

# **Government and Politics**

Advanced GCE **F853**

Contemporary US Government and Politics

## **Mark Scheme for June 2010**

---

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 2010

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)

## Advanced GCE Assessment Matrix

There are **four** levels of assessment of all three AOs in the A2 units. Level 4 is the highest level that can reasonably be expected from a candidate at the end an Advanced GCE course.

Level	Assessment Objective 1	Assessment Objective 2	Assessment Objective 3
4	Thorough and accurate knowledge and clear and detailed understanding of relevant concepts, ideas and political systems. Ability to make valid comparisons between them.	High level of skill in the interpretation, analysis and evaluation of relevant political information (including, the identification of parallels, connections, similarities and differences between aspects of the political systems studied). Ability to recognise bias and faulty argument and to reason effectively towards an individual and informed conclusion.	Ability to distinguish relevant and important factors correctly and integrate these into a balanced, well-focused argument. Ability to communicate this clearly and present it legibly and logically in fluent coherent style containing few, if any, errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling.
3	Good knowledge and understanding of relevant concepts, ideas and political systems. Ability to make some valid comparisons between them.	Good level of skill in the interpretation, analysis and evaluation of the relevant political issues (including, the identification of parallels, connections, similarities and differences between aspects of the political systems studied). Some attempt to recognise bias and faulty argument and to reason sensibly towards a sound conclusion.	Ability to identify the most important factors and present a relevant argument legibly and clearly if, at times, lacking incisiveness. There may be occasional errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling.
2	Limited knowledge and understanding of relevant concepts, ideas and political systems. Limited awareness of standard points of comparison.	Limited level of skill in the interpretation, analysis and evaluation of the relevant political issues (including, the identification of parallels, connections, similarities and differences between aspects of the political systems studied). Limited attempt to explain a few of the more obvious points central to the question and to recognise and describe some differing viewpoints. Reasoning may be incomplete and, while opinions may be offered, they are unlikely to be supported by argument.	Limited attempt to distinguish relevant material, which is assembled into a limited argument with some sense of order and legibility. There may be some errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling.
1	Basic and generalised knowledge and understanding of relevant concepts, ideas and political systems. Such knowledge and understanding will be incomplete and/or of tenuous relevance and may contain significant errors. Basic awareness of standard points of comparison.	Basic skill in the interpretation, analysis and evaluation of some of the relevant political issues (including, the identification of parallels, connections, similarities and differences between aspects of the political systems studied). Basic attempt to explain the simpler points central to the question and it is likely that only one viewpoint will be recognised. There will be little evidence of reasoning.	An attempt is made to shape an argument at a basic level, which lacks coherence, legibility and direction, and is unselective. Contains intrusive errors of grammar, punctuation and spelling.

**Source**

One of the main functions of parties is to provide ideological choice. Many argue however there are no great differences between the two main parties in the USA and that they share the same ideology. Some argue that this is because elections are won and lost on the ability of candidates to appeal to independent floating voters. Parties have therefore moved together in order to win the “vital centre” vote. Others state both parties lack a coherent ideology altogether and are merely broad coalitions of different interests.

**1 (a) Outline the functions of parties in the USA.****[10]**

*Political parties: roles and functions, representation, participation. Philosophy, ideology and policies of the two major parties.*

	<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 functions of the parties.

This may include some of the following:

- Participation
- Representation
- Aggregation of interests
- Mobilisation of voters
- Provision of ideological choice at election time
- Training and recruitment of politicians
- Educative and informative roles
- Governmental roles in the running of federal and state governments.

At the top of level 4 candidates will be able to make 4 or 5 points about the functions of parties. In order to reach this higher mark band, the candidate must make specific reference to US political parties and politics in general. A generic description of functions without such points of reference will be limited to level 2.

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

- 1 (b) Discuss the view that the ideologies of the Democratic and Republican parties have converged in recent times. [15]

	AO2	AO3
Level 4	10-12	3
Level 3	7-9	2
Level 2	4-6	2
Level 1	0-3	0-1

**AO2:** Expect candidates to examine a range of arguments both for and against the ideological convergence between the parties. The former may include discussion of regional differences with a contrast between the south and north, east and west coast. Argument may be based upon the electoral imperative of winning the “vital centre” and/or broader ideological developments with the triumph of liberal capitalism and its impact upon New Deal/social democratic/tax and spend/interventionist policies. Historically, the notion of a dominant ideology is also a useful point for consideration. Those who detect an increased polarisation of party views between Obama and McCain (or conversely, convergence) will be rewarded. Candidates may choose to establish policy criteria such as party positions on economic, foreign and social policy as a means of considering policy differences. This would provide a sound analytical framework for this question.

To reach the top of level 4 candidates will be able to present a balanced consideration of the case for and against ideological convergence along the lines indicated above. It does not matter which point of view they agree with so long as this conclusion is justified by their discussion.

**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 the top of level 4, candidates will have made good use of paragraphs to separate the arguments for and against and have used the introduction and conclusion to good effect. At level 2 and below, candidates will make frequent and intrusive spelling and grammatical mistakes. The essay will lack focus and be disorganised.

- 2 To what extent did the nominations of McCain and Obama strengthen the case for reforming the method of choosing presidential candidates? [25]

*Elections: presidential. The nominating process including primaries, caucuses and national party conventions.*

	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 the process for selecting major party presidential candidates in general and in 2008 in particular. This may include the “invisible primary”, primaries and caucuses; frontloading; the role of money and the media; the importance of Iowa and New Hampshire; the changing role of National Party Conventions. Examples can be drawn of course from other elections. Alternative methods of choosing candidates should be outlined.

To reach the top of level 4 candidates will display a good knowledge of events in 2008 and the nomination system.

**AO2:** Expect candidates to analyse the presidential candidate selection process in a balanced fashion putting forward both its merits and demerits. In the former category, candidates should be able to recognise the excitement created by the contests evident in the record levels of participation; the improvement upon the old system; the ability of McCain to triumph despite a lack of money over Romney; the less than critical role played by New Hampshire and Iowa; the ability of super delegates or otherwise to provide peer group review; the value of media scrutiny; the ability of outsiders to challenge for the nomination; the test of stamina and character.

In terms of demerits, it could be argued: Iowa and New Hampshire still have too much importance (Giuliani) and their unrepresentative nature; the impact of frontloading (super duper Tuesday) and the benefits this confers to those with money and national profile; the impact of the media (soft ride for Obama?); negative advertising and the impact upon party unity; the absence of peer group review and the triumph of telegenic qualities over political skills.

To reach the top of level 4 candidates will apply the 2008 nominations to the arguments. They may differentiate between the proportional system used for the Democrats and winner takes all for the Republicans. There should be recognition of the interest and participation levels reached in 2008 and their significance for this debate.

**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 the top of level 4, candidates will have made good use of paragraphs to separate their arguments and have used the introduction and conclusion to good effect. At level 2 and below, candidates will make frequent and intrusive spelling and grammatical mistakes. The essay will lack focus and be disorganised.

**3 Evaluate the claim that pressure groups undermine democracy in the USA. [25]**

*Pressure groups: implications for the democratic process. Corporatism, elitism, pluralism and New Right views.*

	<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 different types of pressure groups that exist; the role and activities of Political Action Committees; the various strategies used by pressure groups to achieve their objectives. Look for a good range of well worked and up to date examples. This is likely to be a good discriminator. Good candidates will go beyond the traditional pressure groups and give plenty of US examples. Reward candidates who display knowledge and understanding of such concepts as democracy and participation by reference to democratic theory/theorists re pluralism/Dahl, elitism/C Wright Mills, new right & public choice/Olsen and corporatism.

To reach the top of level 4 candidates will display a knowledge of a range of US interest groups, democratic theory and the nature of US government.

**AO2:** Expect candidates to analyse both sides of the argument in a reasoned and balanced fashion. In the case of weakening democracy, expect analysis of such issues as: the inequalities of power between competing groups in such issues as gun control, tobacco and health care; the over-importance of money; the “revolving door” syndrome; iron triangles’ “special” v narrow interests. In terms of strengthening democracy, expect analysis of such issues as: increasing opportunities for political participation; information-giving and educating roles of pressure groups. Look for analysis of the pluralist v elitist debate.

To reach the top of level 4 candidates will attempt to reach a conclusion one way or the other rather than merely reciting the standard arguments. They will have established criteria which will allow an assessment of the democratic worth of pressure groups in a US context. This may invite reference to voter turnout, the frequency of elections and party functions.

**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 the top of level 4, candidates will have made good use of paragraphs to separate their arguments and have used the introduction and conclusion to good effect. At level 2 and below, candidates will make frequent and intrusive spelling and grammatical mistakes. The essay will lack focus and be disorganised.

- 4 **Examine the reasons for the changes in the balance of power between federal and state governments since 1980.** [25]

*The Constitution: 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 display knowledge and understanding of federal and state governments which may include: the dynamic nature of the relationship between federal and state governments; the increased responsibility and activity of state governments and the reduced activity of federal government; the concept of new federalism and the policies which emerge from it; the changes to federal grant-in-aid to states; unfunded mandates; the attitude of the two major parties, for example, the impact of GW Bush's compassionate conservatism with policies such as the No Child Left Behind Act, Clinton's Third Way and the "Republican Revolution." The role of the Supreme Court and the "federalism revolution" in the Rehnquist years with reference to cases such as Alden v Maine and US v Lopez is also highly relevant in this regard.

To reach the top of level 4 candidates will be able to discuss recent developments in federal state relations and provide detail of the factors which have affected this relationship.

**AO2:** Expect candidates to examine some of the following factors which have affected the relationship between federal and state government: the federal government's budgetary problems, federal government failure, the end of the Keynesian consensus (in their own words), the rise of anti-Washington sentiment. The reaction of the states to developments such as the civil rights legislation and elimination of corruption and inefficiency resulting in an institutional revival at state level can be coupled to their fiscal revival in the 1980s. States acting as laboratories such as in Wisconsin (welfare) and California (environmental policies) and the increased profile of governors and the NGA could also be explored.

To reach the top of level 4 candidates will have identified a range of arguments which explain changes in the balance of power. This may invite reference to the different roles played by presidents, Congress, the Supreme Court and the states themselves.

**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 the top of level 4, candidates will have made good use of paragraphs to separate their arguments and have used the introduction and conclusion to good effect. At level 2 and below, candidates will make frequent and intrusive spelling and grammatical mistakes. The essay will lack focus and be disorganised.

**5 Assess the importance of committees in the work of Congress.****[25]**

*Congress: Functions of legislatures; the legislative process, oversight of the executive.*

	<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 types of committees which play a role in the legislative process in Congress and of the process itself. This will largely revolve around the standing committees (and their sub committees) at the committee stage but may also include House Rules Committee and conference committees. Look for up to date examples.

**AO2:** Expect candidates to evaluate the importance of the roles played by committees in the legislative process including: the detailed scrutiny of legislation through the hearings conducted at the committee stage; the standing committees' powers of pigeon holing and of amendment; role of timetabling played by the House Rules Committee; the role of reconciling differences between the House and Senate versions of the bill played by conference committees. The impact of partisan politics and leadership in the Congress could also be considered. Better candidates will weigh the importance of committees against the role played by the two chambers, suggesting that final decisions are rarely made in committee.

To reach the top of level 4 candidates will maintain a sharp focus on the committee work of Congress and distinguish between its legislative and scrutiny functions. This may invite discussion of the nature of the Congress and the impact of party. Reference may be made to the differing outlooks of the Senate and the House and relations with the president.

**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 the top of level 4, candidates will have made good use of paragraphs to separate their arguments and have used the introduction and conclusion to good effect. At level 2 and below, candidates will make frequent and intrusive spelling and grammatical mistakes. The essay will lack focus and be disorganised.

- 6 Discuss the view that the cabinet does not serve any significant presidential purpose. [25]

*The presidency: presidential policy-making, the cabinet and EXOP, problems of coordination of the Executive Branch.*

	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 cabinet which may include: the term “the cabinet” in both its individual and collective sense; membership of the cabinet; the appointment process; the functions of the cabinet as collective; the functions of cabinet officers as individuals running their departments; the varying degrees of use that recent presidents have made of the cabinet; the role of the EXOP. Candidates who refer to recent examples such as members of the Clinton, Bush and Obama cabinets will be rewarded.

To reach the top of level 4 candidates will identify a range of functions that the cabinet does and does not serve. This may invite references to the Clinton, Bush and Obama administrations.

**AO2:** Expect candidates to analyse the declining importance of the cabinet meeting taking into consideration factors such as: the rise in the importance of EXOP; the divided loyalties of cabinet officers (agency capture/departmentalism/“going native”); the proximity and access to the president enjoyed by senior members of the EXOP; the policy specialist cabinet members have nothing to contribute to other policy areas in a cabinet meeting. Candidates may contrast use of cabinet both between and within administrations. The role of cabinet members on an individual basis can be contrasted with its collective function. Reference to the electoral value of the cabinet in terms of race and gender (“a cabinet that looks like America”) will also be recognised.

To reach the top of level 4 candidates will be able to provide a detailed and balanced assessment of the role of the cabinet. Discussion may include reference to the Obama administration and the nature of decision-making in areas such as foreign and economic policy at the present time with references to the EXOP.

**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 the top of level 4, candidates will have made good use of paragraphs to separate their arguments and have used the introduction and conclusion to good effect. At level 2 and below, candidates will make frequent and intrusive spelling and grammatical mistakes. The essay will lack focus and be disorganised.

7 Evaluate the factors which influence appointments to the Supreme Court. [25]

*The Supreme Court: Membership and appointment process.*

	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 the appointment process and a range of factors and institutions involved in the appointment process which may include: the president, Justice Department, FBI, Senate Judiciary Committee, the Senate, pressure groups (ABA & Federalist Society for GW Bush), the media and public opinion. There may be some discussion of personal factors relating to potential appointments. Expect most to focus on the political outlook of the president and the potential to leave a legacy upon the Court. Reference might also be made to gender, race and religion. Personal qualities, qualifications and experience are also relevant in this regard. Details of both the successful and failed appointments such as Bork, Miers, Carswell and Haynesworth, Roberts and Alito and Thomas will provide much scope for discussion.

To reach the top of level 4 expect a discussion of a range of nominations and the identification of several distinct factors which influence appointments. Details of votes and in the Senate and the Senate Judiciary Committee might also be anticipated at this level.

**AO2:** Expect candidates to evaluate the relative importance of factors relating to appointments to the Court. Most will focus on attempts to politicise the Court as stated above. Better candidates will discuss the impact of SJC's hearings and recommendations, the threat and use of the filibuster in the Senate. This might be linked to the "nuclear option" and compromise agreed for the Bush appointments between moderate Republicans and Democrats. The importance of gender/racial and religious balance of the Court might be discussed with the Roberts Court placed in this context. "Confirmability" might be recognised as a further consideration upon appointments with reference to the composition of the Senate, filibuster and cloture votes. An attempt should be made to rank the importance of these factors in order to reach the highest mark in the assessment objective.

To reach the top of level 4 candidates will be able to evaluate the relative importance of a range of factors rather than writing a list. There will be an appreciation of the shared nature of this process and the complexity that this contributes to the process.

**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 the top of level 4, candidates will have made good use of paragraphs to separate their arguments and have used the introduction and conclusion to good effect. At level 2 and below, candidates will make frequent and intrusive spelling and grammatical mistakes. The essay will lack focus and be disorganised.

**8 Assess the role of the Supreme Court in the defence of rights and liberties. [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 the role of the Supreme Court in defending civil rights and liberties. This will include those relating to some of the following: race, religion, gender, sexual orientation, freedom of speech and expression. Look for a good range of well-worked and up to date examples such as developments since 9/11 with the Patriot Act and rulings such as *Boumediene v Bush*, *Hamdan v Rumsfeld* and others re rights such as *DC v Heller*, (*guns*) *Morse v Frederick* (free speech) and *Baze v Rees* and *Kennedy v Louisiana* (death penalty). Reference may be made to landmark rulings from the past. Expect *Brown v Board of Education* and *Roe v Wade*. In order to reach the higher mark bands however candidates should go beyond rulings from the Warren Court and Burger Courts. Better candidates will display a knowledge and understanding of the Rehnquist and Roberts Courts, their composition and voting blocs upon the Court.

To reach the top of level 4 candidates may separate rights and liberties into categories such as political rights or the rights of the accused. There will be a wide range of examples to illustrate arguments with reference to developments after 9/11.

**AO2:** Expect candidates to evaluate the effectiveness of the Supreme Court in safeguarding rights and liberties. This will include: the Supreme Court's use of judicial review. Arguments should be separated to illustrate those instances where the Court has defended liberties and rights (such as above) and in others such as *Miranda*, *Gideon* and more recent rulings (*Texas v Lawrence*) and cases where rights have not been protected, eg *Arizona v Fulminante* (admissible evidence), *Gonzales v Carhart* (partial birth abortion), *Bollinger v Gratz* and *Adarand v Peña* (affirmative action). Discussion may extend to the limited enforcement powers of the Court and the need for further support in order to protect rights (from the legislature and executive, the need for a rights culture). The impact of the Bush and Obama appointments and the present outlook of the Court with the pivotal role of Justice Kennedy too would provide great scope for discussion of key issues.

To reach the top of level 4 candidates will consider the case for and against the Court. This may invite references to other branches of federal government. There will be an attempt to reach a judgement. This may invite consideration of other factors such as the role played by political culture, the media and pressure groups.

**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 the top of level 4, candidates will have made good use of paragraphs to separate their arguments and have used the introduction and conclusion to good effect. At level 2 and below, candidates will make frequent and intrusive spelling 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 2010