A Level Politics

June 2019 exemplars with examiner comments
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June 2019 series

- The June 2019 A level question papers, mark schemes and examiner reports can be found on the Edexcel website:
  - A level Politics > Course materials > Exam materials
- ResultsPlus data for the whole cohort is also available:
  - A level Politics > Course materials > Teaching and learning materials > Guide
UK Component 1 & 2

Source questions
Challenges with sources (1)

- Some did not discuss the source content sufficiently, which is not ideal, as the source content needs to be the basis of the answer.
- Students should be more explicit in their use of the source so examiners can be sure that they are basing their answer on the source.
- Better responses cited the source regularly, making effective use of quotes to guide the direction of the discussion.
- At the lower end of the scale were students who did little more than use the source as a comprehension exercise, explaining both sides of the arguments.
Challenges with sources (2)

- Some students simply agreed with one side in the contested source debate and failed to provide evaluation to reject the opposing view.
- Candidates were unable to offer a clear line of argument throughout, instead just summarising both sides of the argument, and suffered accordingly with their AO3 marks.
- So the key weakness here (and across all 30-mark answers) was a failure to commit to one side and say why that side was the stronger.
- Where candidates did try to contrast arguments from the source, quite often they were unrelated arguments, so the comparison was hard to assess.
Challenges with sources (3)

• Better responses compared the opposing arguments directly, rather than in separate halves of the essay.
• The best answers were able to consider opposing arguments in conjunction with one another before reaching a judgement as to which was the stronger argument.
• These responses also made evaluative judgements throughout their essay, offering sustained evaluation throughout, so their concluding paragraph flowed from what had been argued throughout, but this was rare.
1a. Using the source, evaluate the view that the outcomes of general elections are stable and predictable.

1 (a) The source below considers the factors which deliver success for political parties in general elections. It reflects on whether the outcomes of general elections are predictable or whether the electorate can spring surprises, making the results more volatile.

Some people claim that success in a general election for a political party depends on stable and predictable forces. Few seats change hands in a general election and voting patterns are predictable and constant. In studies of voting behaviour factors such as an individual's class and family background combined with the area in which they live all merge together to provide a clear indication of the way an individual will vote. On this basis, opinion polls accurately indicate the outcomes of a general election. When many people are asked, they readily identify with both a specific class and endorse the policies of a major political party. The dice is loaded from the start and outcomes of general elections are all too predictable and fixed.

However, many now doubt the idea of predictability and the assumptions on which it is based. Instead of predictability they infer unpredictability and volatility with an inability to forecast accurately the outcome of how the public will vote. In fact in 2015, 111 seats changed hands and in 2017, 70. General elections and success in them is built around capturing ideas and having media support. What the political parties say in new policies and their manifestos matters greatly. Opinion polls, as the general election in 2017 showed, are no longer good indicators of the outcome. If anything, the 2017 general election illustrated the importance of age and education as indicators of how people vote. The media can make and break a political party. Riding the wave of media attacks, a political party must have a good leader who can weather any storm and connect with the masses. This is what Blair and Thatcher did and was the basis of their success. Policies and leaders are the crucial factors and, as such, they are the leading indicators for success at the polls.
This Source offers various arguments which argue that the outcomes of general elections are stable and predictable. Social factors such as class and region have an important role, alongside a partisan focus of party loyalty, the general policies of a major political party. Nevertheless, more recently the predictability has drifted, and according to the source, the media, leadership and manifestos have drawn our more instability in the outcome of elections. Therefore, with the widespread advancement of social media and voter tendency focused on short-term rational choices, it appears that outcomes of general elections are not stable and predictable.
However, the concept ofbuzz social factors dictating how people vote is no longer a convincing concept due to the fact that according to the source that new factors are taking over and finding new ways to influence voting. This is partly to do with the idea that the country is going through a period of partisan realignment giving way for factor such as “capturing ideas and having media support” as well as “2017 illustrating the importance of age and education.” These variable factors which
This counter-point shows how, having recognised one side of the argument in their first section (*not shown*), they critique it with the argument they consider stronger. Their judgement can be seen throughout the paragraph.
One of the key arguments which the source suggests that
elections are predictable, due to the rare change of seats.
This is suggested through ‘few seats change hands’
indicating that the concept of safe seats is still very
prevalent within UK politics, and that the electorate are
unlikely to change/influence the change of a ‘safe’ seat.
This proves that elections are therefore predictable,
as seats such as Jeremy Corbyn’s constituency enjoy a
predictable stable outcome. However, although there is
evidence to suggest seats rarely change hands,
the argument suggesting change is far more
common. After the 2017 snap election, it has become

This opening point shows a good linking sentence at the end where they begin their evaluation by rejecting the view they have just outlined. In their next paragraph (not shown), the student goes on to discuss why elections are actually not predictable any more.
These **conclusions** all do the job of concluding with the view they have argued throughout the essay.

In conclusion, whilst elections can be predicted by the way in which separate demographics vote and by opinion polls. These are only predictions and so can be wrong like in 2017 with Corbyn winning more than expected. Arguably any party could win an election if they “connect with the masses” like “Blair or Thatcher.” This shows that elections can be not only this but the influence of swing seats can change the outcome of elections very easily thus making elections hard to predict especially when the election is close.
1b. Using the source, evaluate the view that proportional representation would improve elections to the Commons.

(b) This source is adapted from a Hansard report of a debate in the House of Commons held in October 2017. More than 100,000 people had signed a petition calling for the introduction of proportional representation for elections to the Westminster parliament. Here are extracts from the speeches made by Steve Double MP (Conservative Party) and Caroline Lucas MP (Green Party).

**Steve Double MP**

Proportional representation will damage democracy by putting more power into the hands of parties. First-past-the-post (FPTP) invariably delivers strong and stable government. Votes are not wasted for we have seen turnout increase in recent times. It is clear and easy to understand. In addition it prevents extremist parties from gaining seats. There is a direct link between the MP and their constituency. The FPTP system enables us to exchange our strongly, passionately held views in the House of Commons. My party is committed to FPTP as the best system for this country.

**Caroline Lucas MP**

FPTP is damaging the legitimacy of our system of governance. A winner-takes-all approach to elections promotes adversarial politics. It encourages each of the major parties to seek to defeat their opposition completely, negating the need for post-election cooperation. Policy is likely to change dramatically when governments change. Countries with proportional representation (PR) systems outperform those with FPTP systems; PR would be likely to encourage more people to vote. It is very hard to persuade people to vote when they live in so-called ‘safe seats’. We would also improve the chances of electing a parliament that better reflects modern Britain.

(Sourced from: Crown Copyright)
First part the post is a simple plurality electoral system, which possesses some benefits which the source acknowledges. However, it must be noted that the wider implications of a ‘winner takes all’ system, clearly indicate that proportional representation would improve elections in the House of Commons.

Here the introduction has served its purpose. They have referenced the source, given context to the question and expressed a judgement.
Our current electoral system for Westminster elections is First Past The Post (FPTP), a simple plurality system. This essay will use the given source to evaluate the arguments for changing to a proportional voting system, such as STV (which is used in gor elections into the Normen but gone devolved governments). It will evaluate the benefits to proportional systems, such as greater power to parties, greater legitimacy in the results and encouraged participation. It will contrast the benefits against the best benefits of FPTP, such as creating strong and stable governments, preventing extremism, and increasing participation. It will conclude that PR should not be implemented as it would not ensure strong governance, which could hinder the participation in elections.

In this introduction, the student has done the same, but at considerably more length. There is a debate as to whether this was the most efficient use of the time given that the previous examples fulfilled the same purpose in a much shorter amount of space and time.
Proponents also contend that the issue of wasted votes is not such a significant issue to this day. Steve Double MP mentions how turnout has been increasing in recent years. This argument maintains an extent of weight, as from the lows of 59% in 2001, turnout has been slowly recovering as it reached 74% in 2017. As such, low turnout is not necessarily an inherent flaw of first past the post. Perhaps it is reflective of a longer term decline in trust for political institutions, fuelled by recent scandals. If this is the case, the introduction of a proportional...
In their **counter-point**, the same student is considering the alternative view to the view expressed in the opening point in depth (AO2), as well as expressing a view (AO3) at the beginning.

However, this argument must be rejected as it is true that first past the post is a key causation of depressed turnout, not other factors such as a lack of trust. Caroline Lucas states that proportional representation would encourage more people to vote, which would thus increase turnout. This is because the issue of safe seats and tactical voting would be addressed. For example, the additional member system provides voters with greater choice by electing a constituency MP and a regional party representative. Therefore, under first past the post, Conservative voters living in North Islington or Hull face a lack of voter choice, meaning that turnout is low. However, if AMS was implemented, these Tory voters would have a greater tendency to vote.
Second, it could be argued that proportional representation would improve elections in the House of Commons because it would make Parliament more representative. Lucas argues that, ‘We would also improve chances of electing a parliament that better reflects modern Britain.’ This argument is evidenced by the fact that FPTP creates wasted votes, which means that the make-up of the House of Commons does not really represent how people voted. There are many wasted votes in the UK because of FPTP, as seen in 2015, when 74% of votes were wasted because they were for one of the losing parties. PR is much more representative, for example it is used to elect the Northern Ireland Assembly where Sinn Fein won 24% of the vote and a corresponding 28 out of 106 seats. Therefore proportional representation would be more representative of the UK and could arguably be used to improve elections in the House of Commons. However, this argument is not wholly convincing as FPTP is not totally unrepresentative, as Double argues, ‘There is a direct link between the MP and their constituency.’ Fundamentally, under FPTP there are single-member constituencies with MPs who listen to their constituent’s concerns through surgeries and telephone and email correspondence and voice these concerns in Parliament. Because proportional representation is not based on constituency voting, there would not be individuals in the House of Commons who would directly represent the people’s views in Parliament. Therefore, proportional representation should not be used for elections in the House of Commons because FPTP provides effective representation.

In this **point and counter-point**, the student is discussing how representative each system is.

Again, they are using examples to explore in depth the point they are making.

Here they are refuting the above point by suggesting that representation is not just about numbers, but about making a connection and supporting one’s constituents. They also begin and end their counter-point with their view.
1a. Using the source, evaluate the view that devolution is in danger of undermining the unity of the UK.

1 (a) This source has been adapted from the House of Lords Select Committee on the Constitution report entitled ‘The Union and devolution,’ published in 2016. This report considered the effect of devolution on the United Kingdom and the Union.

England, Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales are stronger united than apart. Yet today, the Union is threatened by continuing demands for independence and also the tensions and inequalities created as policies diverge between devolved bodies – over health, education or tax, for example.

Power has been devolved in an uneven way: a power-sharing executive, a national assembly or parliament, a combined authority, or English Votes for English Laws. The cumulative impact of devolution on the unity of the United Kingdom has not been properly considered. The benefits of unity and the Union have been taken for granted. A coherent vision for the shape and structure of the United Kingdom is required, without which there cannot be constitutional stability.

On the other hand, devolution has been achieved without undermining our unitary state and without the need for federalism or codification of our constitution. The four nations are ‘stronger together,’ in a relationship of clear mutual respect. Although nationalism remains strong in the devolved nations, devolution has satisfied some demands for self-government, avoiding a break-up of the union. Policy divergences reflect local democracy and identities, while maintaining the integrity of the United Kingdom.

(Source: adapted from https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/id201516/idselect/idconst/149/149.pdf)
In the source, the new can be taken that devolution has been successful and enhanced UK democracy through bringing government closer to the people, calming demands for independence and for devolutionary power within the UK's uncodified, unitary constitution. However, the source also presents the view that devolution poses a threat to the unity of the UK due to unequal representation, fueling demands for independence and nationalism, and undermining UK democracy through challenging parliamentary sovereignty. Overall, the strongest view in the source is that devolution is in danger of undermining the unity of the UK.

Here the student has written an **introduction** by referencing the source and summarising both sides of it, but concluding that one side is stronger.
example, Scotland has reached the most devolution as it demanded it more. Wales however, has a smaller population, smaller economy and relies more on Westminster. Only in 2019 has the Welsh Act given them their own parliament suggesting that asymmetrical devolution may be beneficial. Giving away power at a slower pace to each nation who got an appropriate time. In this case, the argument against devo is again stronger of devolution clearly helps nations to satisfy demands of each nation, thus creating more respect and the desire to break up the union is incredibly low.
Here, in a point and counter-point, the student is using the source to consider both sides while still identifying which one is the stronger one in their opinion.
Here, in their **opening point**, the student is using the source effectively by referencing it and then by exploring the point raised in more detail by bringing in own knowledge, showing good AO1 skills.

The student continues towards the end of the section to reject an opposing argument as being weaker, showing good AO3 skills.
1b. Using the source, evaluate the view that Prime Ministers have too much power.

(b) This source is adapted from the House of Commons Political and Constitutional Reform Committee report entitled the ‘Role and powers of the Prime Minister’ published in 2014. This examines whether there is adequate public understanding and clarity about the Prime Minister’s role and powers, and whether the checks and balances on those powers are sufficient.

Prime Ministers have significant powers of patronage such as appointing ministers. They set the Cabinet agenda and are able to control the Cabinet - including deciding who chairs the most important Cabinet committees. If a Prime Minister is an electoral asset, they are fairly secure in office and, as long as they have the support of their closest allies in Cabinet and a large Commons majority, they face very few limits to their power.

However, Prime Ministers cannot appoint whoever they want to Cabinet. They must reflect the balance of party opinion and appoint the ‘big beasts’, as it’s better to have them ‘inside the tent rather than outside’. Theresa May had to retain a balance of ‘Brexiteers’ and ‘Remainers’ in her Cabinet, reflecting Conservative Party divisions.

Prime Ministers can be brought down by their party. Tony Blair was arguably forced to resign. Margaret Thatcher resigned after losing the support of her Cabinet, when her ‘Poll Tax’ was rejected by the public. Prime Ministers with small majorities, or no majority, cannot take Parliament for granted. Theresa May avoided votes in Parliament which she expected to lose and the Commons prevented Cameron from going to war over Syria.

(Source: adapted from https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201415/cmselect/cmpolcon/351/351.pdf)
In their **opening point** the student is taking points from the source and using their own knowledge to add explanation. By exploring the points raised in the source in this detail they are scoring highly in AO1 and AO2 marks.

It’s also worth noting that students can reference the source without directly quoting it.
However, this argument can be easily challenged. This is because not every Prime Minister can get the large majority. The text states that "Prime Ministers with small majorities or no majority cannot take parliament for granted." Thus suggesting that parliament possesses a significant limit on this power. Hence suggesting that Prime Ministers do not have too much power. "Teresa May often worked with the parliament which she expected to lose." Showing that parliament is such a significant check on the PM and thus limiting their power. Moreover, David Cameron was defeated by the Commons when going to war in Syria, showing another Prime Minister's inability to get through parliament. Also, despite Tony Blair's large majority, he still faced limitations.

In the counter-point of their answer, the same student goes on to challenge their point by using counter-points raised in the source.

Here we see the student addressing the points from the source directly and adding some of their own analysis.
This is the final part of a counter-paragraph arguing against a point made prior to this.

Here the student is arguing the case for their side rather than just stating two different sides to an argument. They conclude their paragraph with their judgement.
Ultimately, if we are to take the current government’s requirement for confidence and supply agreement with the DUP in order to have a majority, and the fact that as an indicator, our current PM certainly does not possess too much power. When combining this with the consideration that even leaders with huge majorities ultimately overexercise power to their own demise, it seems that the nature of UK politics ultimately restricts the PM’s power, even without a codified constitution to ensure it. Therefore, overall, it should not be concluded that PMs in the UK have too much power.

This conclusion sums up the discussion had throughout the essay and concludes that PM’s do not have too much power. It is important to note that this student argued this throughout the response as well as confirming this in their conclusion.
UK Component 1 & 2

Essay questions
Since marks for the AOs are equal, it was as important for candidates to reach a reasoned conclusion (AO3) as it was to analyse (AO2) and provide facts (AO1).

Some responses were largely narrative – or often seen as ‘story telling’ and full of AO1 – but underperformance on the essays was again linked to ineffective means of hitting all the AOs.

Weaker essays were not well-planned or thought through – and the candidates changed their views and opinions regularly in the response.

So, as with the sources, the key weakness was not committing to one side and say why that side was the stronger.
2a. Evaluate the view that think-tanks, lobbyists and pressure groups have little impact on government decisions.
Some political analysts have suggested that think-tanks, lobbyists and pressure groups have a lot of impact on government decisions. This is because they come up with political solutions, they can have inside information and they can influence legislation in some cases. The alternative view is much more convincing, as the government has no legal obligation to listen to them, the government can strike them down, and they only really influence government if they are working from the inside. Overall, think-tanks, lobbyists and pressure groups do not have much impact on government decisions.

This introduction outlines both sides of the debate before outlining the view that the essay will take.
This counter-point is looking at think-tanks and is suggesting that they aren’t able to influence government. Their AO3 came in the form of interim judgements.

This student wrote three separate sections, each one considering the effectiveness of each type of group. They included an interim judgement at the end of each section.
Individual pressure, or behind-the-scenes lobbying of government, is often more reliable than public campaigns. Although lobbying is difficult to measure in impact, few government officials would be willing to admit that they were influenced by professional lobbyists. £10 billion is spent on it annually, so there must be some impact on government policy to make it such a lucrative field. Furthermore, think-tanks can influence important figures ideologically, sometimes even before they enter influential positions, which then has a long-term but less dramatic impact on government decisions. Thatcher, for example, was only gradually become committed to some of her key ideas like supply side economics due to her time with think-tanks like the Adam Smith Institute.

This response was not typical, but it was very effective.

The student took a different theme in each section (here it’s the method of behind the scenes/personal pressure) and discussed all three groups – balancing the effectiveness of each and also comparing them.
2b. Evaluate the view that the only political parties that matter in our political system are the Labour and Conservative parties.
Here, in their opening point, the student is discussing the role of FPTP in whether minor parties matter.

Here the student is developing the issue (logical reasoning – AO2) and relating it back to the question.
Here the same student is critiquing the same issue in their counter-point by discussing why FPTP does not help the main parties.

They are using examples, not just to exemplify (AO1), but also to explore in more depth the point they are making (AO2). They are making their examples work hard to help them critique the previous paragraph.
Above, the student is outlining one side of the argument in their **opening point** (only part of the paragraph is shown here).

They follow it with a **counter-point**, where they are not only giving the opposing view (AO2), but explaining why they think it is the stronger view (AO3). Notice also the excellent use of examples which develop the points they make very effectively.
Overall, the source’s argument that general election results are hard unpredictable and volatile is more convincing. In recent years, these factors such as 
views, opinion polls and the dominance of the two main parties have been eclipsed by the changeable circumstances involved in election campaigns, leaders and the media. Therefore, the source’s argument against general elections being predictable and stable is more convincing.

To conclude, it is clear to see that the only parties that matter in our political system are indeed Labour and the Conservatives, as they have represented it could be argued that in recent years smaller parties have gained a greater following as a result of devolution and inability of Labour and Conservatives to attract voters, with nationalist parties’ recent progress in the House of Commons. However, this gained significance still cannot compete with the significance of Labour and the Conservatives, who are favoured by the electoral system with a long standing history of electoral success and recent rebranding of policy that provides greater choice.

The role of the **conclusion** is to tie the essay together and reiterate, briefly, what has come before it. Both these conclusions summarise their essay while reaffirming their clear judgement.
2a. Evaluate the view that membership of the EU undermined parliamentary sovereignty.
This introduction is an excellent example of providing context, defining only the relevant terms and, albeit with some qualification, answering the question by rejecting the assertion.
First, it could be argued that the EU has undermined Parliamentary sovereignty because it has taken some UK legislative power. All EU law is supreme over UK law, and the UK accepted this by agreeing to the European Communities Act of 1972. Therefore any UK law that contravenes with EU law must be amended so that it is in line with EU policies. The EU has a series of common policies that must be obeyed by all member states, such as the Common Agricultural Policy and the Common Fisheries policy, which have limited Parliament’s ability to legislate on issues regarding fishing and agriculture, showing that it has limited Parliamentary sovereignty. However, there are a number of ways that Parliament’s sovereignty has not been affected by the EU. Firstly, Parliament retains power over tax, law and order, social policy, healthcare policy and education policy, showing that their ability to legislate has not been limited. Further, Parliamentary sovereignty has not been undermined because, despite the EU’s common Foreign policy, the UK retains control of its own foreign policy and can spilt from the EU on this issue. This was seen when the UK joined the US led military invasion of Iraq in 2003, unlike the other EU states. Parliament retains control of the UK’s economy, especially as the UK are not part of the Eurozone, proving that, despite claims that Parliament’s ability to affect legislation has been limited, it has not actually been limited and Parliament remains sovereign.

This student is showing excellent detailed knowledge and presents both views in their section. However, despite a brief evaluative sentence starter at the bottom, they have not argued the case particularly effectively of the side they believe to be stronger. While AO3 is evident, it is not at as high a level as the AO1. Students need to concentrate on meeting all three AOs to score highly in essays.
However, once more, criticisms of the EU’s social policies as supranational over-extensions are entirely unfounded. In fact, John Major’s Conservative government attempted to “conserve” British values by obtaining an opt-out from the Schengen Agreement (Paper 1) and moreover, sovereignty is pooled, not surrendered as the UK benefits from a sharing of power by all 28 member states.

Therefore, the EU’s social policies highlight the paradox that although the UK has been criticised for ceding power to Brussels, in doing so, sovereignty has not been challenged, but indeed enhanced.

The student, in this counter-point, is disagreeing with the point made above (not shown) and then, in an interim judgement, reasserting their views.
2b. Evaluate the view that although the House of Lords has less power than the House of Commons, in practice it exerts more influence on government decisions.
Paper 2 qu.2b exemplar

The House of Lords and House of Commons: two main parts of parliament. They have many functions and one being passing legislation and the other being scrutinising the government. One might argue that the Lords has more influence on government decisions for many reasons e.g. their lack of party unity, their better scrutiny and their influential role in passing legislation. This essay will argue the view that the House of Lords does not exert more influence on government decisions.

An example of an introduction which outlines the two sides of the debate and then presents a clear line of argument.
Some may argue that the Lords has more power than the House of Commons in terms of legislating. This is due to the fusion of powers model, which weakens the Commons grip on the executive. First, past the past tends to deliver strong majorities due to the two party system it promotes. As such, governments may find it easier to pass bills through the Commons, with the aid of disciplinary tools like whipping to do so. For example, Blair’s 139 majority meant he was undefeated in the Commons for two terms.

Above, the student is outlining one side of the argument in their opening point.
(only part of the paragraph is shown)

Then, in the following counter-point, they are not only giving the opposing view (AO2), but explaining why they think it is the stronger view (AO3).
(only part of the paragraph is shown here)

However, this argument must be rejected as the Lords legislative power is constrained by statutes and conventions. The Salisbury convention means it is likely to deter opposition if the proposed bill was part of an elected manifesto. Likewise, although the Lords recommended 14 amendments to the EU notification withdrawal bill, the Commons overturned this. Blair used the Parliament act 3 times to avoid amendments from the Lords. As such, the Commons has become increasingly powerful, especially in recent times due to minority government. Not only was the Commons able to defeat the withdrawal agreement 3 times, but it asserted its legislative influence over the government when it took control of the Brexit process through indicative votes, although no options satisfied a majority.
The latter argument is most significant in demonstrating that the HOL does not exert more influence over government due to its limits on policy making, due to its un-elected status. Reform to an elected chamber could change this.
Here are two examples of making synoptic links in a Component 2 essay.

Firstly, the House of Lords can be seen as more influential on government decisions because they are less of a problem of party unity in the Lords and in the Commons. The Prime Minister has a larger majority in the Commons due to the voting system of First Past the Post, whereas in the Lords, the Prime Minister tends to have a larger majority in the Lords, not being elected, they except that the government has a mandate and therefore often have to go against this. This is because if they had a large majority it would ultimately undermine representative democracy, as they had not been elected. This is evident because if the phrase...
Component 1

Core ideas questions
AOs in 24-mark ideas questions

- 24-mark ideas questions have a different stem, ‘To what extent do …’
- This will usually be followed by asking students to compare the way the strands within that ideology agree and differ over the topic raised, e.g. the state.
- As such the nature of the comparison (AO2) and judgement reached (AO3) are different.
- Comparisons (AO2) will need to be made about areas of agreement within the strands over the topic, as well as areas of disagreement.
AOs in 24-mark ideas questions

• Due to the question stem, the judgement (AO3) required is not simply on whether there are similarities or differences, but **whether there are more similarities than differences** (or vice versa).

• Ideas answers need an introduction and conclusion as this is where the AO3 judgements will be included.

• Moreover, the AO3 judgment should be made in the paragraphs linked to the AO2 comparisons made.
Question 3 general points

• As Question 3 has a different stem, the nature of comparative analysis and evaluation is different than on Questions 1 and 2.
• For ideas questions, students need to evaluate whether the similarities were greater than the differences within the named ideology over the issue raised.
• Most students were unable to come to a sustained judgement like this as too many students were not comparing strands within their answer. Centres need to focus on this going forward.
• Very few candidates were caught by the ‘thinkers cap’, and almost all of those who were had an otherwise weaker answer so were not significantly affected by it.
3a. To what extent do socialists have conflicting views over how the economy should operate?

3b. To what extent are conservatives united in their view of society?
This introduction addresses the issue of divides, but does not come to a judgement about which is greater.

This introduction recognises disagreements only, but not whether they are greater than agreement.
Although it can be argued there are significant areas of agreement within conservatism such as that between one traditional conservative and one nation conservative as well as some elements of neo-conservatism. However, it has to be argued that the disagreement between traditional and one nation conservatism on the existence of society is so great that, ultimately, it outweighs the areas of agreement. In this way, these two conservative are not united in their view of society.

This introduction addresses agreement and disagreement, and gives a clear judgement as to which one is greater.
In order to address all the AOs, the best structure for Ideas essays is a themed approach, that is, looking at more than one strand within a paragraph.

This enables students to address all three AOs effectively.

Here the student is looking at similarities between social democrats and the Third Way.

(The student then goes on to contrast this with differences between them in the next paragraph, and then differences between them and Revolutionary Socialists in the final one.)
Here a student is addressing their previous paragraph and critiquing it by arguing that the agreements within Conservatism they identified are not as significant as the disagreements outlined here.

They are identifying that although *(in the previous paragraph)* both one-nation and traditional conservatives support paternalism, in fact they define it in different ways.

(The student goes on in their final paragraph to argue that there are even greater differences between the New Right and these two strands.)
As in 30-mark essays, the role of the conclusion is to tie everything together and confirm the judgement made throughout the essay. The top conclusion does not really do this; instead it outlines differences between them.

The second conclusion focuses more on the extent of disagreement versus agreement, and comes to a judgement … just!
Component 2

Non-core ideas questions
Anarchism questions

3a. To what extent does anarchism have a coherent view on the economy?

3b. To what extent is an anarchist society a realistic goal?
Individualist and collectivist anarchists may share a mutual distaste towards the economic systems embraced around the world. However, not only do they disagree over the purpose of our economic systems, but they fundamentally disagree over how a stateless economy would function.

Here, in their **introduction**, the student is clearly identifying that there are more disagreements than similarities in anarchist views of the economy.
Anarchism can be considered coherent to an extent over the economy, due to a common rejection of state intervention. Anarchists turn to experiments in the USSR with state socialism, but also mixed economies that maintain a degree of state intervention. For all anarchists, economic freedom can only be achieved by the rejection of the state. This is because the state is a threat to fundamental economic principles of liberty and freedom. Emma Goldman, for example, criticised the coercive nature of the state, explaining how it has the ability to deprive people from their property. An optimal economy

Here the student is identifying areas of similarity in their first paragraph before going on in later paragraphs to argue that the differences are more fundamental. It is essential that students do not forget to address both sides.

Also, note the highly effective use of a key thinker, Emma Goldman.
Overall it is evident that anarchism is not concept
in terms of the economy. It is true to concieve
that all anarchists reject state intervention,
however it must be acknowledged that this
is due to different reasons. This is because of
contrasting definitions of economic freedom. It
must also be noted that the perceived function
of a stateless economy is in contradiction
whilst anarchist capitalism embrace free markets,
collectivists seek to fulfil a cooperative, sociable
network for mutual exchange.

...and then finally concluding that despite, some
similarities, fundamentally anarchists disagree more
than they agree.
Ecologism questions

4a. To what extent do ecologists have concerns over economic growth?

4b. To what extent do ecologists argue that radical change in society is necessary?
There is little agreement on society among ecologists. Although there is general consensus on the current problems preventing protection of the environment, the conflict on suitable solutions — whether the overthrow of capitalism or abolishing the state — prevents ecologists from creating a coherent view on what an ideal ecologist society would look like.

In conclusion, there is little agreement on whether society requires a radical transformation, nor what this transformation would be. Until there is consensus on whether capitalism and the state should be reformed or abolished, it must be concluded that ecologists have failed to create a coherent view of an ecologist society or present a single solution for the environmental crisis.

This introduction outlines the argument that the student will follow … that, despite general agreement, the disagreement is more fundamental.

… and this conclusion ties the essay together.
Firstly, ecologists are generally concerned about economic growth because of its links to capitalism, but shallow ecologists are more willing to adopt reform the capitalist system whereas deep ecologists want to overthrow it completely. Ecologists are generally wary of capitalism because of its inescapable desire for economic growth, which may lead to them exploiting the Earth’s natural resources for the sake of consumerism, and their thirst for profits resulting in capitalism putting economic growth before protecting the environment.

This shows he was concerned about economic growth due to its destructive nature to the precious natural world and humans’ relationship with it. Overall, ecologists show some concern about economic growth, but shallow ecologists desire greater government control of it to protect nature for future generations, whereas deep ecologists completely reject economic growth for its destruction of the natural world which has intrinsic value in itself, not just for future generations.
The first, most fundamental division appears in the ecologists' belief on the change needed in human attitude in order to reform society. Both shallow and deep ecologists are in agreement that traditional anthropocentric views are wrong as it encourages selfish behaviour, giving man and excessive dominion over nature. Instead, shallow ecologists argue that the moral community needs to be extended in order to achieve a state of enlightened anthropocentrism. This is aligned with their core belief of intergenerational equity which argues for the preservation of society so that future generations do not suffer from depletion and other shortages of natural resources. This requires moderate change whereby man is a guest but in environmental awareness. In comparison, deep ecologists completely reject this view as it still places humans at the centre, encouraging selfish dominion thus bound...
Feminism questions

5a. To what extent do feminists agree on human nature?

5b. To what extent do feminists disagree about the nature of the society they wish to create?
Feminism questions: general points

• It seemed as well that a significant minority of candidates were unable to develop the views of the key thinkers either in detail or, at times, accurately. This suggests some centres are focusing too much on non-key thinkers such as Mary Wollstonecraft, Betty Friedan and Shulamith Firestone.

• Of the strands of feminism, radical feminism seems to be least well understood. Many candidates ascribed the views of difference or separatist feminists to all radical feminists, when they represent a small minority of feminists overall. ‘Political lesbianism’ was often misunderstood and exaggerated.

• The key area for candidates to practise is comparing and contrasting the views of different feminists, so that answers explicitly consider the degree of difference between their positions.

• Weaker answers also lacked a clear structure and comparison and AO3.
It can be argued that all equality feminists agree on the creation of a society where there is gender equality between men and women. Indeed, liberal feminist Mary Wollstonecraft said “The mind has no gender”, implying women are rational and independent as men however are restricted by stereotypes, which Freidman believed created “The problem that had no name” for women being trapped in domesticity. Hence all feminists agree on the importance of a gender-equal society.

Here the student is showing areas of agreement within the different strands of feminism in their first paragraph where they are focusing on ‘equality feminists’. Please note, however, that the two feminists quoted are not among the five named Key Thinkers in the specification.
In the next paragraph, they are identifying disagreements as well as some agreement within the strands.

The most important thing in the structure of Ideas essays is to ensure that all paragraphs contain comparisons of at least two strands.

However, there is disagreement in Feminism over the spheres in which equality should be pursued as well as the type of equality. Liberal Feminists only believe women are oppressed in the public sphere so that is where gender equality must be implemented. However, Socialist and Radical Feminists subscribe to Hanish’s ‘personal is political’ so indeed Rowbotham believed women are oppressed in both spheres as the economy affects the private sphere. Therefore both radical and socialist feminists advocate equality in both spheres, yet greatly contrast.
6a. To what extent are conservative criticisms of multiculturalism justified?

6b. To what extent do multiculturalists disagree over the role of the state?
While to a certain degree it does appear that in some respects, such as economic management, multiculturalist and conservative ideas could coexist, in a general sense the fundamentalist beliefs underpinning multiculturalist thought, in relation to human nature and society, can be justifiably criticised from a conservative standpoint because in this regard there are fundamental obverses.

This introduction highlights the argument the student will continue throughout their essay.
Multiculturalist thinkers, which come from a liberal standing, such as Will Kymlicka, may certainly disagree that conservative criticisms of multiculturalism are justified. Whereas thinkers like Charles Taylor saw cultural identity as an end within itself, R. Kymlicka perceived the concept to be a vehicle to advancing individualism, a theme very in tune.

In this paragraph, the student is comparing different opinions of conservative criticisms.
The student introduces the argument they will be following in their essay…

Their first point begins with Liberal multiculturalism but, in the same paragraph (not fully shown), they bring in disagreements with other strands, hence raising their AO2 marks.
The first way in which multiculturalists disagree on over the role of the state is how best integration is achieved. Pluralist multiculturalists believe in deep integration. Parekh believes that all humans are culturally embedded from a historical stance and that the state should encourage support for these cultures, thus by using the idea of pluralists wanting the state to encourage integration, this does not share the same idea that Kymlicka had, where the state needs to find specific ways in which integration works for all.

Here the student is picking a theme and then addressing how different strands of multiculturalism disagree over it.
Overall, the three different branches of multiculturalism want different things. These can include how the state encourages integration or how to encourage diversity. The key thinkers also don’t always align to a branch and so therefore can differ on opinions on how best to use the state. This shows that multiculturalists mainly disagree on the role of the state.

…and then **concluding** by asserting that multiculturalists disagree over the state.
7a. To what extent is nationalism regressive?

7b. To what extent does nationalism divide rather than unite societies?
Here are three introductions. The first one defines some terms and outlines, in order the most to least regressive. It does not outline the view the essay will be taking. The second and third ones outline the view they plan to argue, which is a key component for AO3 marks.
Here the student is reinforcing the view that nationalism isn’t progressive by comparing the different strands in the same paragraph.

Please note, however, that students, ideally, should be encouraged to lead with the strands first and then exemplify with the thinkers, rather than the other way round.
Having outlined earlier in the paragraph why nationalism is a unifying force, here the student is challenging this idea by critiquing those points identifying the divisive elements within nationalism.
The first conclusion seeks to express a point of view, mainly that it does divide society.

The second summarises the views of the different nationalism strands, but doesn’t answer the question by coming to a view about whether they are regressive overall.
Component 3A (USA)

12-mark comparative and 30-mark essay questions
AOs in Component 3
12-mark questions

• 12-mark comparative questions on 3a (USA) and 3b (Global) require AO1 and AO2 only.

• This means that students simply have to introduce AO1 that is relevant to the question and then compare this AO2 to find similarities, difference etc, depending on the wording of the question.
AOSs in Component 3
12-mark questions

• The best way to do this is to take a theme and address the comparison within the paragraph.
• As there is no AO3, there is no requirement to reach a verdict or judgement.
• These questions also do not need introductions or conclusions.
USA Q1 and Q2: 12-mark comparative questions

- The most effective approaches to these questions were to identify clear differences/similarities etc, with explicit points made between the US and UK with exemplification.
- Some candidates addressed questions with no direct comparisons, but this was only a small minority of candidates. These gained limited AO2 marks.
- Some wasted time including similarities, when differences were asked for (or vice versa), and gained no credit. Candidates should be reminded to answer the question as set, as this was a common error in all the 12-mark comparative questions.
- Stronger responses referred back to the wording of the question in each paragraph, rather than drifting into general descriptions.
1a. Examine how interest groups in the USA are more effective at protecting civil rights than pressure groups in the UK.
This is the opening paragraph of the answer; no introduction was needed. Here the student is comparing US and UK pressure groups in each paragraph. They are explaining only why US pressure groups are more effective, as the question asks.
Again, here the student is identifying an issue, access points again, and examining how this affects pressure groups in the UK differently to the US.

Notice also that the student is referencing rights throughout the answer.
1b. Examine how devolution in the UK differs from federalism in the USA.
Here the student is addressing a difference in each paragraph.

They are addressing both the US Congress and then comparing it to the UK Parliament and explaining the differences only!

By using phrases like however, whereas, unlike etc, students can maximise their comparative analysis.

It’s worth noting that the student began their response like this with no introduction. This approach is to be encouraged.
Another difference between UK devolution and US federalism is where in which sovereignty lies. In the UK, Parliament is sovereign and remains the supreme law making body whereby no other body can overrule it. Devolution does not involve the distribution of sovereignty to regional bodies of Parliament grants them powers such as the power to implement their own healthcare, education, and policing systems. Due to Parliamentary Sovereignty, Parliament retains the ability to revoke these powers granted to the regional bodies and can strike down any laws made by them, meaning that devolution is not protected and Parliamentary Sovereignty can override these powers and even take them back. However, this differs in the USA as federalism involves the distribution of sovereignty from the federal government to each of the states. The federal government does not have the ability to remove sovereignty from the states meaning that each state can create and abide by its own laws.

Here the student is discussing the issue of sovereignty within devolution and federalism, which they refer to in the opening line of their paragraph.

The student is being highly comparative in analysing the differences in the two systems (only part of the answer is shown here).
2. Analyse the different legislative powers of the UK Parliament and the US Congress.
One way in which the legislative process differs can be acknowledged when assessing the fusion of powers. In the UK, the executive and legislature are fused, meaning the government is able to sit in the Commons. This means that in the UK, the legislative powers are weak since they are determined by the government’s agenda. This can be analysed using the structural theory since the constitution sets out the framework for different branches. This differs as in the US, a strict separation of powers mean that the legislative powers are enhanced. The speaker such as Paasi may develop their own set of priorities, which contrasts with the president. This will be particularly the case under a nationalised ruin term.

Another way the legislative powers differ can be seen when assessing powers of patronage. The US
In the UK Parliament has absolute authority through the concept of Parliament sovereignty. It has the final say on all laws, including those struck down by the courts through Remedial Orders like the Terrorist Asset Freezing Act that overruled Ahmed and others v. UK. This is in complete contrast to the US where the constitution gives certain areas that Congress can legislate on, some that the States can and some the Supreme Court has jurisdiction over. One
3a. Evaluate the view that US foreign policy is dominated as much by Congress as by the presidency.
In order to analyse the extent to which foreign policy is dominated by the president or congress, one must consider constitutional war powers, powers over international relations, and the overall political mandate that each branch maintains over foreign policy. By assessing these factors, it must be acknowledged that in fact the president dominates foreign policy.
However, this argument is not convincing as the President’s constitutional powers give him much more control over foreign policy than Congress.

Congress’ power to declare war is insignificant compared to the President’s power as Commander in Chief because this power is rarely used. Indeed, war was last declared in 1942, yet it is undeniable that the US has been at war since then because of the US President’s ability to commit troops to foreign action, as seen in Iraq in 2003 and in the Cold War of the 1950s. Furthermore, the power of the purse has not helped Congress prevent the President from taking action, as they have never actually withdrawn funding for military action, despite threats. Therefore, it is clear that the President dominates foreign policy more than Congress as Congress’ constitutional powers to affect foreign policy are much weaker than the President’s.

Here, in their **counter-point**, the student is arguing against a previous paragraph. The evaluation (AO3) is woven throughout the paragraph.
3b. Evaluate the view that the effective working of the US Constitution depends more on interest groups than the Supreme Court.
In a counter-point, the student is arguing against a previous paragraph and coming to a view at the beginning and end of the paragraph. This means that it includes elements of all three Assessment Objectives.
The more convincing argument is that the SC ensures this more effectively through Judicial Review and setting Judicial Precedent. The courts protect Human Rights through court cases such as Engel v. Vitale and more recently Masterpiece Cakeshop v. Colorado. In this case in 2017 the SC ensured protection of the 1st Amendment rights of expression, as owners of Masterpiece Cakeshop were not forced to bake a homosexual couple’s wedding cake. Therefore, it is evident that through protection of human rights through direct power, the SC upholds constitutional effectiveness to a better extent than interest groups as they wield direct influence.

Again here the student, in their **counter-point**, is making it clear that they believe this is the stronger argument and exemplifying their argument well. The paragraph ends, as it begins, with their view (AO3).
3c. Evaluate the view that the procedures for electing US presidents and members of Congress are not fit for purpose.
However this argument must be rejected as by diluting direct democracy, the electoral college favours a stable constitutional republic. The founding fathers acknowledged the importance of protecting state identity, and the system does exactly this. Had it not been for the Electoral College, large states such as California would have been able to single-handedly swing the election result for Clinton, which neglects the principle of federalism. States such as Idaho, who have 4 electoral college votes, would be overlooked in campaigns. In addition, although it fails to guarantee a popular vote major, the system ensures a strong winner. The winner takes all system means that president candidates seek
Some may also argue that the procedure of electing members of Congress is not fit for purpose. The system causes a representative deficit, as evident from incumbency reelection rates reaching 97% in 2016. This is due to the presence of safe seats. This is worsened by gerrymandering, which is when state legislatures redraw district boundaries at the expense of the opposition. The founding fathers never intended a two party system to arise, and this first past the post, winner takes all system promotes exactly this. Gerrymandering effectively means that representatives chose their voters, not the other way round. That Republican voters in New York for example may feel violated by the system, which only further exacerbates a sense of disillusionment towards the political system.

Here, in an opening point, the student is addressing the issue of Congressional elections.
Component 3B (Global)

12-mark comparative and 30-mark essay questions
General comments

• The key to success in responding to the longer questions set is to recognise that the performance level of an essay is decided by all three of the Assessment Objectives.

• A large proportion of candidates score well in AO1 by providing detailed and developed knowledge and understanding, but they failed to attain the marks that are available from AO2 and AO3.

• The intellectual skills required to perform at the highest level in AO2 revolve around the ability to provide an analysis with logical reasoning, and by drawing on similarities and differences.

• With AO3 the evaluation will, at the highest level, be based on fully effective judgements, which are consistently substantiated and lead to fully focused and justified conclusions.
1a. Examine the criticisms that have been made of the World Trade Organisation and the G7/8.
One criticism that can be made is that born organisations promote neo-liberal values, which leads to the exploitation of developing countries. Both organisations advocate free trade: the WTO, as Regelmann 1975 argues, world trade to be through open borders and the G7 are all from the Global North, highly developed, wealthy economies, that advocate economic free trade, which liberals like Keohane argue maintains peace. Yet free trade leads to developing economies fighting unfair competition, and can be taken advantage of by developed economies, through dumping for example.

Indeed, Greece has indeed such exploitation led to Wallerstein’s dependency theory, with developed economies relying on demand by developed economies, e.g., Zambia’s interest rate falling 4.6% when China lowered its demand for Zambian steel. Here due to the neoliberal values promoted by the G7 and WTO, this can lock developing economies into a proto-industrialised stage of production, which can widen the inequality between developed and developing economies, promoting...
Both the World Trade Organization and G7/8 have been criticised for being based in western imperialism, especially the USA. The World Trade Organization is based on neo-liberal ideas and the spread of capitalism to allow for a global market and system of trade. This can be seen to undermine other economic systems and allow developed countries to continue to dominate. Similarly, the G7/8 were created as the 7 main economic powers in the world at the time and were there to allow the development of their economic policies to enhance trade relations. This excludes developing countries through western imperialism and allows the USA to continue to dominate.

Again over the next two pages, this student is identifying criticisms of both institutions.
Also both institutions have been criticised in their failures to address contemporary global issues. The IMF was only created to deal with economic governance between the + stakes. It hasn’t subsequently adapted to include policies on climate change which has received high criticism, especially from pressure groups like Friends of the Earth. Similarly the World Trade Organisation primarily deals with trade disputes. It has been criticised for failing to address the poverty enhanced through the divide between developed states and developing states demonstrated in.

By applying a criticism which applies to both institutions, students will maximise their chances of scoring highly for AO2.
1b. Examine the factors that have led to China and India being described as ‘emerging powers’.
In addition, China and India are both becoming far more powerful culturally than ever before. China’s increasing population has made Mandarin-Chinese one of the world’s most widely spoken languages, and the increasing popularity of Chinese brands like Huawei and Social media networks like Weibo has bolstered this power. In turn, the spread of Bollywood cinema has made actresses such as Aishwarya Rai globally recognisable and given Indian media a much wider audience and sphere of influence. With regards to India, media has again confirmed their status as an emerging power; the increasing popularity of Bollywood cinema has made India a much more influential country in the world. As with all 12-mark questions, the comparative aspect requires students to make links and connections between two elements asked. Here it is India and China. The student here is effectively comparing India with China.
Both China and India have been labelled as ‘emerging powers’ in recent years. The first reason for this is their economies. Both are BRICS economies and so play a significant role in global economics due to this factor. China especially accounts in 2019, for around 20% of the world GDP and so have had a dramatic economic growth since the 1980s with an average of 9% a year economic growth. This proves how the two are ‘emerging powers’ as their economies are growing, and fast, and so are emerging as competitors to the US. Some commentators have argued China will overtake the US in GDP by as early as 2020, others forecast this to be late in the Century but the consensus is that one day China will overtake the US. Both of these emerging powers economy’s influence is due to them having the two highest population sizes worldwide which allows for significant manpower in economics.

While this is a good answer, it is typical of a lot of answers which focused primarily on examples of China when answering about both countries. Ideally, both countries will be referenced effectively.
The first factor in these states is their economic growth. Both states have become major economies since the start of the 21st century. Since 2008, China has been the world’s largest export, and according to the IMF it had a GDP of $13 trillion in 2018, making it the world’s second largest economy, or third largest if the EU is included. India has similarly had an economic boom, with IT and services exporting centres exploiting weak labour laws to establish manufacturing bases throughout India and China. India, too, has also benefited from many call centres with international outreach being based there. Both countries have massive populations of over 1 billion and emerging middle classes, which is beginning to make them attractive countries.
2. Analyse how realists and liberals explain the likelihood of war and conflict.
Unlike realists, liberals believe that war and conflict is a failure of reason and should be avoided at all costs. Liberals believe that states should act with the idea of peace in their minds and mutual respect. Unlike realists, liberals see human nature as progressive rather than fixed, and so states reflect this ability, always using reason, debate and compromise in disagreements rather than coercion or force.
Here the student is contrasting the two different perspectives of realists and liberals by looking at their view of human nature and linking it to their view on the likelihood of war.
This answer is again effectively comparing the two views of realists and liberals to explain the likelihood of war.
3a. Evaluate the extent to which globalisation has made the world unipolar rather than multipolar.
Cultural globalisation is the spread of Westernisation, thus flattening other cultures and making the world more uniform. It can be argued that the spread of cultural globalisation has made the world more unipolar. For example, Ron Barber’s “McWorld” refers to how the US has homogenised the globe and has spread their liberal ideologies - both social and economic. For example, consumerism and materialism are the key factors of capitalism, which have spread thanks to TNCs and foreign investment, as well as the Bretton Woods institutions (WTO, WB, IMF) imposing free trade, no tariff rules on developing nations.
The student is continuing here, concluding that globalisation has enhanced unipolarity.
3b. Evaluate the extent to which human rights are more effectively protected by humanitarian intervention than by international courts and tribunals.
For example, the common intervention into Libya issued by the UN was seen as a success as it stopped Gadafi from slaughtering hundreds of people. This was done on the principle of responsibility to protect, as liberals feel a duty to protect human rights (natural rights) which are the basic core ideals of liberalism stemming from John Locke’s views on human nature. Although this was viewed as
Paper 3B qu.3b exemplar

Although this was viewed as a success at the time, the intervention was only successful for a short time. Since 2017, there are two rival governments, 8 parliaments and 400,000 people are internally displaced. Furthermore, it is seen as a breeding ground for terrorism, suggesting that humanitarian intervention is not all that effective. Since the 1990s, we have...

…before arguing in their counter-point that, in fact, humanitarian intervention is not effective.
3c. Evaluate the extent to which regional bodies are effectively able to challenge individual states for influence in global politics.
This essay will evaluate three regional bodies, & the EU, NATO and the ECHR, as challengers to state sovereignty (both political and economic). It will conclude that regional bodies pose a greater challenge to developing states (who desire greater independence) than developed states, who can be more greatly independent and even challenge the dominance of the regional bodies. Yet...
However, given that only 4 NATO members pay the full 2%, this suggests members do not feel challenged. Indeed Trump's threat to leave NATO as well as not abide by Article 5 demonstrate the US's nationalist independence against regional to which it is apathetic. This is because it is the largest funding state of NATO and hence it can be argued, can actually challenged NATO as a regional body.

Here the essay is arguing that NATO has not challenged individual states.