Egoism/ A- Capitalism) and whether they belong to collectivist or individualist traditions			
Know and apply the key principles of the work of Max Stirner			
Know and apply the key principles of the work of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon			
Know and apply the key principles of the work of Mikhail Bakunin			
Know and apply the key principles of the work of Peter Kropotkin			
Know and apply the key principles of the work of Emma Goldman			
To describe what unites all anarchists			
To be able to apply differences across a range of questions and themes			

Key terms (key principles/ Tensions/ Thinkers)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Power, Authority, Government, State, Altruism, Autonomy, Direct action • Syndicalism, Direct democracy, Solidarity, Mutualism • Collectivisation, Mutual aid, Insurrection