



Mark Scheme (Results)

Summer 2023

Pearson Edexcel GCE In Politics
Advanced Subsidiary
Paper 2: UK Government (8PL0/02)

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General Marking Guidance

- All candidates must receive the same treatment. Examiners must mark the first candidate in exactly the same way as they mark the last.
- Mark schemes should be applied positively. Candidates must be rewarded for what they have shown they can do rather than penalised for omissions.
- Examiners should mark according to the mark scheme not according to their perception of where the grade boundaries may lie.
- There is no ceiling on achievement. All marks on the mark scheme should be used appropriately.
- All the marks on the mark scheme are designed to be awarded. Examiners should always award full marks if deserved, i.e. if the answer matches the mark scheme. Examiners should also be prepared to award zero marks if the candidate's response is not worthy of credit according to the mark scheme.
- Where some judgement is required, mark schemes will provide the principles by which marks will be awarded and exemplification may be limited.
- When examiners are in doubt regarding the application of the mark scheme to a candidate's response, the team leader must be consulted.
- Crossed out work should be marked UNLESS the candidate has replaced it with an alternative response.

Marking guidance for levels-based mark schemes

How to award marks

The indicative content provides examples of how students will meet each skill assessed in the question. The levels descriptors and indicative content reflect the relative weighting of each skill within each mark band. Confirmation of the marks assigned to Assessment Objectives is provided at the top of each mark scheme. This has been provided to further reflect the balance between the assessment objectives as described in the relevant level descriptors.

Capping statements

Where applicable and to ensure that candidates are awarded marks for fully meeting the requirements of the question, additional capping statements have been indicated in the mark schemes. Such statements indicate where and how candidates will be limited in their achievement if they fail to fully address the requirements of the question. For instance, where questions require candidates to refer to 'thinkers' or 'engaging with sources'.

Finding the right level

The first stage is to decide which level the answer should be placed in. To do this, use a 'best-fit' approach, deciding which level most closely describes the quality of the answer. Answers can display characteristics from more than one level, and where this happens markers must use the guidance below and their professional judgement to decide which level is most appropriate.

Placing a mark within a level

After a level has been decided on, the next stage is to decide on the mark within the level. The instructions below tell you how to reward responses within a level. However, where a level has specific guidance about how to place an answer within a level, always follow that guidance. Statements relating to the treatment of students who do not fully meet the requirements of the question are also shown in the indicative content section of each levels based mark scheme. These statements should be considered alongside the levels descriptors. 3 Pearson Edexcel Level 3 Advanced Subsidiary GCE in Politics – Sample Assessment Materials – Issue 2 August 2022 © Pearson Education Limited 2022 Markers should be prepared to use the full range of marks available in a level and not restrict marks to the middle. Markers should start at the middle of the level (or the upper-middle mark if there is an even number of marks) and then move the mark up or down to find the best mark. To do this, they should take into account how far the answer meets the requirements of the level:

- if it meets the requirements fully, markers should be prepared to award full marks within the level. The top mark in the level is used for answers that are as good as can realistically be expected within that level
- if it only barely meets the requirements of the level, markers should consider awarding marks at the bottom of the level. The bottom mark in the level is used for answers that are the weakest that can be expected within that level
- the middle marks of the level are used for answers that have a reasonable match to the descriptor. This might represent a balance between some characteristics of the level that are fully met and others that are only barely met.

When a candidate has produced an answer that displays characteristics from more than one level, examiners must use their professional judgement to decide what level should be awarded.

8PL02: AS paper 2 UK Government mark scheme

Section A

Guidelines for marking Questions 1a and 1b
Marks are awarded for AO1 only.
Marks are awarded for showing depth of knowledge and understanding.

Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable material.
Level 1	1-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates limited knowledge and understanding of political institutions, processes, concepts, theories and issues. • Makes superficial links of knowledge and understanding to a particular context. • Uses a narrow range of knowledge and understanding to support arguments/ideas.
Level 2	4-7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates some accurate knowledge and understanding of political institutions, processes, concepts, theories and issues. • Makes some effective links of knowledge and understanding to a particular context. • Uses a broad range of knowledge and understanding to support arguments/ideas.
Level 3	8-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates accurate knowledge and understanding of political institutions, processes, concepts, theories and issues. • Makes fully-effective links of knowledge and understanding to a particular context. • Uses a comprehensive range of knowledge and understanding to support arguments/ideas.

Question number	Indicative content
1(a) Describe the role of backbench MPs	<p>AO1 (10 marks)</p> <p>Candidates may refer to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Represent their constituents, including helping to address their grievances. • Question ministers, including the Prime Minister. • Vote on legislation. • Take part in committees, e.g., public bill committees and select committees. • Take part in debates. <p>Accept any other valid responses.</p>

Question number	Indicative content
1(b) Describe the composition of the executive	<p data-bbox="363 237 576 271">AO1 (10 marks)</p> <p data-bbox="363 309 699 342">Candidates may refer to:</p> <ul data-bbox="411 344 1422 913" style="list-style-type: none"><li data-bbox="411 344 1422 416">• The executive includes the Prime Minister, who is the head of the UK government.<li data-bbox="411 450 1422 562">• It includes the cabinet, who work closely with the Prime Minister and take overall responsibility for the strategic direction of the government.<li data-bbox="411 595 1422 667">• It includes junior ministers who mostly work within government departments, usually responsible for aspects of the Department's role.<li data-bbox="411 701 1422 813">• It includes government departments themselves, run by senior civil servants, who work for ministers, helping them to implement government policies.<li data-bbox="411 846 1422 913">• It includes the Cabinet Secretary, the Cabinet Office, the Policy Unit and special advisors. <p data-bbox="363 947 786 981">Accept any other valid responses.</p>

Section B

Guidelines for marking Question 2
Marks are awarded for AO1 and AO2 only.
Marks are awarded for showing depth of knowledge and understanding (AO1) but this has to be based on the material presented in the source.
Marks are awarded for illustrating clarity of analysis (AO2) but this has to arise from the context presented by the source.
No marks are available for making a judgement or reaching any form of conclusion (AO3).

In AO2 political information means source.		
Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable material.
Level 1	1-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates superficial knowledge and understanding of political institutions, processes, concepts, theories and issues, with limited underpinning of analysis and evaluation (AO1). • Limited analysis of political information with partial logical chains of reasoning, which make simplistic connections between ideas and concepts (AO2).
Level 2	4-7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates mostly accurate knowledge and understanding of political institutions, processes, concepts, theories and issues, many of which are selected appropriately in order to underpin analysis and evaluation (AO1). • Mostly focused analysis of political information with clear, logical chains of reasoning, which make mostly relevant connections between ideas and concepts (AO2).
Level 3	8-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates comprehensive and precise knowledge and understanding of political institutions, processes, concepts, theories and issues, which are carefully selected in order to underpin analysis and evaluation (AO1). • Consistent and sustained analysis of political information, with coherent logical chains of reasoning, which make convincing connections between ideas and concepts (AO2).

Question number	Indicative content
2	<p>AO1 (5 marks), AO2 (5 marks)</p> <p>Candidates may demonstrate the following knowledge and understanding (AO1) when explaining the role of the House of Lords in improving legislation:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Lords fulfils the role of a revising chamber. • It fulfils the role of improving legislation through amendments. • As no party has a majority, amendments are passed on merit rather than party loyalties. • The Lords spends most (60%) of its time examining legislation.

Accept any other valid responses.

Candidates may refer to the following analytical points (AO2) when explaining the role of the House of Lords for improving legislation:

- As a revising chamber, the Lords provides an additional check on the work of the Commons, which will improve legislation.
- The Lords defeated the coalition government a hundred times between 2010-15. This demonstrated its role of challenging the government, in order to improve legislation.
- As no party has a majority in the Lords, its amendments will be based on merit, rather than party loyalty. This is likely to improve legislation, especially as many peers are experts in their fields.
- The Lords can dedicate over half its scheduled time to its role of examining legislation. This means that more time can be allocated to debates on bills to ensure they are widely discussed before being voted on, which should improve legislation.

Accept any other valid responses.

Guidelines for marking Question 3

Marks are awarded for AO2 and AO3 only.

Marks are awarded for illustrating clarity of analysis (AO2) but this has to arise from the context presented by the source.

No AO1 marks are available for repeating knowledge or understanding from the source or for introducing own knowledge and understanding if it is not linked to providing clarity to the AO2 & AO3 points arising from the source.

AO2 and AO3 require candidates to analyse and evaluate the sources and develop their answers, showing comparative analytical and evaluative skills to address the question.

Candidates should focus their comparison on analysing the similarities and differences of the viewpoints given in the sources.

Candidates who do not provide a reference to a similarity and a differences from the source cannot achieve beyond Level 2.

Candidates who *do not* undertake any comparative analysis of the source cannot achieve beyond Level 1.

There are no AO1 marks available. *Do not* give credit to responses where candidates demonstrate knowledge alone. Any knowledge used must support their analysis and evaluation.

In AO2 and AO3 political information means source.

Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable material.
Level 1	1-3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Limited comparative analysis of political information with partial logical chains of reasoning, referring to similarities and/or differences within political information, which make simplistic connections between ideas and concepts (AO2).Makes superficial evaluation of political information, constructing simple arguments and judgements, many which are descriptive and lead to limited unsubstantiated and unjustified conclusions (AO3).
Level 2	4-7	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Mostly focused comparative analysis of political information with clear, logical chains of reasoning, drawing on similarities and/or differences within political information, which make mostly relevant connections between ideas and concepts (AO2).Constructs mostly relevant evaluation of political information, constructing mostly focused arguments and judgements, many which are substantiated and lead to some specific conclusions, that are sometimes justified (AO3).
Level 3	8-10	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Consistent and sustained comparative analysis of political information, with coherent logical chains of reasoning, drawing on similarities and differences within political information, which make convincing connections between ideas and concepts (AO2).Constructs coherent and sustained evaluation of political information, constructing effectively substantiated arguments and judgements, which are consistently substantiated and lead to precise conclusions that are fully justified (AO3).

Question number	Indicative content
<p>3</p> <p>Using the sources, assess whether or not devolution has been a success.</p>	<p>AO2 (5 marks), AO3 (5 marks)</p> <p>Candidates may refer to the following comparative analytical points (AO2) when assessing the similarities and differences between the sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The sources agree that devolution in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, is effectively a permanent change. • The sources agree that devolution has enabled policies to be decided at a more local level. • The sources disagree over the significance of periods of direct rule and instability in Northern Ireland. • The sources disagree over whether the more locally determined policies have been beneficial to the devolved nations. <p>Accept any other valid responses.</p> <p>Candidates may refer to the following comparative evaluative points (AO3) when assessing the similarities and differences between the sources:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • We can conclude that its permanence demonstrates that devolution has been a success. Both Conservative and Labour governments have created or extended devolved powers. • We can conclude that this demonstrates that policies can be attuned to the needs of each devolved nation, which demonstrates that devolution has achieved its original aims. • Either we can conclude from source 2 that despite these periods of direct rule, the power sharing executive has managed to reconvene, showing that devolution has been a success; or we can conclude from source 3 that these periods of direct rule show that devolution has not been a success in N Ireland, as the periods of direct rule undermine the whole purpose of devolution. • Either we can conclude from source 2 that policy and public service divergence e.g., minimum pricing of alcohol in Scotland, or the banning of smacking for children demonstrate the success of devolution; or we can conclude from source 3 that the worsening health and educational outcomes, (compared to England) demonstrate that devolution has not been a success. <p>Accept any other valid responses.</p>

Section C

Guidelines for marking Questions 4a and 4b
AO1 (10 marks) Marks here relate to knowledge and understanding. It should be used to underpin analysis (AO2) and evaluation (AO3)
AO2 (10 marks) Candidates should form analytical views which support and reject the view presented by the question.
AO3 (10 marks) Candidates are expected to evaluate the information and arguments presented. They may rank the importance of the prior analysis. They should be able to make and form judgments and they should reach reasoned conclusion.
Candidates must consider both views in their answers in a balanced way. The judgement a candidate reaches about these views should be reflected in their conclusions. Candidates who have <i>not</i> considered both views in a balanced way cannot achieve marks beyond Level 2. Candidates who do not mention any synoptic points cannot achieve marks beyond level 4. Where there is no synopticity this will limit the A01.

Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable material.
Level 1	1–6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates superficial knowledge and understanding of political institutions, processes, concepts, theories and issues, with limited underpinning of analysis and evaluation. Makes limited synoptic points (AO1). • Limited analysis of aspects of politics with partial logical chains of reasoning, which make simplistic connections between ideas and concepts (AO2). • Makes superficial evaluation of aspects of politics, constructing simple arguments and judgements, many of which are descriptive (AO3).
Level 2	7–12	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates some accurate knowledge and understanding of political institutions, processes, concepts, theories and issues, some of which are selected appropriately in order to underpin analysis and evaluation. Makes some relevant synoptic points (AO1). • Some emerging analysis of aspects of politics with some focused, logical chains of reasoning, which make some relevant connections between ideas and concepts (AO2). • Constructs some appropriate evaluation of aspects of politics, constructing occasionally effective arguments and judgements, some are partially unsubstantiated and lead to generic conclusions, without much justification (AO3).
Level 3	13–18	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates mostly accurate knowledge and understanding of political institutions, processes, concepts, theories and issues, many of which are selected appropriately in order to underpin analysis and evaluation. Makes mostly relevant synoptic points (AO1). • Mostly focused analysis of aspects of politics with logical chains of reasoning, which make mostly relevant connections between ideas and concepts (AO2). • Constructs mostly relevant evaluation of aspects of politics, constructing mostly focused arguments and judgements, many are substantiated and lead to some focused conclusions, that are sometimes justified (AO3).
Level 4	19–24	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates accurate knowledge and understanding of political institutions, processes, concepts, theories and issues, which are selected appropriately in order to underpin analysis and evaluation. Makes relevant synoptic points (AO1). • Focused analysis of aspects of politics with logical chains of reasoning, which make relevant connections between ideas and concepts (AO2). • Constructs relevant evaluation of aspects of politics, constructing focused arguments and judgements, which are substantiated and lead to focused conclusions that are mostly justified (AO3).
Level 5	25–30	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrates comprehensive and precise knowledge and understanding of political institutions, processes, concepts, theories and issues, which are carefully selected in order to underpin analysis and evaluation. Makes consistent and coherent synoptic points (AO1). • Consistent and sustained analysis of aspects of politics, with coherent, logical chains of reasoning, which make convincing connections between ideas and concepts (AO2). • Constructs coherent and sustained evaluation of aspects of politics, constructing effectively substantiated arguments and judgements, which are consistently substantiated and lead to precise conclusions that are fully justified (AO3).

Question number	Indicative content
<p>4(a)</p> <p>How far do you agree that the UK constitution should be codified?</p>	<p>AO1 (10 marks), AO2 (10 marks), AO3 (10 marks)</p> <p>Candidates may demonstrate the following knowledge and understanding (AO1) in relation to the view that the UK constitution should be codified.</p> <p>Agreement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Codification would clarify the relationship between the various branches of government. • A codified constitution would provide a higher constitutional law, which would likely lead to entrenchment. • Codification would most likely lead to greater limits on the power of the government and the prime minister. • A codified constitution would have an educational role. • A codified constitution would allow for modernisation of the UK constitution. <p>Candidates may demonstrate the following knowledge and understanding (AO1) in relation to the view that the UK constitution should be codified:</p> <p>Disagreement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The lack of clarification and certainty provided by our uncodified system is an advantage. • We would lose the flexibility of our constitution if we codified and entrenched it. • Codification might lead to gridlock if there were too many limits on government. • There is no strong support for codification, or consensus around what would be codified. • The existing uncodified constitution has worked well for a long period of time and continues to work. <p>Candidates may refer to the following analytical (AO2) and evaluative (AO3) points when agreeing with the view:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Codification would provide clarity over the relationship between the various branches of government. This is particularly important now that we have left the EU and we have devolved power Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland (AO2). We can conclude that the clarity provided by codification is a significant reason for supporting change. It would establish where sovereignty lies, in the post Brexit UK, and clarify the powers of the devolved nations and their relations with the UK government (AO3).

- Codification would provide a higher constitutional law, which would likely lead to entrenchment. This would likely include entrenched rights, which would be protected by an independent judiciary (AO2). We can form a judgement that as codification would likely involve entrenchment and better protection of our rights, that it would provide a permanent protection from the arbitrary actions of government. The Human Rights Act can be repealed by a simple act of parliament. Our rights would be protected by an independent judiciary who would be able to stand up to government (AO3).
- Codification would most likely lead to greater limits on the power of the government and PM. This is particularly important as we have a fusion of powers that has led to what Hailsham described as 'elective dictatorship'. The power of the PM, exercised Royal Prerogative, could also be limited (AO2). We can reach the conclusion that codification would significantly limit the power of ministers and in particular the prime minister. This is particularly important as PMs would no longer be able to exercise the Royal Prerogative, and their powers would be laid down in law rather than convention (AO3).
- A codified constitution would have an educational role and we would become citizens rather than subjects. Children could be taught about the constitution at school and as adults we would be clear what our rights are as UK citizens (AO2). We can conclude that codification of our constitution would much better inform us all about our rights and the powers of government. This would improve accountability and UK democracy as a whole (AO3).
- A codified constitution would modernise, democratise and decentralise the existing uncodified constitution making a constitution fit for the twenty first century (AO2). We can conclude that this would bring the UK in line with other western democracies and remove many of the UK's anachronistic elements (AO3).

Candidates may refer to the following analytical (AO2) and evaluative (AO3) points when disagreeing with the view:

- The lack of clarification and certainty provided by our uncodified system is an advantage as it has enabled our political system to evolve with changing circumstances. Not only have we devolved powers to the nations, but we have done this in a way that reflects the political context of each one (AO2). We can form a judgement that lack of clarification in our uncodified system is a significant advantage. It has allowed our political systems to develop without the need for constitutional amendments. As well as devolution, the Lords has been reformed and the UK has established a Supreme Court and the Human Rights Act (AO3).
- Codification and entrenchment would produce a more rigid constitution that would be difficult to change, and it would give more power to unelected and unaccountable judges. An advantage of our present system is its flexibility, e.g., withdrawing from the EU was achieved through a simple act of parliament, and laws have been quickly introduced to address issues around the 'terrorist threat' (AO2). We can conclude that our uncodified system avoids the rigidity of entrenchment. It also grants greater powers to elected and accountable politicians, rather than unelected and unaccountable judges (AO3).

- Codification could lead to gridlock and frustrate the will of the voters. The fusion of powers means that governments can implement their legislative agendas and be held to account for their records in office. Voters are provided with a clear choice at elections. A separation of powers and/or an elected second chamber would put too many barriers in place of effective government, making it more difficult to judge governments on their records in office (AO2). We can form the judgement that an advantage of our uncodified system is that government is strong. Governments can implement their policy agendas and be judged on their records in office. This provides a clear democratic choice for voters at general elections (AO3).
- There is no strong demand for codification, nor a consensus on what would replace our present system. This is a recipe for chaos. The advantages of our current system outweigh the drawbacks, and this is evident in the lack of public support for major constitutional change (AO2). We can conclude from the lack of public support for change that voters are generally satisfied with our uncodified system. As there is no consensus on what would replace it, we can conclude that the process codification would likely be time consuming and divisive (AO3).
- If 'it's not broke, don't fix it'. The existing constitution has worked and continues to work adapting to changes in our political circumstances such as Brexit and should be allowed to settle after the large amount of constitutional reform since 1997 (AO2). We can conclude that the existing uncodified constitution has a long record of working and needs incremental changes not codification (AO3)

Candidates may refer to the following synoptic points:

- Rights in context.
- The electoral mandate.
- The role of FPTP in providing strong government majorities.

Accept any other valid responses.

Question number	Indicative content
<p>4b)</p> <p>How far do you agree that the House of Commons is able to exert significant control over the Prime Minister?</p>	<p>AO1 (10 marks), AO2 (10 marks), AO3 (10 marks)</p> <p>Candidates may demonstrate the following knowledge and understanding (AO1) in relation to the view that the House of Commons is able to exert significant control over the Prime Minister:</p> <p>Agreement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Recent elections have produced coalition government, a small majority government and a minority government. • Backbench MPs have become more willing to vote against the party whip. • Recent prime ministers have been constrained by the Commons on very significant policy issues. • The Commons brought down Callaghan in 1979 and retains this power to bring down a Prime Minister and their government. <p>Disagreement</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elections often produces strong Commons majorities. • Party allegiance and whipping in the Commons remains very strong. • PMs rarely fail to get the support of the Commons on significant issues. • PMs are very rarely subject to a vote of no confidence in the Commons. <p>Candidates may refer to the following analytical (AO2) and evaluative (AO3) points when agreeing with the view that the House of Commons is able to exert significant control over the Prime Minister:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Commons has shown greater independence and due to a small government majority or a minority government, the Commons has exerted significant control over the prime minister. This was particularly the case between 2017-19, after Theresa May lost her Commons majority in the 2017 election. Both Wilson and Callaghan faced difficulties in the period 1974-79 (AO2). We can conclude that the Commons has been able to exert a great deal of control over successive Prime Ministers, particularly Cameron, May and Boris Johnson, before his December 2019 election victory. This was also the case, at times, between 1974-79 (AO3). • Since backbench MPs have been more willing to vote against their whip and since prime ministers have had smaller majorities, or a minority government, this has led to many more Commons defeats for the prime minister. Theresa May was defeated over 20 times in the Commons. Callaghan was defeated 34 times in the Commons, from 1976-79 (AO2). We can form a judgement that the willingness of backbench MPs to vote against their government, combined with smaller majorities/ minority

government, has enabled the Commons to exert greater control over successive Prime Ministers (AO3).

- David Cameron failed to get Commons support for his proposed military action in Syria in 2013. Theresa May failed to get Commons support for her Brexit deal in any of the three 'meaningful' votes on it. Boris Johnson was forced by the Commons in 2019 to avoid a 'no deal' Brexit (AO2). We can conclude that the Commons has been able to exert control over Prime Ministers on significant policy areas, which has constrained their room for manoeuvre on key issues such as military action abroad and the Brexit process (AO3).
- The UK has a parliamentary system, and the Prime Minister is accountable to parliament and in particular to the Commons. If a Prime Minister loses a vote of no confidence they can be brought down. This happened to Callaghan in 1979, forcing him to call a general election that he lost (AO2). We can form the judgement that the power of the Commons to bring down a Prime Minister and their government, demonstrates that it is able to exert sufficient control over Prime Ministers. Even though she won the confidence vote in 2019, May's authority was further weakened (AO3).

Candidates may refer to the following analytical (AO2) and evaluative (AO3) points when disagreeing with the view that the House of Commons is able to exert significant control over the Prime Minister:

- Both Thatcher and Blair had large Commons majorities during their two decades of power. Johnson achieved an 80-seat majority in December 2019. Wilson won a huge majority in 1966. In these circumstances it would take a huge backbench revolt to thwart a prime minister (AO2). We can conclude that the period from 2010 to 2019 was a 'blip' and that large Commons majorities have returned. Johnson's large Commons majority means he is unlikely to face defeat, and this weakens the control that the Commons can exert on him (AO3).
- Party loyalty and the whipping system remain strong in the Commons. In this sense it is much more cohesive than the Lords, which contains crossbenchers (AO2). We can form a judgement that party loyalty and partisanship remain strong in the Commons. This was demonstrated when Theresa May won a vote of no-confidence in early 2019, despite being unable to progress her Brexit deal. All Conservative and DUP MPs supported her in the vote (AO3).
- Both Blair and Thatcher were only defeated four times each by the Commons. A Prime Minister with a healthy majority will usually get the support of the Commons for key policy issues and legislation. Theresa May committed the armed forces in April 2018, before asking the Commons, which demonstrated her power to act (AO2). We can conclude that it is rare for Prime Ministers to fail to get the support of the Commons for significant policies and legislation. Theresa May received retrospective support from the Commons for the military action in 2018. Therefore, on such key issues the Commons does not exert sufficient control over the Prime Minister (AO3).

- Confidence votes are very rarely moved by the Opposition. If they are moved, then party loyalties kick in. For instance, despite her unpopularity and her minority government, Theresa May comfortably defeated the Opposition's no confidence vote in early 2019 (AO2). We can form the judgement that although this is a significant power in theory, in practice it is rarely employed. Due to the partisanship in the Commons, it is unlikely that a Prime Minister would be defeated in a vote of confidence, unless they headed a minority government and the opposition parties all joined together to vote against them (AO3).

Candidates may refer to the following synoptic points:

- Role of FPTP in election outcomes.
- Policy issues that have divided parliament and parliamentary parties, such as Brexit.
- The role of the media in reporting on prime ministers and the Commons.

Accept any other valid responses.