

# **Government and Politics**

Advanced GCE

Unit **F853**: Contemporary US Government and Politics

## **Mark Scheme for January 2011**

---

OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA) is a leading UK awarding body, providing a wide range of qualifications to meet the needs of pupils of all ages and abilities. OCR qualifications include AS/A Levels, Diplomas, GCSEs, OCR Nationals, Functional Skills, Key Skills, Entry Level qualifications, NVQs and vocational qualifications in areas such as IT, business, languages, teaching/training, administration and secretarial skills.

It is also responsible for developing new specifications to meet national requirements and the needs of students and teachers. OCR is a not-for-profit organisation; any surplus made is invested back into the establishment to help towards the development of qualifications and support which keep pace with the changing needs of today's society.

This mark scheme is published as an aid to teachers and students, to indicate the requirements of the examination. It shows the basis on which marks were awarded by Examiners. It does not indicate the details of the discussions which took place at an Examiners' meeting before marking commenced.

All Examiners are instructed that alternative correct answers and unexpected approaches in candidates' scripts must be given marks that fairly reflect the relevant knowledge and skills demonstrated.

Mark schemes should be read in conjunction with the published question papers and the Report on the Examination.

OCR will not enter into any discussion or correspondence in connection with this mark scheme.

© OCR 2011

Any enquiries about publications should be addressed to:

OCR Publications  
PO Box 5050  
Annesley  
NOTTINGHAM  
NG15 0DL

Telephone: 0870 770 6622  
Facsimile: 01223 552610  
E-mail: [publications@ocr.org.uk](mailto:publications@ocr.org.uk)

**Source**

There are several types of pressure group in the US and their impact upon government and society varies enormously. Some economic pressure groups such as the American Health Insurance Plans (AHIP) have actively campaigned against recent health care reform proposals. Their activities beg the question as to whose interests they serve. Are they seeking to protect the interests of the general public, including the estimated 48 million Americans without health cover, or do they merely seek to represent the vested interests of private insurance companies?

- 1 (a) Describe two types of pressure group and provide at least one US example of each to illustrate your answer. [10]

*Pressure groups: types; methods used; examples of, and reasons for, success or failure.*

	<b>AO1</b>	<b>AO3</b>
<b>Level 4</b>	7–8	2
<b>Level 3</b>	5–6	2
<b>Level 2</b>	3–4	1
<b>Level 1</b>	0–2	0–1

**AO1:** Candidates will display knowledge and understanding of the types of pressure group. This could include identification and definition of some of the following: cause, promotional, sectional, insider and outsider, single issue, business groups, umbrella groups. Any type identified with examples will be credited. In order to reach full marks, type, definition, and US examples must be given.

**AO3:** Expect most candidates to reach level 3 and use 2 as a default mark. Three clear paragraphs is the ideal. At level 2 and below, candidates will make frequent and intrusive spelling and grammatical mistakes. The answer will lack focus and be disorganised.

- (b) Explain why pressure groups are considered by some to be a threat to democracy. [15]

	<b>AO2</b>	<b>AO3</b>
<b>Level 4</b>	10–12	3
<b>Level 3</b>	7–9	2
<b>Level 2</b>	4–6	2
<b>Level 1</b>	0–3	0–1

**AO2:** Expect candidates to explain why pressure groups might be considered a threat to democracy. This could include discussion of some of the following:

- The role played by money
- The elitist view of pressure group activity
- Secrecy/transparency
- The public versus private vested interests
- Reference to groups that might break the law.

At the top of level 4, candidates will have identified a range of arguments (4 or more) and perhaps attempted to rank the relative importance of each.

**AO3:** Expect most candidates to reach level 3 and use 2 as a default mark. Further marks will be awarded if a candidate is able to write with flair and maintains a sharp focus on the question throughout the essay. At level 4, candidates will have made good use of paragraphs to separate arguments. They may also have used short introductions and conclusions to good effect. At level 2 and below, candidates will make frequent and intrusive spelling mistakes and grammatical mistakes. The essay will lack focus and be disorganised.

- 2 Discuss the view that long-term factors are the key influence on voting behaviour in presidential elections. [25]

*Elections: Factors influencing voting behaviour.*

	AO1	AO2	AO3
Level 4	9–10	9–10	5
Level 3	6–8	6–8	4
Level 2	3–5	3–5	2–3
Level 1	0–2	0–2	0–1

**AO1:** Candidates will display knowledge and understanding of a range of factors which influence voting behaviour in recent elections. This may include reference to:

- Dealignment in the USA: the decline of the New Deal Coalition and the absence of a Republican realignment
- Evidence of the increase in independents/floating voters and split-ticket voting
- Long-term socio-demographic factors: race, religion, gender, region
- Shorter-term factors such as personality, policies, past performance, the economy, the campaign, the media and money
- Recent presidential elections
- Models of voting behaviour
- Brief comparisons with the UK.

To reach the top of level 4 candidates will need to display a knowledge and understanding of a range of factors both long and short-term (a minimum of three of each).

**AO2:** Expect candidates to discuss the relative importance of short and long-term factors as influences on voting behaviour. Candidates can argue either way. They should be able to recognise the importance of dealignment to the increased significance of short-term factors. By the same token, the role played by long-term factors should also be considered.

To reach the top of level 4, candidates will argue both for and against the assertion in the title. There will be balance in their approach and the conclusion reached will be based upon the evidence presented. Expect good candidates to make detailed assessments of the key factors in Obama's victory (which supports the importance of short-term factors). They will though also recognise that Obama did not secure a landslide in terms of the popular vote and this may trigger some reference to "red – blue" America, region, race and religion, etc and thus allow some appreciation of the role played by long-term factors. Brief contrasts with the UK in this regard will help illustrate this point.

**AO3:** Expect most candidates to reach level 3 and use 4 as a default mark. Further marks will be awarded if a candidate is able to write with flair and maintains a sharp focus on the question throughout the essay. At level 4, candidates will have made good use of paragraphs to separate arguments. Their essay will have balance. They may also have used short introductions and conclusions to good effect. At level 2 and below, candidates will make frequent and intrusive spelling mistakes and grammatical mistakes. The essay will lack focus and be disorganised.

**3 Evaluate the claim that political parties are in decline.****[25]***Political parties: Roles and functions. Party renewal and decline.*

	<b>AO1</b>	<b>AO2</b>	<b>AO3</b>
<b>Level 4</b>	9–10	9–10	5
<b>Level 3</b>	6–8	6–8	4
<b>Level 2</b>	3–5	3–5	2–3
<b>Level 1</b>	0–2	0–2	0–1

**AO1:** Candidates will display knowledge and understanding of the functions of parties and recent developments relating to their ability to fulfil them. This might include reference to:

- Participation and representation
- Aggregation and mobilisation
- Membership and voting
- Membership of pressure groups
- Ideological choice: New Democrats, compassionate conservatism, neo-conservatism
- Training and recruitment of politicians
- Fund-raising
- Governmental functions at federal and state level
- Recent developments such as voter mobilisation by Obama and party unity over issues such as health care reform.

At the top of level 4, candidates will be able to identify and develop a range of functions carried out by the parties. In order to secure marks in this level, the answer must make specific and detailed references to US politics. Generic answers on the functions of parties without US examples will not reach beyond level 2.

**AO2:** Expect candidates to evaluate the role played by parties in US government and politics. This should include a consideration of both the case for and against. Various functions could be considered in turn and the extent to which parties fulfil these evaluated. In each case it is possible to argue both for and against.

Candidates could argue that participation, representation and mobilisation and aggregation are the most obvious areas of decline. This can be complemented by the rise of candidate-centred politics at election time and the importance of the “folks back home” as an influence over party on congressional voting.

To reach the top of level 4 however candidates must be able to identify arguments that suggest arguments of party decline have been exaggerated and/or that there is evidence of party renewal. This could extend to the parties’ roles in fund-raising, candidate training, increased partisanship in the Congress, as well as evidence of ideological polarisation in recent times.

**AO3:** Expect most candidates to reach level 3 and use 4 as a default mark. Further marks will be awarded if a candidate is able to write with flair and maintains a sharp focus on the question throughout the essay. At level 4, candidates will have made good use of paragraphs to separate arguments. Their essay will have balance. They may also have used short introductions and conclusions to good effect. At level 2 and below, candidates will make frequent and intrusive spelling mistakes and grammatical mistakes. The essay will lack focus and be disorganised.

**4 Discuss the claim that the Constitution has evolved greatly since 1787. [25]**

*The Constitution. The making of the Constitution; the importance and evolution of its underlying principles; separation of powers and checks and balances, the rule of law and constitutional rights. Constitutional amendments; federalism.*

	<b>AO1</b>	<b>AO2</b>	<b>AO3</b>
<b>Level 4</b>	9–10	9–10	5
<b>Level 3</b>	6–8	6–8	4
<b>Level 2</b>	3–5	3–5	2–3
<b>Level 1</b>	0–2	0–2	0–1

**AO1:** Candidates will be able to discuss the Constitution and its evolution over time. This could include discussion of some of the following:

- The underlying principles: the separation of powers and checks and balances, the rule of law and constitutional rights
- Amendments to the Constitution
- Judicial review and rulings from the Supreme Court
- Various phases of federalism
- Changes to presidential power.

In order to reach level 4, candidates should provide detail of the Constitution and a range of areas which can be used to allow an assessment to be made.

**AO2:** Expect candidates to discuss changes to the Constitution since 1787. This could invite discussion of concepts such as the living/organic constitution. This might be linked to the Supreme Court and its role in defining the Constitution to suit contemporary mores. Arguments relating to the relative scarcity of amendments could be used to outline its rigidity. Evolution via legislation and the development of conventions could also be used to the same effect.

In order to reach level 4, candidates must argue for and against. This could include reference to contrasting views from the right and the left: the former arguing the Constitution is too flexible in times of crisis (link to War on Terror), the latter that the Constitution is too rigid, restricting an adequate defence of civil liberties. Reference may be made to the revisionist view re the intentions of the Founding Fathers and their fear of the mob.

**AO3:** Expect most candidates to reach level 3 and use 4 as a default mark. Further marks will be awarded if a candidate is able to write with flair and maintains a sharp focus on the question throughout the essay. At level 4, candidates will have made good use of paragraphs to separate arguments. Their essay will have balance. They may also have used short introductions and conclusions to good effect. At level 2 and below, candidates will make frequent and intrusive spelling mistakes and grammatical mistakes. The essay will lack focus and be disorganised.

5 Evaluate the factors which influence how members of Congress vote. [25]

*Congress: factors influencing voting in Congress.*

	AO1	AO2	AO3
<b>Level 4</b>	9–10	9–10	5
<b>Level 3</b>	6–8	6–8	4
<b>Level 2</b>	3–5	3–5	2–3
<b>Level 1</b>	0–2	0–2	0–1

**AO1:** Candidates will display knowledge and understanding of voting in Congress.

Discussion could include reference to some of the following:

- The differences between the House and the Senate
- Voting records
- Case studies of legislation such as health care reform
- Concepts such as the “folks back home”, the pork barrel, log rolling, earmarking
- The role of committees in the legislative process
- Congressional liaison from the White House
- The role of party and Congressional leadership
- The impact of caucus groups
- The role played by pressure groups
- Examples of conscience issues and individual ideological perspectives such as Ron Paul’s libertarianism.

At the top of level 4, candidates will be able to provide knowledge and understanding of a range of factors which can influence voting in Congress.

**AO2:** Expect candidates to evaluate the factors which influence voting in Congress.

Candidates should identify a range of factors and attempt to rank their relative importance. Candidates are likely to consider the relative weakness of parties, although this can be contrasted with reference to increased partisanship in Congress in recent times. Case studies such as health care reform may be used to illustrate the role played by pressure groups and the divide between Congress and the presidency. Candidate-centred campaigns, the two year term of the House and discussion of the notion that “all politics is local” may also feature. This might be linked to name recognition and constituency links from the congressional office.

At the top of level 4, candidates will not only list a range of factors which influence voting in Congress but attempt to evaluate or rank their relative significance. Better candidates will make reference to contemporary developments to illustrate their answers and may make some attempt to consider the extent to which Congress serves the minority rather than the public interest. There could be brief comparisons with the UK legislature and the role of parties.

**AO3:** Expect most candidates to reach level 3 and use 4 as a default mark. Further marks will be awarded if a candidate is able to write with flair and maintains a sharp focus on the question throughout the essay. At level 4, candidates will have made good use of paragraphs to separate arguments. Their essay will have balance. They may also have used short introductions and conclusions to good effect. At level 2 and below, candidates will make frequent and intrusive spelling mistakes and grammatical mistakes. The essay will lack focus and be disorganised.

## 6 To what extent has Obama been a successful president?

[25]

*The presidency: Powers of the President, theories and practice of presidential power.*

	AO1	AO2	AO3
Level 4	9–10	9–10	5
Level 3	6–8	6–8	4
Level 2	3–5	3–5	2–3
Level 1	0–2	0–2	0–1

**AO1:** Candidates will display knowledge and understanding of the powers of the presidency. This may include reference to:

- Powers as commander-in-chief, chief diplomat, chief legislator, chief executive, manager of prosperity and party leader
- Obama's role in the determination of foreign and domestic policy
- Relations with Congress and the role of party
- The role of the EXOP, cabinet and congressional liaison
- Policy proposals such as health care reform, the deployment of troops in Iraq and Afghanistan
- Appointments to the Supreme Court, EXOP and cabinet
- The role played by the media, approval ratings and interest groups
- Concepts such as "bargainer in chief", the power to persuade, the two presidencies, the imperial and imperilled presidencies.

At the top of level 4, candidates will discuss a range of powers and relate these to the Obama administration.

**AO2:** Expect candidates to provide an assessment of the Obama administration. Candidates should identify a range of powers and evaluate the extent to which the President has been able to provide effective leadership. This might invite consideration of the nature of presidential power and the constitutional framework within which he operates. The role played by the Congress in the determination of policy will be central to discussions.

At the top of level 4, candidates will successfully apply details of the Obama administration to criteria which allow an evaluation of the extent to which the presidency has been a leading force in the determination of foreign and domestic policy. They will consider both the case for and against and reach a conclusion. Reference might be made to the impact of a domestic or foreign crisis upon presidential power and there could be an appreciation of the symbiotic relationship between the two branches of government. Contrasts might be made with previous administrations and (briefly) with the UK executive.

**AO3:** Expect most candidates to reach level 3 and use 4 as a default mark. Further marks will be awarded if a candidate is able to write with flair and maintains a sharp focus on the question throughout the essay. At level 4, candidates will have made good use of paragraphs to separate arguments. Their essay will have balance. They may also have used short introductions and conclusions to good effect. At level 2 and below, candidates will make frequent and intrusive spelling mistakes and grammatical mistakes. The essay will lack focus and be disorganised.

7 To what extent has the Supreme Court become more conservative in recent years? [25]

*The Supreme Court: judicial independence, membership, appointment process, theories and practice of judicial activism and judicial restraint; the role of the Court in the development of the rights of states and individuals, and of deciding other constitutional issues.*

	<b>AO1</b>	<b>AO2</b>	<b>AO3</b>
<b>Level 4</b>	9–10	9–10	5
<b>Level 3</b>	6–8	6–8	4
<b>Level 2</b>	3–5	3–5	2–3
<b>Level 1</b>	0–2	0–2	0–1

**AO1:** Candidates will display knowledge and understanding of the role of the Supreme Court. This could include reference to:

- Appointments to the Court
- The composition and balance of the Court
- Concepts such as voting blocs, swing voters, strict and loose constructionism, activism and passivism, liberal and conservative rulings
- Recent rulings from the Court
- Rulings from earlier courts such as the liberal activism of the Warren Court
- The constraints upon the Court.

At the top of level 4, candidates will display a good understanding and knowledge of most of the above.

**AO2:** Expect candidates to evaluate the political stance of the Court in recent years. This might invite a comparison of the Rehnquist and Roberts Courts with a focus on some key issues such as free speech, abortion rights and federalism. The candidates will attempt to answer the question by explaining what is meant by a “move to a right” and present detailed evidence to support arguments for and against. Candidates may contrast Warren Court rulings with the conservative backlash of the early Rehnquist years.

At the top of level 4, candidates will provide a balanced answer to the question. This could include reference to rulings from the Roberts Court since 2006 to the present day, such as the differences between the two terms of 2006–2007 and 2007–2008. Constraints upon the Court could be used to argue that the Court is more of a judicial institution than a political one. There could be detailed analysis of the outlook of the Court and the impact of such appointments as (liberal) Sotomayor replacing (liberal) Souter. Comparisons with Warren and Burger Courts would be appropriate to inform discussion.

**AO3:** Expect most candidates to reach level 3 and use 4 as a default mark. Further marks will be awarded if a candidate is able to write with flair and maintains a sharp focus on the question throughout the essay. At level 4, candidates will have made good use of paragraphs to separate arguments. Their essay will have balance. They may also have used short introductions and conclusions to good effect. At level 2 and below, candidates will make frequent and intrusive spelling mistakes and grammatical mistakes. The essay will lack focus and be disorganised.

**8 Discuss the view that rights and liberties are not adequately protected in the USA. [25]**

*Civil rights and liberties: The role of institutions and of the Constitution in defending rights; current issues associated with rights and liberties.*

	<b>AO1</b>	<b>AO2</b>	<b>AO3</b>
<b>Level 4</b>	9–10	9–10	5
<b>Level 3</b>	6–8	6–8	4
<b>Level 2</b>	3–5	3–5	2–3
<b>Level 1</b>	0–2	0–2	0–1

**AO1:** Candidates will display knowledge and understanding of rights and the role of institutions in their protection. This could include discussion of some of the following:

- The Bill of Rights
- Civil rights
- Recent developments such as rulings from the Supreme Court such as *Boumediene v Bush*
- Executive actions eg the closure of Guantánamo Bay (Camp Delta)
- The role of Congress in the protection of rights eg the Patriot Act renewal and insertion of sunshine clauses, civil rights legislation, etc
- The work of pressure groups such as the ACLU, NAACP, NOW.

To reach the top of level 4, candidates will display knowledge of a range of rights and liberties and go beyond discussion of the Supreme Court.

**AO2:** Expect candidates to discuss the adequacy of the protection of rights. This should include discussion of the Supreme Court's use of judicial review which may be linked to rulings relating to individual rights as outlined in the Bill of Rights. Conversely, the failure of the Court or slowness of the Court to act could be discussed to outline the fragility of rights. This could be linked to the notion of "paper rights" and brief comparisons made with countries such as the UK, and the ECHR. This might invite discussion of the role played by the executive and the legislature and the general climate of the time ("war on terror"/WWII) and its impact upon the culture of rights in the USA.

To reach the top of level 4, candidates will consider the protection of rights as both adequate and inadequate before reaching a conclusion. Their discussion will go beyond the role played by the Supreme Court which will limit answers to level 2.

**AO3:** Expect most candidates to reach level 3 and use 4 as a default mark. Further marks will be awarded if a candidate is able to write with flair and maintains a sharp focus on the question throughout the essay. At level 4, candidates will have made good use of paragraphs to separate arguments. Their essay will have balance. They may also have used short introductions and conclusions to good effect. At level 2 and below, candidates will make frequent and intrusive spelling mistakes and grammatical mistakes. The essay will lack focus and be disorganised.

**OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)**  
**1 Hills Road**  
**Cambridge**  
**CB1 2EU**

**OCR Customer Contact Centre**

**14 – 19 Qualifications (General)**

Telephone: 01223 553998

Facsimile: 01223 552627

Email: [general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk](mailto:general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk)

**[www.ocr.org.uk](http://www.ocr.org.uk)**

For staff training purposes and as part of our quality assurance programme your call may be recorded or monitored

**Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations**  
**is a Company Limited by Guarantee**  
**Registered in England**  
**Registered Office; 1 Hills Road, Cambridge, CB1 2EU**  
**Registered Company Number: 3484466**  
**OCR is an exempt Charity**



**OCR (Oxford Cambridge and RSA Examinations)**  
**Head office**  
**Telephone: 01223 552552**  
**Facsimile: 01223 552553**

© OCR 2011