



ADVANCED
General Certificate of Education
2010

Government and Politics

Assessment Unit A2 1

Comparative Government

[AQ211]

FRIDAY 21 MAY, AFTERNOON



AQ211

TIME

2 hour 15 minutes.

INSTRUCTIONS TO CANDIDATES

Either

Answer Questions **1, 2, 3, 4** and **5(a)** or **5(b)** in **Option A**: The United Kingdom and the United States of America

Or

Answer Questions **1, 2, 3, 4** and **5(a)** or **5(b)** in **Option B**: The United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland.

INFORMATION FOR CANDIDATES

The total mark for this paper is 100.

Quality of written communication will be assessed in Questions **1, 3, 4** and **5**.

ADVICE TO CANDIDATES

You are advised to take account of the marks for each question in allocating the available examination time.

For your chosen option, you should spend approximately **40 minutes** in answering the question in Section A and should make reference to the Source in your answer.

Option A: The United Kingdom and the United States of America

Section A: The US Constitution

Source

For over two centuries the Constitution has remained in force because its Framers successfully separated and balanced governmental powers to safeguard the interests of majority rule and minority rights, of liberty and equality, and of the central and state governments. More a concise statement of national principles than a detailed plan of governmental operation, the Constitution has evolved to meet the changing needs of a modern society profoundly different from the eighteenth century world in which its Framers lived.

Adapted from www.senate.gov/civics/constitution

- 1 With reference to the Source and any other relevant information you have studied, discuss the extent to which the Constitution has protected the rights of minorities in the United States. [30]

Section B: Government in the United Kingdom and the United States of America

- 2 Explain what is meant by the term “limited government”. Support your answer with a relevant example. [5]
- 3 Explain how members of the House of Representatives carry out their representative function. [10]
- 4 Compare and contrast the effectiveness of the US Congress and UK Parliament as scrutinising bodies. [25]
- 5 **Either**
 - (a) “There are fewer differences today between the powers of the US President and the UK Prime Minister.” Evaluate this view. [30]

Or

 - (b) “Neither the US President nor the UK Prime Minister can afford to ignore their respective legislatures.” Evaluate this view. [30]

Option B: The United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland

Section A: The Irish Constitution

Source

The constitution grants the Supreme Court authority to interpret its provisions and to strike down the laws of the Oireachtas and activities of the Government it finds to be unconstitutional. Under judicial review the quite broad meaning of certain articles has come to be explored and expanded upon since 1937. In the 1973 case of *McGee v. Attorney General* the court invoked this right to strike down laws banning the sale of contraceptives. The court has also issued a controversial interpretation of Article 40.3, which prohibits abortion. In the 1992 case of *the Attorney General v. X*, (commonly known simply as the “X case”) the Supreme Court ruled that abortion could be allowed under certain circumstances.

Adapted from: www.wikipedia.org/wiki/Constitution_of_Ireland

- 1 With reference to the Source and any other relevant material you have studied, discuss how well the Irish constitution has protected individual rights. [30]

Section B: Government in the United Kingdom and the Republic of Ireland

- 2 Explain what is meant by the term “brokerage”. Support your answer with a relevant example. [5]
- 3 Explain the role that Question Time plays in Dail Eireann. [10]
- 4 Compare and contrast the effectiveness of Parliamentary and Dail committees. [25]
- 5 **Either**
- (a) “Irish governments have much less control over the legislature than their British counterparts.” Evaluate this view. [30]
- Or**
- (b) “Both British and Irish Prime Ministers are more at risk from their own party colleagues than they are from their opponents.” Evaluate this view. [30]

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