



Examiners' Report June 2025

GCE Politics 9PL0 01

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Introduction

This report has been written using input from a wide range of examiners and senior examiners who worked on this paper, and will help to inform candidates and centres in preparing for future exams.

Candidates and centres deserve praise for how they have prepared for this paper, and in particular, how they have continued to develop their A Level source analysis and essay writing skills, and used contemporary knowledge to provide up-to-date discussions of political debates.

Question (Q) 2a in particular, showed how well many candidates have kept up with contemporary evolutions in party policies and divisions, and many responses referred to developments from only a few days before the examination.

The appreciation of how to handle the three different assessment objectives continues to progress, and it is now rarer for candidates who have shown strong Assessment Objective (AO) 1 knowledge then to show weak AO2 analysis and AO3 evaluation.

Candidates did continue to find the political ideas section to be the most challenging, and that section of this report will offer further advice on approaching these questions.

Question 1(a)

Using the source, evaluate the view that rights in the UK are poorly protected.

Overview

This was the more popular of the two source questions. In general, it was answered well, with the vast majority of the candidates drawing relevant points effectively from the source, and supplementing them with their own knowledge and examples to address the question. As is often the case, the main discriminating factors between responses were the depth and rigour of analysis. This was aided particularly by the effective pairing of points, and the quality of sustained evaluation, showing a consistent line of argument from the start of the response to the end.

Frequent issues

Candidates generally understood the core demands of the question, and selected appropriate arguments from the source. In most cases, they were also able to develop, and critically test, these points, using their own knowledge. In doing so, they tended to show a good understanding of the key legislation outlined in the specification. Only the weakest responses simply regurgitated the source material. A few others drifted away from the question's focus on rights to a broader discussion of the benefits of an uncodified constitution; this could be linked back to the question, but was not always done.

The pairing of different source points was a notable discriminating factor between middling and strong analysis, with the best responses recognising that there were often fiery debates around common issues – such as the efficacy of the Human Rights Act (HRA), and the role of judges. Whilst the point around social and economic rights was paired less consistently, and probably the point least effectively supplemented with own knowledge, many candidates did manage to consider it effectively alongside the role of pressure groups in protecting rights. This was a sensible approach given how many such groups focus on social and economic issues. It was noted that candidates who wrote a plan, even quite a brief one, often fared more effectively.

The quality of examples was another strong discriminating factor, and specific cases were often used effectively. This gained the highest rewards where the cases tied closely to the points made and were contemporary – the Begum case, for example, could be used very effectively (although a few candidates misunderstood the details of the case), or the 'Rwanda plan' case. Even more contemporaneously the recent Supreme Court ruling on the meaning of 'sex' under the Equality Act, and its implications for human rights, was used to good effect by some candidates.

The use of cases with only a weak link to rights, such as the Miller cases around Brexit, was less effective. Now older cases such as the Belmarsh Case, whilst still of some relevance, are perhaps used more excessively than warranted in comparison with more recent examples.

It was very pleasing to see only a very small number of candidates now confusing the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR) with European Union (EU) and by contrast the large number who associated the EU correctly with the Charter of Fundamental Rights (CFR). Whilst the source clearly supported with this, it is a pleasing step forward on a point that often causes significant confusion.

In terms of structure, most candidates now embrace the value of paired points from the two sides of the debate followed by a mini-evaluation, or alternatively with evaluation woven into the counter point. Because of this, most candidates sustained a consistent line of argument throughout their response. The quality of analysis and evaluation within these sections were then key discriminating factors. It was relatively rare to see candidates attempt the whole of one side of the debate followed by the other, and those few that did make such a choice did not generally benefit from it.

Recommendations for improvement

1. Use and expand on the source: without being over-reliant on it, take your points from the material provided and use your own knowledge to develop, analyse and evaluate them.
2. Focus on the question: in this case, ensuring that the points and supporting examples tie in specifically to human rights.
3. Use recent examples where available, ensuring that they relate to the points raised by the question.
4. Plan your response, particularly to ensure the most effective pairing of points to support AO2 analysis.
5. Give equal weight to AO3 evaluation through sustained and evidenced judgements throughout the essay.

Chosen question number: Question 1(a) Question 1(b)

Human rights and civil liberties are basic rights to which every citizen is entitled. ~~The extent to which~~ ^{wellness} How well these rights are protected, poorly or effectively, can be measured in terms of whether or not they are sufficiently protected equally for all or if ~~these~~ ^{this} rights protection needs reform. Source 1a highlights numerous arguments for and against the current right's protection that exists in the UK. Overall, with regards to Source 1a, rights in the UK are poorly protected.

Firstly, Source 1a states that rights based legislation such as the HRA 1998, the ECHR, and the Equality Act 2010, provides "strong legal protection for civil and political rights". This is true as these pieces of legislation clearly outline what rights are protected and how, making it easier for ~~common~~ ^{regular} people to understand what their rights are and how they are protected. Furthermore, these pieces of legislation can aid Supreme Court rulings when the matter of rights protection is under examination. This is evident in the case of Shamima Begum, wherein it was ruled that for the protection of the rights of everyone else in Britain, she should not be

allowed back in the country and her citizenship revoked. On the other hand, Source 1a also clearly states that "the existing framework of UK legal rights protection is vulnerable to political attack". This is also true as the uncodified and unentrenched nature of the UK constitution means that any rights based legislation is impermanent and is susceptible to change. This is depicted through the Conservative Party's calls for a 'British Bill of Rights' to be introduced which would replace the current legislation protecting rights. This possibility poses a considerable threat to UK rights protection and thus supports the view that overall, with regard to legislation, rights in the UK are poorly protected. Although one could argue that rights are currently well protected, the unpredictability of UK legislation overpowers this view.

Secondly, Source 1a ~~states that~~ mentions activism, stating that "human rights and civil liberties enjoy relatively strong political support from parties, [...] pressure groups, younger age groups, and deprived regions.". In UK society, we can see an evolving tendency towards taking direct action and people getting themselves involved in politics through demonstrations and petitions, particularly the younger

age groups. In the past decade, we have seen numerous protests and demonstrations wherein young people will be fighting for their human rights and civil liberties and their place in society. In addition, pressure groups can ~~have~~ ^{play} a significant part in protecting rights through direct action, such as lobbying or influencing legislation. Most significantly, the existence of trade unions in society and the role they take on in protecting worker's rights, is an ~~example~~ indisputable illustration of pressure ~~groups~~ groups and their influence. However, on the other hand, Source 1a states that "UK governments have been repeatedly able to introduce legislation weakening rights". This is a powerful counter argument as it highlights the fact that ultimately, these methods of direct action are not legally binding and thus can only achieve so much. Parliament remains sovereign and due to this, with regards to direct action within rights protection, UK rights are poorly protected as at any given point, Parliament can decide to introduce legislation weakening rights.

Overall, it is fair to say that rights in the UK are poorly protected. Although one ~~cannot~~ argue that they are protected somewhat, they are by no means protected to their full potential, or to the extent which the public needs. Rights protection can be reformed by introducing a higher form of law, a codified and entrenched constitution, which would not allow any room for any discrepancies regarding rights protection.



This is a solid Level 3 response. The line of argument is clear and sustained, albeit without the additional substantiation needed for higher levels. The candidate's own knowledge makes some helpful additions to the source material, and the structure supports some solid analysis. A wider range of points, and more substantiated analysis, would take this response into higher levels.



Whilst two solid sections can achieve a reasonable mark, it can be challenging to show sufficient range for the highest marks without developing a third section.

Whilst all AOs are equally important, AO3 is often less convincing than the others. Therefore, incorporating strong, sustained and substantiated AO3 evaluation throughout your essay will give you a great chance of success.

Chosen question number: Question 1(a) Question 1(b)

To suggest rights in the UK are poorly protected would require them to be able to be undermined by the government and parliament, Supreme Court and ~~the~~ civil society. The source presents the plausible arguments human rights legislation is 'vulnerable' to repeal and ~~the~~ ~~primary~~ ~~has~~ ~~practical~~ ~~individual~~ is a tension between collective and individual rights. However, its more convincing arguments are rights are broadly well protected by legislation, the judiciary holding the government to account through judicial review and ~~rights~~ the role of 'civil society' and pressure group campaigns.

The source presents the valid, if flawed, argument that rights ^{legislation is,} ~~are~~ vulnerable to political attack ~~that~~ because ~~the~~ it can be repealed. In the UK, there is no codified, entrenched bill of rights and ~~the~~ legislation such as the Human Rights Act (1998) and Equality Act (2010) can be repealed by a majority in parliament. This is particularly concerning because Conservatives, such as former Justice Secretary Dominic Grieve, have called for the HRA to be repealed as they argue it inhibits national defence and immigration. Hence, rights legislation is not well protected. However, it is necessary to recognise that the political pressure repeal of human rights legislation would cause limits ~~the~~ ~~risk~~ ~~as~~ ~~parties~~ ^{a government} would fear losing support and ~~that~~

hence ~~they are~~ rights legislation is 'semi-entrenched'. Therefore, the more convincing argument in the source is 'current legislation provides strong legal protection for civil and political rights'. For instance, the Human Rights Act (1998) enshrines inalienable rights to life, freedom from torture and to a fair trial which cannot be derogated from. ~~See~~ The Equality Act (2010) established protected characteristics including sex, race and sexual orientation that cannot be discriminated against. These two examples demonstrate rights legislation effectively protects rights by positively stating the rights people have, giving them legal clarity and protection. Therefore, it is more convincing to argue that, as noted in the source, human rights legislation, particularly the HRA (2010), does protect rights ~~well~~ effectively as it is 'semi-entrenched' and gives legal clarity to rights people are entitled to.

The source presents the plausible, if unconvincing, argument that 'there is confusion between collective and individual rights' and hence they are ~~not well~~ poorly protected by the Supreme Court. This could be observed in the For Women Scotland Ltd vs The Scottish Ministers case in April 2025 which ~~ruled~~ ^{defended} ~~sex~~ ^{as} ~~is~~ biological sex. This protected the rights of women as they ~~or~~ have single-sex areas which provides safety, but undermined the rights of transgender people who cannot use certain facilities. This demonstrates there is an ^{inherent} conflict in some legal rulings between individual rights. ~~and it is impossible~~ furthermore, the case of Abu

Qatada, a suspected foreign terrorist, shows friction between the collective right to national security and individual right to freedom from torture. Qatada took 8 years, and £1.7m, to be deported to Jordan because he argued evidence obtained from torture would be used against him, despite the government believing he was a terrorist. This illustrates the ~~clash between~~ ^{supremacy} rights of the Court can prioritise individual rights at the expense of collective rights. Nevertheless, it must be recognised that the Court does have a crucial role in protecting individual rights and restraining the executive. For instance, in the *R (Unison) v Lord Chancellor* (2017) case the Court ruled the government's policy of imposing ~~or~~ fees on employment tribunals ~~infringed~~ the right to a free trial and access to justice. The fact that the government ~~immediately~~ ended the policy and reimbursed those affected shows the Court is an effective ~~check~~ ^{protection}, through ~~judicial~~ ^{ruling laws} ~~review~~ ^{ultra vires}, because it can prevent government policy ~~or~~ infringing rights. Furthermore, in the *R (Syaed) v Home Office* case in November 2023 *R (Neville) v Secretary of State for the Home Department* case ~~is~~ the Court protected the right to strike ~~from~~ government legislation. This shows its effectiveness at protecting rights by ruling laws unlawful and ~~its~~ ^{the} political pressure exerted upon the government gives its ruling further power. Therefore, ~~it is~~ the more convincing argument in the source is that 'civil liberties' are 'protected' by the judiciary because of its power of judicial review and political sovereignty which prevents government's infringing upon rights.

The source presents a valid, if flawed, argument that 'UK governments have been repeatedly able to introduce legislation weakening rights'. This could be observed in the 2023 Public Order Act which limited the right to protest by broadening the legal definition of 'serious disruption' and creating Serious Disruption Prevent orders to block people who have protested more than twice from being with certain people or in certain places. Further, the Safety of Rwanda Act (2024) established Rwanda as a 'safe' third country to which ~~asylum seekers~~ ^{asylum seekers} could be deported despite the ~~the~~ Supreme Court ruling it was not in November 2023. These examples demonstrate that the government can infringe upon rights because of parliamentary sovereignty - it ~~has~~ ^{has} ~~has~~ ^{has} supreme legal authority and FPTP means it will very likely hold a parliamentary majority due to the 'winner's bonus'. However, ~~the~~ the more convincing argument in the source is that 'in UK civil society, there is a strong commitment to rights'. For instance, ~~the~~ pressure group Liberty ~~has~~ ^{has} funded £50,000 to bring a legal challenge against the 2016 Investigatory Powers Act which was ruled unlawful in the 2024 Digital Privacy UK v Home Office ruling. This shows pressure groups are a protection upon rights because, as well as bringing media attention, they can bring legal challenges to rights being infringed upon. Therefore, while it is necessary to note that, ultimately, the government can infringe upon rights due to parliamentary sovereignty, rights are

well protected by pressure groups and civil society because of the legal and political challenges they can bring.

Overall, it is more convincing to argue that rights are broadly well protected in the UK because of human rights legislation, the judiciary, and ~~the~~ civil society and pressure groups. Granted, the government, ^{because of} through parliamentary sovereignty, can infringe upon or even repeal rights, yet this is a limited threat because of the 'political sovereignty' of ~~state~~ ^{rights} legislation due to its support among civil society and from the Supreme Court. Therefore, while ~~acknowledging~~ a reform such as codifying and entrenching a bill of rights would improve rights protection, they are broadly well protected in the UK due to the judiciary and legislation, as well as its strong culture of rights protection.



This is a Level 5 response, which makes effective use of both the source and the candidate's knowledge throughout. There are three strong and balanced sections, and evaluation is woven throughout these sections, effectively to compare the relative strengths of the different arguments. It should be noted that it is not necessary to use all of the available answer space to achieve a high mark – the quality of material is more important than the length, provided there is sufficient depth and breadth.



AO3 is as important as AO1 and AO2.

Question 1(b)

Using the source, evaluate the view that the most important factor in deciding the influence of pressure groups is the methods they use.

Overview

This was the slightly less popular of the two source questions. In general, it was answered well, although a few more candidates than on Question (Q) 1a did not effectively establish the two 'sides' of the debate. One view was offered in the question, and the other could be that methods have little impact, that other factors have more impact, or, most profitably, a combination of the two.

As is often the case on pressure group questions in particular, it was noteworthy that there was a wide variation in the quality and contemporary relevance of examples. Aside from this, and as with Q1a, the main discriminating factors between responses were the depth and rigour of analysis. This was aided particularly by the effective pairing of points, and the quality of sustained evaluation, showing a consistent line of argument from the start of the response to the end.

Frequent issues

Candidates were generally effective in selecting appropriate arguments from the source, and, in most cases, were able to develop these using their own knowledge. As on Q1a, only the weakest responses simply regurgitated the source material.

The quality of the pairing of different points from the source was a notable discriminating factor between 'middling' and strong analysis, and this was generally the most effective on the points around the benefits and limitations of direct action.

The quality of examples, and particularly how contemporary they were, was another strong discriminating factor. It was perhaps surprising how many candidates continued to rely on Fathers4Justice as an example of direct action, or less commonly, Ecclestone's efforts to persuade Labour to retain tobacco advertising for Formula 1 as an example of attempting to influence government. Relying on these older examples is not to candidates' best advantage, especially when there are not only better and more recent examples available but one of these, Just Stop Oil, was offered by the source.

In terms of structure most candidates used sections effectively, with a linked point from each side of the debate and mini-judgements, or alternatively with evaluation woven into the counter point. The quality of analysis and evaluation within these sections were then the key discriminating factors.

One area that some candidates found challenging was how to address the 'opposite' side of the debate. Generally, the most effective approach was to recognise that the limitations of tactics and the impact of other 'success factors' often goes hand-in-hand – for example, that the best tactics can be ineffective if there is no government support; but equally that media support requires good tactics.

Weaker responses either solely discussed tactics at the expense of other factors, or alternatively

considered other factors but did not make effective, explicit links, back to the question.

It should be noted that the words 'most important' are a strong hint to compare with other factors, since by definition if something is the most important then other factors are less important, and the reverse is also true.

Recommendations for improvement

1. Use and develop the source: without being over-reliant on it, take your points from the material and use your own knowledge to develop, analyse and evaluate them.
2. Use contemporary examples: particularly for a contemporary topic such as pressure groups, centres and candidates should try to avoid examples from before candidates were born, such as Fathers4Justice. This is particularly true when better, more recent, examples are available, and even contained within the source.
3. Focus on the question: in this case considering the importance of methods, and returning to the debate posed by the question throughout the essay.
4. Be clear on the counter-case; draw points from the source combined with own knowledge, to ensure that when exploring the alternative to the view posited by the question, you have a clear understanding of what this alternative view is, and that you are always linking it back to the question asked.
5. Give equal weight to AO2 analysis, particularly through the effective pairing of arguments, and AO3 evaluation through sustained and evidenced judgements throughout the essay.

Pressure groups are groups of people who are campaigning for a cause. For example, Just Stop Oil, who protested for years about oil usage and the environmental challenges it creates. Also, Amnesty International who campaign for peace and the end of wars. Most notably the Israel vs Hamas War. However, pressure groups usually go about this in many different ways. Some with protests and demonstrations, while others choose more peaceful ways.

Extract 1 has said "Pressure groups have found that shock tactics or direct action gets publicity and therefore influence." We can definitely see that this is true. Just Stop Oil used shock tactics to get their point across, for example, shutting down the M25 and blocking themselves to roads. This in turn created mass media coverage and definitely created influence. This tells us that the methods and tactics used definitely create influence. Another example is PETA (People for the Ethical Treatment of Animals). Extract 1 also says "Other pressure groups use educational methods to grow their influence." PETA uses educational videos and tweets to show what happens behind closed doors in slaughterhouses and breeding farms. Whilst this can be seen as educational, it can also be seen as shock tactics as some of these videos show animals being slaughtered very

Violently. Also, very similar to Just Stop Oil, Peta also has done public protests where they dress up as animals and pretend to be abused or slaughtered. Due to this, Peta has become one of the most famous and biggest pressure groups in the world. Proving that ~~protest~~ methods and tactics lead to larger influence.

On the other hand, Extract 2 says "Shock tactics and direct action can be ~~seen~~ counter-productive." We have seen this with Just Stop Oil. When they were laying in the middle of roads and giving them selves to them, they were causing people to be late for work, school appointments etc. This created a backlash directed at them and made people feel alienated from their cause. This led to ~~the~~ a fall in supporters and a great perception of the politician thinking they were stupid. As we can see, ~~the~~ the tactics aren't always what what decides the influence. Also Extract 2 also says "What issues the public ^{decide to} support at any given time" This is saying that the pressure groups influence will only grow if they are fighting for something which the public are interested in. Extract 2 also says "It is also argued that the influence of pressure groups is down to chance events" for example Amnesty international with the Russia v Ukraine or Israel vs Hamas, they can make their points and campaign because a war has broken out which is chance.

Whilst the factors of how to properly make your point like correct public support and using chance events to your advantage. The methods used are the media to pressure groups such as Just Stop Oil and Peta.



This is a Level 2 response. Some relevant material is drawn from the source, with the addition of some relevant own knowledge; therefore AO1 is the candidate's strongest area. However, evaluation is not strong here. It is not clear throughout the essay for which view the candidate is arguing, and the structure does not support strong analysis.



Make your 'line of argument' clear in the introduction. Evidence it throughout your essay. Return to it in your conclusion.

Chosen question number: Question 1(a) Question 1(b)

Pressure groups are organisations that seek to influence government policy without gaining any political power, like parties. Extract 1 argues that the most important factor for a pressure group to gain influence is their methods they use, such as through education and engaging the media. Whereas in direct contrast, Extract 2 argues that factors such as a group's status, ~~standing~~ ^{the governing party} and chance events are all more important. Ultimately, while the methods pressure groups use are vital to their success, it is other factors like their relationships with parties that much greater impact their influence.

Extract 1 argues that one of the

most obvious methods that gains pressure groups influence is the Media,

~~Extract 1 argues that~~ as "getting the media on side is vital in establishing

a positive image" using the example of Mr Bates v the Post Office. The

media is a vital tool for pressure groups to use to wield influence,

as through the outrage of the public due to the positive light the

TV programme showed the post matters and ~~then~~ what they went through,

the government in 2024 were forced to apologise publicly to those

affected and give ~~per~~ immediate payments of £75,000 to all ^{those} ~~those~~

affected. Demonstrating how by gaining publicity for an issue, ^{through the media} then

pressure groups can wield ^{an} incredible amount of power, as also

demonstrated by ~~the~~ the mass protests against ~~it~~ of the Palestinian

Solidarity Campaign, ^{since 2023} the largest of which being in London with

250,000 people in attendance - all demanding an immediate ceasefire in Gaza. While it took some time, these protests have

now proven fruitful as through pressuring the government on social media and broadcast media, the government has now demanded for Israel to stop their offensive in Gaza along with France and Canada -

proving that pressure groups methods truly do matter. However, in contrast others would argue that it is the governments relationship with the go pressure groups that matters more, as demonstrated in extract 1, "A friendly government is worth far more than thousands of members in a pressure group". This can best be highlighted through the stark difference in relationships for the between the National League of Farmers between the Conservatives and Labour, whereas in 2024 the Conservatives promised to "have farmers backs", Labour have are currently ignoring the ^{mass} "protests of farmers" ^{blocking streets} over their new inheritance tax bill to make farmers pay inheritance tax on agricultural goods - demonstrating how while the methods of both and the National League of Farmers The Palestinian Solidarity Campaign ^{are similar}, it is the relationship between the government (gov) and pressure group that matters more.

Furthermore, extract 1 argues that through the judicial system and education that pressure groups have been able to better exert influence than any other factor. For example, Care4Catalis has been successfully able to block the Rwanda policy within the judicial system, claiming that the Conservatives immigration policy infringes on the Human Rights Act and the European Court of Human Rights (the ECHR), ~~is~~ meaning that through the use of the judicial system pressure groups have been able to directly hold the government

to account, as since the Supreme Court ruled against the government, not one High Court in relation to the abortion policy has left the UK. In juxtaposition, extract 2 argues that other factors affecting pressure groups, both like their status as an insider or outsider group matters more than their methods of gaining influence.

For instance, due to the National Medical Associations insider group status (an insider group is a pressure group that the government are willing to consult on policy matters, working together to mould policy), they were able to negotiate a pay rise of 2% for doctors and a 3.3% pay rise for junior doctors after weeks of industrial action, whereas

outsider groups, like Just Stop Oil find it much harder to have any ^{influence} impact on government policy as they have much less direct access to policy-making. Overall, while ^{what} the methods & pressure

groups use are vital to how much influence they ^{legal system} have, ^{such as through the} it is not ^{as} some in other factors like the status of a pressure group is much more important as it controls how much access they have to decision-making.

Thirdly, extract 1 also argues that through ^{the methods} finding ^{pressure groups} use to gain influence is ^{not} much ^{not} important. For instance, lobbying - the act of expressing to a representative how you want them to vote on a bill or amendment - and party binding are an extremely important way pressure groups can gain political influence as it gives MPs incentives to vote a particular way or introduce a certain bill.

One of the best examples of this can be through how trade unions like Liberty massively help contribute binding to the Labour party, like

in 2019 when trade unions made up most of their party donations. This is significant as it gives trade unions inordinate influence, as they can better push for legislation, as demonstrated by the Labour party's pledge to scrap zero hour contracts in their 2024 manifesto, highlighting how binding can essentially buy pressure groups influence with a gov.

In contrast, extract 2 argues that a more important factor is random chance events, and ~~is~~ subsequently where the public ~~is~~ support more. This can be demonstrated by 'Just Stop Oil' and 'Insulate Britain', both are environmental pressure groups that commit publicity stunts like gluing themselves to roads and throwing paint onto and beans onto art pieces etc, while a majority of the electorate agree with their views, ~~despite they have~~ had "little additional influence" due to their methods but also because of the increase in hi energy bills due to the Ukraine War that broke out in 2022, that caused oil prices to increase - perhaps leading to their lack of influence on climate policy. Overall, while binding is an incredibly important method of gaining influence, much more so than random events.

In conclusion, while some methods, such as binding and holding the gov accountable in court lend greatly to how much influence pressure groups can exert, it is not the methods that determines how much influence a group has - meaning the methods are not the most important factor but rather it is other factors such as the groups relationship with the gov and status that ^{is much more important} much affects their in determining their influence.



This is a Level 4 response. Whilst not quite showing the depth of sustained analysis and evaluation needed for Level 5 throughout, this response:

- marshalls the arguments from the source
- supplements them with some helpful examples
- sustains a consistent line of argument



When planning your essay, identifying arguments from the two sources that contrast well together ('pairing') is a very effective way to support strong analysis.

Question 2(a)

Evaluate the view that the Labour Party is more **internally** divided than the Conservative Party.

Overview

This was the less popular of the two essay questions. Equally, it was the question on which the most contemporary knowledge was displayed. It was impressive and pleasing to see how so many candidates had kept up-to-date with very recent developments – such as Labour’s division over welfare cuts – and used them to good effect. It was generally the case that candidates focussed a little more on Labour than the Conservatives, and this may well be a reflection of the increased attention given by the media to the governing party. As noted above on the sources, the quality of the supporting AO2 analysis and AO3 evaluation to build on the candidate’s AO1 knowledge were key to success.

Frequent issues

As with all essay questions, candidates could argue for either side of the debate, provided that they considered both sides and reached a substantiated conclusion. It was more usual for candidates to argue that Labour was more divided, but the 'side' chosen did not affect their mark either way, provided that they also gave due consideration to the other side. Where candidates solely or predominantly focussed on one party, and especially where they focussed exclusively on arguments that a particular party was the most divided and they did not consider counter-arguments, their mark was limited.

It was good to see that candidates did focus on the parties named in the question, and where other parties were considered it was almost always tied back to the two main parties and therefore creditable: for example, a number of candidates effectively considered the challenges that Reform UK present to Conservative Party unity.

The use of contemporary political developments was a hallmark of stronger responses, and discussions of the welfare bill, winter fuel payments, Gaza, and immigration policy, including some very up-to-date references to Starmer’s 'island of strangers' speech, were all used to good effect.

Whilst there was not a single way to structure this response, one structure that was used very effectively by some candidates was to build the essay sections around broad policy themes – often economic policy, social/welfare policy, and foreign policy – and to compare the two parties directly within each themed section. This also supported the effective pairing of points, and stronger analysis and evaluation. Considering one party in the first half of the essay and the other in the second, was not generally effective, because it did not support strong analysis.

Some candidates showed a lack of policy detail on the Conservative Party in particular. Sometimes they relied too much on describing the succession of different leaders, rather than analysis of the splits on ideas and policy; or of the debates around whether leadership changes were actually a reflection of personal and policy failures rather than divisions.

Another frequent challenge was that candidates became overly historical and focussed too much on describing developments in the 1970s-1990s. This was absolutely relevant and creditable if it

was used analytically and linked to internal party divisions today, but if taken in isolation did not glean significant credit.

The best responses recognised the nuance and complexity of balancing different factions within political parties, and understood that the current policies they will have studied often represent a compromise between different traditions or wings of the parties.

Recommendations for improvement

1. Focus on the question: in particular, where the question asks about the current situation, ensure that any historical content is related to the contemporary circumstances.
2. Answer all of the question: in this case, where two parties are mentioned try to give roughly equal weight to them, and do not simply discuss two sides of the argument for a single party.
3. Use detailed contemporary examples: understand that specific targeted examples will always gain more marks than older, generalised ones.
4. Give equal weight to AO2 analysis, particularly through the effective pairing of points, and AO3 evaluation, through sustained and evidenced judgements throughout the essay.

In recent years both parties have been ~~div~~ divided due to Brexit and other inflammatory topics. However currently the Labour Party are more divided than the Conservatives due to the pressures of ~~having a new government~~ ^{different policy agreements.}

While the Conservative Party are more united when it comes to welfare, Labour is divided. Since coming into power in 2024 Kier Starmer has introduced various controversial policies which have caused factions in his party. The Winter's fuel allowance cuts have caused backlash in the Labour Party as well as their stance on keeping the 2 child benefit cap. This has caused turmoil in the party as Rachel Reeves tries to patch up the £22bn black hole the Conservatives have left them. ~~While~~ Kemi Badenoch has outwardly said she isn't aiming to introduce policy and wants to re-build the Conservative Party which is widely accepted by Conservatives ^{as a whole}. ~~both~~ With that said she has made her stance to

take the Conservatives back to the right. With her sticking to traditional Conservative values, such as empowering people to work and she has mentioned that she wants to extend the time until you can apply for UK citizenship from 5 to 10 years: demonstrating a firm 'British-First' approach which has been supported by her party. Overall, when it comes to welfare, while the Conservatives aim to rebuild and take the party further to the right to attract Reform voters, the Labour party is more internally divided on its welfare cuts to maintain the economy.

When it comes to foreign policy, Starmer's ^{external} pressures have meant that ~~his~~ ^{his} decisions over the middle east have been received negatively by his party. As over 1 million people sign a petition for a ~~ceasefire~~ ^{ceasefire} in Gaza, Starmer has caused division in his party by his weak approach - still in support of Israel but at the same time ~~&~~ supporting a ceasefire. This has caused confusion in the party as well as his ^{internal} backlash for criticising Trump over

his treatment of President Zelensky - potentially ~~jeopard~~ jeopardising the "special relationship" with the USA. On the Conservatives, they have maintained the Thatcherite euroscepticism and pro-USA movement, ~~was with Liz~~ and even though she's not a member anymore, Truss' attendance at Trump's Florida mansion during the election vote as well as her outward ~~Me~~ MAGA support on podcasts has been influenced by the conservatives as the stand with America and Trumpism. The Conservative party were also very united during Sunak's time when he aimed to get defence spending back to the 2.5% target. This demonstrates that the Labour party are much more divided over its foreign policy than the united Conservatives.

On the topic of the economy however, Labour seem much more united and on the same page. The Labour parties continued commitment to not raising an increase on tax has been a ~~com~~ united subject for all Labour MPs in order to make the cost of living more difficult on struggling families. They also hope to get rid of

Exploitative zero hour contracts which has been fully supported, ~~however~~ and have continued support for slow environment sustainability. The Conservatives seem more divided on the economy after Liz Truss' market crash after cutting tax and public spending by £45 billion, fracturing the party. Their scrap of net zero has left ~~some~~ concerns among MPs and their massive defeat in the 2024 election has seen multiple MPs lose their seat and a shift in the party. While these aren't huge divisions, the Labour party is much more united on economic and environmental policy, due to the Conservatives' struggle for rebuilding the party.

On balance, while the Labour party are united over the economy, the Conservatives' promise to rebuild the party has united everyone, while Starmer's decisions have caused unrest: → leaving Labour internally divided.



This is a 'middling' Level 3 response. There is good contemporary policy knowledge, and the candidate does consider both Labour and the Conservatives, albeit with less content on the latter.

Structuring by policy theme was a good approach; they would have benefitted from being more balanced within each of these sections.



Where the question asks to compare two parties, institutions, factors etc, try to give roughly equal weight to each.

Chosen question number: Question 2(a) Question 2(b)

The Labour Party and Conservative Parties, have both faced recent divides over the years, with the left party divided over recent welfare policy, whilst Brexit has called Conservative unity into question. To see which is more divided one must examine ~~differs~~ the divisions of ~~each~~ ^{both} parties on economic, social and foreign policy. Through this, it becomes clear that it is still the Labour Party that is more divided internally, despite the increased tensions in the Conservatives.

~~It is true that the Conservative Party is more divided on when to prioritise investment than the Labour Party. This is evident in recent conflicts,~~

There is more economic division in the Conservatives on ~~when~~ ^{whether} to invest in high amounts than the Labour Party. This is evident in the conflict over leveling up, with the 'New Conservative' faction - including figures such as Kruger, prioritising investment in red wall seats. This contrasts the more traditional fiscal conservatism of other factions, a conflict that played out in Sunak's 2024

municipals to place leveling up funds, into a new National Service. This contrast the Labour Party, which is broadly united in their belief over a need to invest highly in the country, leading to broad support for GB Energy for example. Significantly, this means that, whilst Labour has a broadly united view of investment, the Conservative plan is far more conflicted, with the party to opposing contrasting growth plans as the same red wall investment some believe necessary for growth is attacked by others as fiscally dangerous, especially division. However, the party's divisions are more intense as there is fundamental disagreement over the economic model Britain should take, for contrasting the Conservatives who are all still broadly committed to neoliberalism. This is evident in how the socialist campaigning wing of the party call for the nationalisation of water and energy and an end to austerity as was in the 2019 manifesto. This is in stark contrast of more moderate factions, such as 'Labour Together' which instead only look to nationalise transport. This is opposed to the Conservatives where there is broad agreement that the Thatcherite consensus should be kept, with no leader since committing to nationalising. Significantly, this shows that Labour's internal divisions feed into the fundamentals of what an

economy should look like as different factions offer vastly different ~~div~~ views, for outweighing any differences the Conservatives have within their neo-liberal framework. Therefore, it is clear that Labour are more divided on the economy.

It is also true that there is more disagreement within the Conservatives over the immigration aspects of social policy. This is evident in the conflict over whether Britain should remain in the ECHR, with One Nation Conservatives remaining committed whilst 'Popular Conservatives' such as Jerrich, call for the party Britain to leave. This contrast Labour who, despite some conflict over immigration, ~~are~~ with blue Labour acting more hostile, are all committed to the view that the ECHR must remain. Significantly, this means that the Conservatives are so divided that a policy which the right would see as absolutely necessary is viewed as extremely dangerous by the One Nation faction, whilst the Labour Party is free mostly from this intense discourse. However, this division is overwhelmed by the fundamental divisions in Labour over social policy around welfare, so with this, for contrasting any divisions over immigration with the Conservatives. This can be seen in how the Starmer government!

plans to cut £5 billion ^{of} PIP has been
announced 100 Labour MPs, in 2025 to sign a
letter opposing the change, whilst ~~the rest~~ 7 MPs
earlier in the year voted to back an SNP motion against
the government to end the child benefit cap with
more austerity. This contrast the Conservatives, with
at most factions, committed to limit on welfare
spending as seen with the year commitment to austerity.
Significantly this shows that unlike a Conservative
Party broadly ~~acceptant~~ ~~of~~ still united by a
commitment to lower immigration despite disagreement
on the measures, the Labour divisions on welfare
strike at a disagreement in principle, with a
significant amount of the party disagreeing with the
government's view that welfare should be cut at all to get
people into work. Therefore, it is clear that
Labour is more divided on social policy as a
whole.

Finally, there is more division within the
Conservative Party over Europe. This is can be
seen with the Brexit conflict, with the ERG
consistently backing leave whilst One Nation
figures such as PIP remain. This
contrast Labour, where less than 10% of MPs
backed leave whilst, with the party continuing to

mostly support measures to get closer to Europe. Importantly, this shows that Conservative divisions over Europe ~~were~~ ^{are} clearly far more significant than the mostly united Labour, whilst the fact these divisions caused the downfall of May in 2019 exposing this division as fierce enough to destroy leadership, for contradicting anything in the Labour Party. However, Also, the fact the ERG opposed the same Windsor framework of March in 2023 is further evidence of how deep these divisions are with their consequences enduring, even after Brexit. However, Labour overall is more divided on foreign policy as their disagreements extend far more than just Europe. But more of global, this is evident in how the hard left call for a more peace-centred approach, such as Corbyn's idea of a minister for peace, rejected by Starmer and their prioritisation of international aid. This last division was big enough to cause Dods to resign as ~~Interim~~ a minister in 2023 from the Starmer government after it cut ~~aid~~ the aid budget. This contrast Conservative unity over a commitment to strong defence at the cost of aid. Significantly, this exposes how Labour divisions extend to Britain's entire place in the world as opposed to just Europe, with the vision of a international

Britain leading the development of disadvantaged nations rejected by the current government prioritising a strong military and traditional western focused foreign policy. This contrast in Conservative party still very focused on defence and who's divisions is debated to Europe. Labour is also more divided on Israel, with the Corbyn leadership pledging to recognise Palestine as a state, contrasting the ~~more Israel careful approach of Sturgeon~~ ^{Sturgeon's foreign policy} whilst former 'Labour Friends of Israel' are more supportive. This contrast the Grand unity in the Conservatives ~~for Israel~~ to such Israel. Therefore due to this more global disagreement Labour is more divided.

Overall, Labour is more divided than the Conservatives. This is evident in the fundamental division in economic, social and foreign policy, which is more intense than Conservative divisions which are limited to conflict within a unified framework. Though the Conservatives are more divided on investment, immigration and Europe, Labour's fight over entire economic models, welfare and Britain globally are more significant. As Sturgeon continues to move right, more division is likely to emerge.

(Total for Question 2 = 30 marks)



This is a Level 5 response. The theming by policy area is strong, and there is good balance within each theme, showing awareness of the divisions in both parties.

There is much contemporary material, and the analysis and evaluation is sustained throughout.



Use the most up-to-date, relevant and focused examples that you can: these will help you to achieve a higher mark.

Question 2(b)

Evaluate the view, with reference to at least three general elections, that social class and region have very little impact on voting behaviour.

Overview of responses

This was the more popular of the two essay questions.

In general, candidates were very effective in discussing the impact of class-based voting, and relating this to general elections, and for the most part, effective at doing the same for region-based voting. What varied more between candidates was their approach to other factors. Whilst there was no single best way to approach this, it is certainly the case that some candidates answered more effectively than others. As with the other UK politics questions, the quality of the supporting AO2 analysis and AO3 evaluation to build on the AO1 knowledge were keys to success.

Frequent issues

Almost all candidates showed a strong understanding of debates around class-based voting, both as it has declined over a number of decades and as it applies today, and often related this well to different general elections. There was also often effective use of terminology around class definitions and supporting statistics.

Region was also addressed well by many candidates, albeit to a less consistent extent. A small number of candidates did misread 'region' as 'religion' which did not assist them in addressing the question asked effectively.

Stronger candidates recognised that class and region are often intertwined. A pleasing number brought in the relevance of national identities and nationalist parties within different parts of the UK – for example the rise and fall of the SNP in Scotland. That said, some candidates made the link between class and region a little too simplistically – asserting for example that the north is working-class and the south middle-class.

General elections were used most effectively when they supported arguments with evidence, rather than simply describing what happened. The 2019 'red wall' election was unsurprisingly well-used, particularly since it was a good opportunity to tie class and region together. Stronger candidates often also understood the complexity of class in the 2024 election: as the red wall was rebuilt, the blue wall crumbled, and many voters moved towards different minor parties.

Elections such as 1979 and 1997 were often also used to good effect, including to establish both consistent and shifting patterns over time. Candidates were free to use any elections they wished, although where candidates did not include at least one recent election this ran the risk of their analysis not being up-to-date.

Some candidates attempted to structure the response by dedicating one section to each of the three general elections they had studied. This was to some extent understandable, especially where they were attempting to show trends over time, and there was no prohibition against doing this. However, it was rarely done very effectively because it tended to lead to a narrative, rather than an analytical, approach.

Another strong dividing line between candidates was how they dealt with the alternatives to class and region. The strongest candidates recognised that voting patterns and election results must be caused by 'something' and therefore if it is not class or region it must be another factor. They also recognised that class and region may be a 'cover' for other factors – such as the importance of Brexit in the 2019 General Election. Similarly, some candidates showed a strong understanding of the connections between region and race, and the tensions but also occasional coalescence between age and class, as voting factors.

Some candidates ignored other factors entirely, which made it harder to present a full picture although if done well, could still achieve a good mark. A weaker approach was to run through a perhaps pre-prepared, 'voting behaviour essay' and to take a number of different factors in turn without making any link back to class and region. Responses that barely considered class or region at all, or did so very briefly, did not perform well.

Recommendations for improvement

1. Follow the question: in particular, where the question asks about the impact on a number of general elections, ensure that you use the elections to address the question asked.
2. Answer all of the question: in this case, where two different factors are mentioned try to give sufficient weight to both, and do not simply discuss two sides of the argument for a single factor.
3. Be clear on the counter-case: ensure that when you are exploring the alternative to the view posited by the question, you have a clear understanding of what this alternative view is, and that you are always linking it back to the question asked.
4. Develop the depth of AO2 analysis, particularly through the effective pairing of themed points, rather than a chronological narrative.
5. Give equal weight to AO3 evaluation through sustained and evidenced judgements throughout the essay.

The 1997 general election was revolutionary for the UK ~~election~~ due to Tony Blair's victory after years of Conservative rule. Tony Blair won this election through many things different ways ~~of~~ of campaign, the most significant one being his image ~~as~~ in the media. During his campaign for the 1997 general election, Blair ~~became~~ befriended the owner of the UK's largest newspaper, the Sun. This then lead to ~~the~~ print media portraying Blair in a positive light, causing his opinion polls to skyrocket. Blair wanted to introduce ideas that would help everyone in the UK, no matter your age, gender, ethnicity or social class. Which is vital as before 1997, over 60% of working class voters, voted for conservative. This new media coverage began to make Blair popular within the working class community, ultimately highlighting the fact that social class had quite a large impact on voting behaviour. However many critics argue that Blair's media coverage had very little to do with his appeal to the working class and in actual fact, the working class were

fed up with conservative rule, almost forcing them to vote for Blair. In conclusion, despite some claims denying it, it's evident that Blair's media image popularised him within the working class, ultimately highlighting the fact that social class had a large impact on voting behaviour in 1997.

Another general election that was massively important in UK history was the 2024 general election where Keir Starmer prevailed gloriously with a massive 400+ seats. During this election there were many things that could have triggered the working class into voting Labour ~~for~~ for the first time in a while. One of the most important ones of these being the cost of living crisis in the run up to winter. Working class voters who typically voted for the conservative party turned their backs on the Labour party due to their ~~policy~~ economic policies which would in theory make it easier for people with little to no money to survive through the winter. This then led to hundreds of changed seats all over the UK in typical working class areas / regions who typically voted for the conservative party. However, many argue that the Labour ^{party's policies} ~~party~~ and social class realistically played no role in Labour's victory.

In 2019 because ~~it was not~~ the main reason for their win was actually people's lack of faith in the Conservative Party after 16 years of Conservative rule. People argued that due to scandals such as partygate, the post office scandal and Junak's leaving for 10 days early, as well as overall poor management from them, ~~over~~ the vast majority of traditional Conservative voters switched up, regardless of social class or region.

~~Another~~ ~~one~~ ~~of~~ ~~the~~ ~~general~~ ~~elections~~ ~~where~~ ~~social~~ ~~class~~ ~~played~~ ~~some~~ ~~what~~ ~~of~~ ~~a~~ ~~role~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~voting~~ ~~behaviour~~ ~~in~~ ~~the~~ ~~2019~~ ~~general~~ ~~election~~. ~~The~~ ~~2019~~ ~~general~~ ~~election~~ ~~announced~~ ~~the~~ ~~proposal~~ ~~of~~ ~~Brexit~~

One general election that had very little voting behaviour due to social class or region was the 2019 general election. This election's main focus was to "Get Brexit done" leaving the country once again completely divided. Unlike ~~any~~ other elections where Labour have seen the Conservatives in a tricky spot and showed it on the day, they didn't have the public support this time due to the recent dismissal of Jeremy Corbyn due to alleged

anti-Semitism. Because of this, there was little fight put up by the Labour party to succeed, which resulted in a landslide to the Conservative victory. Social class had very little to do with this election due to its ~~total~~ lack of competition. Region didn't play much of a role either as over 90% of "safe seats" remained safe, highlighting ~~the~~ how little the impact social class and region had on voting behaviour in 2019. However some argued that social class played a bigger factor than most realised due to the fact the majority of working class voters also really wanted to get Brexit done, which highlights alignment with the Conservative party perhaps suggesting social class played ~~some~~ had some impact on voting behaviour in 2019.

In conclusion, it's clear that in nearly every general election in the past 30 years, due to economic factors or distrust for the opposition social class or region regularly play an important role on ~~vote~~ outcome and definitely have an impact on voting ~~outcome~~ behaviour.



This is a typical Level 3 response, albeit towards the top end of the level. It considers a good range of material and addresses the question throughout.

Whilst there is some effective AO2 analysis and AO3 evaluation, the chronological approach taken does not support these to the extent where they match the AO1 knowledge. A thematic approach probably would have enabled the mark to enter the higher levels.



Structuring your arguments by theme rather than chronologically is usually a more effective approach. This supports higher level analysis and evaluation.

Chosen question number: Question 2(a) Question 2(b)

* Class can be defined generally as how much income or wealth an individual or household has.

Social class and region are traditionally considered to be the ~~extremely~~ ^{most} important ~~deciders~~ ^{deciders} of elections and the most convincing argument is that this remains true to this day.*

But this is not obvious historically where class and party alignment were very closely tied ~~and~~ but remains true ~~to~~ ^{the} ~~early 20th century~~ ^{and} around the end of the 20th century and even until the present day. Some argue that class and region have largely become irrelevant (class particularly)

~~however~~ ^{fact} ~~a~~ ~~more~~ ~~convincing~~ where ~~more~~ ^{such as} ~~is~~ ^{is} ~~noting~~ ^{noting} salient issues like performance or policies like

play a much more determining role. Overall, the more convincing argument is that class and region continue to play determining roles in elections and to say they ~~are~~ ^{are} have very little impact is simply false.

The most convincing ~~argument~~ ^{argument} ~~that~~ ~~example~~ ^{that} ~~of~~ ^{that} ~~the~~ ^{role} class plays an important role is its historic impact on pre-1994 elections. This can be seen in the study conducted by Butler and Stokes that found in the 1964 general election 78% of AB voters in the AB class voted conservative and 64% of voters in the DE class

voted Labour our. Furthermore, regions played a complementary role with working class voters that didn't vote Labour often coming from the countryside with these "devout" voters often having less association with the unions whose strong ties to Labour were emblematic of the role class played. This can also be seen in the 1979 general election where this started to change with Thatcher appealing to the ~~new~~ working class who were becoming more socially mobile known as the "C class conservatives". On the other hand some will argue that the 1979 general election shows the ~~total~~ class as having little impact due to ~~silent~~ issues like the poor performance of the Labour government ^{with the whole of discontent} and Thatcher's excellent, professional campaign capitalising on the context with slogans like "Labour isn't working". However, ~~the more convincing~~ This shows the importance of both context and campaigns in winning elections rather than class or region. However, the more convincing argument is not that class became irrelevant but that Thatcher managed to appeal to the working class who were more ~~social~~ socially mobile and liked traditional values like nationalism and Christianity allowing her to capitalise on the "C-class conservatives." ~~This demonstrates~~ how ~~even~~ when factors like context ~~to~~ or campaigns are taken into account ~~important~~ they are ~~off~~

much of the Labour parties support was concentrated in specific regions with them winning the vast majority of seats in Scotland and a lot of the seats in the city ~~demonstrating~~ ~~the~~ ~~the~~ metropolitan city areas with their "socially liberal, fiscally conservative" policies. To conclude, while there is undoubtedly a ~~role~~ ~~played~~ ~~by~~ a decline in the visibility of class ~~and~~ ~~region~~ it still played a more subtle but vital role in the 1998 general election with Labour changing not because class was irrelevant but because class had changed. Furthermore, 1997 showed a clear divide in ~~of~~ region ~~and~~ ~~demonstrated~~ ~~was~~ ~~which~~ ~~gave~~ between the countryside and the city that ~~apparently~~ ~~still~~ ~~exists~~ today. This demonstrates how class and region are still vital.

Some would argue that in recent elections class and region have become far less important with ~~issues~~ ~~and~~ ~~more~~ ~~dividing~~ ~~lines~~ ~~being~~ ~~drawn~~ ~~a~~ ~~between~~ other social factors ^{and policies}. One example of this is the 2024 election where Labour's Red wall fell due to Reg issues like Brexit showing the decline of region as a factor and the ~~rise~~ ~~importance~~ ~~of~~ Reg issues on Johnson's campaign capabilities on the issue with the slogan "Get Brexit done". Furthermore,

The influence of other social factors can be seen in the 2024 general election where 78% of those 46% of those aged 65 and over voted conservative ~~despite~~ compared to just 9% of those aged 18-29 (according to a YouGov poll after the election). However, the more convincing argument is comparatively only 34% of those in the DE class voted Labour and 27% of those in the AB class voted Conservative. This shows a clear decline in the influence of class and region when compared to the Butler and Stokes study of 1964 and the rise in importance of ^{by} issues like and other social factors. However, the more convincing argument is that social factors like age simply reflect a different type of class with the older generation significantly more likely to own homes ~~and~~ with home ownership being almost twice as likely to vote conservative as other any other housing situation. This demonstrates how while age is a key dividing line it is still linked to class in terms of wealth and therefore to say class no longer matters is incorrect. Furthermore, the rise of Reform was a key factor in splitting the vote in the 2024 election when ^{which} she embodied the a sort of left behind working class with those who are unemployed or in social housing being most likely to vote Reform. These voters ~~also~~ also voted for Brexit in 2016 and Johnson in 2019 showing a clear underlying

continuity in the importance of class. This shows that region and especially class are still vital factors in elections.

To conclude, while the visibility of class may have declined it is still a vital factor albeit in a more subtle way. This is most convincingly seen in the rise of populism and reform who appeal to what ~~could be~~ is a part of traditional white working class. Therefore ~~the~~ Furthermore, the divide between the left and right voters and the right and left voters and country side has never been more apparent. Therefore class and region continue to be vital factors in determining voting behaviour to this day.



This is a good Level 4 response. Whilst this candidate also appears initially to adopt a chronological approach, they bring out the themes effectively from the various elections and tie them back to the question asked. This supports stronger analysis, which addresses the question, whilst acknowledging the other factors that are relevant to understanding the impact of class and region.



Tie everything back to the question being asked - including both your examples and your counter points.

Question 3(a)

To what extent is socialism united in its view of human nature?

Overview of responses

This was the more popular question of the ideology questions. That said, there was a wide variation in quality.

It was pleasing to see that almost all candidates now treat the requirement to refer to two of the named five key thinkers as second nature, and understand the importance of relating the debate to different strands of the ideology. It was also notable that more centres and candidates now have a good understanding of the subtle but important difference between the demands of Q1 and Q2 to 'pick a side', and the demand of Q3 to decide 'how much?' – as signified by the question stem 'to what extent?'.

Where candidates performed less well it seemed either to be because they focussed too much on describing the individual views of different strands in turn, rather than comparing and contrasting them, or alternatively that they had hoped to be asked a different question on socialism and were determined still to answer it.

Common issues

Most candidates were able to recognise that Socialists have a broadly positive view of human nature, and that this tends to be more collectivist than individualist. Fewer candidates referred to the rationality that is also common in Socialists' view of human nature.

Building on the above, a number of candidates also recognised that Third Way socialists in particular take a less-avowedly collective approach; although relatively few explicitly identified this approach as communitarian as contrasted with common humanity. It was common for candidates to recognise that there is also a dividing line between earlier and later socialists around the impact of capitalism on human nature. Different views of the malleability of human nature were discussed well by some candidates.

That said, a significant number of candidates drew the divisions in too stark or unnuanced terms, attempting to portray branches as having a wholly 'positive' or 'negative' view of human nature', or suggesting that Third Way socialism was entirely individualistic.

As is often the case on socialism questions, candidates who structured their discussion by agreement and/or disagreement within themes – such as collectivism and capitalism – generally achieved more marks than those that gave a description of the position of each branch in turn. The latter approach, sometimes called a 'chronological' or 'story-telling' approach, tends to be overly descriptive and does not lend itself to effective analysis, because the branches are not weighed convincingly against each other.

There was generally effective use of key thinkers, although as ever this was more effective where it was used to support strand divisions, rather than simply 'some socialists such as Marx' or 'later socialists such as Giddens'.

AO3 evaluation was most effective when candidates recognised the nuance demanded by 'to what extent?' It is not a case of deciding that socialists are either united or divided, but rather of determining 'how much'?

Finally, some candidates, albeit not as many as on Q3b, did attempt to 'shoehorn' a general essay on divisions within socialism – evolution vs revolution, managed capitalism vs full socialism, the role of the state etc – into a question that was not about this, and these responses did not perform well. It should also be noted that whilst evolution vs revolution is a valid division within the ideology, referring to multiple strands as simply 'evolutionary socialists' in a question that is about a different theme, will usually result in over-simplification and will not generally support strong analysis.

1. Answer the question asked: if you hoped for a different question put that aside and ensure that all of your response explicitly addresses what was requested.
2. Remember that the two sides of an ideologies question are 'agreement' (unity) and 'disagreement' (division) and that you must therefore consider both in some detail.
3. Consider your essay structure: where possible group your sections by theme, and then by agreement and disagreement within each theme, rather than by strand. Avoid a 'storytelling' approach, and especially a chronological description of the older strands of socialism through to the newer.
4. Value timed practice: as the final question on the paper, and worth slightly fewer marks, this is the section where candidates most often have less time. The more practice you have of responding in exam conditions, the better you are likely to perform.

Chosen question number: **Question 3(a)** **Question 3(b)**

Socialism is a key political idea of how a state should be run, and advocates for equality and evolution. There are three main strands of Socialism: Revolutionary Socialism, Social democracy, and Third way Socialism - all of which have varying views on human nature. As a general overview, Socialists believed that human nature must work together in order to achieve a mutual benefit for all.

Revolutionary Socialists, such as Marx and Engels, viewed human nature as flawed and pragmatic. Marxism advocated that as humans we should overthrow capitalism through revolution - yet this is far from what 'Socialism' advocates for. Both Marx and Engels witnessed and studied revolutions and the effects it had on human nature, which is what their beliefs are built around, as Engels studied the French Revolution and argued that gradual change has no impact on

human nature whatsoever, and so for societal change to occur we had to make radical change through revolution. On the contrary, Social democrats such as Crosland and Webb, ~~advocated~~ opposed this idea on human nature and viewed them as inherently pure, unlike Marxism, and thus advocated for gradual change rather than radical change. Social democrats suggested that human nature should evolve gradually with the hopes that we don't stray too far from tradition and our ancestors beliefs and work. Here we can see that Revolutionary Socialists have contradicting views to those of Social democrats on human nature, meaning they are divided in their views.

Furthermore,

Third way socialists, such as Giddens, ~~it~~ accepted the idea of capitalism but suggests that human nature seems to regulate it to promote equality rather than corruption. Giddens also thought that human nature had a moral duty to support the less fortunate and viewed

human nature as equals. Third way socialism cross combines ideas from neo-liberalism and neo-conservatism and thus advocates for equality to be present across human nature, the richer should be taxed more, in the idea that their wealth will boost economic growth and equality will be achieved. We can see that Revolutionary Socialists share similar ideas on human nature to those of the Third way - this shows us how they are somewhat united in their views on human nature.

Socialism It is evident that across all three strands of socialism, there are some shared beliefs / views on human nature, particularly between Revolutionary Socialists and ~~Social democrats~~ ^{Third way socialists}; however Social democrats have vastly different ideas on human nature, when compared to the other strands. Socialism as a whole appears to be somewhat disunited on its views about human nature.



This Level 3 response shows good knowledge of the approaches taken by the different branches of socialism. It is quite chronological, and this does make analysis more challenging.

However, because the candidate teases out some explicit links between the strands within these paragraphs, it enters Level 3.



Try to structure ideology essays by themes, bringing out agreement and disagreement, rather than taking each strand separately.

The extent to which Socialism is limited in its view of human nature can be analysed through the strands of Socialism (Revolutionary Socialism, Social democracy, and the Third Way) views on their ~~fundamental~~ fundamental perception of human nature, their view on what naturally motivates and concerns humans, and their view of the influence of Capitalism on human nature. Socialists ~~are~~ ^{are limited} in their fundamental perception of human nature, and on the influence of Capitalism on human nature, however there is ~~disagreement~~ ^{disagreement} on the what naturally motivates and concerns humans. Overall however, the unity is ~~more~~ ^{more} greater and more significant than the ~~disunity~~ ^{disunity}, ensuring that to a large extent albeit not entirely, Socialism is limited in its view of human nature.

All Socialists are limited in that they share a fundamentally positive view of human nature. Revolutionary Socialism, Social democracy and the Third Way all believe humans are naturally sociable, and would naturally desire for a more

equal society than the one created by Capitalism. Social Democrat Anthony Crossland agrees that the fundamental nature of humans is positive, as they have an innate sense of 'fairness' as well as a natural opposition to large amounts of inequality of outcome. This positive view of human nature is shared by all socialists, with Revolutionary Socialists placing a large emphasis on the positive qualities of fraternity and altruism, ~~which is the~~ ~~just~~ ~~purpose~~ while the Third Way believes that as a result of human's naturally positive nature they will be willing to contribute significant amounts of tax for a public good, as their ~~positive~~ fundamentally positive nature ensures they will support greater equality. This fundamental agreement among all socialists of a positive view of human nature is highly significant, and is it is the belief that underpins all the other aspects of their view of human nature. Therefore, this unity over the fundamental nature of human nature flows on to a large extent (albeit not entirely) socialists are united in their view of human nature.

There is disagreement between socialists regarding what naturally motivates and concerns humans. Social Democrats believe and revolutionary socialists

believe humans are entirely motivated by moral factors. Marx's writing of a society in which the economy is based on 'from each according to their ability to each according to their need' is underpinned by his belief that humans natural concern is for the moral good of society as a whole, something shared by social democratic democrats. However, the Third Way disagrees. Giddens ~~also~~ argues that human nature is communitarian, in that it is underpinned by a concern for the society as a whole but also the individual. Giddens advocates for neo-liberal markets ^{is the third way} is based on his belief that humans have a natural desire to improve their financial position in addition to moral concerns. This acknowledges that ~~the~~ human nature is driven by ~~the~~ economic as well as moral concerns, as well as concern for the individual in addition to community would be naturally ~~other~~ the other ~~franchise~~. Therefore the disagreement ~~enjoy~~ it would not be accurate to claim that socialism is entirely limited in its view of human nature. However, that there is still some agreement in this area as well as that the disagreement is outweighed by the agreement in other areas enjoy it is accurate to say that to a large extent ~~but~~ not entirely, socialism is limited in its view of human nature.

A

All socialists agree that Capitalism has a negative impact on human nature, damaging the positive qualities that socialists believe inherent are inherent in humans (something also accepted by all socialists). Marx wrote that the natural human qualities of fraternity and altruism had been replaced by the 'false consciousness' of bourgeois values, therefore hindering the natural link that ~~between~~ individuals feel to society as a whole - their common humanity. The view of Capitalism negatively impacting on human nature is shared among socialists. In 'Beyond Left and Right' Anthony Giddens established his credentials as a socialist by arguing that Capitalism had had a 'corrosive' effect on the natural positive qualities humans possess such as fraternity. ~~Therefore~~ This view of Capitalism as hurting the positive qualities that humans ~~are~~ ~~possess~~ possess would also be accepted by social democrats. Therefore, the view of Capitalism damaging human nature is a shared one among socialists. ~~As~~ This is another significant ~~argument~~ ^{link} among socialists regarding their view of human nature, and this combined with their unity on the fundamentally positive

nature of humanity outweighs the disputes on what naturally motivates humans, ensuring that to a large extent, but not entirely, socialism is limited in its view of human nature.

In conclusion, it would be ~~rather~~ ~~unwise~~ to claim that socialism is entirely limited in its view on human nature, due to the ~~disparity~~ ~~gap~~ between Revolutionary Socialism and Social Democracy compared to the Third Way regarding their view on what naturally motivates and concerns humans. However, the unity between ~~them~~ the strands in their fundamentally positive view of human nature, as well as their ~~shared~~ shared view that Capitalism has had a negative impact on human nature, ensures that to a large extent, but not entirely, socialism is limited in its view of human nature.



This Level 5 response showcases several of the elements to success in ideology questions.

The judgement recognises that the question is 'to what extent?'

The exploration of issues is thematic rather than taking the strands separately.

The thinkers are used to support the analysis.

There is good consideration of both agreement and disagreement within socialism.



To show 'balance' in an ideology essay, consider both agreement and disagreement within the ideology, and between its different strands, in detail.

Question 3(b)

To what extent is liberalism united in its ideas about democracy?

Overview of responses

This was the less popular question of the ideology questions.

The same general points as made above on Q3a also apply here: that candidates now generally have a good understanding of requirements around key thinkers and ideological strands, and know that the judgement is 'how much?'

That said, the comment about candidates hoping, and still attempting, to answer a different question from the one asked, applied even more strongly on this question. It was clear that many candidates wished to answer about the state, rather than democracy, and did not adapt to the question asked. Centres and candidates are reminded that in addition to the themes of society, the state, the economy and human nature, debates around the core ideas and beliefs, such as 'liberal democracy', also provide fertile ground for ideology questions.

Common issues

Candidates who recognised the inherent tensions within liberalism around democracy, and were able to discuss the ways in which all liberals have concerns but find a different balance or role for democracy, achieved well on this question.

Unfortunately, it was more common for candidates to over-generalise. They suggested, for example, that classical liberals dislike democracy and modern liberals like it, or that classic liberals favour representative democracy and moderns favour direct democracy. This was also sometimes an issue on the question of the franchise. However, a number of candidates did well to recognise the nuance and historical context here, in that classical liberals were often writing before the extension of the franchise was a universally-accepted political reality and were often more wary of mass democracy.

In terms of thinkers, JS Mill in particular, found himself being advanced as an example of both sides of an often artificially stark debate. Locke, by contrast, was treated better because most candidates recognised his important role in the debate around the social contract and limited government. A number of candidates also creditably brought in the views of Wollstonecraft, for example, around the importance of formal equality in democracy, and Rawls around the 'scope' of democracy. Friedan was the least-used thinker, perhaps understandably for this specific question.

The biggest single issue for a number of candidates was that they attempted to answer a different question, most commonly around the views of different strands of liberalism on the role of the state. Clearly there are links that can be made from democracy to the state, particularly in terms of the scope of democracy, how far different liberals would allow voters to choose a larger state role, and how many guarantees would be sought for individual freedom under democracy. However, these links were often not made, and too many candidates used a standard state essay, simply adding the word 'democratic' or 'in a democracy'. This approach was not to their advantage.

To a lesser degree, some candidates did the same with the economy theme – although again, this could be made relevant. A small number of candidates also made some questionable assertions around tolerance, suggesting that it might be a division in liberalism relevant to the debate around democracy.

That said, there were plenty of examples of stronger responses here, and the mark scheme as well as the stronger example below should give centres and candidates a clearer idea of how such questions can be approached effectively. The area of constitutionalism, and especially the ways in which all liberals agree that constitutional safeguards can be applied to safeguard against some of the dangers of democracy, was used very effectively by some candidates, although not as widely as might be expected.

It was also generally true that most candidates attempted to consider both agreement and disagreement; unusually being a little stronger overall on the former than the latter. A ‘storytelling’ approach was also much less-common on socialism, because the division between the two strands of liberalism tends to support more direct analytical engagement.

AO3 evaluation was strongest where it was evidenced, rather than asserted, and sustained throughout the essay.

Recommendations for improvement

1. Answer the question asked: if you hoped for a different question put that aside and ensure that all of your response addresses what was requested. In particular, do not try to turn a question that is not about one of the four themes into a response that is.
2. Remember that the two sides of an ideologies question are ‘agreement’ (unity) and ‘disagreement’ (division) between the branches, and that you must therefore consider both in some detail.
3. Use thinkers effectively, and in particular ensure that you are confident in the accuracy of your understanding about their core ideas, as laid out in the specification.
4. Value timed practice: as the final question on the paper, and worth slightly fewer marks, this is the section where candidates often have less time. The more practice you have of responding in exam conditions the better you are likely to perform.

In this ~~an~~ essay, I will show how the two strands of liberalism (classical and modern) and the key thinkers, Mills, Locke and Wallstonecraft agree or disagree around the idea of democracy. At a first glance I am more inclined to disagree with the statement, however there are some areas of agreement around democracy.

Classical liberals such as Locke and Mills believe more in direct democracy. Due to their views around human nature and the idea of freedom from, they believe that individuals are able to vote directly on important matters, take Brexit for example. This gives individuals more power to decide what influences their lives. However, modern liberals such as many Wallstonecraft support both direct democracy and representative democracy. They agree with a classical liberal that people ~~shd~~ should be able to vote on important matters. But they also believe that there is no need for people to

Vote on everything, so a representative is elected to represent the ideas of the individual. After the first two points, I am more persuaded to disagree with the statement. This is due to the agreement between strands only going one way, modern agrees with classical however classical liberals do not agree with modern liberals.

Another ~~area~~^{area} of disagreement is the fact that classical liberals do not believe that everyone has to be represented. However both classical and modern liberals believe that everyone should get an equal opportunity. What this means is that both strands believe everyone should be able to vote. But only modern liberals believe everyone should be represented. Classical liberals believe that if an individual choose not to vote, they shouldn't be represented. This links back to paragraph 1, only modern liberals support representative democracy. Due to these reason, I continue to disagree with the statement.

In conclusion, there are many reasons that support the statement, both strands supporting direct democracy and both supporting equal opportunity to ~~keep~~^{name} a few. On the other hand, the points disagreeing with the statement outweigh the points in favour. This is the reason I have been persuaded to disagree with the statement and ~~say~~ say liberals are more divided around democracy.



This is a Level 1 response, due largely to a number of inaccuracies.

The direct/representative democracy distinction is not helpful in this debate, and in particular trying to link classical liberals to direct democracy is not to the candidate's advantage.

Whilst thinkers are named, the links to Brexit are difficult to make.

Some credit is gained by the allusions to disagreements over the franchise, taking this response higher within Level 1.



Showing accurate understanding of the different strands' beliefs, and applying them appropriately to the question, is the key basis to a good ideologies response.

↳ Democracy typically refers to 'rule by the people' - a term derived from the Latin 'demos kratia'. Whilst liberalism is an ideology inherently united in its foundational principles of freedom, individualism, rationalism and equality - all evident factors of democracy, there is varying disagreement over the role of the state in assisting and ensuring democracy can flourish. Whilst classical liberals are far more seemingly two dimensional, viewing democracy as simply individual freedom to be heard, modern liberals prefer to take a more active stance in ensuring democracy can thrive for all - even the weakest in society.

To some extent, liberals are united in their views about democracy. Fundamentally believing in the vital need for a liberal democracy in society, liberals believe a democratic

state arises contractually and consensually. Drawing on John Locke's 'Social Contract Theory', ~~that~~ which argues the state should maximise rights to "life, liberty and property" (all of these being democratic ideas), all liberals would cohesively view the need for a liberal democracy vital to society. ~~Further~~ ~~this unity further~~, all liberals would ~~strongly advocate for a democracy that maximises individual autonomy~~ ~~autonomy~~. However, dichotomy of views begins to appear between strands surrounding the extent to which this democratic state maximises individual autonomy. whilst ~~the~~ classical liberals, such as ~~the~~ John Stuart Mill would advocate heavily for a state merely ~~emphasising~~ ~~positi~~ exercising positive freedom (the absence of external constraints), modern ^{liberals} would take this further. For example: Betty Friedan ~~in~~ emphasises the need for both negative and positive freedom - most notably labelled as
↳ for both men and women

"enabling" state - as compared to the ~~the~~ modern "nightwatchman" state. ~~When~~ placing importance on ~~the~~ sacrifice to help all flourish, modern liberals believe in a more sympathetic democracy, ensuring even the ^{most disadvantaged} ~~poor~~ in society have their voices heard.

Potentially taking some unity further within liberalism, both strands might strongly advocate for a democracy enhancing individual freedoms and democratic rights through ~~some~~ state ~~input~~ the economy. However, ~~st~~ classical and modern liberals might ~~not~~ then disagree over the extent of state involvement in this economy. Favouring a ~~£~~ 'laissez-faire' approach to the economy, ~~the~~ classical liberals such as many ~~well~~ might see ~~the~~ democracy as enabled by no government involvement in personal economics. ~~well~~ ~~emphasised~~ ~~the~~ ~~benefit~~ emphasised a free market, notably able to be an ally to female

emancipation and flourishing.

Allowing the female voice to be heard, this suggests classical liberals far prefer a democratic system that simply leaves individuals alone. Contrastingly, modern liberals take a more

Keynesian approach to the economy, suggesting that true democracy will thrive when all ~~one truly~~ have truly equal access to social mobility and flourishing. Key thinker John Rawls notes that under a veil of ignorance, humans would choose a society that mostly enables the least advantaged to thrive, and therefore our democratic system should reflect this.

In conclusion, liberals appear to be far more divided than united in their views about democracy.

Although holding similar principles surrounding the way a liberal democracy is formed and should be upheld, they are truly ~~divided~~ divided in their

different approaches and further beliefs of ~~how~~ what this democracy looks like and how it acts. Discourse of ~~or~~ beliefs about ~~democratic~~ how to maximise true democracy resultantly places them at odds with each other, suggesting they are more greatly divided, than united, in their ideas about democracy.



This is a solid Level 4 response. The candidate engages well with 'democracy', and draws on areas of both agreement and disagreement.

The references to the state are linked to the question in a relevant way, although the link from the economy is not quite as strong.

There is helpful reference to a number of different key thinkers.



When discussing any of the four 'themes' within ideologies – human nature, society, the economy, and the state – make sure that you tie them strongly into the specific question asked.

Paper Summary

Overall, the usual sound advice for all Politics exams remains true in this series.

Based on their performance in this examination, candidates should:

- produce balanced essays that consider both sides of the question
- use contemporary, accurate and relevant examples
- give due balance to all three assessment objectives – AO1 knowledge, AO2 analysis and AO3 evaluation
- divide their time proportionately between questions
- perhaps most of all, use the wording of the question, guidance, and source material to answer the question, the whole question, and nothing but the question

Grade boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:
<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/results-certification/grade-boundaries.html>

