**A-level Politics**

**Unit 1 Revision Booklet**

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**Over the revision period we recommend**

* Read and sort through your file notes. Make sure that they are all complete, in the right part of your file, in the right order and understandable.
* Go back to the McNaughton textbook and clarify any parts that you don’t understand.
* Read through the revision notes in this pack and add your own notes to them where you think necessary. Plan your revision! Pick out questions, produce your own rough answer and then check your answers against the notes in this booklet.
* Produce your own charts and spider diagram to help you revise (e.g. on ‘The Functions of parliament or, ‘Models of Executive Power’). Your revision must be active and not passive!
* Look through the potential exam questions (past exam papers themselves are on Godalming Online but all the previous questions are here too at the start of each section). Get a feel for what sort of questions are being asked. Try to produce bullet point answers, or rough plans, for these questions. Check your answers against the mark schemes. Remember the more you practise the more likely it is that a similar question to one that you have already answered will appear in the exam.
* If you want to write out answers to time and e-mail them to us we will mark them and send them back to you.
* Good Luck!

**A-Level Politics – Advice on answering exam questions for Unit 1 A Level Politics**

There are three assessment objectives for A-Level politics.

**AO1**

Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of relevant institutions, processes, political concepts, theories and issues.

**AO2**

Analyse aspects of politics and political information, including in relation to parallels, connections, similarities and differences.

**AO3**

Evaluate aspects of politics and political information, including to construct arguments, make substantiated judgements and draw conclusions.

At A Level, 40% of all marks are for AO1 but **you will not** **achieve the highest marks if you do not also score highly on AO2 and AO3.**

You will see these three objectives referred to on the right-hand side of the examiner’s mark scheme.

**General Advice**

* **In source questions, it clearly states ‘Using the source…’.** If you fail to refer to the source, you will be limited to 12/30 marks, no matter how excellent your answer is! It is best to make this very clear to the examiner by quoting from the source or using the phrase ‘the source suggests that’.
* **Make sure that you obey the command word in the question.**

For example, you need to know how to ‘evaluate’. To evaluate means to analyse a range of arguments, weighing up the strengths and weaknesses of each and reaching a conclusion.

* Each point you make should be backed up with a **relevant and up to date example**. You should build up a bank of examples for each topic you study (e.g on good example cases for the Judiciary topic).
* **Always give definitions for any key terms mentioned in a 30 mark essay question**. So, if a question asks for the advantages of First Past the Post, make sure you can define FPTP.
* **Get your timing right**! (see below) If you find yourself going over the time limit for any section of the question you should stop writing and move on to the next question. This is important because you do not want to spend too much time on each question. It would be a disaster to leave yourself short of time on the second or third question. It is better to write bullet points than run over time.
* **Explain & Evaluate your points**. The general pattern should be **(‘PEEL’)**:

1. Make the **P**oint.

2. **E**xplain it.

3. Give an **E**xample.

4. **L**ink it back to the question

**The Structure of the Unit 1 Paper**

* There are 4 topics that you need to revise. These are: Democracy & Participation, Political Parties, Elections and Voting Behaviour & the Media.
* There are 3 sections to the Paper **(but for your year 12 mock, you will only be examined on 2 sections as the third is an ideology question which have not covered yet).** You must answer one question from section A and one non-source-based question from section B. Section A is a compulsory question and section B there is a choice of two. You should spend 45 minutes on each question.

**Question 1 – the source-based essay question**

* This is worth 30 marks and you should spend 45 minutes on this question.
* **Read the source carefully and highlight any main quotes** that might summarise the two sides of the debate. You may wish to use two highlighter pens.
* **Highlight the other arguments ‘for’ and ‘against’** the subject that you need to evaluate.
* Use these to **create a plan**. It is best to draw up a quick table, with your ideas in bullet points.
* From this, **develop argument and counter argument pairs**. They must be logical and naturally go together. You may add your own counter argument, but the initial argument must ALWAYS come from the source.
* **Decide your ‘answer’ before you begin writing.** You will need to state your opinion in the introduction so you need to decide! Judgement is expected, so be decisive, but you can give a judgement that is based on ‘it depends’. Essays are NOT murder mysteries: tell the examiner that it was Mrs Peacock, with the lead piping, in the conservatory, at the beginning of the essay, not the end!
* **Do not write in the first person** e.g., ‘I think’ or ‘In my opinion.’ Instead, use phrases like, ‘it can be argued that…’ or ‘an alternative viewpoint is…’
* Your introduction should be brief, starting with the controversy of the topic and a definition of any concept. It should give a summary of the arguments and at the end of this paragraph you should state your opinion or answer to the question (**signposting your view**).
* You should include at least 3 argument pairs, 4 if aiming for a top grade.
* Use **quotes from the source** to make a point and develop your argument from this.
* **Keep returning back to the question**. Make sure every paragraph you write is question-focused. You can make the examiner aware of this by regularly referring to key words in the question in your answer.
* **Include interim conclusions** at the end of each paragraph pair, referring back to the key words in the question.
* Refer to topics studied in other parts of the course. This is called a synoptic link and is an essential requirement for A\*/ A grades. For example, if you are discussing the participation crisis, you could refer to the fact that there is a lack of representation of minor parties due to the system of FPTP (which is part of your electoral systems work!), How ‘democratic’ something is (and consider the type of democracy it is too) could probably connect to many topics!’
* **Remember to ‘PEEL’ each paragraph (Point-Explain-Example-Link to Question). Always, Always give examples!** Your examples need to demonstrate the point that you are making, so explain this connection before moving on.
* Make a judgement. Your opinion should be clear from the outset and reinforced as you go along with your interim conclusions. However, summarise your argument in the conclusion. You need to take an opinion, but there may be variability as sometimes factors change in different circumstances (influence of small parties). You are evaluating the extent of an issue, therefore it is ok to have an element of ‘it depends’ in your answer.

**Question 2: the non-source based Essay**

One 30-mark question from a choice of two, which assesses AO1, AO2 and AO3.

* Spend **45/50 minutes** on this
* You will be asked to evaluate a view or the extent of one particular issue, eg, the dominance of the
* You will need to provide 3 points arguing in favour and 3 points arguing against.
* **Write a quick plan** to order your thoughts, by selecting that key words of the question (e.g. ‘influence of party leaders’) drawing up a table of points for and against. Spend 5 minutes on your plan.
* In your plan, create argument and counter-argument pairs. These must be logical and naturally go together.
* **Decide your ‘answer’ before you begin writing.** You will need to state your opinion in the introduction, so you need to decide! Judgement is expected, so be decisive, but you can give a judgement that is based on ‘it depends’
* Follow a point vs counterpoint (mini-judgment) X 3 structure. (Use this structure when planning questions too – **see below for examples**)
* Make sure that the counter argument is directly linked to the argument you have just made, e.g. Partisan dealignment may indicate the rise in influence of small parties, **vs**. partisan dealignment was not evidenced by the 2017 election, in which 82% voted Labour or Conservative!
* You will need an introduction which defines key terms, lays out the points on either side and signposts your overall answer to the question
* You will need a conclusion which sums up the points you’ve made on both sides and **justifies your judgement.**
* **Use the wording of the question** – address the statement given to you in the question directly. Yes, it’s correct or no it isn’t. There may be a level of variability or ‘it depends’ on certain factors.
* **Remember to ‘PEEL’ each paragraph (Point-Explain-Example-Link to Question). Always, Always give examples!**

**Planning advice for the Source based question:**

**HOW TO PLAN**: When planning a source question, read it through first and underline anything you could use as a point, you are looking for **three points on each side of the argument**, see below as an example. Points/evidence to suggest two-party dominance has declined are indicated by **blue arrows.** Points/Evidence suggesting that the two main parties are still dominant are indicated by **red arrows**. The key phrase of the question is highlighted in **green**

Use the issues raised in source 1 to indicate the areas you need to cover.

1. Using the source, evaluate the extent to which **two-party dominance has declined** in the UK. *In your response you must compare the different opinions in the source and use a balance of knowledge and understanding both arising from the source and beyond it to help you analyse and evaluate. (30)*



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| **Two party dominance in decline**  | **Not in decline** | **Judgement: Which side is stronger?**  |
| The Third-Party Column In the source indicates that third party support has steadily increased since 1979 leading to multi-party politics in the UK. The rise of the Lib Dems during the Bair years can be seen, with 62 seats in 2005. SNP were the third party in 2015 winning 56 seats, depriving Labour of many historic seats.  | **What the source doesn’t show is that 2017 saw a reversal in the success of the smaller parties in time of winning seats.** The SNP lost 21 seats and their vote share went down 1.7%. In terms of vote share 2017 was the best combined result by the Conservatives and Labour since 1979. |  |
| Column three The % of seats won by the two main parties has also been steadily decreasing, from 95.8% to 86.7%. This could well have a correlation with partisan dealignment. This is the fact that the % of voters who cast their ballot for the two main parties has also decreased since 1979 from roughly 80% to a historical low of 65% in 2010.  | **A decline of 9.1% over a period of 36 years from 1979 to 2015 indicates a very minor decline**, as clearly Parliament is still extremely dominated by Labour and Conservative MPs, who will dominate committees and the passage of Bills. |  |
| **In 2010, the UK saw it’s first peace time coalition since the 1930s,** which you can see in column one, as neither party have 326 seats, the number needed to form a majority. Cameron’s Conservatives had to form a coalition government with the Liberal Democrats under Nick Clegg who had won 57 seats. A small party gaining power indicates that the two-parties no longer dominate. | **The coalition only lasted for one term**, and 2015 saw a return to single party government under David Cameron’s Conservatives, one of the two main parties in the UK. The first column shows clearly that Cameron had a majority in the house, and what the source doesn’t show us is that the Lib Dems collapsed in 2015, to be replaced by the SNP as the third largest party, who had no role in government.  |  |

**Conclusion:** summarise your arguments and justify why the side you’ve picked is better than the other:

**Planning advice for the 30-mark non-source based question**

With the 25 markers from the old specification below, and the essay plans outlined in the different sections below, it would be a good idea to plan them out yourself using the **30-mark structure** we have taught you in class, outlined below. Make sure your points and counterpoints are linked as closely to each other as possible, and make sure to include mini-judgements so your essays have an argument.

**Introduction:** Set out the debate. Lay out your points on either side and signpost your answer.

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| **Point For** | **Point Against** | **Mini-Judgement (which side is stronger?)** |
| First point | First counterpoint |  |
| Second point | Second counterpoint |  |
| Third point | Third Counterpoint |  |
| Optional fourth point | Optional fourth counterpoint |  |

**Conclusion:** Summarise your argument, explaining why the side you have picked is stronger or more convincing than the other side.

**Some dos and don’ts for exam success:**

**Do:**

* Get your **timing right**
* Use **up-to-date examples** and, if you can, try to use examples that are a bit different (e.g. comment on the results of the current election or news stories. This could be relevant for all 4 Unit 1 topics!).
* **Do not use examples in isolation**. They are used best when they help to illustrate a point you are making.
* **Obey command words** and focus like a laser on the question. Try to repeat key words in the question in your own answer so that the examiner is aware that you have the question in mind. In the best answers we have seen the one thing they all have in common is that they have addressed the question directly and conclude with a specific answer to the question (believe it or not, not all candidates do this!).
* **Study past papers and mark schemes**. Even if you’re not sitting at your desk you can still run through potential questions in your head. It all helps!
* **Practise questions** under exam conditions (your teacher will always be happy to look through your work).
* **Answer the question on the paper** and not the one you hoped for!

**Don’t:**

* Use out-of-date examples and when you do use examples make sure that they relate to the point you are making and are ‘woven in’ to your answer.
* Write down all you know about a topic – instead, apply what you know to answer the question you have been asked. ***Be a ‘laser guided missile’ rather than a ‘carpet bomber’!***
* Use prepared answers. Examiners never ask exactly the same question twice.

**Previous Exam Questions (out of date)**

**BE AWARE:** These 25 mark questions are from the old specification (no longer the format used in the exam you will sit) but have been included here to show you the type of questions you will be asked – but are still useful for you to look at when it comes to the issues being examined on, and plan them as non-source based 30 markers.

**Old Spec 25 Markers (similar to non-source 30 markers)**

* To what extent has the Labour Party moved away from its traditional principles? (25)
* To what extent have devolution and membership of the EU affected representative democracy in the UK? (25)
* Assess the merits of the different electoral systems operating in the UK. (25)
* To what extent has the power and influence of pressure groups changed in recent years? (25)
* To what extent is there a democratic deficit in the UK? (25)
* Make out a case in favour of electoral reform for the Westminster elections (25)
* Do pressure groups concentrate or distribute power? (25)
* To what extent do the major parties agree over policies and ideas (25)
* Assess the strengths of representative democracy as it operates in the UK (25)
* To what extent do pressure groups undermine democracy? (25)
* To what extent are the major parties internally divided over policies and ideas (25)
* Assess the advantages of the various electoral systems used in the UK (25)
* c) Assess the various measures, other than electoral reform, that have been suggested to improve democracy in the UK (25)
* c) To what extent is pressure group power in decline? (25)
* c) To what extent has the Conservative Party abandoned Thatcherism? (25)
* c) Should FPTP continue to be used for elections to the House of Commons? (25)
* c) Assess the advantage of using proportional representation electoral systems (25)
* c) To what extent do the major parties differ over policies and ideas? (25)
* c) To what extent is the success of pressure groups a reflection of their level of public support? (25)
* c) Should direct democracy be more widely used in the UK? (25)
* c) To what extent do the different electoral systems used in the UK produce different outcomes? (25)
* c) Should referendums be more widely used in the UK? (25)
* To what extent do pressure groups strengthen pluralist democracy? (25)
* To what extent is the Labour Party still committed to its traditional principles? (25)
* Make out a case in favour of retaining the ‘first past the post’ electoral system for the House of Commons (25)
* How effectively does representative democracy operate in the UK? (25)
* To what extent does democracy in the UK suffer from a ‘participation crisis’? (25)
* Is pressure group politics in the UK better described as pluralist or elitist? (25)
* To what extent are the major UK parties internally united over ideas and policies? (25)
* Should the Westminster electoral system be reformed? (25)
* To what extent are the largest pressure groups the most successful ones? (25)
* To what extent do the UK’s major parties accept Thatcherite ideas and policies? (25)
* To what extent would the wider use of referendums improve democracy in the UK? (25)
* To what extent is the modern Conservative Party influenced by ‘One Nation’ principles? (25)
* Assess the arguments in favour of the greater use of direct democracy in the UK (25)

# Democracy and Participation

**What do I need to know?**

* Current systems of representative democracy and direct democracy
* The expansion of the franchise and debates over suffrage
* The role of pressure groups in politics and other influences
* The development of political rights in the UK

**Key vocab**

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| Legitimacy | Accountability | Promotional group |
| Direct democracy | Civil liberties | Group politics |
| Representative democracy | Civil society | Pluralism  |
| Pluralist democracy  | Common law | Hyperpluralism  |
| Democratic deficit  | Decentralisation  | Limited government |
| Participation crisis | e-democracy | Redress of grievances  |
| Franchise | Electoral mandate | Manifesto |
| Think tanks | Elitism | Sectional group |
| Lobbyists | Formal equality | Suffrage  |

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# Key concepts and definitions

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| Legitimacy* Legitimacy means rightfulness. It is the basis for political stability - in a **democracy** governments require legitimacy in order to have the **authority** to govern.
* Governments promote participation in regular competitive elections - they can claim they have a **mandate** and thus legitimacy.
* Referendums may be used to legitimise particular policies. In the UK they have been used in particular for constitutional issues – Scottish Devolution 1997.
* Constitutions that lay down the ground rules of government may help to give legitimacy to the government.
* During periods of political instability, or in times of war, governments may try to bypass democratic elections and gain legitimacy by gaining the support of the people using patriotism e.g General Elections were suspended during WW2.
* Legitimacy can also be claimed in a number of other ways; Tradition (hereditary monarchy), still accepted in a number of Arab states E.g Saudi Arabia.
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| Representation* In an indirect, **representative democracy**, voters elect a representative to make decisions on their behalf.
* Burke, an 18th Century politician argued that representative should use their judgment and not slavishly follow the views of their constituents. Most MPs regard themselves in this light.
* The idea of **‘social representation’** is that a representative body should be a microcosm (mini version) of the community it represents i.e representative of sex, race, class, age of that community.
* A **‘delegate’** is a representative who exactly follows the instructions of those who appointed or elected him. Arguably MPs are generally delegates of their party, following the instructions of the whip. They are not delegates for their constituents – it would be too difficult to consult them on every issue and constituents do not have the necessary knowledge and understanding to make decisions.
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| Democracy* A system of rule based upon government of the people, by the people and for the people.
* For a system to be called democratic its key principles have to be: political equality for all voters, popular participation, a choice between different options for the voter and government in the public interest.
* Democracy can be **direct** in which all voters express views and vote directly on policies. Or it can be **indirect**, in that representatives are elect to decide policy on the public’s behalf.
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| Direct democracy* Direct Democracy implies that all citizens have direct and continuous participation. Are involved in the decision making process and do not rely on elected representatives
* It is not prevalent today and was used in ancient Athens. Referenda are modern example of Direct Democracy, used within a representative system.
* Other forms of Direct Democracy include: initiatives and jury lots.
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| Representative democracy* An **indirect** form of democracy in which politicians act on behalf of, and are accountable to, the public
* Usually operates through the mechanism of regular and fair elections. The UK is a representative democracy.
* Representative democracy does not imply that those who are elected are mere delegates (delegates are there to follow other peoples instructions and not use their own judgement) as they may use their own judgement when deciding issues. Therefore although a majority of people in Britain were probably against the war in Iraq a majority voted in favour in Parliament.
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| Referendums* A referendum is a popular vote on a particular public policy issue.
* Voters are expected to respond to a particular question, usually answering yes or no.
* On some occasions more than one question is put in a referendum (e.g. Scotland – 1997)
* Referendums are one of the few features of Direct Democracy in modern political systems. They differ from elections as they are on a single issue and not a method of forming a government
* They may be advisory or binding (in the UK in theory they cannot be binding because of Parliamentary Sovereignty – in practice they are likely to be binding). If they are used to raise issues for debate they are called initiatives (usually from a public petition) and if they decide public policy they are usually called propositions or plebiscites.
* Referendum have been used by the Coalition and the Conservative government regularly – on electoral reform (2011), Scottish Independence (2014) and leaving the EU (2016).
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| Power and Authority* Power is the ability to get someone or a group of people to do what you want them to do – even if it is against their will.
* Authority is the right to tell people what to do because there is legitimacy e.g authority for govts gained through elections.
* Power is based on the ability to reward or punish
* Authority may be based on tradition (monarchy), personality (charismatic), or legal-rational authority based on person’s post or office (elected or appointed).
* It is possible to wield power without authority – e.g totalitarian regimes (Mugabe/ Korea). It is possible to have authority but to lose real power e.g the Queen.
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| Sovereignty* Sovereignty refers to absolute and unlimited power.
* Internal sovereignty refers to the fact that sovereignty is located in the state. External sovereignty refers to a state’s relationships at an international level
* Legal Sovereignty is defined in terms of absolute legal authority and in the UK rests with parliament that can make and unmake laws.
* Political sovereignty is defined as unlimited political power and in the UK theoretically rests with the people but in practice lies with the PM and the executive due to the power wielded in Parliament.
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| The State* There is some disagreement about the meaning of this concept.
* It can be seen as an association that holds a monopoly of power within a given territory.
* It is distinguished from a government that refers to the political arrangements within a state. Systems of government may change but the state remains the same.
* Citizens or subjects belong to a state.
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| A Pressure Group* A pressure group is an organised group of people aiming to influence government or decision-makers
* Do not stand for election to parliament, local government etc.
* Narrow issue focus (or single issue)
* A small group of householders concerned about local pollution is a pressure group as is ALF which fights against vivisection
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| Interest (or Sectional) Groups* Represent a particular section of society, such as teachers, doctors or businessmen. Membership is limited to people of that particular occupation.
* They aim to look after the interests of that particular group.
* Sectional groups campaign for their own economic interests and do not aim to benefit wider society e.g. National Union of Teachers (NUT) or Confederation of British Industry (CBI). Members therefore tend to be motivated by their own material interest.
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| Cause (or promotional Groups**)*** These represent a specific issue (such as Friends of the Earth and the environment) linked to the benefit of others or the wider society. Members are therefore motivated by altruistic concerns.
* Membership is open to all
* Sometimes Cause groups have a single limited objective (such as the prevention of a third runway at Heathrow airport). However, in such circumstances such a movement might represent a combination of sectional and promotional interests.
* Others may take a broader long term objective (e.g. the Child Poverty Action Group fights for an end to child poverty which may require many different methods and take many years to achieve).
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| **Rights and Civil Liberties** * The term ‘human rights’ and ‘civil liberties’ are often used interchangeably but they mean different things.
* Civil liberties are the rights and freedoms enjoyed by citizens which protect them from unfair treatment by the state and government. They are those freedoms guaranteed by the stare and the constitution
* Prominent examples are: the right to a fair trial, the right to vote and stand for election, the right not to suffer discrimination on the grounds of colour, ethnicity, gender, sexual orientation etc. (outlined in the Equality Act 2010), the rights to form associations for peaceful ends.
* The Human Rights Act 1998 bought the European Convention of Human Rights into UK Law, it’s enforced by all courts in the UK.
* Freedom of Information Act 2000 – right to request information held by the government in the public interest.
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| Insider Groups* They have access to policy-makers. Pressure groups that the government considers respectable and well informed, and with which it likes to be associated.
* Given direct and frequent access to ministers and government departments
* When a government is drafting a policy or a new law, an ‘ultra-insider’ group would expect to be consulted by high-level government and have its views taken very seriously. E.g. National Farmers Union (NFU).
* Lower profile insider groups (such as CPAG) may concentrate on continually developing contacts with government, and rarely seek to influence the wider public.
* Heywood also refers to ‘prisoner groups’ which are PGs funded or created by government (e.g. Commission for Equality and Human Rights).
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| Outsider Groups* Groups that do not wish to be closely associated with government, or are unable to gain any formal recognition from government.
* Examples are the National Union of Students (NUS) or the Stop the War Campaign.
* For example, the govt. wouldn’t even think of consulting the Stop the War Campaign on its policy on Iraq.
* Because of their ‘outsider status’ such groups often resort to methods of direct action to communicate their message. At the extreme this may even include civil disobedience (e.g. ALF)
* Such groups may have outsider status either because they have been *denied* access by the government (NUS), or because they *choose* to operate as outsiders (ALF).
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| Pluralism* Theory of the distribution of political power that holds that power is widely and evenly dispersed in society rather than concentrated in the hands of an elite.
* Pluralists have a positive view of pressure group politics believing that healthy debate and discussion (the ‘free-market of ideas’) strengthens democracy
* In a pluralist society citizens are represented through membership of organised groups
* All groups have a measure of political influence
* No group can achieve a dominant position because others will always challenge it.
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| Functions of Pressure Groups (use ‘PREPP’ to remember these)* **Participation** (e.g. Stop the War)
* **Representation** (e.g. Outrage)
* **Education** (e.g. Amnesty + Occupy)
* **Policy Formation** (e.g. ASH + BMA)
* **Policy Implementation** (e.g. NFU)
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**Useful Information**

When using the information below to write plans for potential questions, make sure you’ve added **the most up to date examples,** and used the structure we’ve given you in class and on pages 2 & 3 to help plan them.

### The distinction between direct and representative democracy

*This is a question of comparing the definitions of the two types of democracy described above in the (a) section notes. However, you should specifically draw out the distinctions, i.e:*

* **Direct democracy is purer**.
* **Referendums may carry more legitimacy** than decisions made by government and Parliament. Because they represent the direct will of the people, they can lend legitimacy to major political decisions – e.g. the good Friday agreement referendum in 1998.
* **Direct democracy tends to operate with constitutional change such as the devolution referenda in Scotland, Wales and NI in 1997 & 1998**, whereas **representative democracy concerns day-to-day, year-to-year running of the country.**
* **Representative democracy will weigh up the different interests** of sections of society whereas **direct democracy represents the crude view of the majority.**
* **Representatives are accountable for their decisions** while the people cannot be accountable to themselves.

Liberal democracy ***(****The term used to describe most, modern established western democracies such as Britain or the USA.) You may need to understand this for a 30-mark question on whether Britain is a Liberal Democratic society (see below)*

* It is characterised by free and fair elections.
* Government is limited, usually by a constitution.
* Government is accountable to the people.
* The rule of law applies with all citizens equal under the law and government itself subject to legal constraints. This implies an independent judiciary.
* There is normally some degree of separation of powers between branches of government, with internal checks and balances – implying a strong, entrenched constitution.
* There are special arrangements, often a ‘bill of rights’, protecting the rights of individuals and minorities.
* The transition of power from one government to the next is peaceful, i.e. the losing parties accept the authority of the winners.
* The existence of representative institutions.
* There is free access to independent (from government) sources of political information. This implies freedom of expression and free media.

### Pluralist democracy

* Conforms to the principles of liberal democracy, as shown above.
* Particular stress laid upon features such as free elections, representative institutions, protection for individual and minority rights.
* In addition it means that may different groups, such as parties, pressure groups and other free associations are allowed to flourish with political life.
* It also implies a high level of tolerance of a variety of different political and ideologies and cultural lifestyles and belief systems.
* Today it also implies multiculturalism – different cultural/ethnic/religious groups are tolerated.

### The difference between pressure groups and political parties

**Similarities**

* Both are formal organisations
* Both have specific goals and engage in campaigns to achieve them
* PGs sometimes compete in elections
* Some PGs have a broad range of policies just like parties (e.g. Countryside Alliance or CBI).
* Equally, some parties may only have one main aim which makes them more like PGs (e.g. Sinn Fein, Green Party or UKIP)
* Some parties have factions within them which operate like PGs (e.g. the Cornerstone Group of Conservative MPs which campaigns for family values)

**Differences**

* Attitude to governmental office (Parties aim to *fill* positions in government, PGs aim to *influence* government). As a result parties put up candidates for elections, pressure groups only tend to do so as a method of attracting publicity.
* Breadth of aims – parties tend to have a broad policy platform, pressure groups a narrow or single-issue platform.
* Legal Status – Parties are legal entities regulated by the electoral commission.

### The factors influencing the power of Pressure Groups (see below 30 mark plan for details)

* Size of membership (Make Poverty History, RSPB)
* Government support (League Against Cruel Sports or Child Poverty Action Group under Labour Party, CBI under Conservatives). Trade Unions will have less influence under Conservative governments for example.
* Insider Status (NFU, CBI)
* Financial resources (WWF, Amnesty Greenpeace)
* Organisation (e.g. Fuel Lobby)
* Strategic position (NFU, any public service unions such as nurses and teachers)
* Backing of public (e.g. ‘Hacked Off’)
* Celebrity Support (e.g. Bono with Make Poverty History, Hugh Grant and ‘Hacked Off’)

### The problems of distinguishing between interest and cause groups

* Some groups possess both characteristics. E.g. The Terrence Higgins Trust carries out work on behalf of people with HIV and AIDS (interest/sectional). It also promotes activities which are linked to public health and awareness about AIDS (cause/promotional).
* Some groups contain members with both sectional and promotional motivations. E.g the group aimed at stopping development at Dunsfold may contain ‘NIMBY’s and environmentalists.
* Some groups may mask their sectional motivations by adopting the language of a promotional group e.g. CBI may attract more positive media attention if it is seen to embrace arguments which embody the economic development of the country as a whole rather than the sectional concerns of businesses.

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## 30-mark non-source Questions

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| Evaluate the extent to which representative democracy is beneficial to the UK (30)Advantages of representative democracy* The **people cannot be regularly expected to consider and make important decisions**. They have neither the time nor the interest. Therefore representatives can do so on their behalf.
* **Representatives have the time and hopefully expertise** to consider political issues rationally. MPs often come from professions with high levels of analytical skills required, such as lawyers and doctors.
* **Representatives have a role in educating** the public about political issues.
* **Representatives can ensure that the interests of different sections of society are taken into account** in political decisions. Taking into account the views of minorities is easier as a representative of an entire constituency.
* **Representatives can be held accountable** for their decisions to ensure democratic outcomes. This can happen at election time, or in extreme cases, through recall petitions signed by 10% of constituents.
* Representatives can **‘aggregate’ demands** of the people, making them more coherent and developing logical political programmes.

Disadvantages (and problems) of representative democracy* **Representatives, and parties, may distort the demands of the people** to suit their own political ends.
* The **people may fail to respect the decisions made by their representatives**. They cannot be removed from office normally until the next election. E.g. 7 Labours MPs voted against triggering article 50 in February 2017 despite being from constituencies that voted Leave in the Brexit referendum
* The **idea of the electoral mandate is flawed** in that voters are only presented with a manifesto, the whole of which they must accept or reject. Voters cannot express preferences *within* various election manifestoes.
* **Representatives do not make themselves accountable enough between elections**.
* Today, when the **public is better informed** and has access to a wide range of independent information, they are able to make key decisions for themselves. E.g 24 hour news media/social media etc.
* **Representatives may make decisions purely for electoral advantage** (e.g. tax cutting, expenditure raising), even though such decisions may be unwise.
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| ***Evaluate the extent to which representative democracy is a useful system in the UK (30)*** *The following are arguments suggesting that Britain is a successful representative system. In each case there is a critique of or counter-argument to the point.* * **We are all represented equally by an MP** who will take up our grievances in Parliament. Philip Davies (Conservative MP for Shipley) for example states he will always put constituency interests before those of his own, following the delegate model of representation.

*However, many MPs simply ‘toe the party line.’ Also, both Houses of parliament are not socially representative, with a lack of women and members of ethnic minorities.* BME MPs make up 7.8 per cent of the 2017 parliament, compared to roughly 14 per cent of the population as a whole. *There is also a heavy middle class bias, with* 29 per cent of MPs in 2017’s Parliament having been privately educated, compared to roughly 7% of population.* The **elected Parliament and assemblies in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland use fairer systems and give fairer representation**. *The FPTP system at general elections distorts representation. E.g. in 2015 the SDLP won Belfast South with just 24.5% of the vote!*
* We have **many pressure groups with active support and memberships who represent effectively the many interests and causes in society**.

*However, sometimes, wealthy vested interests dominate and so representation is again distorted. It could also be argued that minorities are under-represented.** Although it is not elected, the **House of Lords does contain members who represent various sections of the community.** *E.g Lord Dannatt (former head of the British Army), Lord Sugar (businessman) etc.* There are representatives of different industries, causes, voluntary organisations, worker groups, NHS patient groups, professions and occupations etc. *However, peers are unelected, and some sections of society are overrepresented, such as the 26 CofE Bishops.*

***Further counter-arguments:**** We could argue that government itself is not representative enough. Although it is accountable through Parliament and at elections, it may not be responsive enough to the demands of the public and may not represent public opinion accurately. This may be especially true when there is no general election imminent.
* There is a strong argument that local government is not representative. Turnouts at local elections are notoriously low and local party cliques may not be representative and operate in their own interests. Turnout at the local elections in 2014 was 35.7%!
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| ***Evaluate the extent to which the UK is suffering from a participation crisis (30)***Yes there is a participation crisis: * **Membership of political parties has been falling dramatically** – from a high of about 2 million in the early 1980s to under 500,000 in 2012.
* **Parties are finding it increasingly difficult to recruit candidates for election** at local level.
* **Election turnout has been falling to 66% at the previous election in 2015**. This is potentially reflective of ‘contentment culture’ because of economic success in Britain, or broader disillusionment with political parties and the political system.
* As the main parties have become less ideologically polarised we have seen **the growth of partisan & class dealignment** and loss of identification with parties. Less people voting for the two main parties or voting on class lines (see voting behaviour).

No there isn’t: * Party membership of the Labour Party has seen a huge rise under the leadership of Jeremy Corbyn since 2015 people. With over 300,000 people joining as a direct result of his leadership campaign in 2015.
* Partisan Dealignment is arguably in reverse as a result of the return to two party voting in the 2017 general election, with Labour and the Conservatives receiving 82% of the vote combined, up from 66% in 2015.
* Turnout in 2017 also improved on the 2015 figure, increasing to 68.7%, suggesting ‘voter fatigue’ is not overly significant despite the election being held only two years after the previous one, and one year after the Brexit referendum. The referendum itself had a turnout of 72.2%.
* We have seen **rises in pressure group membership and activity**. There has also been the rise of **‘new social movements’** which involve large amounts of people being mobilised in a cause.e.g anti-Iraq war movement and the ‘Occupy’ movement in 2011. E-petitions, introduced by the Coalition have attracted thousands of signatures on issues from Europe, to the Hillsborough disaster and the death penalty. A petition to ban Donald Trump from the UK in 2015 received 586,000 signatures and was debated in parliament. The most recent People’s vote march in March 2019 attracted over 1 million people to central London to campaign for a second referendum.
* **Government itself is also involving more people in the policy making processes** with citizens’ forums, juries, focus groups etc. Local authorities also regularly consult members of the community about their services. The introduction of new Police and Crime Commissioners in England and Wales also increases democracy in public bodies, namely the police.
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| **Evaluate the view that direct democracy should be used more widely in the UK (30)** **Introduction.** Direct democracy is a form of democracy that is based on the direct, unmediated and continuous participation of citizens in the tasks of government. Advocates of direct democracy make the arguments that it is the most genuine form of democracy, it helps to educate the population, it cuts out the need for a potentially corrupt political elite and that it is the most legitimate form of democracy. However, under analysis, many of these arguments are not as strong as they might seem at first.***(Point)*** Direct Democracy is considered to be the **most genuine form of democracy**. Its advocates argue that it is the only pure form of democracy, as it ensures that people only obey laws that they make themselves. Popular participation in government is the very stuff of freedom: it is how the people determine their collective destiny, their ‘general will’. Meanwhile Representative Democracy means that there is a gulf between government and the people. This is potentially expressed by the popularly held view amongst Brexiteers that the current parliament is a ‘Remain parliament’ working against ‘the Leave supporting public’ ***(Counterpoint)*** However, one must bear in mind that at times **Direct Democracy can constitute the ‘tyranny of the majority’** or the, ‘rule of the 51%’. Advocates of representative democracy tend to argue that the quality of a democracy should not be judged on the ease with which the majority can get their way but rather on how it treats its minorities. In this sense direct democracy can feel decidedly undemocratic to those who are not a part of the majority view. This has widely been expressed by the People’s vote campaign for a 2nd referendum on Brexit, as they argue Theresa May’s push for a hard Brexit, completely ignores the pro-Remain 48% in the UK. ***(Point).*** Direct Democracy is also considered to be a **great promoter of personal education** and development. Advocates argue that direct democracy creates better informed, more participative and more knowledgeable citizens. In this sense it has educational benefits. Direct and regular popular participation in government encourages people to take more interest in politics and to better understand their own society – both how it works and how it should work. For example, one could argue that the recent Irish referendum on the Lisbon Treaty played a significant role in educating the Irish population about the complex issue of EU membership and, in so doing, enabled them to better play an active role in shaping their own futures. The Scottish Independence referendum in 2014 was seen as a civilised debate based on facts, and a pre-prepared plan of what an independent Scotland would look like. ***(Counterpoint).*** However, there is a risk in exaggerating the potential educational benefits of participation in direct democracy. It is **not always the case that citizens understand the true complexities of the issues upon which they are voting** and, anyway, it can seem simplistic to reduce their decision to a simple ‘Yes / No’ verdict. In the case of the Britain leaving the EU it could be argued this was the case. The press played a particularly important role in the Brexit campaign with emotive headlines such as the Sun headline, ‘Queen backs Brexit’, not based on evidence or facts about Eu membership. ***(Point)*** Direct democracy is **potentially our saviour from the professional class of politicians** who have arguably blighted our democracy in recent years. This is because it reduces, or removes, the public’s dependence on self-serving professional politicians. Recent events in the UK, such as the ‘cash for honours’ scandal and the MPs’ expenses scandal in 2009 would bolster the case for doing away with this ‘political elite’ who seem increasingly distant from the public in whose name they are supposedly acting. Elected MPs do not always represent the view of the people in any event! This could be the counter argument with the referendum on the EU – demonstrating how out of touch the MPs were! ***(Counterpoint)*** However, **critics of direct democracy argue that the public as a whole generally lack political knowledge and are not capable of seeing the broader picture and of taking a more considered view**. Certainly, paid politicians are employed to look at issues in a great deal of depth and have teams of researchers to help and inform them. They are therefore perhaps best placed to act in the broader national interest than the sum total of voters in a direct democracy, who might be more inclined to vote in a prejudiced fashion because they don’t have all the information to hand.***(Point).*** Finally, it is argued that direct democracy **provides the most legitimate form of government** in the sense that people are more likely to accept decisions that they have made themselves. When citizens make political decisions directly they have to take responsibility for them – there is no one else to blame. This helps to ensure stable government. ***(Counterpoint).*** However, to counter this it might be argued that the **results of referenda, say, do not automatically confer legitimacy**. Many turnouts for referenda are extremely low in this country (lower than for general elections) and the degree of legitimacy can be called into question when it is not clear whether the electorate have voted on the issue at hand or rather on a whole raft of other irrelevant concerns. The turnout at the AV referendum in 2011 was just 42%, less than half of the electorate! It is also perfectly possible for the media, businessmen, the church or pressure groups to influence the result by putting their, sometimes substantial, backing behind one particular side of the campaign. Allegations of Russian interference in the Brexit campaign in 2016 are also damaging it’s credibility as a democratic result. **Conclusion**In conclusion it can be seen that many of the arguments in favour of direct democracy can be contradicted with strong counter arguments. A more considered definition of democracy would not find a situation where there is a ‘tyranny of the majority’ acceptable and, equally, the argument that direct democracy leads to a higher level of education can be countered by the very low levels of participation in recent referenda in this country and the level of debate over the Brexit referendum. Finally, while direct democracy might do away with our much-reviled class of professional politicians, there is no particular reason to assume that direct democracy would be any more ‘legitimate.’ In turn it could become open to different forms of corruption, such as manipulation by big business or other elites within society. |

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| **Evaluate the view that the benefits of representative democracy far outweigh the negatives (30)****Introduction** Representative democracy is a limited and indirect form of democracy operating through the ability of representatives to speak for, or act on behalf of, the people. Advocates of representative democracy argue that it is by far the most efficient form of democracy, it means that decisions are made by an informed political class, it still allows for the voice of the people to be heard (albeit mediated) and it has led to the development of party politics which enhances voter choice. However, under analysis, some of these arguments are not as strong as they might seem at first.**(Point)** **Representative democracy is the most efficient form of democracy because decisions often need to be taken quickly and decisively**. Population sizes of many states run into the millions and this means that, whilst consulting the people directly may seem an attractive option, in most cases this is simply infeasible. By employing representatives of the people in legislative assemblies representative democracies are therefore a solution to this problem. **(Counterpoint)** Despite this, **critics of representative democracy argue that the only way to ensure that people obey laws is if they have made them directly themselves**: it is how the people determine their collective destiny, their ‘general will’. Representative Democracy, however efficient, can mean that there is a gulf between government and the people. This is particularly the case when the Government makes decision which are not perceived to have a mandate from the people e.g. the Labour government’s decision to go to war in Iraq.**(Point)** Secondly, **advocates of representative democracy argue that the public as a whole can sometimes lack political knowledge and are not capable of seeing the broader picture and of taking a more considered view**. It might also lead to ‘rule by the 51%’ or ‘the tyranny of the majority’. This is why, under representative democracy, paid politicians are employed to look at issues in a great deal of depth and have teams of researchers to help and inform them. They are therefore best placed to act in the broader national interest than the sum total of voters in a direct democracy, who might be more inclined to vote in a prejudiced fashion because they don’t have all the information to hand. There is also the capacity that representative democracy has to put forward a more nuanced viewpoint than would be the case with a simple ‘Yes/No’ under direct democracy. The recent compromise on prisoners’ voting rights in the light of an HRA ruling is a good example of this.**(Counterpoint)** However, **critics of representative democracy say that it has led to a ‘spadocracy’, the development of an elite political class who have lost touch with the people they supposedly represent.** They would say that elected representatives have blighted our democracy in recent years (e.g. ‘Cash for Honours’ and the MPs’ Expenses Scandal) and that elected MPs do not always represent the view of the people in any event! On Europe, for example, there is a chasm between the views of MPs (broadly in favour of integration) and the views of the public (broadly against). The rise of the career politician, such as David Cameron, Ed Balls and Ed Miliband, who become special advisors, then MPs and then high level ministers or even PM just adds to this sense of disconnect between the people and their politicians. **(Point) It can further be argued that Representative Democracy still means that the public’s voice is heard through the continuous mediation and aggregation of their views**. In countries like the UK which maintain the constituency link between representatives and their constituents, representatives are compelled to listen to their constituents and keep communication channels constantly open if they want to be re-elected at the next election (e.g. Jeremy Hunt, the MP for SW Surrey holds regular constituency surgeries). This means that there is a degree of accountability and transparency to representative democracy that should not be underestimated. It is also the case in representative democracies that the votes of all representatives are a matter of public record. This helps constituents effectively hold their representatives to account.**(Counterpoint)** However, one must bear in mind that **the constituency link is not an altogether foolproof mechanism for ensuring the mediation and aggregation of the public’s views**. For example if an MP has a safe seat (e.g Bootle in Liverpool), or is intending to retire at the next election, he or she may have less incentive to consult with their constituents. In this sense representative democracy can sometimes mean constituents feel quite distant from their representatives and that their voices are not heard. There is also no guarantee that MPs will follow the delegate model, i.e. going with the majority opinion in their constituencies, once in Parliament. Kate Hoey, the Labour MP for Vauxhall in South London, is a hard Brexiteer, but has a heavily Remain constituency. **(Point).** **A final argument in favour of representative democracy is that it leads to the emergence of party politics and a party system which is simpler for voters to understand**. This means that, rather than having a multitude of views being exhibited, as might be the case under direct democracy, voters may face a more straightforward decision at election time of, say, one of a handful of parties to choose from. For example many constituency contests in the UK are two way competitions between Labour and the Conservatives.**(Counterpoint).** However, some argue that, as is the case in the UK, **certain voting systems lead to the emergence of two party systems which inevitably cannot reflect the full political spectrum**. In the UK this has led to the emergence of two ‘catch all’ parties both vying for the centre ground and with very similar policies. **Therefore in some cases one could argue that representative democracy has reduced voter choice. The harsh reality of the two party system created by FPTP is that smaller parties are doomed to fail.** **Conclusion**In conclusion it can be seen that the arguments in favour of representative democracy are compelling. The large population sizes of most modern nation-states, the relatively low political education of the public and the lack of time that they have to devote to political decision-making means that representative democracy is best suited to meeting voters’ needs in the 21st century. This is not to say that there are not problems with representative democracy. Democratic deficits can emerge as the political class becomes distant from the people it is supposed to represent and political parties (and the representatives themselves) are not always as attuned to their electorates concerns as they could be. Nevertheless, it is one of the strengths of representative democracy that it can be flexible and respond to its perceived weaknesses (for example through changing the voting systems or introducing advisory referenda) and for this reason the arguments for it are most persuasive. |

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| **Evaluate the extent to which the UK is suffering from a ‘democratic deficit’ (30)*****Democracy in the UK has been accused or considered to be in ‘deficit’ for a number of reasons:***• Declining turnouts at all levels of elections. 35.7% at the 2014 local government elections. Hovering around the 65% mark at UK general elections. • Wider political apathy which renders questionable the democratic framework.• A deficit in political education as the wider public lack interest and knowledge in the political system.• The continuation of one House of Parliament, the House of Lords with undemocratic credentials and no sign of real reform.• An unfair voting system which creates an ‘un-democratic’ outcome for Westminster elections (no sign of change since the vote for FPTP in 2011).• Pressure groups with ‘elite’ status who may pursue narrow sectional interests which disadvantage the majority of the population.***However, it may be argued that there is not a ‘democratic deficit’ and that democracy is continually evolving to meet the needs of the population. The following may be cited:***• Reforms have taken place to develop democracy such as devolution across the UK, the Constutional Reform Act of 2005, giving increasing independence to the House of Lords, Freedom of Information Act, Recall of MPs etc. • New systems of Proportional Representation have been introduced in these devolved regions, including AMS in Scotland and Wales, as well as STV in Northern Ireland. • Widespread pressure group membership and activity ensure that there is no ‘democratic deficit’.• Human/civil rights are protected and have been developed.• Turnout, although not high, is in line with many other western democracies, and saw a slight increase in the 2017 general election, from 66% in 2015 to 68% in 2017. Turnout at Brexit Referendum was 72%.• Popular and real choice exists at election times for the voting public, with multiple parties standing across the UK, especially in the devolved regions. The UK is currently in a period where the two main parties, the Conservatives and Labour, are vastly different in terms of policy and ideology.• Referendums have been held widely in recent years, AV (2011), Scottish Independence (2014) Brexit (2016) |

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| **Evaluate the extent to which the UK is a liberal democratic system (30)**IntroductionLiberal Democracy balances the principle of **limited government** against the idea of **popular consent**.Its **‘liberal’** features are reflected in a belief in **limited government** and in a **network of internal and external checks** upon government that are designed to guarantee liberty and afford citizens protection against the state.Its **‘democratic’** character is based on a system of **regular and competitive elections**, conducted on the basis of universal suffrage and political equality. True democracy is synonymous with **political pluralism**, a tolerance of many beliefs, rival movements and parties.How is the UK system ‘liberal’?The Labour government did a great deal to fragment and spread out power in this country. * **Devolution**
* **London Mayor & Assembly**
* **HRA** introduced in 2000 (a more proactive judiciary, with the support of the Act, is protecting peoples’ rights)
* **Freedom of Information Act** came into force in 2005
* The Judiciary has become more independent of the other branches of government with the introduction of a new Supreme Court in 2009.

How is the UK system ‘democratic’?* **New electoral systems in Wales, Scotland, Northern Ireland and London.** These are fairer systems which produce a more proportional representation (i.e. fewer wasted votes and more representation for minority parties).
* **Increasing use of referenda** (e.g. for devolution and London Mayor)
* **Introduction of City Mayors**
* **Increasing political pluralism** (e.g. the huge increase in pressure group activity fuelled by the mass communications revolution).
* The **Welsh Assembly** is now the **only democratically elected body in the world that has an equal representation of men and women**.
* **Blair appointed the first ever black cabinet minister** (Paul Boateng, Chief Secretary to the Treasury), Cameron the first ever Muslim cabinet minister (Baroness Warsi). There are now a number of openly gay ministers.
* **Minority parties now represented in Europe** (UKIP, BNP, Greens) and one Green MP and one UKIP MP at **Westminster.**
* The Coalition has introduced **fixed term parliaments** (the next election will be May 2015)

How could the current system be criticised as not conforming to liberal democratic ideals?* Still **no written constitution**
* Recent parliamentary reform has, if anything, weakened liberal democracy rather than strengthened it. Reforms to the Commons under Labour were trifling and Lords reform has been slow materialising. **Parliament as a whole remains weak** and the executive is increasingly strong.
* **Blair** was almost **presidential in his style**. He placed little emphasis on cabinet meetings and much more on ‘tete a tetes’ in ‘Tony’s Den.’ He also relied on an array of ‘shadowy’ advisors (such as Alistair Campbell) rather than elected politicians. However, because of the nature of coalition, Cameron has had to listen more and become more consensual.
* FPTP remains distinctly unrepresentative of the true wishes of voters.
* Because of the Westminster system it could be argued that **we do** **not have enough parties to truly represent the diverse views of the electorate.**
* **Are PGs listened to?** Millions marched in the ‘Stop the War’ coalition but they were largely ignored.
* **Are PGs the answer anyway?** Often their success is dictated by the ‘sexiness’ of the issue (e.g. fashion models and anti-fur, Joanna Lumley and the Gurkhas), their celebrity support (e.g.Hugh Grant and ‘Hacked Off’), their resources and ‘insider’ status (e.g. CBI and *not* the ‘Occupy’ movement…).
* **The Media is controlled by a relatively small number of proprietors** such as Rupert Murdoch who owns The Times, Sun, Sunday Times & News of the World.
* We have an increasingly **apathetic electorate**. From this perspective, participation in political life is low. Only 30-40% voted in the 2014 European elections. How can we call ourselves a democracy if this is the case?
* How much power do we have over our own affairs anyway. It could be argued that **global markets dictate our economic policy** and **the Americans dictate our foreign policy**. Are the days of sovereign liberal democratic states numbered?!

*Now write your own conclusion to this answer!* |

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| **Evaluate the extent to which Pressure Group Power is increasing in the UK (30)** **Increasing:** * Tuition fee protests (2010), fuel protests (in 2000), Countryside Alliance and Stop the War (in 2004), and Make Poverty History in 2005 have attracted **huge numbers of supporters**. The BBC estimated that 1 million people attended the Stop the War march against the Iraq War in February 2003.
* There has been a huge **growth in the ‘politics of protest’** generally in recent years and some protests such as the ‘May Day Riots’ have become cult events. In recent months the student protests have been similar in some ways. These have also been fuelled by globalisation and the growth of the internet (‘cyberactivism’). International 'hacktivist' group Anonymous calls for people across the world to join its **Million Mask March** on Bonfire Night. The first event was in 2013 and since then thousands of protesters have donned Guy Fawkes masks in London on bonfire night.
* Breakdown in community and the **rise of ‘individualism’** has meant increasingly that people look for ‘tailor-made’ groups to represent their beliefs. PGs often fit the bill. They cater for a ‘pick and mix’ politics. For example sectional groups created for particular jobs or sections of society, i.e. NFU or BMA.
* Devolution has meant that there are now **more layers of government to influence**. There are more access points. Pressure group activity is now a, *“multi-level, multi-arena game.”* CBI has it’s own regional organisation (CBI Scotland) which aims to lobby the Scottish Parliament. The **EU is also an increasingly active area** (e.g. Countryside Alliance appealing foxhunting ban to European Court in 2002) We haven’t left yet!
* In the **Internet age**, government feels the need to pay more attention to public opinion. If voters are more interested in issues than in party beliefs, government must be sensitive to public opinion. Pressure groups are a key indicator of public opinion. They may also exploit online petitions through the parliament websit or websites such as Change.org.
* Government is ever more complex and technical. Therefore **governments increasingly need PGs to inform them about opinion**, demands, needs and, in some cases, about changes in society in general. Insider Pressure groups such as the CBI, BMA and NFU all serve a purpose for government, not just the people. NFU helps to educate farmers on changes to government policy.
* Britain’s **media have become increasingly active in campaigning on political issues**. This has provided more effective vehicles for pressure groups to pursue their causes and interests. The Sun often runs campaigns which directly correlate with the demands of Pressure Groups.

**BUT** Are PGs actually achieving results to match their increased levels of activity?* The tuition fee protestors in 2010 did not succeed in making government change its policies. Neither did the Stop the War march in 2003 or the ‘Occupy the London Stock Exchange’ movement in 2011 actually change government policy towards the banking system. The Countryside Alliance also failed to end the ban on fox hunting. Fathers 4 Justice & ‘Plane Stupid’, while amusing the nation with their wacky stunts, have yet to change government policy. The recent naked protest in Parliament by outsider Pressure Group ‘Extinction Rebellion’ in April 2019 achieved no meaningful policy debate or change in government policy.
* Despite a previous decline in membership of political party membership which may have been caused by an era of consensus politics in 2010-2015, it is clear that politics from 2017 onwards is **diverging away from pressure group activity and back into the traditional realm of party politics.** Parties are making huge drives for new members, with Labour gaining 300,000 new members under Jeremy Corbyn since 2015 and both the Conservatives and Lib Dems spending hundreds of thousands on membership campaigns.
* Generally it can be argued that there has been a decline in meaningful participation in western democracies in the last 20 or 30 years. Although large numbers of people may, at different times, be attracted to marches and demonstrations, this seldom leads to longer-term political involvement or commitment. For some protest may have become a social event - it is a form of *‘lifestyle politics’* or *‘politics lite.’* Many large groups simply have ‘*chequebook*’ members. PGs require active members to be effective.
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| Evaluate the view that Pressure groups play a vital role in strengthening democracy (30)**Yes*** PGs **provide essential freedom for citizens to organise** with likeminded people
* They help to **disperse power** and act as a supplement to electoral democracy
* They **provide functional representation** (e.g. Interest / Sectional Groups)
* They **allow for continuity of representation** (even between elections)
* They **act as a ‘safety valve’** – an outlet for pent-up energies and help maintain the stability of society.
* They **apply scrutiny to government** activity (e.g. Stop the War)

**No*** The freedom to organise and influence is **exploited by the rich and powerful groups** (e.g. Countryside Alliance or CBI). Do PGs empower the already powerful? Poorer groups in society (such as the poor, children, asylum-seekers) have to rely on less well financed organisations (e.g. Child Poverty Action Group)
* **Powerful insider groups are favoured** over outsider groups. This is not conducive to the idea of an open democracy. The most incisive pressure group activity takes place ‘behind closed doors’ where it is not subject to public scrutiny and public accountability. (CBI influence on Conservative party policy)
* **Corporatism has emerged** which reduces the impact of parliament
* **PGs are often not representative of their members**
* PGs increasingly use celebrity support where they can. Is this fair & democratic? This is perhaps a form of **‘non-legitimate’ power**. Unlike conventional politicians, PG leaders have not been elected.
* **PGs are essentially sectional** and do not act for the interests of the country as a whole.
* Do PGs create a **‘tyranny of the minority’**?! By their nature they represent minorities rather than majorities. Therefore, can ‘special’ interests sometimes prevail at the expense of the majority?

**In conclusion** it cannot be said that pressure groups play a vital role in strengthening democracy. Whilst it is tempting to look at the huge number of groups (and indeed of pressure group membership) as evidence for their strengthening role, it is crucial that this is not confused with in influence. **Summary of key points:** Whilst there is no doubt that certain insider groups still wield considerable influence within government (especially those which possess information important to decision-makers such as the BMA, CBI and NFU) these groups are elitist and unaccountable to their members or the public. In contrast many of the groups on the pressure group scene in recent years are actually ‘outsider’ groups (Occupy London, UK Uncut, Stop the War etc) and, despite attracting much public attention, they have had little success in actually influencing government. **Answer the question:** Therefore it is difficult to argue that pressure groups do indeed play a vital role in strengthening democracy in the UK  |

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| ***Evaluate the view that the UK should introduce compulsory voting (30)***

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| *Yes Introduce It* | *No don’t introduce it*  |
| **If voters knew that they had to vote or face a fine, it may force them to educate themselves** about politics in order to make an informed decision.  | **It is a civil liberties violation. Many argue it is a basic right not take part in the electoral process.** In many cases not voting is a conscious choice, not made out of apathy, but as a method to signal disillusionment with the political system.  |
| **By increasing turnout, it will give greater democratic legitimacy** to parliament and the party that win the election and subsequently form the government. Turnout in Australian elections tend to be around 93%.  | **Ill-informed voting does not increase legitimacy, it may actually decrease it, as it is harder to tell which votes are meaningful and informed ones.** It may also lead to ‘donkey voting’, voting for whoever is at the top of the list of candidates.  |
| **By ensuring that all aspects of society are involved including minorities,** politicians, parliament and government will have to make sure that their policies will address the concerns of everyone, not just those who vote in large numbers, improving representation and making them more accountable.  | **To enforce it and make sure everybody does vote will lead to large scale expenditure on enforcement.** Although the government would make money from fining those who don’t vote, the administrative costs of chasing people would be significant. Liechtenstein is an example of a country where penalty fines were enforced during the 20th century but the cost of enforcement exceeded total receipts from the fines. |
| **It could be argued that voting is a civic duty, so citizens should be obliged to carry out that duty.** Suffragettes fought and died for the right of women to vote, whilst before large scale suffrage was introduced through the reforms acts of 1867 & 1884, as well as the Representation of the People Acts in 1918, 1928 and 1948, Parliament and MPs were liable to be highly unaccountable and ‘rotten boroughs’ existed.  | **The system will just reinforce the two-party system operating in the UK,** as less informed voters are more likely to vote for the two parties they are more likely to have heard of, the Conservatives and Labour, who have more money to spend on campaigning and advertising and tend to get more press coverage.  |

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| **Evaluate the view that Government support is the most important factor influencing the success of a pressure groups (30)*** **Government support and Insider Status** is the first factor which needs to be assessed. Both promotional and sectional groups are bound to be far more successful if they are bound to a sympathetic government. (League Against Cruel Sports or Child Poverty Action Group under Labour Party, CBI under Conservatives). Trade Unions will have less influence under Conservative governments for example, compared with the CBI, a wealthy group which has Insider status with the Conservative party.
* **Size -** The more supporters a group has, the more pressure it can place on decision-makers. Politicians do not like to fly in the face of public opinion because they will regularly dace the need for re-election. Age UK (a group campaigning for the rights and needs of elderly people) has had significant success, not least because it represents such as significant proportion of the population. Similarly, if a group is too small it will struggle to be heard in the wake of larger more powerful groups. **However,** size is no guarantee of success, as the Stop the War campaign in 2003 managed to rally 1 million people to protest against the Iraq War, with no success, as they didn’t possess the support of Blair’s government.
* **Financial resources (WWF, Amnesty Greenpeace) –** Wealthy groups can afford ecpensice campaigns, employ lobbying firms to influence ministers and MPs on the government benches, sponsor political parties and purchase advertising space on the still largely unregulated internet. The Institute of Directors and CBI have considerable financial wealth and have in recent years enjoyed good favour with the Conservative government. **However,** finance on its own is not enough, as if you do not have public opinion on your side, or your group is not in favour with the party of government, you will not see returns on your investments. A major example of this is hugely wealthy Trade Unions not making substantial legislative gains under a Conservative government.
* **Strategic position -** Some pressure groups may be more successful because they represent more sectional interests which are more important to the economy or society. For example the NFU is in a strong strategic position because UK agriculture is seen as vital to the economy. The BMA may be in a strong strategic position due to periodic ‘winter crises’ in the health system when more beds (i.e. funding) is needed. Another aspect of strategic position is whether there are any groups rivalling one groups position. For example, Plane Stupid, an outsider group with good public support but is regularly defeated by the powerful and wealthy air transport lobby. However, this links to the most important factor of government support, as strategic position is about **how the government views the particular group and its necessity to society or the economy.**
* **Backing of public (e.g. Greenpeace or ‘Frack Off’)** Parties are happy to adopt policies if they are popular with the public, e.g. the rising profile of environmental issues in UK party politics is testament to the work of environmental single-issue promotional groups such as Greenpeace. This undermines government support and Insider status by suggesting that actually, public opinion is more important in influencing government than lobbying ministers behind closed doors.
* **Celebrity Support (e.g. Bono with Make Poverty History, Hugh Grant and ‘Hacked Off’)** – Having celebrity backing for your campaign is an excellent way of gaining media coverage and public support/membership in turn. A good example of this is actress Joanna Lumley’s high-profile support for the Ghurka rights campaign in 2008, where Burmese troops who fought for the UK were awarded the right to settle and live in the UK. **However,** celebrity support is not enough on its own, as Hacked Off’s high profile support from actor Hugh Grant shows, as the government have not acted on many of the 2012 Leveson Inquiry’s recommendations on how to regulate the press.

*Now, write your conclusion below!* |

**Evaluate the view that citizens can no longer feel confident that their rights in the**

**UK are secure and established. (30)**

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| **Rights are not secure and established**  | **Rights are secure and established** |
| In recent years citizens have experienced a loss of Rights curtailed by increasingly governments. This process has been undertaken as governments have sought to protect citizens from acts of terrorists – Blair’s Terrorism Act 2006 lengthened the amount of time a terrorist suspect could be detained without trial to 28 days (having asked for 90).  | An Independent judiciary upholds Human Rights against overly powerful governments in the UK. The judiciary has been empowered and alongside the Constitutional Reform Act of 2005. This is a fundamental part of living in a democracy – separation of powers is key to controlling government. |
| Pressure group evidence continually shows proof of governments undermining Rights in the UK – as seen in the work of Liberty and Stonewall. After the rushed introduction of the Data Retention and Investigatory Powers Act (DRIPA) in 2014, Liberty aided Tom Watson MP and David Davis MP to launch a legal challenge arguing that DRIPA is incompatible with the Human Rights Act and EU Charter of Fundamental Rights. | If there are more cases and disputes in the news concerning Rights it is not indicative of increased problems but rather shows increased transparency and the evidence of ‘Rights in action.’ When this is backed up by the growth of social media, it enables the electorate/public to become better educated about their rights.  |
| Parliamentary sovereignty and the uncodified UK constitution means even the Human Rights Act 1998 is insecure and Conservatives want to repeal it and replace with a British Bill of Rights. This was evident in their manifesto in 2015. | In recent years the passage of more detailed legislation means that Rights are set out clearly and in detail. These include the Human Rights Act 1998 and the Equality Act 2010. All of the above has established a clear Rights based culture  |

**Evaluate the view that the voting age should be lowered to 16 (30)**

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| **Yes it should be lowered** | **No it shouldn’t be lowered**  |
| With the spread of citizenship education and widespread access to news sources on the internet, **young people are now better informed than ever.** Parties have embraced social media to attract support from the young, with the Conservative spending £100 million pounds on online advertising in 2015, and Jeremy Corbyn having 1.8 million followers on twitter.  | **There is no obligation other than limited citizenship education at secondary schools for young people to learn about politics,** and 16 and 17-year olds may just be too young to make rational judgements without an education in politics. |
| **At 16 years of age you are able to marry, pay taxes, and leave home. You can legally have sex, which implies it is the age at which the Government deems you old enough to become a parent**. If you are deemed old enough to become a parent, get married and contribute to the treasury, then **you should be deemed old enough to decide who makes the policies** that so greatly affect your life | **Most 16-17 year olds will still live with their parents, most of them will not drive until they are at least 17, and will still be in some form of education until 18.** This exempts them from a lot of taxes that voters in the 18+ bracket would have to pay such as council tax, income tax and road tax. This arguably gives them less of a stake in society.  |
| **Turnout amongst the 18-24 age group is very low.** If the voting age is lowered, people will become engaged in politics from an earlier age and may be more likely to vote, as they will be more invested n what is going on politically. It isn’t just about short-term issues such as tax, but long term constitutional issues will affect young people for the rest of their lives, e.g. Brexit, which they couldn’t vote on in the Referendum.  | **The issues at stake are often too complex for a 16 or 17 year old to understand.** For example, the Brexit referendum was an incredibly complex issue requiring a strong understanding of UK politics and the workings of the EU. This is too much to ask of someone still at school or college.Young people could become too easily influenced by social media trends such as #cleggmania, #millifandom or Corbyn’s social media following. |
| **The radicalism of the young may act as a useful counterbalance to the extreme conservatism of elderly voters.** The grey vote is a major electoral asset, and young people should be allowed an equal say in their future, just as the old can. 59% of 65+ voters voted conservative in 2017, compared to just 18% of 18-24s. Whilst 67% of 18-24 voters voted Labour in 2017.  |  |

**Conclusion: Do you think the voting age should be lowered to 16?**

**Political Parties**

**What do I need to know?**

* Functions and features of political parties in the UK’s representative democracy.
* How parties are funded.
* The origins and development of the three main parties (Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat)
* The emergence and importance of minor parties in the UK and whether the UK is now a multi-party system
* The various factors that affect party success

**Key Vocab**

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| Classical liberalism | Modern Liberals  | Neo-liberalism  |
| Left wing | Cash for honours | Libertarianism  |
| Democratic socialism  | Third way | Mandate |
| Liberal democracy  | Consensus | Party faction |
| New Labour | Dependency culture | Party manifesto |
| New Right | Party system | Populism |
| One-nation conservatism | Short money  | Right wing |
| Political party | Two-party system  | Social liberals |

## Key concepts and definitions

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| Political Party* Group of like-minded people who attempt to win political power through elections. Disraeli said, “Party is organised opinion”.
* Will generally have a **broad ideological identity** – its members will share basic values and goals. At elections they will produce a policy programme known as a manifesto.
* It will also have a broad policy focus (**catch – all),** since (if it is a major party) it must convince the electorate that it can take on the task of government. Smaller parties may be more **programmatic** in nature – i.e. Much more fixed opinions (ideological) focussing on particular issues.
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| Party GovernmentThe belief that only by placing the power in the hands of a single party can a country be effectively governed. Politicians can then be strong enough to take unpopular but necessary decisions. Politicians are held accountable by offering the electorate a choice between the record of the party in office and the criticism of the opposition. This is done through the publication of manifestos. |

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| Manifesto and MandateManifesto is a list of policies that a political party promises to carry out if it wins the election, such as cutting taxation. All major parties publish a manifesto during an election campaign. A mandate (simply ‘permission’) is what a party has when it wins an election and forms a government. It then feels that it has been given permission by the electorate to carry out the policies in the manifesto. |

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| Distinctions between parties and pressure groups Notes on this question can be found in the Democracy and Participation section  |

**Useful knowledge and terminology**

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| The core Functions of political parties (Think ‘PROPER’!)**Policy function**: Parties contribute to formation of government policy through party conferences and meetings.**Representative function**: In the past, parties have represented different sections or classes of society, for example Labour were traditionally the party of the working class whilst the Conservatives were more the party of the Middle and Upper Classes. However, increasing ‘**party de-alignment’** has partially eradicated this distinction; due to the FPTP system parties must now have a wide base of support in order to win elections.**Organisation of Government:**  Under our political system and electoral system FPTP, it is usual for one party to secure an overall majority in the House of Commons. That party is referred to as ‘the party of government’, and government ministers are drawn from that party. It is rare in this country for a coalition of parties to be in power, although this did happen in 2010 with the Conservative-Lib Dem coalition. Since June 2017, we have had a ‘confidence and supply agreement’ between the DUP and the May’s Conservative government. Note that this is not quite a formal coalition, but an informal deal to support the government in key votes (but not May’s deal).**Participatory function**. Parties recruit members some of whom will become party activists – thereby encouraging political participation. As of December 2017 (last official figures released), Labour had 564,000 members and the Liberal Democrats had 102,000 members as of May 2017. As of August 2017, the SNP had 118,000 members. As of December 2016, the Green Party (England and Wales) had 46,000 and UKIP 34,000. As of December 2013 (latest published figure) the Conservative Party had 149,800 members. Party membership has risen notably since 2013, both in total and as a percentage of the electorate.**Elections:** Parties play a crucial role in educating the public about the election issues and ‘getting out the vote’. E.g Momentum and the organisation of Labour party volunteers during the 2017 general election. **Recruitment of leaders:**  Parties help to ‘talent spot’ future leaders and provide opportunities for them to develop their political expertise. All party leaders have to start as MPs elected as candidates from that particular party.  |

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| Consensus politics* One meaning is that the main political parties adopt policies which are similar and overlap a great deal. That is, there is a broad consensus over most key political issues. This is likely to reflect broader opinion among the electorate. With consensus politics, political conflict tends to concern such issues as policy detail, how to deliver policies and the competence or otherwise of the government and opposition, but not over the main issues.
* It is generally agreed that the ‘50s and ‘60s (‘Butskellism’) and the period between 2005-2015 = consensus politics.
* Another meaning is that parties agree to suspend political conflict over certain issues and to adopt consensus politics. This has occurred in recent times over issues such as the Northern Ireland troubles from 1968-2007 and the Iraq war and postwar involvement since 2003. There is also an informal consensus over the so-called ‘war on terror’ and, more recently, with the financial crisis e.g the extraordinary measures taken by government to restore the banking system were not challenged by either of the other two main parties on the grounds that disunity would be damaging at a time of national and international crisis.
* A formal version of consensus politics occurs when there is a coalition government and two or more parties develop an agreed set of policies based on consensus views, as happened with the Conservative-Lib Dem coalition of 2010-2015. It has also been a feature of politics in Wales & Scotland since devolution.
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| Adversary Politics* This is typically the opposite of consensus politics
* When there is a wide and clear gulf between the policies of main parties e.g. the 1980s was a great period of adversary politics in Britain, when Thatcherism was confronted by a very left-wing Labour Party under Michael Foot. Political conflict became deep and intense.
* During this period, Margaret Thatcher was privatising key state run industries in line with her ‘New Right’ neo-liberal economic ideas, whilst Michael Foot wrote the ‘Longest Suicide note in history’ (The 1983 Labour party manifesto which advocated renationalisation and increased state control).
* Potentially the advent of Corbyn as leader of the Labour party in 2015 and Prime Minister Theresa May’s pursuit of a Hard Brexit since 2016 as opposed to Corbyn soft Brexit may indicate a return to adversarial politics.
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| **Factors that may influence party success****Leadership*** Experience in Government – May vs. Corbyn in 2017. Could be seen as an advantage or disadvantage.
* Media Image – How a leader is treated by the media may influence what the public and their party think of them. Corbyn pre-election, May post-election.
* Decisiveness – Theresa May’s U-turn on social care in the run up to GE2017 made her seem indecisive.
* Ability to Lead – Corbyn faced of Vote of No Confidence in July 2016 which triggered a leadership election. May faced a Conservative party Vote of No Confidence in December 2018.

**Unity** * Labour split in 1981 with ‘gang of four’ forming the SDP, Conservatives united behind Thatcher
* 1997 – Blair had virtually completely united the party
* 2017 – Corbyn united Labour with an unexpectedly good election result
* Since 2016 – Tories mildly split on Europe – rebellion in December 2017
* 9 Labour MPs quit the Labour party in February of 2019 over Corbyn’s leadership and failure to deal with anti-semitism within the party. 8 of them, including Chuka Umunna and Luciana Berger, went on to form The Independent Group – Change UK with three ex-Conservatives, Sarah Wollaston, Anna Soubry, and Heidi Allen.

**The Media** * Does the party dominate on social media? Conservatives spent 1m on Facebook alone during GE2015, whilst Labour (Momentum especially) reached millions with its viral videos during GE2017
* Traditional Media – the party political leanings of the major newspapers mean they can significantly influence the public’s views of a party. In 2017 the Daily Mail had a circulation of 1,514,000 and 74% of it’s readers voted for the Conservatives, the Mail’s desired party of government.
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| *There are a number of potential questions that might be asked on* similarities and differences between parties. *Some questions might ask about the differences between Labour and Conservatives/ some might ask about the ‘main’ parties – here you bring in the Lib Dems.*Main areas of consensus (similarities) between the three main parties* **Health/NHS**. All main parties agree that the NHS is an institution that needs funding and supporting. Whilst they disagree on the inner workings of it, they do both want to keep it broadly free at the point of access.
* **Social Policy**. General consensus between the three main parties that there is a need for policies to combat family breakdown, deprivation in poorer areas and lack of opportunity for the young. There is also a general sense that general inequality and lack of social justice need to be addressed. Disagreement is confined to methods rather than priorities.
* **Environment**. All three parties agree that environmental protection is a priority, especially climate change and the need for renewable energy production. Conflict is confined to details of policy and which renewables are most appropriate, with some disagreement over nuclear energy.

Main areas of difference between the parties* **Cutting the deficit**. May and Hammond to cut ‘harder and faster’ than Labour. This is particularly true since Corbyn has taken over as Labour leader, even with May’s promised ‘End of Austerity’
* **Crime**. Conservatives see personal responsibility rather than social causes as the basis of crime and their response to the Summer 2011 riots was one emphasising the role of punishment. Corbyn has heavily criticised cuts to police funding in the wake of increased violent crime and terror attacks in London (2017).
* **Education**. Over Free Schools, grammar schools, tuition fees, Academies, there is now considerable difference in policy across the parties. Corbyn highly against these and wants a National Education Service similar to the NHS.
* **Tax.** Conservatives have a tax-cutting inclination and have continued this after the 2015 election. The 2017 budget included a range of tax cutting policies.
* **Welfare State**. *There are some disagreements over the detailed operation of welfare services. Iain Duncan-*Smith has introduced significant changes to the welfare system (including capping housing benefit, capping the amount of benefits any family can receive and reducing the rise in other benefits to below inflation levels).
* **Role of the State.** Labour favours an interventionist or ‘Enabling’ State. Corbyn is in favour of renationalising some industries such as water and energy companies as well as Royal Mail. The Conservatives have criticised this heavily calling it a ‘nanny state’. They favour a minimal state which empowers local communities (including voluntary groups and businesses etc) to take local action themselves. May has however said she wants to ‘tackle the burning injustices’ of British society and help the ‘just about managing’ families.
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| **Old Labour Values**Before the advent of New Labour in the 1990s, the Labour Party possessed what could be could democratic socialist ‘Old Labour’ values. There has arguably been a return to these values since Jeremy Corbyn won the leadership of the Labour party in 2015.* **Equality** – redistribution of income to reduce the worst inequalities, Labour has also been associated with ‘social justice’ and formal equality under the law.
* **Equality of opportunity** – Realising that total inequality was unfeasible, Labour opted for the idea that everyone should have the same opportunities to achieve in life, no matter what their family background is.
* **Collectivism and common ownership** – The idea that many of our goals are achieved collectively rather than individually. The welfare state, Trade Unionism and the cooperative movement. Public ownership of major industries, run by the state on behalf of the people, Steel etc., continued under successive Labour government until Thatcher’s privatisations in the 1980s.
* **Trade Unions-** Workers were weak compared to employers. Support for TUs was therefore vital in redressing the balance between them. This was a key value of Old Labour.
* **Statism and welfare system** – Centralised state can and should play a key role in controlling economic activity and in securing social goals – this is statism. It in theory ensures equality of treatment. The National Health Service (NHS) was established in 1948 - it provided free access to doctors, dentists, opticians and hospitals
* **Class conflict –** The belief that the interests of the two great classes, the working class and the middle class cannot be reconciled, and government therefore must support the interests of the disadvantaged working classes.
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| **New Labour Values**New Labour and the subsequent Blair-Brown premierships from 1997-2010 were the practical application of the ideological philosophy of the ‘Third Way’, a middle ground between leftist socialism and rightist neo-capitalism.* **Rejection of class conflict -** New Labour had a belief in the middle class and aspiration, i.e. the concept of social mobility. All members of society have an equal right to be supported by the state.
* **Role of capitalism –** Acceptance that capitalism is a good way of running society. Third Way – profits from capitalism to invest socially. Happy for tax to be low, it wasn’t link the Old Labour belief in redistribution of wealth through high taxes, instead using public borrowing.
* **An ‘enabling’ state –** state provides services but allow for tendering through the private sector
* Acceptance of individualism and communitarianism over collectivism. Blair favoured the idea of community over the whole state – individuals are prominent but have responsibilities towards communities. Blair spoke famously of rights (freedoms) and responsibilities (duties people had to the state).
* **Equality of opportunity -** Same as Old Labour - Realising that total inequality was unfeasible, Labour opted for the idea that everyone should have the same opportunities to achieve in life, no matter what their family background is.
* **Political and constitutional reform -** New Labour realized that the UK was deeply undemocratic – You know about this from Unit 2. Devolution in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. Judicial reform as well as attempted House of Lords reform.
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| Main Beliefs and Policies of the Labour Party* Historically **based on socialist principles**: equality, collectivism, redistributive taxation and the welfare state. Under Jeremy Corbyn, the Labour party has seen a move back to **Old Labour** principles.
* Labour now accepts that economic activity should be based largely on free markets. The role of the state is now more flexible – an **‘Enabling State’** focusing on delivering Equality of Opportunity. Combating inflation is a key priority, as is the promotion of en enterprise culture. Although Corbyn has pledged limited renationalisation of the water industry at a cost of more than £60bn and moves to take the National Grid and Royal Mail back into public ownership in the 2017 manifesto.
* They believe that the best response to poverty is not to redistribute income from rich to poor, but to offer **tax credits to the ‘deserving poor’** – those on low pay, seeking work, poor pensioners, or families with children. Welfare benefits should be an incentive to work not a disincentive (e.g. ‘Welfare to Work’ schemes) Jeremy Corbyn said at the 2017 manifesto launch that Labour will end the freeze on welfare benefits. The current benefit cap means an extra £12bn is taken from low-income families a year.
* **Education at all levels – nursery, primary, secondary and higher – is a priority** and is seen as the best way to spread opportunity more evenly and to create a more effective, wealth creating workforce. It is also seen as a weapon against youth crime. Labour opposes the rise in tuition fees to £9,000. Corbyn has even pledged to abolish tuiton fees during the 2017 general election.
* **Health provision– free to all, equal and comprehensive**, funded largely out of taxation. Although New Labour believed thatthe private sector should be involved when this creates better value for money or effective, faster treatment, Corbyn is particularly against the use of Private Finance Initiatives (PFIs), which he says are partially privatising the NHS.
* The **reduction of poverty,** especially among children and pensioners, is a key priority, with ambitious targets for poverty reduction being adopted. Corbyn in February 2018 proposed a 50% rate of tax for income over £123,000 and 45% for earnings above £80,000 to help fund this.
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| The difference between One Nation Conservatism and ThatcherismNature of One Nation Conservatism (or traditional conservatism)* One Nation Conservatives believe that government has a responsibility to maintain the welfare of all the people and should interfere to achieve that. They see society not as a collection of individuals but rather as an ‘organic whole’ (the ‘organic society’), where everyone’s interests are interrelated. This has led to a belief in ‘paternalism’. Benjamin Disraeli adopted one-nation conservatism for both ethical and electoral reasons. Before he became leader of the Conservative Party, Disraeli had announced that, as a result of the Reform Act 1867 which had enfranchised the male working-class, the party needed to pursue social reforms if it were to have electoral success. Theresa May said upon assuming office as PM in 2016 ‘David Cameron has led a one-nation government, and it is in that spirit that I also plan to lead.’

**Nature of ‘Thatcherism’*** Thatcherism is typified by the belief in the strong individual and a strong economy. This equates to **‘neoconservatism’** and **‘neoliberalism’**. Neo conservatism is the belief in robust moral values and an authoritarian state. Neoliberalism is the term used to describe ‘laissez-faire’ or free market economic ideas. The period most obviously representing a Thatcherite Conservative government is that of Margaret Thatcher herself from 1979-1990, which saw large scale privatisation of state owned industry as well as neoconservative policies such as the Falklands War in 1982 and the inclusion of Section 28 of the Local Government Act 1988 1988, and stated that authorities including schools “shall not intentionally promote homosexuality or publish material with the intention of promoting homosexuality."
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| Main Beliefs and Policies of the Conservative Party* Conservatives believe that **society is basically over-governed** and so have a long term objective to reduce taxation and to reduce regulations upon personal and business activity.
* They tend **to emphasise the authoritarian elements of law and order policy**, arguing that prison is a good deterrent against crime.
* Recently Conservatives have come to accept that there is too much inequality and poverty. This is what Cameron means by Britain’s **‘broken society.’** May has built on this even more, as she has talked about those ‘left behind’ by globalisation, ‘just about managing families’ and spoke of the excesses of the ‘privileged few’ in her speech in the steps of Downing Street in 2017.
* Though Conservatives have an increasing concern for the environment, mainly climate change and carbon emissions, they **do not believe that environmental policies should present too many restrictions on industrial and commercial activity.** **May has, abolished the Department for Energy and Climate Change, moving the responsibility for climate change to a new Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy.**
* The party shares the other parties’ support for the principles of the welfare state, though they are more enthusiastic than the others about **the involvement of the private sector**. Especially true in pensions and health provision. In education they share Labour’s policies on choice, but have been more relentless in pursuing the policy of Free Schools and pushing to place more power in the hands of Headteachers (e.g. over performance related pay).
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With the Political Parties topic, you’re are likely to get asked one of three questions. Either comparing the two main parties to each other, or asking you to compare them to their past (such as Old Labour, Thatcherism or One Nation Toryism). The below tables should help answer any of these questions.

Conservatives

With most of May’s time as Prime Minister being focussed on Brexit, current Conservative policy consists of the announcements she has made since the disastrous 2017 manifesto which she has abandoned much of. The points below **in bold are policies from the May government**, those *in italics are from the Conservative 2015 manifesto. Look back for detailed notes on May’s policies in your Parties booklets and either add to this or make your own tables. This is not an exhaustive list of policies or as detailed as possible.*

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| Policy area | Current Conservative policy | Thatcherite or One Nation Tory? |
| **The Economy** | **The U-turn on the National Insurance during the 2017 general election confuses this slightly. May does seem to be more willing to increase taxation, alongside some tax cuts. She is definitely more willing to consider a more interventionist policy. Particular when combined with her view that the Brexit vote is about those who have been ‘left behind’ by globalisation.**  | There are overtones of the paternalism most often associated with One Nation Toryism here. May views Brexit and the general rise in populism as sections of the electorate feeling that the current status quo isn’t working for them. This has meant that she seems to be considering more state intervention (a very One Nation concept).  |
| **Education** | **In the 2017 Spring budget, it was announced there’d be £320m made available for new free schools, to take the total of these up to 500. Of particular importance was the fact that these new free schools can be selective grammar schools. These would be the first new grammar schools since the 1960s.**  | This has elements of both Thatcherism and One Nation Toryism. Whilst Thatcher certainly was in favour of less state intervention, including in the education system, the promotion of grammar schools is certain a return to One Nation Conservatism. The amount of grammar schools in the UK reached its peak under the One Nation governments of the 1950s and 60s.  |
| **Europe** | **May’s first term as Prime Minister will undoubtedly be remembered for Brexit and how she deals with it. Currently it looks like she is accepting that a ‘Hard Brexit’ is needed, meaning that the UK may need to give up some of the freedom in the economic sector with Europe, in return for strong restrictions on freedom of movement.** | Overall May’s stance bares more similarities to the attitude of Thatcher. The One Nation government of Ted Heath initially took the UK in to Europe (the EEC as it was then). Thatcher had more mixed feelings on Europe, but she certainly was not particularly pro-political union with the continent – arguing in her famous ‘Bruges Speech’ against further integration. Therefore May’s hard Brexit can be seen as more Thatcherite than One Nation. |
| **Health** | **May’s Spring budget of 2018 announced further funds for both the NHS (£325m) and for social care (£2bn over the next three years). All of this is in keeping with the general attitude of the modern Conservatives, which is very much pro-NHS, at least in appearance.**  | Neither Thatcher nor the One-Nation governments of the 50s and 60s were actively against the NHS. However, the policies put forward by May do seem most at home with the paternalism most often associated with One Nation Conservatism.  |
| **Environment**  | **May has said little on the environment so far. She has, however, abolished the Department for Energy and Climate Change, moving the responsibility for climate change to a new Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy.** *This is different from Cameron’s policy in the 2015 Conservative party manifesto. This spoke quite strongly in favour of cutting emissions and preventing climate change.*  | Climate change was not widely considered an issue prior to the 1990s. Having said this, May’s move to reduce the state’s intervention in preventing this certainly bears similarity to Thatcher’s attitude to state intervention, promoting a minimal state.  |
| **Welfare**  | **The Spring budget confirmed that the rate at which claimants will have their benefits reduced as they come back in to employment has been reduced slightly.***However, this is a break from the general policy of the Conservatives since 2010. Cameron’s governments was mainly characterised by significant cuts to benefits, most typified by a freeze on the increase on a broad range of benefits.*  | This is much more similar to Thatcher than One Nation. She was in favour of ‘the state doing less’, which Cameron’s cuts definitely support.  |
| **Transport**  | *The main transport policy for the Conservatives is the proposal of HS2. This involves heavy state spending. However, in resisting calls for even semi-nationalisation of the railways, HS2 remains the exception rather than the rule.* **Theresa May is fully supportive of the planned third runway at Heathrow.**  | With Thatcher’s large scale privatisation, the resistance to any calls of nationalisation by the current Conservatives is far more aligned with Thatcher than One Nation Tory. |
| **Housing**  | **May announced at Conference 2017, and reiterated in 18/19 budgwts, a £2bn grant to build affordable housing, stating councils and housing associations can bid for the cash to build, and in areas with high rent, the homes can be social rent, rather than “affordable” rents, which can be up to 80% of market rent.****Also, at 2017 conference, May pledged £10bn for Help to Buy**. **In the budget Nov 2017, May also announced a cut to stamp duty for first time buyers, helping young people to own their own home.**  | Initially this appears like One-Nation Housing policy, as she is making a commitment to ‘social housing’ and affordable housing which would appear to help the ‘just about managing families she spoke of in 2016. However, the pledge for social housing is only 2bn compared to 10bn for the Help to Buy scheme. Although Help to Buy is govt. intervention in the housing market, its Thatcherite in nature, as home ownership was a key component of Thatcher’s belief in Individualism (Thatcher said ‘There is no such thing as society).  |
| **Energy**  | **May announced in October 2017 that the energy bills of 11m households will be capped for as long as five years under legislation put forward by government, which the Conservatives have claimed could save people up to £100 a year. May said ‘the energy market is broken’.**  | This is clear evidence of government intervention into the markets, specifically the energy market in this case, with Theresa May suggesting the monopoly of the big six energy companies is leading to unfair prices for UK consumers. This is clear evidence of government One-Nation style paternalism and interference in the market.  |

**Conclusion:** *Do you think that the current Conservatives are more One Nation or Thatcher?*

Labour

Labour are in a slightly similar position to the Conservatives, although due to different reasons. Corbyn appears to have notably different views from the majority of his fellow Labour MPs (though presumably similar to the majority of Labour members). The policies below are the ones Corbyn has put forward so far from the 2017 manifesto to announcements made more recently.

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| Policy area | Current Labour policy | Old or New Labour? |
| **The Economy** | **Corbyn has come out strongly in favour of higher taxation and greater spending by the state. He has proposed reducing the tax reliefs companies receive, as well as increasing corporation tax alongside this. He has made similar suggestions about land value tax as well. In February 2018, Corbyn proposed a 50% tax rate for income over 123,000 and 45% for earnings above £80,000.However, Corbyn has committed to reducing the budget deficit (effectively the amount the UK is overspending). He plans on doing this through increases in taxation, but does plan on bringing it down.** | This is very similar to the attitude of Old Labour. Old Labour supported high taxation, the top rate of taxation being as high as 90% during the Old Labour governments of Prime Ministers such as Attlee. The attitude of bringing down the budget deficit is more New Labour. This is more in keeping with the consensus, centrist politics that defined New Labour’s approach.  |
| **Education** | **Corbyn has proposed a ‘National Education Service’ – based on the NHS. He is against free schools and public schools, as well as tuition fees. He proposes a return to the previous system used, when local authorities had control of schools, and university did not have tuition fees attached to it.**  | This also is very in keeping with the attitudes of Old Labour. New Labour brought in the initial tuition fee system, as well as the first academies. Corbyn believes that both of these were negative changes and is hoping to bring the UK back to the system of the Old Labour governments.  |
| **Europe** | **Corbyn has in the past been outspoken against the EU. His current stance is that as the people have voted to leave the EU this is what the UK must do and Labour needs to support this. This was signified by the three line whip on Article 50.** **In February 2018 and in his 2019 talks with May, Corbyn did declare that if PM he would stay in the customs Union, indicating a softer Brexit position than previously.**  | New Labour was very much pro-EU, so Corbyn’s stance is clearly distant from this. Old Labour were mixed on Europe, but during the 1980s were very strongly against further integration. Therefore, Corbyn’s attitude on Europe is more Old Labour than New.The customs union announcement was not single-handedly enough to make Corbyn’s position on Brexit more New than Old Labour.  |
| **Health** | **Corbyn strongly supports the NHS. He wants to reverse any partial privatisation of it and make sure it remains completely publicly run. He is particularly against the use of Private Finance Initiatives (PFIs), which he says are partially privatising the NHS.**  | The NHS was strongly supported by both Old Labour and New Labour. However, as New Labour did make use of PFIs within the NHS, Corbyn is once again more similar to Old Labour here. However, you could argue he is close enough to New Labour in terms of general attitude – if you had to make the point in an essay, for example.  |

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| **Welfare**  | **Corbyn is very strongly against the welfare cuts that the Conservatives have brought in over the last 7 years. Notably, Corbyn has spoken out against the Conservatives benefit cap, which he thinks is unfair and has a devastating impact on certain sections of society.** **Jeremy Corbyn said at the 2017 manifesto launch that Labour will end the freeze on welfare benefits. The current benefit cap means an extra £12bn is taken from low-income families a year.** | This is similar to both New and Old Labour policy. Both of these supported the welfare state, although their attitudes were slightly different. New Labour were more focussed on the idea of ‘Welfare to Work’, than the ‘Cradle to Grave’ benefits of Old Labour. Ultimately, both were in favour of the welfare state, in a similar manner to Corbyn.  |
| **Transport**  | **Corbyn would renationalise the railways in the UK. As their existing contracts run out, he would take them in to public ownership. The 2017 manifesto pledged to renationalise the water industry, the National Grid and the Royal Mail.**  | The railways were also nationalised under Old Labour too, making this another area where Corbyn’s Labour has considerably links to Old Labour policy.  |

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| **Environment**  | **Corbyn has spoken in positive terms about the need for protecting the environment. He has proposed a “Green Investment Bank”, which would invest in green technologies, such as renewable energy.**  | This is one of the few areas where Corbyn clearly differs from Old Labour and is far closer to New Labour. New Labour were strongly in favour of increased renewable energy, increasing funding for it noticeably during their time in power.  |

**Conclusion:** *Do you think that the current Labour party are more similar to Old or New Labour?*

**Conservative vs Labour**

The two parties have drifted apart in recent years, having in the past become very similar. This was particularly the case under Cameron and Blair. Nonetheless there are some areas where they do overlap.

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| Policy area | Current Conservative policy | Current Labour policy | Similar or not?  |
| **The Economy** | **The U-turn on the National Insurance confuses this slightly. May does seem to be more willing to increase taxation, alongside some tax cuts. She is definitely more willing to consider a more interventionist policy. Particular when combined with her view that the Brexit vote is about those who have been ‘left behind’ by globalisation.**  | **Corbyn has come out strongly in favour of higher taxation and greater spending by the state. He has proposed reducing the tax reliefs companies receive, as well as increasing corporation tax alongside this. He has made similar suggestions about land value tax as well. However, Corbyn has committed to reducing the budget deficit (effectively the amount the UK is overspending). He plans on doing this through increases in taxation, but does plan on bringing it down.** | The two parties do agree on the most fundamental issue facing the economy currently – the deficit. Both parties accept it needs to be reduced. The manner in which they plan on doing so continues to be an area they differ on. Labour under Corbyn plan on increasing taxes to manage this, whilst the Conservatives still, mainly, remain committed to austerity and tax cuts.  |
| **Education** | **In the 2017 Spring budget, it was announced there’d be £320m made available for new free schools, to take the total of these up to 500. Of particular importance was the fact that these new free schools can be selective grammar schools. These would be the first new grammar schools since the 1960s.**  | **Corbyn has proposed a ‘National Education Service’ – based on the NHS. He is against free schools and public schools, as well as tuition fees. He proposes a return to the previous system used, when local authorities had control of schools, and university did not have tuition fees attached to it.**  | The two parties have very clearly different stances when it comes to education. Whilst May is proposing less state control of the education sector, Corbyn wants to reverse the trends of the last two governments and reduce the amount of Free Schools, as well as tuition fees.  |
| **Europe** | **May’s first term as Prime Minister will undoubtedly be remembered for Brexit and how she deals with it. Currently it looks like she is accepting that a ‘Hard Brexit’ is needed, meaning that the UK may need to give up some of the freedom in the economic sector with Europe, in return for strong restrictions on freedom of movement.** | **Corbyn has in the past been outspoken against the EU. His current stance is that as the people have voted to leave the EU this is what the UK must do and Labour needs to support this. This was signified by the three line whip on Article 50.**  | Europe is one area where the two parties have relatively similar ideas. Both parties support the idea of Brexit as the choice of the British people. They might disagree slightly over what the priorities should be in the negotiations, but the broad aims remain the same. |
| **Health** | **May’s Spring budget announced further funds for both the NHS (£325m) and for social care (£2bn over the next three years). All of this is in keeping with the general attitude of the modern Conservatives, which is very much pro-NHS, at least in appearance.**  | **Corbyn is strongly supports the NHS. He wants to reverse any partial privatisation of it and make sure it remains completely publicly run. He is particularly against the use of Private Finance Initiatives (PFIs), which he says are partially privatising the NHS.****Health and social care reform at a cost of £7.7bn, as part of a package that includes a guarantee of A&E treatment within four hours and the end of the NHS pay cap** | Health has similarities to Europe. It is in the detail that the two parties disagree. Both support the NHS and want to increase investment in it to aid it going forward. They have slightly different views over what that means in practice, however.  |
| **Environment**  | **May has said little on the environment so far. She has, however, abolished the Department for Energy and Climate Change, moving the responsibility for climate change to a new Department for Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy.** *This is different from Cameron’s policy in the 2015 Conservative party manifesto. This spoke quite strongly in favour of cutting emissions and preventing climate change.*  | **Corbyn has spoken in positive terms about the need for protecting the environment. He has proposed a “Green Investment Bank”, which would invest in green technologies, such as renewable energy.**  | Labour has more in common with the policies of the Conservatives under Cameron. Both Cameron and Corbyn are in favour of greater investment in ‘green’ technology and energy. May might take a similar line in the future, her initial steps do seem to put her at odds with this.  |
| **Welfare**  | **The Spring budget confirmed that the rate at which claimants will have their benefits reduced as they come back in to employment has been reduced slightly.***However, this is a break from the general policy of the Conservatives since 2010. Cameron’s governments was mainly characterised by significant cuts to benefits, most typified by a freeze on the increase on a broad range of benefits.*  | **Corbyn is very strongly against the welfare cuts that the Conservatives have brought in over the last 7 years. Notably, Corbyn has spoken out against the Conservatives benefit cap, which he thinks is unfair and has a devastating impact on certain sections of society.** | Despite the Conservatives most recent budget slightly moving them towards Labour in terms of their beliefs, the two parties mainly disagree on the role of welfare in the UK. Corbyn has spoken vocally against the extent and depth of the Conservatives cuts under the banner of ‘austerity’.  |
| **Transport**  | *The main transport policy for the Conservatives is the proposal of HS2. This involves heavy state spending. However, in resisting calls for even semi-nationalisation of the railways, HS2 remains the exception rather than the rule.*  | **Corbyn would renationalise the railways in the UK. As their existing contracts run out, he would take them in to public ownership.**  | A clear area of disagreement between the two parties. Labour are supporting the possibility of public ownership of the railways, whilst the Conservatives have come out clearly against it.  |

**Conclusion:** *Do you think that the two main parties are overall similar to each other, or remain fundamentally different?*

**Evaluate the view that small parties are having an increasingly important impact on UK politics. (30)**

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| **Increasingly important impact** | **Less Important**  |
| **In a situation in which neither major party secures an overall majority in the House of Commons**, a small party may become the king maker in forming a government, as happened with the Conservative-Lib Dem coalition in 2010, when the Conservatives only won 306 seats, needing the Lib Dems 57 to form a government. DUP are in a ‘confidence and supply agreement’ with May’s Conservative govt. after she failed to win a majority in the 2017 GE. | **The coalition 2010-2015 represents a brief blip** in the long history of single party government in the UK, and we have potentially seen the end of Partisan dealignment in the UK – with 82% of voters voting for the two major parties.  |
| **Small parties can claim to represent a large number of voters in the UK.** UKIP received 3.8 million votes in 2015, whilst the Lib Dems and the SNP got 2.4 million and 1.5 milion votes respectively.  | **Due to the FPTP electoral system,** the electoral success of the smaller parties in terms of vote share did not translate into seat share. With UKIP only winning one seat in 2015 and none in 2017, which saw their vote fall to just above 500,000. |
| **Mainstream parties must respond to views & modify their policies** – The rise of the Green party has forced the major parties to adopt greener policies. David Cameron’s support for green energy in 2010 has been attributed to this. The electoral success of UKIP in the 2015 GE also influenced Cameron in his decision to call the 2016 Referendum on Britain’s membership of the European Union. The rise of the SNP in Scotland forced David Cameron to hold a Scottish Independence Referendum in 2014 which was only narrowly won by the No side – 55% to 45%.  | **Arguably Cameron called the Brexit referendum as much to quell dissent amongst his own party as to stave off the rise of UKIP,** ever more powerful Conservative backbench MPs and government ministers had been lobbying him for a referendum for years.  |
| **Devolved government –** The rise of the SNP has forced all other major parties to support further devolution in Scotland. This was partly a response to the close result of the Scottish Independence referendum in 2014, but also the major parties shock at losing almost all of their Scottish Westminster seats to the SNP in 2015. Lab, Cons and Lib Dems only won one seat each in Scotland! | **Although devolution represents a significant democratic step for the UK**, the regional devolved governments have very little impact on UK politics as a whole. The NI Assembly is also primarily a resentative body rather than a legislative body.  |

**Conclusion:** Do you think small parties have an increasingly important role in UK politics?

**Evaluate the view that UK Political Parties should be funded by the state (30)**

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| **Arguments For** | **Arguments Against** |
| **It will** **end the opportunities for corrupt donations.** The Electoral Commission is investigating donations to UKIP and the Leave campaign worth £2.3m, assessing whether Arron Banks was the “true source” of loans made in his name. | **Taxpayers may object to funding what can be considered ‘private’ organisations,** especially those they personally disagree with. Why should passionate Labour supporters have to fund the Tories? |
| It will **end the possibilities of ‘hidden’ forms of influence** through funding. For example, the ‘Black & White Ball’ a 2016 fundraiser held by the Conservatives which cost £15,000 pounds a table, and saw (then) PM David Cameron sat next to Howard Shore, a millionaire & outspoken critic of the EU who paid over £1000 pounds to be there.  | It will be **difficult to work out how to fairly allocate funding.** If it is awarded on the basis of past electoral success then it will have a snowball effect and large parties will retain their advantage. Short Money allocated to opposition parties in parliament is allocated this way and has been criticised for it. The alternative of basing it on future aspirations is vague and subjective. |
| State funding would **reduce the huge financial advantage that the large parties hold over the smaller parties** and allow them to make electoral progress. For example, the Conservative party raised almost £25m between April and June 2017 compared with £9.5m for [Labour](https://www.theguardian.com/politics/labour) and only 4.4m for the Lib Dems in the same period.  | **Parties may lose some independence and begin to see themselves as organs of the state.** It may also lead to excessive state regulation of parties. The Party in Government would potentially have the power to change the rules on funding to their advantage. |
| It will improve democracy by **ensuring participation from groups who do not have a ready and available source of funds at election time.** Often small parties have to take out loans which leave them in severe debt. UKIP was £380,630 in debt before the 2017 election. | W **With all the information that is freely available on the internet about policies and issues and the various political blogs and commentators, the role of parties in informing voters is less necessary than it was.** The rise of social media as a forum for low budget mass media messaging also undermines the need for party funding. Momentum had low budget videos reaching 8 million people on Facebook during the 2017 general election. |

**Conclusion:** *Do you think that parties should be funded by the state?*

**Electoral Systems**

**What do I need to know?**

* How the different electoral systems of the UK work: FPTP, AMS, STV and SV.
* The advantages and disadvantages of each of these systems.
* Why these different electoral systems are used in different UK elections.
* The impact of the electoral systems on; the type of government, party representation and voter choice
* How referendums have been used in the UK and the increase in their use since 1997.
* The case for and against using referendums in a representative democracy.

**Key Vocab**

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| First-past-the-post (FPTP) | Additional Member System (AMS) | Single Transferable Vote (STV) |
| Supplementary Vote (SV) | Safe seat | Marginal seat |
| Minority government | Coalition government  | Absolute majority |
| Constituency | Government by consent | Initiative |
| Plurality  | Proportional representation  | Referendum |
| Safe seat  | Tactical voting  | Majority government |

### Key concepts and Definitions

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| Defining elections * An election is primarily a way of choosing representatives, applying to the UK and European Parliament, local government, devolved assemblies and some individuals such as the London Mayor.
* Some elections, notably general elections, also choose a government in democratic states.
* Elections use different systems for converting raw votes into elected seats.
* It involves all or most of the citizens in showing preferences between candidates.
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| The functions of elections * To elect representatives. General elections determine who shall represent the constituency in Parliament.
* It may also elect a government and a Prime Minister.
* An election grants a popular mandate to representatives or to a government.
* Similarly they provide popular consent for the winning party to govern.
* Elections are an opportunity for citizens to deliver a verdict on the outgoing government.
* It also gives a choice between different political philosophies and programmes.
* They have an educative function in that they inform the public about political issues.
* They are an opportunity for citizens to participate in politics and so can strengthen democracy.
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| Distinguishing elections from referendums * Elections are normally held at specific or at least semi-formal intervals. Referendums can be held at any time where they are felt to be desirable.
* An election is to elect representatives and leaders whereas a referendum involves a single question over a specific issue. Elections deal with a wide range of issues.
* The result of elections is binding while, in the UK, referendums are advisory rather than binding on Parliament.
* While the result of an election may be complex, the result of a referendum is a simple ‘yes’ or ‘no’.

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| Basic description of first past the post * Also known as simple plurality.
* In single-member constituencies voters choose between different candidates and can only vote for one of those candidates.
* Voters cannot show any preference between candidates from the same party but must accept the chosen candidate from each party.
* The candidate who receives the most votes (known as a plurality) is elected.
* It is not necessary for a candidate to achieve an absolute majority (50% plus) to be elected.
* In general elections the party that receives an absolute majority or, failing that, more seats than any other party, is invited to form a government.
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| Basic operation of the Supplementary Vote * Used to elect a single person such as a president or a mayor.
* In a first vote the voters show a single preference for one of the candidates.
* If any candidate receives an absolute majority (50% plus) of these votes they are elected.
* If no candidate achieves an absolute majority, there is a second vote.
* In the second vote only the top two candidates from the first ballot run off against each other
* One of these two candidates must then win an overall majority (it is a ‘majoritarian’ system)
* A variation in the London Mayor election means that voters show their second preference at the same time as showing their first preference – i.e. they show a first and second choice => no need for 2 separate ballots.
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| Basic operation of the Additional Member System (AMS) * A hybrid system, i.e. a combination of two systems running side by side.
* A proportion of the total seats in the Parliament or assembly operate on the basis of first past the post. In Scotland and Wales this is about two thirds of the total seats.
* The other third of the seats are elected on the basis of a regional list system (see above).
* There is a variation in Scotland and Wales. The regional list seats are not awarded proportionally. There is a ‘differential top-up’. This means that parties which do less well in the constituency elections, are awarded more than their proportional share in the regional list seats. This counteracts the distorting effects of the first past the post section. The result is a broadly proportional outcome overall.
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| Basic operation of Single Transferable Vote (STV) * Constituencies return more than one member, normally between 4 and 6 (6 in Northern Ireland).
* Each party may put up candidates up to the number of seats available in the constituency.
* Voters may vote for any or all of the candidates in their own order of preference. They may use as many or as few votes as they wish.
* Voters may place candidates from the same party in any order, whatever the parties may recommend. They can also vote for candidates from different parties.
* For a candidate to be elected s/he must achieve a quota of votes. The quota is calculated as the total votes cast divided by the number of seats plus one. Finally one is added to the total. That is the electoral quota.
* Any candidates who achieve the quota on first preference votes are elected immediately.
* Thereafter the spare subsequent preference votes of elected candidates are distributed to the other candidates until the required number of candidates have achieved the quota.
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| The nature of mandate and manifesto * The mandate is effectively the authority to govern, granted by voters.
* At UK general elections it is accepted that the party which wins the election has been granted a mandate by the people.
* As each party produces an election manifesto, it is also accepted that the governing party has a mandate to implement all aspects of that manifesto.
* Parliament can act as the guardian of the manifesto and the Lords in particular may challenge measures which do not conform to the mandate.
* There is also an implied ‘doctor’s mandate’ suggesting that the winning party has the authority to do whatever it considers necessary to further the national interest, even if such measures were not included in its election manifesto.
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| Referendums* A referendum is a popular vote on a particular public policy issue.
* Voters are expected to respond to a particular question, usually answering yes or no.
* On some occasions more than one question is put in a referendum (e.g. Scotland – 1997)
* Referendums are one of the few features of Direct Democracy in modern political systems. They differ from elections as they are on a single issue and not a method of forming a government
* They may be advisory or binding (in the UK in theory they cannot be binding because of Parliamentary Sovereignty – in practice they are likely to be binding). If they are used to raise issues for debate they are called initiatives (usually from a public petition) and if they decide public policy they are usually called propositions or plebiscites.
* Referendum have been used by the Coalition and the Conservative government regularly – on electoral reform (2011), Scottish Independence (2014) and leaving the EU (2016).
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**Useful Knowledge and Information**

### The main consequences or effects of the first past the post system

* MPs are almost always elected on less than 50% of the votes. In other words more people voted against each MP than voted for them. SDLP leader Alasdair McDonnell retained his South Belfast Westminster seat at the 2015 election with only 24.5% of the vote! Only 319 of 650 MPs won absolute majorities of over 50% in their seats in 2017.
* It also means that governments normally achieve an absolute majority of the seats in the House of Commons without winning an absolute majority of the total votes. In 2005 the Labour government got 55% of the seats on only 35% of the votes. In 2015 the Conservatives got 36.9% of the vote but 50+% of the seats!
* This in turn means that Britain has for many years had single party government (2010-2015 being the exception).
* This means that UK governments tend to be strong and decisive and do not suffer the normal weaknesses of coalitions. It also means the government has a very clear electoral mandate and can be judged on the basis of that (‘Mandate Democracy’)
* A negative interpretation is that it creates politics which is too adversarial and not consensual enough, that it excludes smaller parties from power permanently and creates an ‘elective dictatorship’ where the executive is seen as over-powerful.
* The most critical assessment is that the system distorts representation in the House of Commons. Parties (Labour under Blair, or Conservatives in 2015) with concentrated support receive a disproportionately high number of seats, while parties with evenly spread support, such as the Lib Dems and UKIP, are discriminated against. UKIP got 3.8 million votes in 2015, but only won one seat. The SNP only got 1.4 million votes but 56 seats, as they have narrow and concentrated support.

### The ways in which elections promote democracy

* Elections ensure government by consent. They therefore effectively reinforce general consent to the democratic system. If there were no elections there would be no way of guaranteeing popular consent. Democracy demands that people have a choice over who represents and governs them.
* They make government accountable to the people. Without elections government would not be accountable and so would be able to act beyond its authority and might abuse its mandate. During election campaigns, candidates must justify what the government or their party has done. Their past record and policies are put under scrutiny. In this role they may also serve an educational function for the public.
* Elections provide opportunity for citizens to participate in the democratic process. Such participation can underpin consent and can help to ensure popular obedience to elected government. Without democratic legitimacy and widespread participation, the government will not have a mandate, and may even become tyrannical in nature.
* Elections can provide a means by which suitable candidates are chosen to hold office or to be representatives in elected assemblies.

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### The operation of the electoral systems used in the UK

**Electoral system summary**

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| **System** | **Type of system** | **Examples** | **Main features** | **Effects** |
| **FPTP** | Majoritarian  | UK General Election | Plurality in single member constituencies | Strong constituency – MP link, strong single party govt |
| **STV** | Proportional | Northern Ireland Assembly | Multi-member constituencies with wide voter choice | Highly proportional, Many parties gain representation |
| **AMS** | Mixed | GLA, Scottish Parliament, Welsh Assembly | Hybrid system, FPTP and regional list with a variable top up | More proportional than FPTP and constituencies preserved. Small parties do well – 2 types of MSP. |
| **Supplementary Vote** | Majoritarian | London Mayor | Used to elect individuals. Voters have 2 preferences on the ballot paper | Helps smaller parties, but not very small parties, candidate receives a majority but still wasted votes.  |

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| Party Attitudes towards electoral reform |
| **Liberal Democrat** – Have supported reform for decades – cynics would claim because it is in their own interests. Liberals though argue it is based on their belief in democratic principles. Favour STV but supported AV in the referendum in 2011.PR mentioned in their 2017 manifesto.  |
| **Labour –** A substantial group supports reform but it declined over the period of Labour rule. The Labour leadership supported the introduction of AV and offered it to the Lib Dems as part of a coalition deal in 2010. Will stick with FPTP now that the 2011 referendum was lost. |
| **Conservatives** – Very little support for reform. Campaigned strongly and successfully for a ‘No’ vote in the AV referendum in 2011. Firmly in favour of FPTP and arguing for a reduction of seats from 650 to 600 which will favour them further (through altering constituency boundaries). |
| **Small Parties** – SNP, Plaid Cymru, RESPECT and Greens also support change – partly because they feel discriminated against (or have done in the past in the case of the SNP) and partly because they believe that Britain is not democratic enough. |
| **Conclusion** – Electoral reform finally appeared on the political agenda following a ‘hung parliament’ and the Coalition Government. Indeed the Lib Dems made the AV referendum a condition of their participation In the Coalition. Now the vote has been lost it looks like electoral reform will return to the political ‘long grass’. |

### Advantages of using referendums to determine political issues

* It is the most direct, **purest form of democracy**, uncorrupted by the filter of representative democracy. They represent the pure will of the people, as with Brexit in 2016. Theresa May said ‘the people have spoken.’
* **They can heal rifts in society.** The referendum on the Good Friday Agreement in Northern Ireland in 1998 ended decades of conflict.
* The fact that the people have made the decision grants it a great deal of **legitimacy**. This is especially true where decisions concern the system of government (e.g. Good Friday Agreement in Northern Ireland in 1998).
* Referendums are useful in **securing the consent of the people** for important constitutional and governmental change (devolution in Scotland & Wales 1997).
* There is a citizenship issue in that referendums give people the opportunity to **participate directly in politics** and so may increase their attachment to political institutions (e.g. to have elected mayors in London in ‘98).
* They have an **educational function**, raising citizens’ awareness of issues. The Scottish Independence referendum was a good example of this.
* Sometimes referendums **can solve a problem** for government itself when there is a good deal of internal conflict. This was the background to the 1975 referendum on whether Britain should remain in the European Community. It is also the case with the AV referendum in 2011. The promise of a referendum (where MPs are allowed to campaign as they choose) was a smart way of cementing the present coalition together.

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### Disadvantages of using referendums to determine political issues

* If referendums become too frequent there will be a **danger of ‘voter fatigue’**, resulting in low turnouts and apathy. e.g AV referendum (2011) where turnout was 41%.
* Referendums may have the effect of **undermining respect and authority for elected institutions**, notably MPs and Parliament. If parliament is side-lined too often, parliamentary sovereignty is undermined, and MPs no longer seem to have much purpose.
* Referendums arguably represent the **‘tyranny of the majority’.** Minority interest would be swamped by the power of the democratic majority. This would probably occur if there were votes on human rights issues or on fox hunting, or the death penalty for example.
* Many issues, such as was the case (arguably) with Brexit, may be **too complex for the average voter to understand**. MPs are employed to analyse huge amounts of information and come to an informed decision, voters who work in non-political jobs may not have the time to get to grips with issues in the same way.
* Similarly, **voters may respond to emotional, rather than rational arguments** - In the Scottish independence referendum in 2014 it seemed many voters were getting swept up in the emotions attached to the issue, rather than the facts behind it.
* **Referendums may also cause social rifts**, where society is swept into conflict by the campaign. This arguably happened in Scotland during the Independence referendum, and England and Wales saw a 23% rise in religious, ethnic and racially motivated hate crime in the 11 months after the Brexit referendum.
* There is a danger with referendums that **voters would be swayed by campaigns of newspapers**, notably tabloids, or by wealthy vested interests who can afford to spend large amounts of money on the campaign. This was arguably the case with the 2011 AV referendum where the ‘No’ campaign attacked Nick Clegg personally. The Sun’s ‘Queen backs Brexit’ headline is another example of this.
* Similarly **voters might make illogical choices in referendums**, for example voting for tax cuts which might result in the collapse of public services.

## 30 Mark non-source Questions

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| **Evaluate the view that elections are an effective way of promoting democracy in the UK (30)***The following points could be seen as ways in elections can promote democracy.* * Ultimate expression of the popular will apart from referendums. In a representative system they are the occasion when the people are able to show a preference between different candidates, parties and political programmes or ideologies. They are also the opportunity for the people to express their approval or disapproval of the outgoing government’s performance in office. It is more direct than other measures of public opinion.
* Force governments to be accountable to the people. Governments are accountable continuously to Parliament, but they also control Parliament because they have a majority in the Commons. The people, on the other hand, are independent of government.
* Elections satisfy the democratic need for government by consent. They ensure the peaceful transition of power and grant democratic, elective authority to the winning party. Democracy requires that those who have lost an election accept the authority of those who have won. In other words they can be said to reinforce democratic consent.
* A democracy requires a well informed citizenry. Elections and the campaigns that precede them have an important educative function by informing citizens about political issues and the alternatives that are available.
* Elections are the key device by which suitable representatives are chosen. Representatives are vital to the working of democracy. This applies to other levels of election – European, devolved and local.
* Elections are, for many people, the only way in which people can participate in politics. Participation is also important in maintaining a healthy democracy and also reinforce consent.

*The following points could be seen as ways in which elections may not promote democracy.** The doctrine of the mandate has problems. At general elections it is accepted that the winning party has a mandate to carry out the whole of its manifesto. However, elections do not indicate which elements of a manifesto the voters approve of. In other words the electoral mandate is a blunt instrument (particularly the case in the aftermath of the 2010 General Election).
* Elections in Britain limit democratic choice. Voters have no say in which candidates are selected (i.e. there are no primaries or dual ballots or cross-party preferences) and so have to accept a choice of candidates determined by small party committees. They also cannot demonstrate second or subsequent preferences.
* The FPTP system is arguably hugely undemocratic (you know the arguments!)
* In the age of consensus politics it could be said that the choices presented at elections are largely an illusion because there are so few differences between the main parties. *This argument may not be particularly strong currently due to the major differences between May and Corbyn*
* FTPP elections in the UK are also decided in a handful (about a 100) of marginal seats. This means that for most people their vote doesn’t make a difference. According to the Electoral Reform Society, 368 of the 650 seats were ‘safe seats’ in 2015. This is not democratic!
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| **Evaluate the view that the UK should adapt a proportional representation system for general elections (30)***The following can be seen as arguments in favour of adopting proportional representation for general elections.* * FPTP is simply unfair. It **distorts party representation** and **places too much focus on a few marginal seats**. By contrast, PR does produce fair representation.
* The **current system effectively excludes smaller parties** from decision and policy making processes. This narrows the political spectrum and places all the power in the hands of the two main parties.
* The **current system creates adversary politics** as opposed to consensus politics. Adversary politics prevents continuity between one government and another whereas consensus politics allows for the development of longer term policy making.
* The experience of Scotland in particular is that **PR can produce good, dynamic government** whether it be coalition or minority government. Consensus politics is operating in Scotland and seems to be successful.
* Arguably the **current system is one of the causes of current disillusionment with politics in Britain**. PR would increase public support for the political system by giving voters more choice and fair choices.
* PR is the most common basis for electoral systems in modern democracies, (the most notable exception is the USA). **Adopting PR would, it can be argued, bring Britain into the modern world of democracy**.

*The following can be seen as arguments against the adoption of proportional representation for general elections.* * PR would almost certainly prevent any party from winning an overall majority in the House of Commons. If one values the importance of having single party, decisive government, this is a problem!
* The current system has stood the test of time and produced a stable political system. PR could have unknown consequences.
* Coalition or minority government which would almost certainly result from PR, can be seen as weak and indecisive. Above all coalitions are, it has been claimed, governments for which no-one has voted and place too much power in the hands of smaller parties who become ‘kingmakers’.
* Coalition government would also destroy the system of the electoral mandate on which British government relies. Single party government, produced by first past the post, has a clear mandate and so is fully accountable. Coalitions, with post-election negotiated political programmes, have no such mandate. Power-sharing in Northern Ireland collapsed in 2016, when the parties couldn’t agree on joint-policy.
* FPTP is a simple system to understand. PR is more complex and so may result in a loss of public confidence and possibly even lower turnouts.
* PR would almost certainly mean the end of the close relationship between constituencies and MPs. Their representative role and their willingness to take up grievances on behalf of constituents is a vital part of the British political system.
* PR can also result in the election of extremist candidates, as they wouldn’t need a plurality of votes to win a seat. A small number of people could elect an extremist candidate. Nick Griffin, leader of the racist far-right British National Party, was elected to the European Parliament in 2009 under a PR system with only 8% of the vote.
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| **Evaluate the view that the UK should abandon FPTP for Westminster elections (30)****Define key terms**: The First Past The Post system is a majoritarian system used for the UK’s general elections. **Why’s the Q being asked?** The suitability of FPTP has been questioned in recent years due to the increasing number of smaller parties in the UK which now account for as much as a third of the vote at general elections. Despite this share of the vote, they often fail to get any meaningful representation at parliamentary level. Criticisms of FPTP are also fuelled by the terrible disproportionality of UKIP’s result at the 2015 election. **Signposting the answer:** Purported strengths of FPTP include its ability to offer the electorate a clear choice at the ballot box, the constituency link and the fact that it usually delivers strong government. However critics point to the fact that other electoral systems can match many of the supposed strengths of FPTP whilst simultaneously offering the electorate more choice.One major strength of FPTP is supposedly the **clear electoral choice** which it offers between two parties each committed to a different policy or ideological agenda. It can be argued that this makes elections and policies more meaningful to ordinary citizens. **However,** due to the fact that elections often come down to a quest for the votes of middle England in a hundred or so marginal constituencies it is often the case that the two parties are competing for the same support. The result is that their policies become more centrist and are often difficult to distinguish. Rather than creating a clear electoral choice **it can therefore be argued that FPTP actually reduces choice to one of two very similar ‘catch all’ parties.**Another major strength of FPTP is seen to be the **strong link between MP and constituency** which it offers. When a single MP serves a single constituency, people know who represents their interests and who should take up their grievances. For example, Jeremy Hunt, the MP for South West Surrey, holds regular surgeries in the major towns in his constituency. **However,** opponents of FPTP point to the fact that other **electoral systems do still preserve the constituency link** so this should not necessarily be seen as a strength purely of the FPTP system. The Alternative Vote system would preserve the single constituency MP and other systems such as AMS, STV and retain some form of constituency representation. **It can also be argued that not all MPs are the loyal servants of their constituents they might purport to be.** Evidence has shown that in marginal seats MPs are often far more attentive to their constituents’ concerns than in the country’s many safe seats. The Expenses Scandal in 2009 revealed that the most corrupt MPs were more likely to be those in safe seats. So one could even argue that the constituency link can be a weakness, rather than a strength, of the FPTP system.In addition to the above criticism of MPs being unrepresentative due to the security of being in safe seats, even those not in safe seats can rarely claim to represent an absolute majority of the electorate within their constituency. Under FPTP candidates only need a plurality of votes, i.e. the most votes (1 more than the second most popular candidate) to win. MPs are almost always elected on less than 50% of the votes. In other words more people voted against each MP than voted for them. SDLP leader Alasdair McDonnell retained his South Belfast Westminster seat at the 2015 election with only 24.5% of the vote! Only 319 of 650 MPs won absolute majorities of over 50% in their seats in 2017. A stronger argument for FPTP perhaps is that it **offers a mandate democracy.** This is because under FPTP there is a greater chance that voters get what they vote for: winning parties have the ability to carry out their manifesto promises. The doctrine of the mandate can only operate in systems that produce single-party governments and FPTP is the most likely system to deliver this. **However, a major flaw with this argument is that FPTP has a tendency to produce a ‘Winner’s Bonus’ which actually gives winning parties an unfair mandate.** This means that the ‘clear’ mandate enjoyed by the winning party is actually derived from a minority share of the vote. For example, Labour’s share of 55% of the seats and clear parliamentary majority in 2005 came on the back of just a 35% share of the vote and only a 3% lead over the Conservatives. In 2015 the Conservatives got 36.9% of the vote but 50+% of the seats. It can be argued that it is inequitable that a party with such a small share of the vote should get such a significant mandate and the opportunity to govern by itself for up to 5 years. The point can also be made that, at the 2010 election, a coalition resulted for which no-one voted! The doctrine of the mandate is fallible in such a scenario. Connected to this point is the argument that, whilst unrepresentative of the electorate’s views, **FPTP does at least deliver strong government**. This happens because the government of the day enjoys majority control of the House of Commons. Coalition governments, by contrast, can be weak and ineffective because they have to seek legislative support from two or more parties. **The major weakness in this argument is that, in the UK, FPTP is becoming less and less able to produce single party government and certainly failed in May 2010. In 2017, Theresa May received the highest share of the vote for the Conservatives since Thatcher’s 1983 victory, but failed to win an overall majority, and is relying on the Northern Irish UP for electoral support.** **In conclusion** it can be seen that, under assessment, the supposed strengths often put forward by supporters of FPTP for Westminster elections are not as definitive as might have been thought. **Summary of arguments & answering the question:** As for certain ‘strengths’, such as the oft-quoted constituency link and the alleged ‘clear’ choice offered to voters, it can be argued these objectives can be just as easily delivered by alternative electoral systems or are only arguably true under FPTP in the first place. Even in the case of FPTP’s most important strength, its supposed ability to deliver strong, single party government, this did not prove to be the case in the 2010 election where a coalition resulted. Evidence suggests that the pattern for future elections could well be similar thereby undermining FPTP’s supposed strengths together with its suitability for Westminster elections still further. |
| **Evaluate the view that the criticisms of FPTP being used for Westminster elections far outweigh the positives (30)****Define key terms**: The First Past The Post system is a majoritarian system used for the UK’s general elections. **Why’s the Q being asked?** The suitability of FPTP has been questioned in recent years due to the increasing number of smaller parties in the UK which now account for as much as a third of the vote at general elections. Despite this share of the vote, they often fail to get any meaningful representation at parliamentary level. Criticisms of FPTP came to a head in the recent referendum in May 2011 on changing the system to AV. **Signposting the answer:** Supposed criticisms of FPTP include the fact that it discriminates against third parties and tends to underrepresent minorities, its inbuilt bias towards the Labour Party, the fact that it may dampen political participation and that it delivers an ‘elective dictatorship.’ However, supporters of FPTP point to the fact that all electoral systems have their flaws and that the major advantages of FPTP, that it delivers a clear choice and strong government, should not be sacrificed lightly.**One major criticism of FPTP is that it discriminates against third parties**. In the 2015 election UKIP received 3.85 million votes but only 1 seat. This is because their votes are spread in a broad and shallow fashion across the country yet rarely in excess of 30% in particular constituencies which might be enough to deliver them that seat. The other small parties suffer even more. The Greens have just one seat to show for their 1.2 million votes. ***However, supporters of FPTP would argue that discrimination against the smaller parties is the price we pay for having a simple electoral system and that it may be desirable that extremist parties such as the BNP are excluded from Westminster***. In 2010 the BNP got over 500,000 votes, but no seats. They would also argue that it is possible for smaller parties to win seats if they channel their campaign intelligently as, indeed, the Greens proved in 2010 by winning in Brighton Pavilion. Finally, the fact that the Liberal Democrats were a member of the Coalition government from 2010-2015 suggests that it is not beyond the scope of third parties to achieve influence at the highest level**. On balance, however, it cannot be denied that smaller parties do fair unfavourably under FPTP.****A second common criticism of FPTP is that it can be biased towards one particular party.** From 1997-2015 this was Labour. This is because Labour wins a lot of its seats by small margins. It therefore utilises its votes much more efficiently than the two other parties and benefits from the system as a result. This is proved by the 2005 election result where Labour achieved 35% of the vote yet received 55% of the seats! One might compare this to the Conservatives who at the 2010 election achieved a higher share of the vote yet won just 47% of the seats. ***However, defenders of FPTP might point out that again this is the price we pay for a system that consistently delivers the (supposedly) desirable outcome of stable one-party government.*** They would say that no one system can be universally ‘fair’ to all political parties and that it is up to the other parties to try and make the system work just as well for them. This is happening to some extent under the present government which is reducing the number of seats in the Commons and also standardising the size of each constituency in terms of population. These changes will tilt things more in favour of the Conservatives again. **This criticism is therefore not perhaps as strong as that regarding the potential discrimination against the smaller parties**.**Thirdly, it has been argued that FPTP has a negative impact on political participation in the UK.** This is because of the concept of safe seats and ‘electoral deserts.’ In seats such as South West Surrey (Conservative) and Bootle in Liverpool (Labour) the winning parties have such unassailable majorities that many voters simply do not bother to vote because the result is a foregone conclusion. There are also vast areas of the country which are considered ‘deserts’ for one party or the other and which, again, may mean that voters may not turn out. In South West of England, for example, Labour have just 5 seats (all university towns). **However, supporters of FPTP would argue that it is not the electoral system which is reducing political participation**. Indeed, they argue that other electoral systems such as AMS and STV which are used in Scotland and Northern Ireland respectively, do not deliver higher turnouts. Turnouts in referenda, such as the recent one on AV, are also no higher. **Therefore, it may well be the case that the problem of reduced political participation in the UK has little to do with FPTP and this is a groundless criticism.****Finally, the First Past the Post system delivers disproportionately strong government in the UK which creates an ‘elective dictatorship’**. This is because of the so-called ‘Winner’s Bonus’ which means that a relatively small swing of the vote between Labour and the Conservatives can deliver a large majority for the winning party and, in some cases as in 1997, a landslide result. Critics argue that this is dangerous for the country as a whole because it can lead Prime Ministers to take advantage of their huge parliamentary majority to push through contentious and potentially unpopular legislation, arguably with limited legitimacy. This argument could be used against some of Margaret Thatcher’s anti trade-union legislation in the 1980s and certainly against Tony Blair’s decisions to go to war in the Arabian Gulf post 9/11. ***However, defenders of FPTP would argue that it is a positive strength of the system that it often delivers a large majority for the winning party and that this enables government to take decisive action***. For example, it could be said that Margaret Thatcher’s reforms were very necessary and that it was our electoral system (as opposed, say, to that of France or Italy) which meant that Britain could ‘swallow the medicine’ that was needed! That said it is perhaps more difficult to make the same case for Tony Blair’s wars in Iraq and Afghanistan which have been criticised for contravening international law. Certainly, in light of this, the Coalition government has been much more careful with regard to the military action in Libya. **This suggests that this particular criticism of FPTP may carry some weight.****In conclusion** the criticisms of FPTP for Westminster elections are undoubtedly strong. **Summary of arguments & answering the question:** Whilst there are a number of strong arguments in favour of FPTP, not least its simplicity and ability to delivery single-party government, the system is particularly open to criticism regarding its drastic unfairness to smaller parties. This can be summed up by the fact that the two largest parties, whilst only mustering about two thirds of the votes between them, secure nearly 90% of the seats. This leaves a significant portion of the country underrepresented in parliament and brings into question the very legitimacy of parliament itself. This has been especially contentious in light of controversial decisions made by recent governments which, in the case of Labour in 2005 (35% of the vote) were arguably contrary to the wishes of two thirds of the electorate. **On balance**, therefore, certain criticisms of FPTP carry considerable weight and cannot be easily countered by defenders of FPTP. |
| Evaluate the view that the introduction of PR in UK general elections would be overwhelmingly beneficial (30) *The following are likely consequences of the introduction of PR together with analysis of those effects** The **duopoly of the two main parties would be broken**. This would certainly be true if STV were used and would probably occur under AMS. This would clearly result in smaller parties, especially the Lib Dems and UKIP, gaining more representation and the opportunity to share in coalition government. It might also encourage the creation of successful new parties who would have the prospect of winning significant representation quickly.
* **Coalition government**, as has occurred in Scotland and Wales. Coalitions can be supported or opposed. Supporters say they introduce healthy consensus politics, create more continuity and represent a wider spectrum of political opinion. Opponents say it would lead to unstable government run by coalitions without a clear electoral mandate.
* PR might also lead to **minority governments** because no party would be able to win an overall majority in the House of Commons. Critics say this is inherently unstable but worked in Scotland (2007-11). This can lead to weak or dysfunctional government. The Greens threatened to withdraw support for the minority SNP Scottish government’s budget in January 2019 unless local council were given more tax powers.
* PR **increases voter choice** and creates more equality among voters. It also would reflect voter opinion more accurately. There would be fewer wasted votes and more choice whichever PR system were to be used. This might help to renew public faith in politics.

You must say that different systems would have different effects. STV, offering multi member constituencies and wide vote choice, would result in a multi-party system, with perhaps four or five parties competing for power. It would also result in the election of more independents if the experience of Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland were repeated in Britain. AMS (a hybrid system, only partly PR), would probably lead to fewer parties becoming successful and it is likely that two parties would still dominate without their being able to form single party governments.  |

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| **Evaluate the view that the new electoral systems introduced across the UK in 1997 have been successful overall (30)****Introduction**Labour introduced the new electoral systems in 1997 on the back of their devolution agenda. There was also a sense in which these systems were being ‘tested out’ for potential use for Westminster elections particularly in light of the prospect of a coalition with the Liberal Democrats (of course this never materialised). The new systems referred to are Supplementary Vote for London mayoral elections, AMS for the Scottish Parliament, Welsh Assembly and London Assembly and, finally, STV for Northern Ireland. On the whole the systems have been successful in the sense that there has been little demand for change from their respective electorates. However, they haven’t been successful in the sense that FPTP remains firmly embedded as the preferred system for Westminster elections.**Supplementary Vote***Successful for:** A big city like London needs a high-profile figure to represent it nationally and internationally. SV encourages ‘Big Tent’ politicians (such as Sadiq Khan, Boris Johnson and Ken Livingstone) to run and gives the mayor a significant mandate (i.e. they can say that they have the support from over half the city).
* Having to obtain and absolute majority of at least 50.1% of the vote gives the elected mayor democratic legitimacy and a mandate to govern with the consent of over half the people. This is more democratic than systems like FPTP, which do not require a party to gain an absolute majority to govern.

*Failure for:** Worries that it could produce a ‘compromise candidate’ (‘the least disliked’). No evidence of this yet, although Khan didn’t achieve over 50% of the vote until the second round.
* Hasn’t provided a launch pad to SV (or AV, which is very similar) being adopted for Westminster which is what some had hoped.
* Still a majoritarian system which denies representation to smaller parties, and barely increases the likelihood of them winning.

**In summary** SV has been a success in London. Voters easily understand the system and have used it to give their three mayors so far (Livingstone, Johnson and Khan) significant and meaningful mandates. However, it has failed in the sense that it did not become a springboard to the adoption of AV nationwide.**AMS** *Success for:** Nationalist parties (Plaid Cymru & SNP)
* The party of opposition at Westminster who tend to do well in Scottish elections (not true of Labour)
* The devolution process
* Smaller parties who achieve success in the regional seats.

*Failure for:** The Union? Scotland is splitting further away from England.
* The party of government – often seen as a protest vote
* Sometimes produces minority governments which are weak and easily manipulated.

**In summary** the introduction of AMS has been a great success for Nationalist parties. AMS was originally planned by the major Unionist parties so as not to deliver a parliamentary majority. However, such has been the popularity of the SNP that they have achieved this despite the system and not because of it. In this sense it has arguably been a failure for Unionists because it would appear that devolution (facilitated by the AMS voting system) may deliver full independence for Scotland in the longer term.**STV***Success for:** The peace process in Northern Ireland
* Consensus politics
* Fair representation for every party.

*Failure for:** Not established as a contender to replace FPTP, despite being the preferred system of the Lib Dems.
* The necessity of power-sharing caused by STV in Northern Ireland has given undue importance to political crises, and Westminster has had to dissolve impose direct rule over Northern Ireland since January 2017 due to disagreements between Sinn Fein and the DUP.

**In summary** STV has been extremely successful in helping to cement the peace process in Northern Ireland. Specifically designed to deliver coalition government it has forced the main opposition parties (Sinn Fein and the DUP) to work together. It has also ensured that all sections of the community are represented through the multi-member constituencies which are a feature of the system. Having said this, supporters of PR for Westminster will again be disappointed that there is no groundswell of opinion to adopt the system nationwide.**Conclusion**In conclusion the four new systems introduced since 1997 have arguably been largely unsuccessful. Whilst they have certainly been successful for the nationalist parties in Scotland and Wales, in producing a popular mandate for the London mayor and in helping to build peace in Northern Ireland they have been unsuccessful in more significant ways. Firstly, turnout has not risen noticeably in response to ‘fairer’ systems as supporters of more proportional systems predicted it would. Also, if one considers that the systems were at least partly introduced as ‘test cases’ for a substitute system for Westminster then they have been decidedly unsuccessful, as the large ‘No’ vote in the AV referendum confirmed. Finally, the most lasting legacy of the new systems could be in how they are arguably facilitating the disintegration of the United Kingdom itself (especially in Scotland), something that they were supposed to be a brake against.  |

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| **Evaluate the view that the criticisms made of the electoral systems used across the UK are all justified (30)**A number of electoral systems are used in the UK today. In addition to FPTP, used for Westminster elections, Labour introduced a variety of new electoral systems in 1997 on the back of their devolution agenda. These new systems are Supplementary Vote for London mayoral elections, AMS for the Scottish Parliament, Welsh Assembly and London Assembly and finally STV for Northern Ireland. These systems have all been subject to criticism for a variety of reasons.**FPTP****FPTP is the system used to elect the Westminster Parliament.** **Criticisms*** Lack of fair party representation – disproportionate results such as UKIP in 2015.
* Winner takes All system – both in individual constituencies and nationally.
* Electoral deserts – The large amount of safe seats which amount to huge amounts of wasted votes. One assessment should that 22 million votes cast in 2017 had no impact on the result.

**Assessment*** Lack of fair representation is the price paid for stable government
* Electoral deserts (large amounts of safe seats) do mean that the election is fought in the ‘centre ground’ of politics (usually in suburban seats)
* The public backed FPTP in the 2011 referendum

**AMS****The Additional Member System (AMS)** is a hybrid system used to elect representatives to the Scottish Parliament, Welsh Assembly and Greater London Assembly. **Criticisms*** Provides two types of representatives which can be confusing and may lead to some representatives thinking they are more legitimate than others.
* The SNP argued that it was designed to prevent majority government forming (though they did manage this in 2011)

**Assessment*** Having 2 types of representative is the price paid for retaining the constituency link but also building in a degree of proportional representation.
* Whilst originally designed to deprive the SNP of a majority government, AMS has not succeeded in this. This is good if you’re an SNP supporter, bad if you’re a Unionist!

**STV****The Single Transferable Vote (STV)** is the system used for elections to the Northern Ireland Assembly. **Criticisms*** Complex calculating system
* Delivers power to smaller parties as coalition is inevitable
* Caused problems when used for local government elections in Scotland

**Assessment*** The complex system is more the problem of the counters rather than the voters who just have to number candidates in order of preference.
* This system is used specifically in Northern Ireland to encourage coalition–building. Therefore this is not an accurate criticism in this case. Although power-sharing can easily fall apart – as seen currently.
* It can be argued that voters’ issues with using the system will bed down with more familiarity.

**SV****Finally, the Supplementary Vote (SV),** the system used to elect the London mayor. Criticisms* Produces ‘compromise candidates’
* Could favour smaller parties, or even extremists

Assessment* There is no evidence that the winners of the Mayoralty have been ‘compromise candidates’. In fact the opposite, they tend to be big personalities capable of appealing to voters outside their parties.
* Smaller parties are not favoured as they still need to place at least second in the first round of voting to stand a chance of winning.

In conclusion, the various electoral systems at use in the UK have all been subject to criticism, but these criticisms do not always stand up to scrutiny. STV has been criticised for its complicated calculation system, but it is undoubtedly the most appropriate system for a politically and socially divided society such as Northern Ireland. SV has been criticised for potentially producing a ‘compromise candidate’, but there is no evidence of this as yet, and the system has been successful in producing a popular mandate for the London mayor. Nevertheless, while the criticisms of FPTP largely stand, the new electoral systems have failed to gain popularity or to produce a groundswell of opinion to change the method we use for electing the Westminster Parliament, as seen in the 2011 AV referendum, and so it seems unlikely that their use will be extended.  |

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| ***Evaluate the view that the wider use of referendums would improve democracy in the UK* (30)***The following are arguments in favour of using referendums to determine political issues with, in each case, a critique of, or counter-argument to the point in italics below** Democracy is increasingly essential, and **referendums represent the purest form of democracy** and so should be encouraged. Referendums are commonplace in Europe and the USA and this **would bring Britain into line with modern practice**. *The general arguments in favour of referendums can be countered by the problems that they bring. This include the problem of ‘voter fatigue’, the tendency of voters to be swayed by emotion not reason and the fact that wealthy vested interests, or the tabloids, might be able to determine the outcome of referendums on a non-rational basis (see advantages disadvantages of referendums above).*
* There are potentially a number of key changes which would alter the nature of the constitution and system of government. Such **changes require the consent of the people**. e.g on the EU or independence for Scotland. *(On the other hand, are such issues too complex for the public to research and come to an informed decision on alongside their busy daily lives? That’s what elected representative are for!)*
* **With increasing information available people are in a better position than ever before to assess political issues**. *(But, it can be difficult to separate fact from opinion, especially on the Internet and with overly polticised print media which usually focuses on emotive rather than rational arguments (‘Queen backs Brexit headline in the Sun in May 2016)). Issues may also be too complex for the average voter, who doesn’t have the time to get to grips with the biggest issues.*
* **They can heal rifts in society.** The referendum on the Good Friday Agreement in Northern Ireland in 1998 ended decades of conflict. *However,* ***Referendums may also cause social rifts****, where society is swept into conflict by the campaign. This arguably happened in Scotland during the Independence referendum, and England and Wales saw a 23% rise in religious, ethnic and racially motivated hate crime in the 11 months after the Brexit referendum.*
* Sometimes referendums **can solve a problem** for government itself when there is a good deal of internal conflict. This was the background to the 1975 referendum on whether Britain should remain in the European Community. It is also the case with the AV referendum in 2011. The promise of a referendum (where MPs are allowed to campaign as they choose) was a smart way of cementing the present coalition together. *However, referenda can also bring dow governments and lead to political instability, as happened to David Cameron’s government following the 2016 Brexit referendum.*

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| Evaluate the view that referendums are the most effective way of improving political participation in the UK (30)*The focus of the essay needs to be primarily on referendums (both pos. & neg.) with some mention of other ideas.*Mention: drop in participation, drop in turnout etc. Does this equate to a long term disengagement with politics?**Referendums can improve participation in the following ways:*** They are a direct form of democracy which gives the public direct control over decisions. Voting is often a habit, once people vote they are more likely to vote again.
* Political education is likely to improve as debate is focussed on a particular issue, people will therefore tend to get more involved. I.e. Scottish Independence referendum 2014
* The availability of an initiative system could lead to people feeling empowered and therefore organising themselves to change policies they don’t like or create new ones.

**Referendums don’t improve participation:*** Turnout at the Scottish and Welsh referendums doesn’t back up the idea that people are more likely to vote in the 1997. Turnouts were Scottish 60%/ Welsh 50% - lower than the turnout in the election. In the AV referendum in 2011 turnout was 41%. (The Scottish Independence referendum was a notable exception to this with an above average turnout (85%)). EU Ref 2016 was also 72%
* Voter fatigue if used too often (a danger with initiatives)

**Other methods of improving participation:*** Lower the voting age to 16. Lead to more voting in absolute terms but less in relative terms. (see democracy section for more on this)
* E-democracy – ease of participation/ speed/but what about the digital divide which could exclude poor?
* Compulsory voting – Will increase due to threat but is this a real increase in participation? i.e ‘donkey voting’ (see democracy section for more on this)
* A change in the voting system? = fewer safe seats/concentration on marginals/ change in political culture.

**Conclusion**Weigh up all the ideas and suggest which one you think might be most effective. But participation is not just about voting and perhaps the rise in PG membership and use of Focus groups counteracts the decline in voting? |

**Voting Behaviour and the Media**

**What do I need to know?**

* How manifesto and party policies impact on electoral results
* The impact of socio-economic factors on voting behaviours
* How other factors, such as gender, age, ethnicity and region impact on voting behavior, turnout and trends
* How voting patterns change from election to election
* A detailed understanding of the 1992, 1997 and 2017 elections

**Key Vocab**

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| Abstention | Core voters | Deviant voting |
| Class & partisan dealignment | Valence issues | Governing competency |
| Disillusion and apathy | Manifesto | Mandate |
| Economic voting | Swing/floating voter | Instrumental voting |
| Political opinion poll | Rational choice model | Salience |
| Social class  | Tactical voting  | Turnout |

## Key terms and concepts

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| **Mandate vs Manifesto****Manifesto:** A pamphlet that outlines (in more or less detail), the policies or programme a party intends to introduce if elected to power. They often include ‘vote-winning’ policies which often are very difficult to achieve, e.g. ‘reducing net migration to the tens of thousands’ (Conservatives 2015). Corbyn’s manifesto in 2017 contained many popular vote-winning pledges, but was criticised as some were un-costed. **Mandate:** An instruction or command that gives authority to a person or body to act in a certain way. A party gains this after an election, authorising it to carry out it’s particular policies laid out at election time. Politicians serve the public by carrying out the aims of their parties. E.g. the 1997 landslide election result for New Labour under Blair give him a **strong mandate** to govern.  |

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| **Valence Issues** * Where most of the electorate hold similar views on an issue, they may decide to vote for one party or another based on **how well they think the party and/or it’s leader will manage that particular issue**, as well as on a judgement of how **well the party managed** it in the past. I.e. assessing the **competence (see below)** These are known as valence issues.
* Valence can also refer to the **general ‘image’ of a party and its leader**, which may affect voting behaviour. Sometimes also called ‘competence voting’
* **Governing competence: A key valence issue** – voters often base their decision in voting on how competent they feel the outgoing government has been and the potential competence of the other parties.
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| **Salience and Rational Choice voting****Rational Choice voting:** Many voters who are not committed to any particular party or ideology, make a rational choice between the parties in order when voting, weighing up the strengths and weaknesses of each, based on valence issues (above) and the particular salience (see below) of issues to them. These voters are of particular importance to parties at election time as they tend to be floating/swing voters (see below). **Salience:** The general meaning of salience is ‘importance’ or how crucial something is. In Politics, an issue is salient if it is particularly important to one group of voters when they are making up their mind which party to vote for.  |

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| **Expressive vs Instrumental Voting** Two variations of rational choice voting are ‘expressive’ and ‘instrumental’ voting. If assuming that voters naturally seek to benefit from voting from a party, then we can divide the type of benefit into two categories: **Expressive (or altruistic) voting:** Voters deriving satisfaction from voting for the party that they believe will benefit society as a whole. For example, somebody who lives in an area not directly affected by immigration but votes for a party promising to curb net migration to the UK because they believe it will benefit society as a whole. **Instrumental voting:** The other kind of benefit is voting for a party whose policies are likely to directedly benefit the voter themselves. It is self-interested voting. For example, a businessman may vote for a party which promises to reduce business taxes, whilst a benefit claimant may vote a party which promises to make benefits more generous. |

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| **Types of Voters****Deviant voters:** Voters who do not vote the way we would expect based on their social characteristics, especially when it comes to class. Examples are working class supporters of the Conservative party or middle class/upper class voters opting for the Labour party. In the past many ‘Deviant’ Conservative voters were thought to be doing so out of ‘deference’ – i.e. working class voter deferring their support to those whom they considered to be their superiors. This is no longer the case, it is more due to other factors such as the economy or immigration. **Floating (or swing) voters:** A voter who tends to vote unpredictably in different elections and is liable to change the party which they vote for often. These may be voters who feel no particular ideological allegiance to any one party. An example would be someone who voted Conservative in 2015 and then Labour in 2017. **Tactical Voters:** A voter who feels that their first-choice vote will be wasted because it is for a party that has no chance of winning the constituency, may choose to vote for their second choice. By doing this they may still have an influence on the outcome. Typically, supporters of the Lib Dems or Greens vote either Labour or Conservative to try to keep their least favourite party from winning. This is tactical voting. **Core voters:** Parties are often said to be pursuing a ‘core vote strategy’ at election time, i.e. appealing to a fixed base of support, often defined by socio-economic, regional or class identification. This would be defined as working class support for the Labour Party traditionally being seen as Labour’s core support. It can be more complicated than this, as different party leaders can shift the core support, i.e. Thatcher, although a Conservative won some core working class supporters due to some of her key policies, such as selling off council houses. The core vote for the Conservatives and Labour has arguably been eroded over the years, linked potentially to **Partisan Dealignment (see below)** |

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| **Partisan Dealignment** * A process which began in the 1970s whereby voters who used to be strongly attached to one of the two main parties and always voted for it, detached themselves from that relationship in ever greater numbers.
* Fewer and fewer voters have been voting for one of the two main parties, Conservative or Labour, falling from 89% in 1979, to a low of 65% in 2010.
* It is associated with Class Dealignment (see below).
* **Arguably, the 2017 election saw at least a disruption in this pattern, with 82% voting either Conservative or Labour** (although this may be temporary and not a long term change)
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| **Class Dealignment** * A trend in which progressively fewer people consider themselves to be a member of a particular social class, and so class has a decreasing impact on their voting behaviour.
* For example, in the past AB voters at the higher end of the social class classification would be more liable to vote Conservative, with 78% doing so in 1964.
* In recent times this has declined dramatically, with only 40% of AB voters voting Conservative in 2010, with only small increases in 2015 and 2017.
* Class cannot be entirely written off as a factor influencing voting behaviour, as evidenced by continued working class support for the Labour party in 2017, support for minor parties and the Brexit vote. Even centrist New Labour in 1997 received 59% of working class DE voter support, and in 2017 59% backed Corbyn.
* This has had a knock on effect on partisan dealignment (see above)
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**Useful knowledge and Information**

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| **The influence of Class on Voting Behaviour** Traditionally in UK politics, class was the defining factor in how to determine how someone would vote, due to the strong class system within society. During the 1960, possible as many as 80% of people voted on class lines. Defined by AB Upper Middle Class) C1 (Middle class), C2 (skilled working class) and DE (working class).* The way one voted was part of their class identity and the parties established strong links in communities defined on class lines, i.e. working class communities in the East End of London.
* However, in recent years, the UK has seen a progressive period of **class dealignment**. A trend in which progressively fewer people consider themselves to be a member of particular social class, and so class has a decreasing impact on their voting behaviour.
* For example, in the past AB voters at the higher end of the social class classification would be more liable to vote Conservative, with 78% doing so in 1964.
* In recent times this has declined dramatically, with only 40% of AB voters voting Conservative in 2010, with only small increases in 2015 and 2017.
* This may be due to the advent of New Labour under Tony Blair, a more centrist middle-ground vision of Labour values, as well as the growth in strength of the centrist Liberal Democrats from the 1980s onwards.
* However, class cannot be entirely written off as a factor influencing voting behaviour, as evidenced by continued working class support for the Labour party. Even centrist New Labour in 1997 received 59% of working class DE voter support, and in 2017 59% backed Corbyn.
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| **The influence of valence issues on voting behaviour**Valence issues can have a big effect on voting behaviour, especially when it comes to floating or swing voters who have no particular allegiance to party, who may be looking for a deciding factor on which way to vote. * Valence issues can be defined as when most of the electorate hold similar views on an issue, they may decide to vote for one party or another based on **how well they think the party and/or it’s leader will manage that particular issue**, as well as on a judgement of how well the party managed it in the past. These are known as valence issues. This could be a particular issue such as national security, foreign policy or the economy. David Cameron played up to this, constantly referring to the Conservative governments ‘long-term economic plan’ in 2015.

 * Valence can also refer to the **general ‘image’ of a party and its leader**, which may affect voting behaviour. Sometimes also called ‘competence voting.’ Theresa May entered into the 2017 general election arguing she could give the country ‘strong and stable leadership’’ but made several mistakes which made her seem indecisive, such as her U-turn on social care. Tony Blair created an image of youth and vitality in 1997, whilst Neil Kinnock was not as trusted by the electorate in 1992.
* **Governing competence is a key valence issue** – voters often base their decision in voting on how competent they feel the outgoing government has been and the potential competence of the other parties. Gordon Brown had been attacked in the press in the run up to the 2010 election for his violent temper and poor relationship management with ministers and advisors.
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| **The relationship between turnout and demographics**Turnout is the proportion of those eligible to vote in any election who do actually turn up to vote. It expressed as a percentage of the electorate, i.e. 69% of the electorate turned out to vote at the general election in 2017. Demographics refers to a voters age and class in this context. The first key aspect of relationship can be seen in the fact that, statistically, the younger you are, the less likely you are to vote. Turnout amongst the 18-24 age bracket has been the lowest of any bracket in the previous three elections. In 2010, turnout in this bracket was at 44%, 2015 it was at 43% and 2017 it was at 54%. A likely cause is widespread apathy amongst young voters and a lack of political education. This is significant because it may make it difficult for more radical parties like the Greens to make an impact, it may discriminate slightly against the labour Party. The second key aspect of the relationship which is linked to the first is that **the 65+ age bracket shows high turnout figures in all elections,** with 76% in 2010, 78% in 2015 and 71% in 2017. This is sometimes referred to as the grey vote, and is significant because it give a big advantage to the Conservatives and (previously) UKIP, who are most supported by the elderly. Thirdly, in terms of class, **turnout was among the AB classes was much higher than among the DE (working class) bracket.** 69% of AB voters cast their votes in 2017 compared to just 53% of DE voters. This gives an advantage to the Conservatives whose core vote tends to be in the AB classes, and a disadvantage to Labour, who tend to rely on working class DE support. Fourthly, **overall turnout in the last three elections seems to be on a general upwards trend** amongst all age groups and social classes, which is significant as it may suggest that supposed ‘participation crisis’ is coming to an end, although all three of those elections were ‘close fought’ elections.  |

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| **The relationship between age and voting behaviour**It will be seen that there are several factors which suggest a strong relationship between age and voting behaviour in the UK. The first aspect of the relationship is that the **younger you are, the more likely you are to vote Labour.** Winston Churchill once said “if a man is not a socialist by the time he is 20, he has no heart. If he is not a Conservative by the time he is 40, he has no brain.” These words still tend to reflect the pattern between age and voting behaviour today. At the 2017 general election, 18% of the 18-24 bracket voted Conservative compared to 67% for Labour. The older the voter, the less likely voting Labour becomes. In the 65+ age bracket, only 23% voted Labour in 2017. This suggests a strong link between age and voting behaviour. The second key aspect of the relationship which is linked to the first is that **the broadly Conservative-leaning 65+ age bracket shows high turnout figures in all elections,** with 76% in 2010, 78% in 2015 and 71% in 2017. This is sometimes referred to as the grey vote, and is significant because it give a big advantage to the Conservatives who 59% of the 65+ bracket voted for in 2017, and UKIP (previously in 2015) who are most supported by the elderly. This suggests a strong link between age and voting behaviour. The third key aspect of the relationship can be seen in the fact that, statistically, **the younger you are, the less likely you are to vote.** Turnout amongst the 18-24 age bracket has been the lowest of any bracket in the previous three elections. In 2010, turnout in this bracket was at 44%, 2015 it was at 43% and 2017 it was at 54%. A likely cause is widespread apathy amongst young voters and a lack of political education. This is significant because it may make it difficult for more radical parties like the Greens to make an impact, and it may discriminate slightly against the labour Party.  |

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| **Why turnout at general elections has been seen to be decreasing in recent years**Turnout at UK general elections has been on a broad downward trend since the heights of the February 1974 general election when 79% of the electorate turned out to vote. It hit a historic low at 59% in 2001 and has hovered at rough 65% since. This is potentially due to three reasons:* **Wide spread disillusionment with the ‘catch-all’ consensus nature of political parties** and poor treatment of youth – scrapping EMAs and raising tuition fees to 9000 a year. Apathy towards the mainstream political process caused by what people say as a pointless exercise that changes nothing. Ken Livingstone once said ‘if voting ever changed anything, they’d abolish it.’
* **Increasingly alternative way for people (especially young people)** to participate in Politics – E-petitions, direct action, PGs etc. Petition to ban Donald trump – 586,000 signatures and debated in Parliament in January 2016. Occupy London Stock Exchange in 2011 is another example of alternative participation through direct action.
* **More interest in single issue politics –** Scottish independence, Environmentalism, Brexit etc. Whilst turnout has been decreasing during general elections, voters have been become more impassioned about single issues which are more high profile.
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**30-mark non-source Questions**

**Evaluate the view that the publication of opinion polls should be banned in the run up to elections (30)**

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| **Ban**  | **Don’t Ban**  | **Judgement?** |
| **Opinion polls may influence the way people vote based on nothing but the popularity of a party amongst other voters.** In an informed and advanced modern democracy, people should be making decisions based on the issues, not simply ‘band-wagoning’ on to a party which is doing well in the polls.  | **It would impinge the principle of freedom of expression.** Banning something means restricting the public’s access to information and stifling debate. Shouldn’t the public have a right to see if a party is doing badly. |  |
| **Opinion Polls have been proved wrong on countless occasions, and may mislead the public, making them change their vote based on inaccurate information.** Some of the polls on 7 June 2017 (one day before the election) delivered Tory leads of seven points, 10 points, 12 points and 13 points. Turned out to be a 2-point lead! The last two polls before the Brexit referendum showed Britain remaining by 55% to 45% and 58% to 42%. This may have led to Remain voters staying at home and Brexit supporters making sure they voted.  | **Polls often get it close to exactly right, and polling is an evolving science, showing increasingly sophisticated and accurate results.** Survation accurately predicted the result of the 2017 general election, calling a hung parliament, 2% lead for the Conservatives and the likely outcome of a deal with the DUP! |  |
| **Arguably, Politicians should not be slaves to ever-changing public opinion as expressed in the polls.** Politicians should campaign as conviction politicians, making policy as a result of detailed research and studies, not the whim of the less-informed, often emotive rather than rational, electorate. Miliband’s widely mocked ‘Ed Stone’ was the consequence of Labour polling badly on immigration.  | **Polls also help politicians gauge the most important issues for the public and form their policy positions on those issues.** Lord Ashcroft's investment in individual 1,000-strong polls in marginal constituencies to help the Conservatives shape their message is another example of polls helping to shape a campaign (2015) |  |
|  | **Polls can help smaller parties gain recognition in the UK’s two-party system dominated by Labour and the Conservatives.** The Greens used polls showing them with strong support very effectively in their successful campaign to be included in the planned televised debates for the 2015 election. |  |

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| **PLAN THE BELOW QUESTIONS:** **When planning this question, link all other factors back to whether they are more important than age (or whichever factor the question gives you, region, class etc.) at the end of each paragraph. You don’t have to agree with the factor given, but in this case we have.** ***Question: Evaluate the extent to which age is the most important factor in influencing how a person will vote (30)*** **Introduction: Define key terms**: **Lay out your points on either side:** **Signposting the answer:** **Paragraph 1: Age:** It will be seen that **the most important factor** is the age of the voter. There is an undeniable trend between older age and being more likely to vote for the Conservative party, and younger voters being more likely to vote for the Labour Party. In 2017, 66% of 18-19 year olds voted Labour, whereas 69% of 70+ year olds voted for the Conservative party. This also favours the Conservative party, as the UK has an ageing population and lower participation in elections in younger people (such as 18 year olds). T**he 65+ age bracket shows high turnout figures in all elections,** with 76% in 2010, 78% in 2015 and 71% in 2017, compared to just 54% for 18-24 year olds in 2017. This is sometimes referred to as the grey vote, and is significant because it give a big advantage to the Conservatives and (previously) UKIP, who are most supported by the elderly. Moreover, another example as to how much of an influence age is on voting behaviour, is the Brexit referendum. It was seen that 73% of 18-24 year olds, voted remain, whilst 66% of 65+ year olds, voted leave. **Overall, age is the most significant factor.** **Paragraph 2: Class:** Traditionally in UK politics, class was the defining factor determining how someone would vote, due to the strong class system within society. During the 1960s, possible as many as 80% of people voted on class lines. Defined by AB Upper Middle Class) C1 (Middle class), C2 (skilled working class) and DE (working class). **Explain the significance**: The way one voted was part of their class identity and the parties established strong links in communities defined on class lines, i.e. working class communities in the East End of London. However, in recent years, the UK has seen a progressive period of **class dealignment**. A trend in which progressively fewer people consider themselves to be a member of particular social class, and so class has a decreasing impact on their voting behaviour. For example, in the past AB voters at the higher end of the social class classification would be more liable to vote Conservative, with 78% doing so in 1964. In recent times this has declined dramatically, with only 40% of AB voters voting Conservative in 2010, with only small increases in 2015 and 2017. This may be due to the advent of New Labour under Tony Blair, a more centrist middle-ground vision of Labour values, as well as the growth in strength of the centrist Liberal Democrats from the 1980s onwards. However, class cannot be entirely written off as a factor influencing voting behaviour, as evidenced by continued working class support for the Labour party. Even centrist New Labour in 1997 received 59% of working class DE voter support, and in 2017 59% backed Corbyn. **Link back to age:** **Although significant, the link is still not as clear as it is with age** due to class dealignment, and the fact that young people do not define themselves in such terms. **Paragraph 3: Region:** Looking at parties’ regional support can be helpful in explaining voting behaviour. **Explain significance**: The Conservatives are dominant in the South East and West, and slightly dominant in the Midlands. Labour leads in the north of England but this is not a decisive lead. Scotland has moved from being a Labour stronghold before 2010, to being dominated by the SNP with 56 out of 59 Scottish seats, and then returning to three-party contest in 2017 with the SNP back down to 35. Until 2015 Wales was not dominated by any one party, but there was a genuine competition between four parties there. However, Labour still dominates after 2017. Liberal Democrats have little support outside London and the south of England. **Link back to age:** Although region is helpful with determining party dominance in certain areas, **it is less helpful than age in determining an individuals’ voting intention, as individuals may not vote solely based on where they live.** **Paragraph 4: Ethnicity:** There is a clear link between ethnicity and voting intention. Explain the significance: It has it normally been seen that members of an ethnic minority are more likely to vote for Labour. At the 2017 general election, Labour had a massive 54 point lead over the Conservatives for BME voters, with 65% of the BME vote going for Corbyn in 2017. L**ink back to age: However,** There is a link between ethnicity and economic factors. This community is, overall, poorer than the white community and therefore arguably is more likely to have left-wing voter preferences. **In other words, the factor at work is not race, but class and income. This suggests that as a factor in itself, age is more significant than ethnicity.** **Paragraph 5: Gender:** Gender has in the past been seen to have some impact on voting behaviour. **Explain the significance:**  However, more up to date studies and information post-elections have revealed this to be quite minimal for the most part. For example, a Yougov survey of 52,000 adults following the general election, 43% of females voted Labour, and 43% voted Conservative. For men, it was 39% vs. 43%. **This is a very small difference and insignificant in determining voter intentions.** Over 23 years between 1992 and 2017, there has been almost no significant difference with how men and women vote. Even when the Prime Minister is female, as in 1983, 1987 and 2017, when men were almost equally as likely to vote for the woman as women were. **Link back to age:** **Therefore age is clearly more relevant.** **Paragraph 6: Rational Choice voting (Issue voting, valence, leadership etc): Explain the significance:** Another significant factor would be rational choice voting, i.e. when floating voters aren’t ideologically committed to one party decide their vote on the issues, either specific ones, or valence issues. A swing voter may be swung by what political analyst Peter Kellner calls valence issues, judging parties and politicians not on the specific issues but on their character. **Governing competence** of the main parties and their leaders is a key valence issue, and voters may choose to judge a party based on its record in government or its reputation on an issue. Economic competence was a major factor in the 1979 election, as Thatcher and the Conservatives were seen as more economically competent than Labour under James Callaghan. Floating voters may choose to **vote instrumentally or expressively**, either voting for parties promising policies which would directly benefit them, or voting for the party they feel would benefit society best as a whole. **Alternatively, a parties’ leader may also swing a floating voter. Tony Blair’s youth, decisiveness and charisma in 1997 is often cited as the reason for the 8.8% swing to Labour and massive landslide. Link back to age:** However, a voter’s idea of what may constitute a key instrumental issue for them, as well as their own view of valence, may be **significantly influenced by their age**, as younger voters are going to care more about education policy than pension policy for example. **Conclusion: Summarise the argument made above, linking each factor back to the significance of age and proving our judgement:**  |
| **Evaluate the extent to which Economic Policy is the most important factor influencing floating voters (30)****Introduction: Define key terms**: Floating voters**Lay out your points on either side:** **Signposting the answer:** **Economic Policy:** Economic Policy is arguably by far the most important factor which could influence the party preference of floating voters, as it informs the electorate’s view of a party, it’s leader, and gives the media something to comment on. The old saying in Politics that voters vote based on the thickness of their wallets can be seen to be factually accurate, as in 2015, Yougov found that the number one issue amongst the electorate was the state of the British economy, above contentious issues such as Healthcare and immigration. Politicians centre their whole campaigns around the state of the economy, criticising other parties’ economic positions, whilst extolling their own economic prowess. Theresa May criticised Jeremy Corbyn’s manifesto is ‘uncosted’ and famously made the argument that Labour was paying for it’s policies with a ‘magic money tree.’ This desire to appear economically competent has been an election technique since 1979, when the Tories famously declared ‘Labour isn’t working’ and when C2 voters famously split evenly between Labour and Conservative at 41%. It will be seen that all other factors are influenced by the predominance of economic policy. **Valence Issues:****Explain significance:** Valence issues could be described as a situation when most of the electorate hold similar views on an issue, they may decide to vote for one party or another based on how well they think the party and/or it’s leader will manage that particular issue, as well as on a judgement of how well the party managed it in the past. This could be particularly influenced by the public’s view of the party’s leader. These are known as valence issues. Governing competence is a key aspect of voter behaviour, not looking at a particular policy area, instead focusing on which party voters believe will govern the country best. **Link back to economic policy:** A key part of valence is how well the party will run the British economy, and therefore many parties make the economy a central part of their campaigns. David Cameron did this will his constant refrain that the Conservatives had a ‘long term economic plan’ back in 2015, not only giving him a personal image of economically credible, but adding to the valence of the Tories as well. **Rational Choice Voting (Instrumental and Expressive voting):****Explain significance:** It could be argued that to ascribe voter choice to one particular policy area is far too simplistic, as voters tend to vote broadly on altruistic (expressive) or instrumental lines. An altruistic (or expressive) voter votes for the party they believe will do best for the entire country as a whole, not necessarily the party which best serves their own self-interests. An instrumental voter votes for the party which is going to best answer their self-interest. Expressive voting played out in 2017, when Labour were ahead by 2% amongst C1 voters (43% to 41%). This is a class traditionally dominated by the Conservatives and may be evidence of expressive voting. **Link back to economic policy:** Despite this, the problematic aspect of this argument is that often, the way people judge what is best for themselves or best for the country will be based on economic policy, as evidenced by the arguments above.**Issue voting (linked to age):****Explain significance:** Age is a highly significant factor in determining how people will vote in general elections, as economic policy may be far less important for younger voters than older voters. This is due to the fact that younger voters tend to be in education, paying less tax, and have no dependants, i.e. children. Younger people are far more likely to focus on social justice and equality rather than tax or pensions policy. In 2017, There is also a clear correlation between age and voting intention, as 66% of 18-19-year olds voted Labour, whilst 69% of 70+ year olds voted Conservative. **Link back to economic policy:** The clear link here is the older you get, the more concerned you become with economic policy, as you pay more tax, have a salary and will be increasingly interested in their pension policy. **Tactical voting:****Explain significance:** The tough reality of the FPTP electoral system used in UK general elections means that large numbers of swing voters are forced to vote for one of the two main parties in order to keep the other one out, rather than be able to vote for the smaller third party they like the most. The June 2017 election vote has been branded the “hold your nose” election after an estimated 6.5 million people made tactical decisions out of the 27 million votes. This arguably has almost nothing to do with economic policy, instead it is to do with the harsh reality of the FPTP electoral system. **Link back to economic policy:** A link to economic policy that could be made is the fact that many of those tactical voters may have chosen a party most aligned with their preferred economic vision, as the economy is always a top issue at election time, as evidenced in 2015, when Yougov found it the number 1 issue. **Party Leaders:****Explain significance:** Charismatic, decisive and popular leaders support the party in its widest sense, leaders with charisma attract all important swing voters to vote for the party, for example Blair appealing beyond the traditional Labour base in 1997 and 2001 and leaders of minor parties attracting major media attention such as Nigel Farage in 2015. Building on this, the media focuses on eye-catching stories based on personality rather than ideas such as economic policy. Indeed, the personality espouses the ideas, becoming the ‘brand image’ and figurehead of the political party. Leaders’ performances under the spotlight (for example at Prime Minister’s questions or at election debates) matters in securing electoral success. Leaders need to perform effectively to carry the authority and give the impression that they can manage their own party and the country. In 2010, only 6 per cent of people said having Mr Miliband as Labour leader made them more likely to support the party, while 40 per cent said it made them less likely to do so and this shows that leadership is hugely important when it comes to attracting voters.**Link back to economic policy:** Leaders, no matter how popular, can be bought down by poor public perception of their economic policy, or by specific unpopular economic proposals. A prime example of this would be James Callaghan in 1979, who was more liked than Thatcher, but was perceived as a Prime Minister who had badly mismanaged the British economy. In 2017, May became hamstrung by the highly unpopular social care policy which became known as the dementia tax.**Press:****Explain significance:** The media in Britain arguably plays are more significant role in swinging floating voters towards a party than economic policy, as it the primary way in which voters learn about the parties fighting for their votes. The Sun, a newspaper with a national circulation of nearly 2 million, has supported the party which achieved a majority in parliament in every election between 1979 and 2015, with the exception of 2010, when the Conservatives were the largest party, but didn’t receive a majority. The print media will focus on personality politics, especially the leaders of the two main parties, far more than economic policy. Personal gaffs and scandals, such as bigot-gate in 2010 and May’s ‘fields of wheat’ comments in 2017 dominate the coverage in the newspapers and the print media far more than economic policy. Social media is now increasingly important at election time, as shown by the rise in Labour activism on twitter and Facebook, especially by Momentum, the left-wing Corbyn supporting party faction. **Link back to economic policy:** Despite this supposed dominance, and although the media might be the most visual influencing factor on elections, it could be argued that it’s influence is negligible compared to economic policy, as the 1997 general election shows.  Advocates of the view that The Sun backing Blair swung the election for him has been disproved by polling expert Professor John Curtice, who has found that “the pattern of vote switching during the 1997 campaign amongst readers of The Sun or any other ex-Tory newspaper proved to be much like that of those who did not read a newspaper at all”. Most of the 13.5% swing from Labour to the Conservatives (12.5%) before the 2010 election happened before the Sun announced its change of support to the Conservatives. Curtice puts this down to Cameron’s pledge to cut the deficit and balance the books – i.e. economic policy. **Conclusion: Summarise the argument made above, linking each factor back to the significance of economic policy and proving our judgement:**  |

**Evaluate the view that, for the general public, the media is more significant than**

**policy statements and manifestoes from political parties. (30)**

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| **Media is more significant**  | **Policy/Manifesto more significant**  |
| The media can highlight the strengths/weaknesses of leaders at election time. This was particularly evident during the 2015 election, when traditional media in particular highlighted the perceived personality weaknesses of Ed Miliband. Also true of 2017, when Theresa May mishandled her U-turn on social care, when she seemed to trying to cover it up – ‘nothing has changed!’ | Even popular leaders can be bought down by poor policy, leading to less liked leaders being elected. Thatcher was personally less well-liked than James Callaghan in 1979, known mainly for her time as Health Secretary under Ted Heath, when she was known as the ‘milk snatcher’ for removing funding for free school milk, and yet she still won a majority of 43 seats in 1979. May was polling higher personally than Corbyn in 2017, but the social care “dementia tax” policy also crippled her campaign.  |
| Media is the way in which party manifestos and policies get out to the electorate – and they determine the public response to them. One poll in the run up to the general election in 2017 found that 67% don’t read manifestos, they find out about policies in the press. Heavy criticism in the press has made leaders change their policies such as Philip Hammond and his U-turn on rising tax levels for the self-employed in September 2018.  | The public tend to vote on issues (issue voting) and what the parties will/won’t do to improve their lives (instrumental voting). They won’t be as influenced by media positivity/negativity. Yougov found that the Economy was the number 1 issue in 2015. A primary valence issue is economic competence, and the general view of which party will manage the economy better is more important than media coverage.  |
| Huge influence of biased/politicised print media and the rise in social media means parties increasingly fighting for media dominance. The public appeared to be swayed by a largely anti-EU press in the run up to the EU referendum. The newspapers with the largest readership are the Conservative leading Sun and Daily Mail. Between 1979 and 2015, the only election where the party backed the Sun has not won was 2010.  | The media is clearly becoming less influential due to the fragmentation of the media landscape. Social media is hugely dominated by Labour supporters and the decline in the print media shows that the Conservative dominated papers are losing influence. This polarisation actually cancels out the influence of the press as it essentially acts as an echo chamber as the general public tend to choose media sources which reflect and endorse their views |

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| **Evaluate the extent to which Party leaders are the crucial factor in whether or not a political party is successful (30)****BE AWARE: *At first glance this question looks like a question about political parties, but its actually asking you about reasons for success, i.e. at elections. Therefore, it’s about voting behaviour and comparing different factors of valence or the media.*** **Introduction: Define key terms**: **Lay out your points on either side:** **Signposting the answer:** Reasons why the party leader is the most important factor:**Charismatic, decisive and popular leaders support the party in its widest sense,** Leaders with charisma attract wavering voters to vote for the party, for example Blair appealing beyond the traditional Labour base and leaders of minor parties, such as Farage (with his everyman appeal) and Sturgeon (liberal and patriotic), have made a significant difference to their parties’ electoral appeal, therefore these types of leaders work effectively in offering an attractive brand to voters and they can have a great impact, this type of brand appeal is likely to continue. **Charisma makes it easier to** petition for funds and donations to contest elections and achieve success, therefore this type of leader is far more effective in ensuring that their party is successful, people respond to them and this type of personality is likely to continue to make an impact as political leadership is about personality. An example of this could be Blair in 1997, whose charisma and clear vision for the country was hugely important, contrasted with the grey and unexciting John Major. T**he media finds it easier to connect with personality rather than ideas.** Indeed, the personality espouses the ideas, becoming the ‘brand image’ and figurehead of the political party, with attention focused on their behaviour, therefore the media supports the view that party leaders are crucial; leaders with a strong brand play better in the media and gain more positive press and therefore appear more favourable to the electorate, whereas weaker leaders are often mocked by the press and this damages their credibility with the public. Thatcher’s decisiveness and image as ‘the Iron Lady’ helped her in the run up to the 1983 election. Much was made of Corbyn’s honesty and sincerity in the run up to the election in 2017. Ed Miliband was mocked for the way he ate a sandwich in The Sun Newspaper in 2015, nothing to do with policy. **Leaders’ performances under the spotlight** (for example at Prime Minister’s questions or at election debates) matters in securing electoral success. Leaders need to perform effectively to carry the authority and give the impression that they can manage their own party and the country, thus these types of party leaders can have a crucial impact and weak leaders struggle with division, for example John Major was a very effective ‘soap box’ campaigner, speaking to people on the streets. ‘Cleggmania’ began after Nick Clegg’s strong performances in the leaders debates at the general election in 2010, whilst Ed Miliband came across as nerdy and lacking authority in his election interview with Jeremy Paxman in 2015, stuttering over the phrase “H…h..hell yes I’m t…t..tough enough”. **Other factors which may be more important:**In 1979 James Callaghan ironically had a more favourable image than his opponent, Margaret Thatcher, but lost anyway. The focus in this election **was more on policy than personality,** such as the dire state of the British economy. if the policies the party produce are popular and tackle key issues, effective leadership is less important. Consequently, this shows that party leaders do not have to be overly popular, strong or charismatic and that policies can be influential in making a party successful, however these examples are from the last century. **This could also be said of the 2017 election**, which was initially about leadership, but Labour effectively steered attention towards its popular manifesto pledges, whilst the Conservatives tough economic decisions in their manifesto (social care in particular) damaged their popularity. **Party Unity is a crucial factor for the success of a party**, as a party which appears disunited is not going to suggest it would make an effective governing party. Corbyn’s Labour party was heavily disunited prior to the 2017 election campaign, and Theresa May’s leadership has divided her party since, due to the poor election result, as has the issue of Brexit amongst her split cabinet of Remainers and Leavers. A leader is only as good as the **talent and support around them in their political party,** for example the role of Mandelson, Brown and Campbell for Blair and Osborne for Cameron, therefore depth and breadth in key appointments and support staff ensures that a clear message is given in the media and ensures party success, it shows that success is a more complicated issue than simply having a popular, strong leader.A range of other issues are more important than the leader, such as **economic prosperity and worldwide events** beyond the borders of the UK, for example the impact of the Iraq War and the financial crash on Labour’s success in 2005 and 2010, the outcome of the Scottish referendum for the SNP in 201, consequently these events are beyond the control of party leaders and often come down to factors beyond their control, so it is clear that other factors can influence success and that leadership alone is not the key factor. Domestic events outside of the leaders control can damage a party’s popularity, such as the Grenfell Tower fire in June 2017 severely damaged Theresa May’s popularity. **The role of the media is far more important than the party leaders** **themselves**. How the media targets the party and its ideas is vital and leaders often pander to the media and change their views to please the media, as evidenced by David Cameron’s close ties with the Murdochs and former tabloid News of the World Editor Rebekah Brooks, which came to light during the Levison inquiry into press standards in 2013. therefore, it is not just the sheer personality of a leader that dictates success, it is that coupled with the backing of media corporations that helps parties to be successful and this outlet will continue to be influential. Does the party dominate on social media? Conservatives spent 100m on Facebook alone during GE2015, whilst Labour (Momentum especially) reached millions with its viral videos during GE2017. Traditional Media – the party-political leanings of the major newspapers mean they can significantly influence the public’s views of a party. In 2017 the Daily Mail had a circulation of 1,514,000 and 74% of its readers voted for the Conservatives, the Mail’s desired party of government. Miliband mocked in the press in 2015.**Conclusion:** Are party leaders the most important factor? Justify your conclusion |

## Evaluate the extent to which the dominance of the two main parties in the UK political system is in decline (30)

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| Two-party dominance in decline  | Not in Decline | Judgement (which side is stronger) |
| Partisan dealignment: There is a long-term trend of voters turning away from the two main parties. In 1974, 79% voted for the two main parties, whilst in 2010, just 67.6 per cent of all voters opted for Labour or the Tories.  | 2017 General Election: The percentage of voters who supported either Labour or Conservative was 82.3%. Partisan Dealignment is (potentially temporarily) over. Theresa May might have failed to win a majority, but she got the Tories' highest share of the vote since 1983. Labour, meanwhile, did better under Jeremy Corbyn than it had done since 2001. It was the two parties' best combined performance since 1970 |  |
|  Third party support has increased leading to multi-party politics in the UK. Growth in UKIP support (3.8 million votes in 2015 – 12.6% of the votes), Greens and LIB Dems in 2010s. SNP winning 56 seats in 2015.  | There has been a collapse in third party support – support for UKIP and the Lib Dems have collapsed. While the Liberal Democrats won an extra three seats in 2017, their share of vote actually declined by 0.5 per cent. The SNP lost 21 seats and their vote share fell 13.1% from 2015. The Greens were down by 2.5% and, most calamitous of all, UKIP has shed nearly 3.3 of its 3.8 million 2015 election votes. |  |
| Voters see little difference between the Conservatives and Labour –they captured the middle ground (eg New Labour and Conservatives in 2000s under Blair and Cameron.   | The two main parties have clear ideological differences in 2017. They no longer operate in the centre ground. Corbyn and his beliefs regarding nuclear weapons. Privatisation v. nationalisation etc in the water/rail sectors. (Look at your notes from Political Parties) |  |
| Neither of the two main parties won enough seats to form a majority government in 2010 and so a coalition between the Conservatives and Lib Dems occurred. Theresa May is now relying on the DUP to govern since 2017. | Young people have begun to vote in large numbers: turnout amongst 18-24 yr olds was 54%, up from 43% in 2015. This was bound to benefit the Labour party, as 69% of 18-24 year olds voted Labour in 2017 |  |

## Conclusion: Overall has there been a decline in two-party dominance?

**Evaluate the extent to which general elections in the UK are lost by the government rather than won by the opposition (30).**

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| **Lost by the Government (mistakes by them)** | **Won by the opposition (positive factors that the opposition have achieved)** |
| **Weak leadership & PM –** If a Prime minister is seen to have lost power at the national level, or lost control of their own government, it could have a vital impact on the wider valence of the party of government. A good example of this would be John Major’s time as Prime Minister from 92-97, who was severely weakened by his failure to deal with Tory party’s image of sleaze, including cash for questions and numerous sex scandals. | **Positive leadership qualities by leader of opposition party -** It wasn’t the absence of charisma from Major that lost him the election in 1997, instead it was Blair’s charisma, strong leadership qualities, and strong oratorical skills which arguably won the election for Labour in 1997. |
| **Poor record in government - J**ohn Major in 1997 was plagued by a poor record in government – he was PM when Britain crashed out of the Exchange Rate Mechanism in 1994, which saw the pound severely lose value. Gordon Brown’s poor record in government from 2008-2010, including the poor press coverage of his handling of the banking crisis, and his failure to call an election in 2008.  | **Positive policy ideas –** Thatcher in 1979 was not perceived anywhere near as positively as PM James Callaghan, but the Conservative party’s policies on the economy, which was doing very poorly during the ‘winter of discontent’ in 1978, arguably won her the election, showing that the appeal of the opposition could be more important than the record of the govt. itself.  |
| **Poor campaign by govt. party –** Theresa May went into the 2017 election with a huge poll lead, with many pundits and pollsters predicting a 100-seat majority. It can be argued that her dismal campaign, including her failure to deal with the U-turn on social care due to the unpopular dementia tax, as well as her decision not to take part in the TV debates, undermined her clear advantage.  | **Excellent campaign & use of media by Opposition –** The 2017 general election cannot be seen just as a Conservative failure but as a success for the Labour party, with Jeremy Corbyn proving himself to be a highly effective and charismatic campaigner, with highly popular policies and a big online following. Thatcher and Blair also had the support of the print media in 1979 and 1997 consecutively.  |
| **Disunited govt. party –** By the time of the 1997 general election, the Conservative party was extremely divided over the issue of European Integration. Major’s own cabinet was severely divided over the issue, and he faced a leadership election based on his attitude towards Europe. The Brownite vs. Blairite split also damaged the image of the Labour party in the general election of 2005, with his Blair’s majority being slashed to 66 from 100+.  | **United Opposition party** – Along with the disunity of the Conservative party in 1997, the Labour party was united behind Blair’s leadership, with him having finished the long process beginning with the leadership of Neil Kinnock to move the Labour party to the centre ground.  |

## Appendix - Useful terms

These terms will need to be understood and used in your answers.

**Absolute majority:** a majority greater than 50%. A party has an absolute majority in the House of

Commons if they have more seats than all the other parties put together.

**Accountability:** the property that a representative must answer to those he represents, and can be

removed by them. Representatives should act on criticisms from the represented, and should take

responsibility for failures or incompetence. Government is accountable to parliament on a day-to-day

basis and to the electorate on election-day; some would argue that, in today’s media-centric world, they are more effectively held to account by the media than by the official Opposition.

**Butskellism:** the post-war consensus between Labour and the Conservatives on Keynesian economic

policy. The term was coined by *The Economist*, and is derived from the names of Hugh Gaitskell (Labour chancellor 1950-1) and Rab Butler (Conservative chancellor 1951-5).

**Cause group:** a pressure group which promotes a specific set of objectives which do not directly benefit its members. Cause groups are subdivided into section cause groups, which promote the interests of a section of society; attitudinal cause groups, which aim to change the attitudes of the public on particular issues; and political cause groups, which aim to change the political system.

**Citizenship:** the status of being a citizen of a particular country. The term is often associated with the exercise of one’s rights and obligations as a citizen – particularly in a democratic society.

**Clause Four:** The clause in the original Labour Party constitution which committed the party to

nationalisation. Tony Blair managed to get the clause replaced with a ‘Statement of Values’ on becoming leader in 1994.

**Coalition government:** a government made up of more than one party. Coalition governments are rare in the UK, thanks to the First Past the Post electoral system. However, in other countries – Germany, for example – such situations are commonplace.

**Conservatism:** a political ideology which values history and tradition over new ideas and rapid change.

Conservatism also tends to involve a commitment to a strong state and tough policies on law and order, based on a pessimistic view of human nature.

**Devolution:** A process of constitutional reform where power, but not legal sovereignty, is distribruted to national or regional institutions. In the UK this has meant transfer of power to the assemblies in Scotland, Wales and NI.

**Election:** A popular vote held to determine which political party will form the next government.

Faction: A sub-group within a political party representing a particular ideological or policy position.

**Gerrymandering:** This is the manipulation of electoral boundaries so as to create a safe seat for a

particular party.

**Indirect democracy:** Citizens hand over decision-making responsibility to someone else. These

representatives act on behalf of their constituents and are held accountable at elections, so that

representatives who the electorate feel no longer represent their views can be removed. Also known as *representative democracy*.

**Insider group:** a pressure group which has access to government, and can expect to be consulted on

issues and policies relating to its area of expertise.

**Laissez-faire:** the classical liberal doctrine that the state should not interfere in the private capitalist economy.

**Liberalism:** A political ideology which has an absolute commitment to the freedom of the individual at

its centre. There are two distinct types: *classical liberalism*, which defines ‘freedom’ as being left alone by government; and *modern liberalism*, which acknowledges that true freedom is only achieved if every individual is free from ‘want, idleness, ignorance, squalor, and disease’ (in the words of Sir William Beveridge). Thus, for a modern liberal, government is justified in providing people with education, healthcare, benefits and housing. Mrs Thatcher’s economic policy was largely built on classical liberalism.

**Majoritarian:** electoral systems which require the winning candidate to gain over 50% of the vote.

**Mandate:** The idea that, in voting a party into power, the electorate gives that party the authority to pursue its manifesto promises. Interpreted more strongly, a mandate can be taken to mean that an

elected government had a duty to carry out its promises, as though the election was a binding contract between electors and elected.

**Manifesto:** a document published by a political party in the run-up to an election, which sets out what

action the party would take in a wide range of areas. Parties are elected on the basis of their manifestos, and are thus given a mandate to carry out those commitments. The public is likely to become disillusioned with parties in government which fail to do what they promised to do in their manifesto.

**Outsider group:** a pressure group which has no direct access to government, and must thus pursue its aims through other means.

**Paternalism:** the brand of conservatism, espoused by Benjamin Disraeli, that the wealthy should look

after the poor and the disadvantaged in society in order to preserve social harmony.

**Pluralism:** A political system in which power is widely dispersed between different groups, and decisions are the result of negotiations between these groups.

**Plurality:** A description of an electoral system that awards a position or seat in the legislature to a candidate who has achieved more votes than any other even if this does not represent 50% + absolute majority

**Power:** the ability to influence the behaviour of others; more specifically, the ability to make somebody do something that they would not otherwise have done.

**Pressure group:** a group of people with a common aim who seek to influence government policy, but do

not seek to win power through elections.

**Proportionality:** The property that the percentage of seats won by a party is broadly (or, in some cases, exactly) in line with their percentage share of the popular vote.

**Sectional group:** a pressure group which represents the common interests of a particular section of

society.

**Socialism:** Broadly speaking, socialism is a political ideology which has at its heart a commitment to

*equality* and *common ownership* of the factors of production. The term is not a precise one - it covers a whole spectrum of ideological traditions, from Marxism on the left to social democracy on the right. We can identify some core values that run through all these different strands: those of community, cooperation, social equality, social justice, and common ownership. The socialist movement is essentially about championing the working-class underdog in the face of institutionalised elitism and the domination of the aristocracy.

**Sovereignty:** the ultimate power and authority within a political system. A. V. Dicey identified

‘parliamentary sovereignty’ as one of the two pillars of the constitution (the other being the rule of law); but perhaps it is more accurate to say that, in a representative democracy, *legal* sovereignty rests with parliament, whilst *political* sovereignty rests with the people.

**State:** The set of *institutions* that constitute the governing authority in a country. The term ‘state’

includes not only government, but also such other institutions as the civil service, the judiciary, and the armed forces.

**Surplus votes:** Under First-Past-The-Post, the votes a candidate receives over and above the amount he needs to beat his opponent.

**Thatcherism:** the political and economic ideas of Margaret Thatcher (Prime Minister 1979-90).

Thatcherism is a mixture of a classical liberal commitment to the free market and neo-conservative social attitudes.

**Third Way:** the ideological position of New Labour, signifying a pragmatic compromise between social

democracy and liberalism.

**Tyranny of the majority:** A term coined by John Stuart Mill in his major work *On Liberty* (1859). The ‘tyranny of the majority’ refers to the ability of a majority to inflict on a minority policies which are unacceptable to them. For example, if a majority of the UK electorate votes to build a motorway through a village, despite the protests of the resident villagers, those villagers can be said to be victims of a ‘tyranny of the majority’. This is one of the flaws Mill saw in the democratic system.

**Wasted votes:** Under First-Past-The-Post, all votes cast for losing candidates. They are ‘wasted’ because they have no impact on the final composition of parliament and government.

**Expressive Voting:** When an undecided floating voter votes the party they believe will best serve society as a whole. I.e. somebody who isn’t directly affected by immigration voting for the party pledging to curb it.

**Instrumental Voting:** When an undecided floating voter votes the party they believe will best serve their specific needs, i.e. a businessman voting for the party offering lower business rates (taxes)

**Partisan Dealignment:** The increasing trend of voters turning away from voting for the two main parties at general elections.

**Class Dealignment:** The declining significance of class a an indicator of voting behaviour, due to the declining importance of class in British society.

**Valence:** The governing competence or general image of a party and it’s leader.