

Examiners' Report

June 2015

GCE Government and Politics 6GP03 3A

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June 2015

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Introduction

As in other recent series this paper saw a pleasing level of focus on contemporary events from many candidates, particularly on education, the economy, transport and penal policy. Most candidates focused on post-2010 Politics, particularly the topic of law and order where candidates tended to concentrate on historic content and thus on more contemporary developments.

Following on from the above point the Law and Order essay was less popular than previously, with the education essay proving more attractive. This is perhaps understandable since they will have experienced the majority of their secondary education under the coalition. This question was noticeable in that many candidates had strong personal views which in some cases distracted from the issue of the degree of 'transformation'. Equally a pleasing number of candidates were able to explore 'transformation' and make a clear line of argument.

Choice and quality across the short response questions were quite even. A number of candidates were caught out by failing to closely read the instructions to question 5 which clearly specified disagreements between the coalition and opposition, rather than within the coalition. Very few candidates missed the 'domestic' in Q1, 'using examples' in Q5 and the plural of 'governments' in Q6, so in general they did stick closely to the questions asked.

Candidates must remain vigilant in their attempts to respond to answering the question. This allows them to achieve maximum marks whilst making the most effective use of their time.

It was pleasing once more to see few candidates eschewing a political approach in favour of a geographical (Question 4), sociological (Question 7) or any other study-related one. In general there was a strong political focus.

Balance remained critical to achieving Level 3 in essay responses. In those short responses where it was requested, only a small number of candidates attempted wholly one-sided responses. Candidates also noted previous feedback on the balance between breadth and depth, with only a few offering a series of underdeveloped points.

Synoptic structure was generally strong with greater use of direct contrast of views, over the indirect 'all of one side then all of the other' approach. Equally however there was some slip back on synopticity in terms of specifically ascribing views to those who hold them. Too many opposing arguments were credited to 'it could be argued that', rather than to the individual parties involved, or to other relevant groups.

A final point is the varying level of accuracy of statistics cited by candidates—noticeably on question 2 where HS2 was confidently stated to cost anywhere from tens of millions to hundreds of billions, to creating anything from hundreds of jobs to tens of thousands, and cutting the journey time from Manchester to London to between thirty minutes and three hours.

Question 1

This was the least popular of the short questions but was attempted by a good number of candidates.

The key elements to success were recognition of the focus on 'domestic' and 'since 2010', and the use of argument and evidence over assertion particularly in terms of the clarity of the link to 'stimulating growth'. For example candidates who explained why the deficit might lead to a drag on growth did rather better than those who simply stated the fact and left the reader to work out how.

The coalition's focus on austerity and cutting the deficit arising from the financial situation in 2010 was the most popular area for consideration and many candidates were able to link this to the effects on growth. A lack of consumer confidence and the high rates of unemployment creating a vicious cycle were also cited. Many candidates attempted to argue that a lack of government control over interest rates was partly to blame but very few did this convincingly since they tended to rely on an assumption that the Bank of England had prevented them from being cut low enough to fuel growth.

Level 1 responses were rare, but generally failed to address the question by focusing on pre-2010, or general economic factors.

Level 2 responses were generally characterised by an over-emphasis on a single point such as austerity, or a tendency to cite two or three relevant points whilst failing to provide sufficient evidence on the government's ability to stimulate growth.

Level 3 responses considered a range of factors and offered a clear line of argument to link them to sluggish growth since 2010. The candidates showed a greater awareness of specific policies arising from austerity that might limit growth, and of how low confidence or unemployment might create a vicious cycle.

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Question 2 ☒

Question 3 ☒

Question 4 ☒

Question 5 ☒

There have been a number of domestic factors which have limited the governments ability to stimulate growth.

The first most obvious one is the ongoing internal financial crisis, with the UK in huge debt and austerity measures in place.

The government has undergone huge cuts to public departments and this has also meant the scrapping of some big infrastructure programmes. The government has been reducing spending in areas like business and innovation, with the withdrawal of or the reduction of government grants has led to in certain parts of the UK ^{with} increased unemployment. The bank bail out in 2008 has also made the banks much more cautious in handing out loans to businesses which has had an effect on growth. The financial crisis has also made foreign firms or countries ^{many} increase their investing in the UK, as the UK is reliant on foreign companies investing here and creating employment. Another factor which may have impeded growth is the bank of England's policy of lowering ~~the~~ interest rates to 0.5%, while this might be good for people in the UK paying off their loans. It has however meant foreign countries choose to invest elsewhere or keep their money in other countries as the interest payment is considerably lower in the UK.



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Examiner Comments

This response has a reasonable point on government policy, albeit one that would benefit from a clearer link to the drag on growth. The bankers' points are not in the mark scheme but are creditable if brief. The final point however gleans little credit as low interest rates are generally accepted as promoting growth and any suggestion to the contrary would have to be clearly argued through.

Final mark 8.



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Examiner Tip

Where a question specifically asks about 'limiting' it is important to ensure that all points are clearly linked to limitations.

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The first ^{factor} ~~reason~~ why governments have failed ^{or limited} to stimulate growth in the economy is because of high unemployment when they came in of 2.5 million, as a result of the recession. This meant that fewer people were earning and as a result, there was less consumption in the economy which is why there was stagnant growth in from 2010-2012, or one of the main factors at least. We've seen what raising ~~to~~ reducing unemployment can do do growth over the last few years with unemployment coming down to 1.86 million and subsequently, growth has been 2.3 and 2.6% in 2013-2014, the highest in the G7.

The second ^{factor} ~~reason~~ why governments have failed ^{or limited} to stimulate growth is due to their austerity programme and the need to reduce the deficit through 80% in cuts in spending and 20% through tax rises. The spending cuts have led to a loss in jobs which have a negative impact on growth. But as well as this, schemes such as 'Building Schools for the Future' has been scrapped. This leads to a reduction in investment which has a negative impact on growth through a fall in GDP output.

A third ^{factor} ~~reason~~ why the government has been limited in achieving economic growth

is due to earnings growth and productivity. For the majority of the period up to 2014, inflation had been above earnings growth which has put a squeeze on people's real wages. This has led to less spending in the economy and people simply can't afford to live. The so called 'cost of living crisis', that Labour have continually reiterated. Again, we can see this has a big impact on growth as since 2013, ~~in~~ late 2013, earnings growth has gone positive and the economy, GDP growth rate has risen significantly.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This is a good example of a candidate whose points are concise, and who is not afraid to use less common arguments where they can still be clearly tied to the specific question. Two of the three points are not on the mark scheme, and were rarely used by other candidates, but were nevertheless creditable.

Final mark 13



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

The accuracy of the answer is more important than any consideration of essay length or popularity with other candidates.

Question 2

This was the most popular of the short responses, perhaps reflecting the level of current debate surrounding it.

Whilst the question comes under the transport element of the environment topic, economic arguments were still perfectly acceptable and many candidates showed a pleasing level of awareness that both the economic and environmental case for HS2 was a matter of debate. A number of candidates also drew creditable parallels between the case for HS2 and the alternative case for a third runway at Heathrow Airport.

The biggest discriminator between responses was the level and accuracy of the specific evidence offered, and how well that evidence was linked to clear arguments.

Level 1 responses were rare although a very small number of candidates focused on transport generally rather than on HS2 in particular.

Level 2 responses were sometimes too one-sided to progress to level 3 or overly reliant on assertion rather than argument and evidence. For example, it is true that some see HS2 as creating a 'northern powerhouse' but simply mentioning the term is not a substitute for drawing a clear line of coherent argument between this project and that concept.

Most Level 3 responses covered both economic and environmental arguments and showed an awareness that the two were not always opposed. Many candidates deployed convincing and accurate statistics, and showed an awareness of the specific groups advancing particular points. Whilst synopticity is not a specific requirement for short responses such is creditable.

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Question 2 ☒

Question 3 ☒

Question 4 ☒

Question 5 ☒

Explain the arguments for and against the High Speed Rail link

The Arguments For High Speed Rail link have been that it will bring about economic benefits as more people can come to the UK as it's faster. Also more tourists will be able to get in the country through one ~~the~~ link.

~~Answer the~~ Arguments against the High Speed Rail link have been it will cause too much noise pollution and will contribute to green house gases. Also it has been argued that it will cost too much money for Britain as the Air port expansion was put to a halt in terms of how much it would effect the environment which can be applied to the high Speed Rail link.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Comments

The arguments here are valid but are very tenuous, with little evidence provided in support.

Final mark 5



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Examiner Tip

Developing the points made is key to progressing up the range of marks.

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The High Speed Rail Link is a controversial subject for many reasons. One of the main reasons the coalition government opted to support HS2 was because it is seen as a greener alternative to airport expansion, and the coalition had promised not to allow an extra runway at Heathrow and to be the 'greenest government ever', so they supported HS2 as a link for the country. However many say that overall HS2 is not much greener than an extra runway since the amount of greenhouse gases and destruction to countryside that will occur in the building of HS2 are significant.

Another reason that there is support for HS2 is because it is believed that by creating a high speed link in the country the economy in areas where HS2 passes will boom since it is easier for businessmen and possibly cargo

to get to and from the areas thus increasing areas which have a lower ^{average} income than London ~~by~~ ^{as} such as Gravesend which is on 10% lower. However this argument is criticised since it is based on the probability that people will want to invest these areas, and that if the government wanted to aid these areas, expanding airports or by building new ones near them would have a much greater effect from ~~attract~~ investment from foreign countries such as Japan that already has large investments in the UK.

Lastly a reason against the building of the HS2 rail is that it is a very expensive project costing the treasury a considerable amount of funds from the tax payer, who many believe that instead of investing the millions of pounds into the HS2 that if the government wished to aid the communities they should invest directly into the areas rather than HS2.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

Although the points in this response are brief, the direct contrast within paragraphs is highly effective in demonstrating awareness of the competing arguments, and this carries it over into level 3.

Final mark 11



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Alternate points are not only a useful synoptic approach for essays, but also an effective method of showing balance within short responses which require them.

Question 3

This was the second most popular short response question, and many candidates showed an impressive specific knowledge regarding anti-terrorism legislation since 2001. More variable was the extent to which candidates linked this to the question of consensus. There was a lack of clear understanding here of where and which parties have agreed or disagreed and why, e.g. the contrast between the approaches of the Labour governments and the coalition, and tensions within the coalition.

The various attempts to change the number of days suspects can be held without trial was a popular choice, with some variations in accuracy. TPIMs and control order, ID cards, and the Snoopers' Charter were also discussed. Some candidates showed the ability to make links to very recent events such as the response to the rise of ISIS.

Level 1 responses were uncommon, but were generally seen where a candidate was determined to write about law and order policy in general, rather than tackling terrorism.

Level 2 responses were often characterised by clear awareness of different anti-terrorism measures. Other level 2 responses made such a link but in an overly one-sided way.

Level 3 responses combined clear awareness of measures taken since 2001 with a good understanding of where there has been both consensus and a lack of it, often linked to an understanding of different party approaches to civil liberties in general as well as to practical concerns over particular policies.

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Question 5 ☒

When Blair came to power in 1997 he wanted to adopt a more conservative approach to crime; to be tougher on crime, in order to bring the Labour to a more middle ground. Despite taking a tougher approach, Blair did remain left-wing in his approach by tackling the causes of crime ^{creating} the famous phrase "tough on crime, tough on the causes of crime". Furthermore, with terrorism Blair decided to adopt a tough stance. For example, Blair wanted to introduce the ~~By taking his New Labour approach, Blair established changes such as~~ ~~Some~~ ~~that~~ which enabled disadvantaged families policy of holding suspected terrorists 28 days without trial. ~~the~~



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

The sole mark here is granted for a passing reference to Blair being tough on terrorism, but overall this response is very brief, is not directed to the question, and suggests major timing issues.

Final mark 1



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Timing issues create several problems, including reading the question at a rush which often results in not properly addressing it as well as producing only a short and tenuous response.

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A cross party consensus on ~~the~~ tackling terrorism since 2001 is shown by the fact that both the Labour government and the coalition government took an authoritarian approach. Labour's authoritarian approach was strongly conveyed from the Terrorism Act 2006 where the 'promotion' of terrorism was banned which infringed on freedom of speech. The coalition showed consensus to this when with the 'Trojan horse' issue the coalition put in an authoritarian method of preventing perceived radicalised UK citizens from returning from Syria showing to a mild extent cross party consensus.

On the other hand a point where there was a lack of cross party consensus was when the Conservatives in the coalition wished to bring in the 'snoopers policy' where by the government could monitor anyone's internet access unrestricted were opposed by the Liberal Democrats from within the coalition who saw

the policy as a huge invasion of privacy. This revealed a large lack of cross-party consensus on tackling ~~The most~~ terrorism.

The most significant reveal of cross-party consensus was in 2014/2015 with the problem of ~~radical~~ radicalisation arising and MPs from all 3 main parties at the time showed support for the blocking of radicalised UK citizens from returning to the United Kingdom.

In conclusion there is generally a considerable extent to how much there has been a cross party consensus over tackling terrorism especially with the problems of the trojan horse and with radicalisation.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This is a relatively short response for a level 3 mark but the candidate benefits from a clear and accurate approach to balance, showing awareness of the importance of 'to what extent'. The focus on 'consensus' is also tight and helpful.

Final mark 11



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Never produce a one-sided response to a 'to what extent' question.

Question 4

It was pleasing to see the vast majority of candidates who tackled this question avoiding a general explanation of globalisation and instead focusing on its economic impact on the UK. Resource price fluctuations, international organisations, multinational corporations, and the impact of global crisis were all well covered.

Candidates tended to distinguish themselves when they clearly linked these issues to the impacts on the UK economy, and how well they then drew the line to economic policy making, identifying the ways in which UK governments might find themselves limited or restrained.

Very few candidates focused on the positive impacts of globalisation for economic policy making in the UK, although this was not necessary to obtain the full range of marks. A brief accurate definition of economic globalisation was useful and creditable.

Level 1 responses either failed to recognise that this was a question about the economic impacts of globalisation, or the candidates had encountered timing problems.

Level 2 responses either showed clear awareness of the impact of globalisation on the UK economy without fully developing the link to policy making, or covered only a narrow range of points. Some level 2 responses focused entirely on different aspects of membership of the EU, for example.

Level 3 responses drew clear links from aspects of economic globalisation to specific policy implications on a range of areas, most commonly tax, trade, interest rates and financial stability, and were often able to evidence these with specific pertinent examples of government economic policies.

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Since joining the EU in the 1970s, the UK has been part of a revolutionary growth in economic dependency - it could now be said that the health of the British economy is dependent on the health of economies in the EU and throughout the world.

In 1997, just a few days after winning the general election, new

Prime Minister Tony Blair and his Chancellor, Gordon Brown, ~~transferred~~ granted independence to the Bank of England ~~in~~ in the matter of interest rates. Interest rate control was a powerful tool of economic control for the government, but many European countries had already granted independence to their banks - the connected nature of these economies led Britain to move more in line with its neighbours.

Foreign investment has become more important - therefore, the government occasionally gives tax breaks to them to encourage international investment in the UK. For example, Chancellor George Osborne gave tax breaks to ~~the~~ a production company ~~for~~ various film production companies in order to encourage them to ~~film~~^{shoot} the new 'Star Wars' film in the UK.

In essence, globalisation has ~~not~~ necessitated greater controls on the ~~Briti~~ British economy - because, as the EU have already experienced with the financial ruin of Greece, ~~one economy~~

~~It~~ affects them all, it is clear
that one the failure of one economy
can affect many others.



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Examiner Comments

The first main point here is weak in terms of its link to globalisation, and is more of a general 'why governments have less control over the economy' argument. The second and third, more relevant, points, are briefer than they could have been.

Final mark 7



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Examiner Tip

Irrelevant arguments do not cost marks directly, but they do cost time which limits the opportunities to gather marks with creditable material.

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Globalisation is the increased integration of the global economy through goods and services as well as the movement of labour and capital.

One implication is the fact that it has taken monetary policy out of the hands of the government or MPC. The recent hiking of the oil price has placed huge disinflationary pressure on the UK as well as the global economy. Current UK inflation is -0.1% and this has led to the MPC to push back ^{their} decision on whether to raise interest rates or not. This is a great example of how globalisation and our exposure to international commodity markets has effected economic policy making in the UK, that decisions are made on external factors, not domestic factors such as productivity and earnings growth.

A second limitation is that it has made it harder for the UK government to implement fiscal policy and especially in regard to being able to tax large TNC's such as Apple, Amazon and Starbucks. These companies can move, manipulate and divert profits to tax havens such as

Luxembourg in order to reduce their tax liabilities. And although a parties have said that they can claw this money back eg: Labour said they could get £75 billion from them, the IFS have said these numbers have simply been 'plucked out of thin air'. Globalisation has led to a big 'tax gap' of 6.8% of tax revenue, resulting in a loss of £39bn to the treasury.

A third limitation of globalisation on economic policy has been the inability for the government to regulate its own industry's. For example, the banking industry is now open to a new international style of banking brought about by the Basel Accords, especially that of 'Basel III' which looks at improving regulation within the financial system. Furthermore, the UK being a part of the EU has led the UK government losing sovereignty and its ability to make national decisions on trade and budget spending. Globalisation has led to more decisions being taken on a supranational basis, with the UK unable to do what it domestically would like.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This candidate shows a particularly strong link between their general arguments and their specific examples, using the latter to help address the question of the impact on policy making.

Final mark 13



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Linking relevant and accurate examples to arguments makes a significant contribution to securing a good mark.

Question 5

This question was of mid-range popularity but was answered well by those candidates who responded to its specific demands. A minority of candidates missed the focus on disagreements between government and opposition. Thus this question saw the widest range in quality of response across all of the short questions, with the most level one responses.

Where candidates did engage with the question the main discriminator was the level of detail concerning the different reasons for disagreement, and the strength of the link to the specific examples used.

It should be noted that, in accordance with previous series, candidates were allowed latitude on 'welfare policy' and, whilst benefits was as expected the main area of focus, material on health and education was also credited.

Level 1 responses almost invariably focused on disagreements within the coalition. These received some credit for identifying relevant policy areas, such as the bedroom tax or tuition fees.

Level 2 responses covered relevant areas of disagreement but tended to focus on a relatively narrow area of policy, such as different aspects of the NHS reorganisation.

Level 3 responses covered a range of relevant policy disagreements and linked each to specific reasons for disagreement, often showing sophisticated understanding of the individual criticisms of changes to child benefit, the introduction of the spare room subsidy or bedroom tax, and the implementation of the universal credit. Some also creditably discussed the reasons for policy disagreements over specific health or education policies.

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The main reason for disagreements on welfare betw between the Coalition and Ed Miliband's Labour opposition is an ideological one. Despite the view that with the rise of New Labour, the Conservatives and Labour have become similar, there are still clear cut differences between them.

The Coalition government spearheaded a number of welfare cuts. For example, the ~~the~~ removal of the Education Maintenance Allowance (EMA), which was paid out to students of higher education from low-income backgrounds. Despite ~~the~~ the apparent 'death' of Clause 4 socialism under Blair, Labour still disagree strongly with this kind of radical change, believing it to be hurt the most needy in society.

This can also be seen with the so-called 'bedroom tax' (officially the spare room subsidy), a tax ~~is~~ levied on anyone with an unoccupied bedroom in their home. Despite being ~~as~~ a party that traditionally favours taxation as a method of raising ~~cap~~ capital, Labour described the bedroom tax as 'cruel', ~~and~~ and pledged to end it immediately if they won in 2015.

~~Labour tend to favour taxes~~

Both old Labour and new tend to favour taxes that are in some way 'redistributive', in that they help to create a more equal society. This is done by taking people who are well off and using that money to fund public services and, notably, welfare.

Here is the 'root of their ideological objection to ~~the~~ Conservative-led welfare policies - the Conservative belief in the individual responsibility of the citizen - they shouldn't require state support if they are able to work.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

The examples here are solid and relevant but are not matched by the quality of the analysis of 'why' on the first two points which keeps this response within level 2. Had the candidate moved beyond 'hurt the most needy' and 'poor' and matched the level of analysis seen in the final point they would likely have reached level 3.

Final mark 9



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Where a question asks candidates to 'explain why using examples', the quality of both the examples and the analysis of why is important to reaching level 3.

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The coalition government introduced one Welfare Reform Act in 2012, which had strong opposition from the Labour government. The Act had various new welfare reforms, probably the most significant being the introduction of Universal Credit. This is a computerised system which combines 6 benefits into 1 single payment. However, it has been highly criticised by Labour even though it was supposed to make it easier for claimants to move in/out of work. Firstly, it has been criticised for being late in the delivery of the whole system. ~~He was a~~ Iain Duncan

Smith promised the system would be up and running by 2013, but has pushed this back to 2017. Secondly, Michael Meacher and Ed Balls have criticised the scheme of being too expensive as it costs around £20 billion to fully setup. Lastly, there have been problems with the rollout of the benefits in areas where Universal Credit has started. Margaret Hodge called the rollouts an "unmitigated disaster".

Next, there was huge opposition between the Spare Room Subsidy or 'the Bedroom Tax' as it was dubbed by Labour. This tax ~~charges~~^{es} people living in a council house if they have a spare room. 2/3 of the 660,000 people affected are disabled which was a big concern of the Labour party. Furthermore, Angela Jackson criticised the tax as she stated there are not

enough single bedroomed council houses to move into.

Lastly, Labour has criticised the introduction of Personal Independent Payments which replaced the Disability Living Allowance. This introduces means testing for anyone claiming disability benefits by a private company Atos. Labour have criticised it as it is essentially privatisation as Atos makes money out of finding non-disabled people, which has been ~~critic~~ opposed strongly by left wing members such as Dennis Skinner. Also in June 2015, there have been criticisms by Labour over the rollout of the benefit.



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Examiner Comments

This is a strong answer with a range of clear and well-argued points that effectively link analysis and examples.

Final mark 15

Question 6

This was mid-range in popularity for the three essay questions, and many candidates performed very well. Very few took the time to specifically lay out the nature of 'the environmental challenges'.

Balance was important here and it was pleasing to see many candidates displaying awareness of both the successes and failures of both pre- and post-2010 governments.

The most common weakness across many responses was the lack of synopticity, with many combining a strong level of understanding about specific views with a tendency to identify where those views come from.

The weakest candidates stuck to generalities, often guided by their perception of which governments were 'green' and which were not, without supporting evidence.

Mid-range responses were characterised either by a specific and balanced response that focused on one specific government, or a response that covered multiple governments and specific policies but needed further demonstration of effectiveness. Some responses contended that one government was successful and another not so, offering strong evidence to back up each proposition but ignoring a deal of evidence to the contrary.

The strongest responses recognised the successes and failures of governments before and after 2010, linking these to evidence of impact in a developed and highly nuanced way.

In terms of synopticity the most successful candidates recognised the potential mileage in the opinions of different parties, pressure groups and international organisations, and applied these views to critiques of specific policies.

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Chosen Question Number:

Question 6 ☒

Question 7 ☒

Question 8 ☒

Since 1997 the awareness of bad climate change and global warming has been increased. Every country all over the world are aware of these growing problems and know that measures need to be taken in order to help the growing problem. Also since 1997 the improvements in technology have helped us start to overcome these problems.

Every new government has set environmental targets to help reduce CO₂ and greenhouse gas emissions. However the extent to which these targets are met can be questioned. For example the 2010 coalition wanted to reach the target of reducing emissions by 30% by 2020. The Liberal Democrats want to raise this target with further ambition to 50%. They also agreed to complying with EU environmental standards and their targets. However these targets have not been reached.

In recent years many projects have been discussed to help improve the state of the environment.

Firstly the High Speed Rail Link, to reduce CO₂ emissions that would have been higher if other method of transport had been used e.g. a plane journey. This expensive yet environmentally friendly method of transport is predicted to be a completed project between 2032 and 2038.

Secondly there has been increased investments from governments since 1997 into renewable energy sources. For example the expansion of wind energy farms both offshore and onshore. These are greener ways of producing

energy instead of from coal burners and the use of fossil fuels.

Solar power has also been increasingly encouraged in households in order to reduce energy bills and the usage of non-renewable energy sources.

However, to 'keep the lights on' in UK renewable energy sources are simply not enough to power everything. Therefore the recent 2010 coalition government have invested in the building of Hinkley Point, a nuclear power station. Despite the risks of the installation of the power station. It is apparently vital that the UK have this. Especially considering corrupt countries are currently providing us with energy, e.g. Russia, and effectively therefore have the power to hold us to ransom. Therefore it is believed the UK will have more

control if this is built. Despite this not being a renewable or 'green' energy source.

Also since 1997 increases in Green Taxes upon Energy Bills have been done to help fund more investment into renewable energy sources. This has also been done to encourage people to lower personal usage of energy, therefore they have to pay less. This will eventually help improvements in energy sources.

Now governments have set targets to ensure that all new homes have smart grids and meters in order to monitor energy use per-household. This will motivate house owners to try and decrease the amount of energy they are using. By 2020 the 2010-2015 coalition stated that all homes must have smart-grids and smart-meters.

The investment into new smart technology over recent years has been incredible. Electric cars are now on the market, which do not use fuel and therefore reduce the usage of coal and oil.

which are non-renewable energy sources. The government have encouraged consumption of these products by subsidising them to customers. Also the investment of charging-car points across the country has increased. At one point the idea got scrapped back in 2013, then got reintroduced.

~~It has been de~~ No decision has been made regarding expansion of runways at either Heathrow or Gatwick. This is because there are great implications regarding the additional air pollution from this, that would damage the environment further. Also this would further disagree with European Air Quality Standards.

Any return on the investment into environmentally friendly energy resources or infrastructure projects will not see return for a long time. firstly because they have to be built, e.g. HS2 or the nuclear

power station, these are extremely long processes and may take decades to complete them all.

All parties and recent governments since 1997 have made sure that movements towards a better environment has been ~~made~~ suggested or started. Therefore there has been wide-spread consensus over the idea that the changes have to be made, and small differences across party's on how this should be done.

Since 1997 governments have made extreme investments to tackle environmental problems. However, throughout this period it cannot be stated how effective they have been until these projects are completed and start having positive effects upon the environment. But yes, the governments have started to effectively tackle the environmental challenges it is faced with,

especially more recent governments.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This candidate lists much relevant policy which takes them high within level 2 but the response is not specific enough on pre-2010 governments.

Final mark $8+7+6+5 = 26$



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Where a question specifically asks about 'governments' it is necessary to give roughly equal attention to the different governments in terms of both time and specific detail.

Put a cross in the box ☒ indicating the question that you have chosen.
If you change your mind, put a line through the box ☒
and then indicate your new question with a cross ☒.

Chosen Question Number:

Question 6 ☒

Question 7 ☒

Question 8 ☒

One of the major environmental challenges facing governments since 1997 has been climate change.

Labour took a major role in climate change discussions in the 1997 World Summit in Kyoto where it was agreed that the EU should reduce greenhouse gas emissions by 8%. The agreement ran from 2005 - 12 and this target has been achieved and surpassed, but it is not clear how much government policy has been responsible for this. Environmental groups point out that the EU's greenhouse gas emissions have fallen by over 20% but during this time, emissions have risen worldwide by over 20% as heavy industry has moved to developing nations.

To combat climate change Labour focussed on two main areas, fuel production and transport.

Regarding transport their plan was to reduce car use by the end of their tenure & to achieve this they introduced high fuel duty on petrol/diesel*. In 2000 High fuel protections blockaded depths & revenues bringing the country to a standstill, leading to Gordon Brown facing his first big environmental challenge by coming into protest & lowering duty levels. Labour also introduced differential car tax (VED) to encourage people to buy vehicles with small engines (hybrid & electric vehicles pay £0 p.a. those with larger engines up to about £300 p.a.). This policy may have had some limited success, but by 2010, car use had risen by 17-1%.

Labour also promoted alternative fuel sources, to move away from unsustainable fossil fuels. They tried a programme of biomass energy production, which failed, mainly

* to make people think twice about making unnecessary car journeys, therefore cutting emissions.

due to the large quantities of land needed for biomass production. This took away agricultural land food prices rocketed. The policy was abandoned.

Even despite these setbacks the Labor Party continued with legislation regarding climate change, bringing in the Climate Change Act (2008) introducing targets for CO₂ emissions to fall (26% by 2020, 80% by 2050).

A labor success was the Climate Change Levy (2001) which imposed taxes on businesses for energy use (and subsidised green energy projects) which a firm paid in tax to saved in reduced energy use, although some high energy use traditional industries found this difficult. Energy use dropped yearly by on average 2%, despite the Taxpayers Alliance calling it a 'skettle tax' and saying it made no difference to environmental targets.

When the coalition came to power in 2010 they promised to be the 'Greenest Government Ever', putting environmental policies high on their agenda.

The coalition backed labor's policy to introduce

The HS2 rail link to Birmingham, as rail is considered greener than road / air transport. & the pleasure & relief of green ^{people} groups such as Friends of the Earth, cancelled plans for an extra runway at Heathrow, raising hopes that they would be true to their word. However following a report it now looks likely that there will be another runway in the South East (either at Heathrow or Gatwick). Environmentalists say ~~now~~ that the Coalition put the economy before the environment in this case, with the extra jobs / business / tourism generated, before the environment and people & wildlife affected by more noise & pollution.

Another environmental challenge is trying to achieve the EU's target of 15% of all fuel production coming from renewables by 2020.

When Labour left power, renewables accounted for about 1.7% of all fuel production methods, with subsidies for onshore wind, offshore wind & solar under the Coalition this figure has risen to about 4.5% (still a long way off target). The Coalition stopped subsidies for onshore wind, upsetting their Lib Dem element who felt there should be much more wind power.

use in the UK. Conservative backbench MPs agreed with the stopping of the offshore wind subsidy fearing backlash from constituents who did not want them on their coastlines, saying they were an eyesore and citing wildlife impacts due to bird strikes. They are also thought to be unreliable due to the nature of wind.

Offshore wind subsidies continue through, showing a commitment of the Coalition to energy production from renewables. In a bid to reduce fossil fuel use the Coalition championed 'fracking' which although a 'low carbon' energy source, is said to have many negative environmental impacts such as polluting water courses/aquifers according to the Green Party. On energy production it can be said that the Coalition have improved low carbon sourcing but it is negligible the impact it has had on climate change.

The vaccines will introduced by the Coalition to try to combat the spread of bovine TB, has had many critics from the environmental sector such as RSPB saying it is scientifically unproven as a method of control & inhumane. Labour wanted to abolish this policy. They say that the Coalition put economic interests of farmers before environmental

concerns.

Flooding is another environmental issue which the Governments I have failed at. Labour plan on not dredging partly caused the catastrophic floods in Somerset. This was a case of the environment coming before the human population.

To conclude, the environmental successes of all Governments since 1997 have been limited. Environmental policy is not a vote winner, tellingly it was hardly mentioned during the 2015 election campaign - even by the green party. Since 2008, the economy has been government priority.

Regarding the biggest challenge, climate change, it is difficult politically as few people want to drive less, fly less or pay more for fuel. Policies which would actually make an impact would amount to political suicide.

Climate change is a global problem and any cuts to emissions made in the UK are offset by rising levels elsewhere in the world. It is a problem being discussed today in

Australia by Angela Merkel, David Cameron
& other G7 leaders, and it is one with no
easy answers and one which will not go away
any time soon.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Comments

A good range of policy and clear awareness of both successes and limitations with respect to different governments. The one area in which this essay is weak is synopticity.

Final mark $10+9+7+7 = 33$



ResultsPlus

Examiner Tip

To reach level 3 synopticity requires not only a range of views, but specific attribution of those views to the individuals, groups or parties who hold them.

Question 7

This was the least popular of the three essay questions. Those candidates who did attempt generally did well, and most had a strong focus on the 2010-2015 period.

Most candidates focused on penal policy, and there was little discussion of less relevant law and order policies, for example on policing.

Aside from the focus on policy area and time period, the major discriminator here was the degree of evidence presented by the candidates linking law and order policies to the issue of rehabilitation. Often candidates adopted a linear approach, contrasting the liberal attitude of Clarke to the later and 'tougher' policies of Grayling.

The weakest responses were one sided, strongly descriptive (rather than analytical) and insufficiently focused on rehabilitation.

Mid-range responses were characterised by awareness of a wide range of relevant penal policy, but only moderately linked to the specific question of a 'rehabilitation revolution'. Some candidates got side-tracked by the question of how successful the policies were in reducing crime, whilst others were very competent at advancing one side of the debate and could have reached level 3 had they shown a little more balance.

The strongest responses focused on rehabilitation throughout, and made efforts to link different policies back to the impact on rehabilitation. Sophisticated awareness was often shown of tensions between the coalition partners and between different wings of the Conservative party.

In terms of synopticity a surprisingly small number of candidates discussed alternative viewpoints advanced by the opposition. Whilst crime is often seen as a consensus issue criticisms of the 'rehabilitation revolution' as a cost saving exercise, or political soundbite, could clearly have been issues equally relevant. The views of pressure groups such as the Howard League for Penal Reform, as well as those of victims' rights charities, also offered fertile ground that was too often left untouched.

Put a cross in the box ☒ indicating the question that you have chosen.
If you change your mind, put a line through the box ☒
and then indicate your new question with a cross ☒.

Chosen Question Number:

Question 6 ☒

Question 7 ☒

Question 8 ☒

The 'Rehabilitation Revolution' was a policy of former & first Coalition Minister of Justice, Clarke. He attempted to carry through the Conservative 'has a noodle' image, established in 2006 by Conservative leader David Cameron. Its implementation is questionable & its support undeniably varied both within the Coalition & in Parliament in general.

Clarke was appointed to please the Liberal Democrats in coalition as his view on crime was focused more on the causes of crime & rehabilitating criminals. The Liberal Democrats were content with his policies & called him the '6th Libdem minister', while more right wing members of the coalition viewed ~~him~~ Clarke as too soft or even left wing in his ~~beliefs~~ approach.

It can be argued that the 'Rehabilitation revolution' was implemented in practice as more criminals who had committed lower level crimes were given community sentences. This was because Clarke saw these as more effective than custodial sentences. Only 40% of those who had done community sentences reoffended in 2009 ~~and~~ between ages 18-24, ~~&~~ in comparison to 54% of the same demographic in the same year who had been in prison.

The view that community sentencing was to be the way forward was also supported by the ~~more~~ traditional ~~Labour~~ members of the Labour party due

to their core ideology which focuses on ~~crime~~ causes of crime, rather than on punishment. However, Clarke's other ~~policy~~ proposal which was to decrease sentences by 50%. if there is an ~~&~~ early guilty plea was called 'soft' ~~by~~ ^{by} the Labour party's shadow minister of Justice, Khan ~~as the Labour~~ ~~as the Labour~~ party did not want to revert to being viewed as the ~~party~~ ^{party} that is 'soft' on crime but one that 'tough on crime & tough on the causes of crime'; an image branded by Blair & the new Labour movement^{*1}.

The Rehabilitation revolution arguably continued ~~after Clarke~~ ~~into the 1990s~~ ^{after Clarke} was replaced by Grayling in a reshuffle. Grayling stated that Rehabilitation should be continued but through private firms ~~not~~ ^{not} interfering & being paid by results, thus incentivising them to increase their standards of services^{*3}. ~~Rehabilitation~~ ^{Rehabilitation} would not work if it were to continue in prisons, but Grayling did not cut such programmes & also encouraged the greater use of custodial sentences to ~~make~~ ^{re-establish} prison ~~into~~ as a 'deterrent' once more. This was

called counterproductive by critics as rehabilitation cannot take place in ~~the~~ prison where overcrowding is a problem. ~~the prison~~ ^{the prison} recidivism rates are over 50%, ~~showing~~ ^{reinforcing} that 'prison is a way of making bad people worse' (Douglas Hurd). ~~the~~ Hurd stated this in the context of the 'College of Crime' where by lower level criminals surrounded by higher level criminals can learn ~~from~~ ^{how} to ~~the~~ commit higher, more severe crimes, thus graduating onto ~~the~~ higher level criminal behaviour.

To conclude, the 'Rehabilitation Revolution' was implemented to an extent, as exemplified through Clarke's greater use of community sentencing & Grayling's acceptance of rehabilitation & policy of it to be supplied by private firms, despite his generally more right wing view. However, the revolution did come to a stand-still under Grayling due to his more authoritarian, ~~more~~ ^{more} pro-prison stance on ~~law & justice~~ ^{law & order} policy.

*1. In addition to Khan's criticisms, other, more right wing members of the

Conservative party, who were more content with Grayling's appointment, stated that policies such as community sentencing & rehabilitative policies were also soft as ~~the criminals~~ ^{they do} ~~do not~~ not provide enough justice for victims of crime as they still allow for criminals to ~~be~~ operate in society & are not kept off of the streets where they can continue their criminal behaviour.

*2. The Labour party also stated that due to Grayling's appointment as Minister of Justice, the Conservative party experienced a greater push to the Right than was expected or even promised & once called Ukip clowns, but stated that the Conservatives had 'joined the circus'.

*3. However, Grayling also stated that those in need of rehabilitation would have to seek out the help they needed themselves, making it more difficult to reform ~~any~~ ^{criminals} & to gather any statistics on how many criminals would,

thereafter, be removed. Also, it was pointed out that criminals could 'relapse' during treatment, or even continue to commit crimes after ~~having undergone~~ treatment as measuring recidivism after rehabilitation ~~can~~ ^{has} proved to be difficult.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Comments

This response starts very promisingly and has clear synopticity, but weakens by its one-sidedness, placing it in high level 2.

Final mark $7+7+8+6 = 28$



ResultsPlus

Examiner Tip

Balance is a key component to reaching level 3 in essay questions, as no essay questions on this paper require one sided responses.

Put a cross in the box ☒ indicating the question that you have chosen.
If you change your mind, put a line through the box ☒
and then indicate your new question with a cross ☒.

Chosen Question Number:

Question 6 ☒

Question 7 ☒

Question 8 ☒

~~The~~

For:

↑ use community sentencing - Prison Govt used sentence.

Restorative justice ✓

Private prisons - rehabilitation lower reoffending

Against:

Stronger under Grayling

Reoffending rate

Literacy rates

Lb Dems lack of influence.

The term "rehabilitation revolution" was used by Ken ~~Q~~ Clarke, a liberal conservative, who was Justice Secretary from 2010 to 2012. This 'softer' approach to law and order was established in the conservative party's manifesto in 2010 and Cameron's 'hug a hoodie' approach ~~has been~~ ^{was} used to make the conservatives appear less ^{authoritarian} ~~harsh~~ towards ^{law + order} ~~criminals~~. ~~But~~ After ^{the formation of} ~~they formed~~ a coalition ~~with~~ with the Liberal Democrats in 2010, there were promises of this "rehabilitation revolution" in order to cut crime and the reoffending rate which

continues to be high at around 27%.

The first measure introduced by the coalition was the increased use of community sentences as it is often believed that prison does not work as it serves as a 'school of crime' for particularly young offenders that have relatively short sentences. This now means that ^{a custodial sentence} ~~or prison~~ is the least used sentence with many more community sentences and fines being given to offenders. It has been argued that this has been successful as the reoffending rate for community sentences is lower at around 20%. Although this does not alone rehabilitate offenders, it helps as part of reintegrating offenders back into society which is key so that they are able to live law abiding lives. In spite of the success of this punishment, 8 out of 10 people, according to a Yougov poll, believe that community sentences are a "soft option" and this may be the reason for why this "revolution" has not gone far enough as the parties wish to reflect public opinion and take a harsher approach.

Another reform introduced by Clarke was restorative justice, a process where victims are able to discuss their experience with the criminal that affected their life. This has been extremely successful with a 90% victim satisfaction rate. It has also greatly helped to rehabilitate offenders as they are able to understand the impact of their crime which

will hopefully mean that they are less likely to reoffend. These plans were also enjoyed cross party support as Labour and the Greens also believe this is an effective tool to use within all prisons. However it is clear that this has only been tested within ^{some} prisons and should go further in order to have a greater impact in reducing crime and improving the future lives of offenders. *

Another promise made by the coalition was more effective rehabilitation programmes within prisons such as ~~drug treat~~ treating drug addiction.

However, despite the ~~re~~ rhetoric of improving rehabilitation programmes, this is extremely difficult to control in practice and requires effective ~~pr~~ workers in prisons to be able to carry this out. A way in which the coalition have sought to do this, in particular the Conservatives, is the introduction of private prisons within the UK. There ~~are~~ Despite criticism from the Labour party, particularly shadow Home secretary Yvette Cooper; ~~A~~ 10 out of 12 private prisons have lower reoffending rates. ~~Furthermore in all prisons there has been~~ This suggests that privatisation has been beneficial for the government as costs fall but also for offenders as providers have more incentive to provide better

quality rehabilitation programmes.

Furthermore, in all prisons, private companies such as Halfords have been working with the prison service on a job provision programme. This means that if offenders complete a training programme within a prison they are given a job guarantee when they leave. This is extremely useful for offenders as they are given the work which provides them with an income and also the skills needed to lead a law abiding life.

On the other hand the fact the replacement of Ken Clarke with Chris Grayling in 2012 led to a harsher approach on prisons, less focused on rehabilitation. For example, this can also, Cameron promised to continue building prisons in 2010 to meet the demands of the growing prison population which is currently at 88,000 and is gradually increasing. This is despite Lord Philip's claims that prisons are "bursting at the seams." This rise in crime may be due to a lack of rehabilitation under the coalition which has not tackled the high reoffending rate.

~~Criticism from the tab~~

The coalition have also been criticised for not providing offenders with the skills needed to be stop reoffending. For example, as over 60% of the offenders in prison have no qualifications and

63% have the maths ability below an 11 year old, it is clear that rehabilitation in prisons is not effective. Despite Theresa May's claims that "prison works", these shocking statistics would suggest otherwise.

The coalition's approach to law and order can also be judged by their reaction to the 2011 riots ~~when~~ for which Cameron described as acts of "pure evil". This ~~was~~ After 1,700 arrests and 1,000 offenders charged, these sentences were on average 25% longer than normal. This is an example of the coalition's harsh approach towards offenders which may also be as a result of public opinion, with ~~over~~ 70% of people believing that these rioters should have any benefits taken away as a result of their crimes. ~~This is the 2011 riots at~~ Despite these riots, the coalition cut the police ~~set~~ budget by 20% in 2011 meaning over 1,000 jobs were lost. This has meant that the police force has been unable to deal with increasing crime and also prisons have not been given enough funding in order to invest in rehabilitation programmes.

To conclude, due to a lack of liberal Democrat influence and Ken Clarke's removal as justice secretary, the coalition's promise of a 'rehabilitation

revolution" has not been implemented in practice. ~~this~~ Instead the coalition followed a policy of harsher policy focusing on retribution as Theresa May stated that people "want to see criminals punished" and have focused on austerity over the programme of reforming the prison service. This has therefore failed to deal with the reoffending rate and alarmingly high prison population.

* This, as well as many other measures, are an example of how the coalition could go further.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Comments

This is a strong answer showing balance, specific policy and effective synopticity, taking it well into level 3.

It is also well written and pleasing to read which is reflected in the AO3 mark. To reach the very highest marks, given the nature of the question, requires more concentration on policy as well as impact.

Final mark $9+9+10+8 = 36$



ResultsPlus

Examiner Tip

AO3 marks are based on a mixture of a clear and well organised structure, a coherent writing style and the effective use of appropriate vocabulary.

Question 8

It is rare for an essay question to focus on education in particular but, despite this, this question proved to be very popular with many candidates keen to consider the record of Michael Gove in particular, and the impact of his policies on their educational formative years.

This proved to be of help to some candidates and a hindrance to others, as some showed a very strong awareness of the ways in which coalition policy both built on and departed from that seen prior to 2010, whilst others were more concerned with how 'good' the policy was than how radical. In some cases these candidates embraced the premise of the question, then dispensed with 'transformation' after the introductory paragraph.

The weakest responses tended to be personal polemics, most often anti-Gove in nature, and were one-sided. Alternatively, the focus was on one particular area of reform, most commonly academies.

Mid-range responses tended to assume, to a greater or lesser degree, that the reform was radical, and then to focus on discussing how that worked in a variety of specific policy areas. These responses advanced higher in terms of marks in direct relations to a greater level of awareness of the aspects of continuity seen in these policies.

The stronger responses focused throughout on the question of transformation, treating the question of 'good or bad' as incidental or irrelevant. They considered, in a very detailed and sophisticated way, the extent to which coalition policies were genuinely new or simply the logical continuation of pre-2010 policy. The expansion of academies, rise in tuition fees, and reform of examinations were all particularly fruitful areas.

Where candidates did recognise that the major question was the degree of reform rather than its 'rightness' this was the most synoptically strong of the essays. Many candidates brought in the views of teaching unions and other relevant groups, and made direct comparisons between the policies of Gove and Morgan and the approaches of others. There was still some use of 'it could be argued that' but less so than in the other essay questions.

Put a cross in the box ☒ indicating the question that you have chosen.
If you change your mind, put a line through the box ☒
and then indicate your new question with a cross ☒.

Chosen Question Number:

Question 6 ☒

Question 7 ☒

Question 8 ☒

The coalition government at beginning of their term stated that although they agreed with some ideas of Labours education policy, a reform was needed as the UKs rankings in core subjects in World league tables had fallen dramatically ~~from~~ 1997 - 2009 (New Labour period). Before the UK was ranked 4th in science, as of 2010 it had dropped to 26th. Education Secretary, Michael Gove decided the focus of the reform would be

toughening national curriculum with more intense focus on the core subjects (science, maths & english). School league tables were reformed and schools are now only measured on pupils performance in the core subjects, rather than all subjects. This would encourage schools to enhance the teaching levels of these subjects and hopefully return the UK to its former glory of one of the leading countries in the subjects.

A policy that entered the education system under New Labour was 'hijacked' and dramatically changed by the coalition was the use of Academy status. Under Labour Academies were schools that were failing which were given academy status (given freedom from education system) yet still received central government funding, but was also open to sponsors, in the hope the school would improve. By end of New Labour there were only 400. The coalition changed the use of academies, they were offered to schools that were deemed exceptional in order to promote further improvement & growth. This was heavily criticised by Labour who claimed the coalition misunderstood meaning of Academies.

Free Schools also rose dramatically under coalition. schools funded by government but set up by parents/volunteers/charities etc. They were supposed to drive up standards of schooling by introducing competition to an area of poor schooling, however Labour say they have widened the attainment gap by offering middle-class areas opportunity to create own school and segregate children from lower income families.

who traditionally achieve worse grades.

The coalition however introduced a pupil premium in attempt to decrease attainment gap, offering schools monetary incentives for giving places to low-income family children. The money was meant to be spent on reducing class sizes/ one-to-one tuition to increase grades of these pupils, but there are concerns about its effectiveness and where the money is spent.

The controversial raising of university tuition fees is another example of the coalition reforming the education system. They also made nurseries free to attend, illustrating the increased focus on younger students to enhance future generations.

The extent of coalition impact on education is quite great - however whether it was successful is another matter.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Comments

This response begins promisingly with some useful context to the changes followed by clear awareness of how academies can change Labour's policy. However it then becomes simply a description of change, rather than an evaluation of the level of change (and is inaccurate about free schools, which were new, not expanded).

Final mark $7+5+5+4 = 21$



ResultsPlus

Examiner Tip

Where questions are asked about 'transformation' the focus should be on the nature and degree of change ahead of a description of the change, or a discussion of the pros and cons of that change.

Put a cross in the box ☐ indicating the question that you have chosen.

If you change your mind, put a line through the box ☐

and then indicate your new question with a cross ☒.

Chosen Question Number:

Question 6

Question 7

Question 8

Plan Yes - curriculum reform → more focus on math → GCSE → A-level → more focus on math.
 high education → more focus on math → GCSE → A-level → more focus on math.
 academies free school → more focus on math → GCSE → A-level → more focus on math.

No - academies were already there under labor → more focus on math → GCSE → A-level → more focus on math.
 - intro under labor, ultimately going to happen → more focus on math → GCSE → A-level → more focus on math.
 - curriculum → GCSE's already there → more focus on math → GCSE → A-level → more focus on math.

GCSE checks the ends the other → more focus on math → GCSE → A-level → more focus on math.
 GCSE don't pass, borrow, independent → more focus on math → GCSE → A-level → more focus on math.

Over the last five years of the Coalition government, much has been done to change and transform the education system, the way it works and the best ways to raise standards within the system. But is there more rhetoric than substance over the reforms made and have they really transformed the education system in the UK.

Firstly under Gove, there has ^{definitely} ~~definitely~~ been a transform in the Curriculum and how pupils take exams at the end of the year in regards to A-Levels and GCSE's. In regards to curriculum, more focus has been placed on STEM subjects in secondary schools and the need for all pupils to have basic literacy and numeracy ~~are~~ skills. This has been highlighted by a change in the national curriculum and the ^{continuity of} compulsory nature of subjects such as English, Maths and Science at GCSE. The introduction of University Technical Colleges (UTC's) have also been a great success which gives students the option to take a more vocational learning path if they wish. Where the Coalition argue there has been a real transform is in regard to the shakeup

of GCSE's and A-Levels. They argued that GCSE's were not rigorous enough and so have moved it to a more linear system to take out the reliance dependency that had taken over pupils. The exams were also made harder in order to deal with the grade inflation that had made its way into the system. This move has been supported by business groups such as the CBI and who argue its necessary to bring educational standards up. The coalition have also reformed A-Levels and have removed the AS qualification introduced by Labour in 2000. Again, they argue it should make exams more rigorous which should drive up standards. This hasn't had a great reaction from universities nor schools as they believe it will only lead to more admissions testings for universities with those going to the best schools getting into the best universities. ~~the~~

Many will argue that the curriculum changes in particular have transformed the education system. This is true if we compare it to Blair and Brown who introduced the AS qualification and extended and supported the modular GCSE system. But if we look back at Thatcher and Major, there isn't much evidence to say this curriculum reform has transformed the education system, more brought it back to what it once was. For example, the changes to GCSE's are effectively a bringing back O-Levels and they are only now GCSE's by name. The same to the A-Level which was one single free-standing qualification under Thatcher and Major. So really, the recent Curriculum reform has transformed education since 1997 but offered continuity since the 1980's.

A second way in which the Coalition have transformed the education system is through higher education and the raising of tuition fees made to £9,000 under the last government. Free university tuition was the sign of equality of opportunity of previous governments and so the introduction of ^{higher} fees have threatened that social inequality stands face. The Conservatives in particular say this has to be done to ensure UK universities can compete on an international basis and this has been supported by universities and business groups who argue that this is the only way to raise standards and ensure we have good graduates that can improve the competitiveness of the UK economy. Labour and the Lib-Dems just say this a threat to social inclusion and this led to the Lib-Dems rehighlighting their wish for free tuition as well as Labour promising to reduce fees to £6,000 if they come into power. The Conservatives have just arguing that they're following the Baines report brought to them by Labour and is consistent with where higher education needs to go. Many will argue that the raising

Many will argue eg. students, schools that this has fundamentally transformed education policy in the UK. But really, Labour introduced tuition fees in 1998 with an initial £1,000 paid straight up and extended this to £3,000 later in their second term. So it's not as if the introduction of tuition fees have transformed the system but students and others will argue it's more about the magnitude of the increase. ~~However~~ studies and this has acted as a deterrent for ~~these~~ ^{those} in lower income families not to go to universities and that this failure to provide equality of opportunity is what has transformed the system. But numerous studies have shown that the number of students from deprived areas

going to university is up, that the use of grants and loans has meant that, until you start earning over £21,000, you do not have to start repaying your loan. That overall, 50% of students never actually end up paying their student loan back. So the premise that higher fees has transformed the system and reduced the opportunity of those to go to university is simply not the case.

A third way in which the Coalition have ~~seen~~ seen to have transformed education policy is due to the introduction of academies and free schools.

In 2016, there were ~~201~~ 210 academies, now there are over 4,500. 400 Free Schools were created with another 500 hoping to be opened in the next 5 years.

The removal of local authority control and the increasing powers given to headteachers and governors have been seen by the Coalition as

a necessary way to improve and raise standards, with As Charles Kennedy

said, 'Trust the teachers, don't let politicians make a mess of it'. However those

on the left say this will only create social widening and a two-tier society with the best pupils going to academies and free schools who have,

on average, a 2.7 applicants per place. This may see as the future of our secondary education system.

However, like Curriculum Reform, a move to academies and free schools have transformed the education system from the Labour years as it has fundamentally broke away from the LEA control and has introduced competition in hope to drive up standards. But, if we look back to Thatcher and Major, these academies are similar to Grant-Maintained schools

as well as Grammar schools so again its more continuity rather than transformation. Furthermore, it was the last Labour government that actually brought in academies to fix failing schools so if the system hasn't really been transformed.*

To conclude, the recent education reforms under the Coalition have certainly transformed the way ~~can~~ the education system works in the UK compared to that of the last Labour government but in comparison ~~to~~ the Thatcher and Major government's before, it has offered more continuity in its fundamental ideological principles ~~that~~ than transformation, particularly in areas of curriculum reform and the introduction of academies and free schools.

* It's more of an extension of a policy that they believed would work, ~~and~~ offers continuity to the increased private provision in the AHS example - which offered continuity from the Labour government.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This candidate considers a narrower range of policy than some other responses. The discussion is tightly focused on the question of transformation with strong analysis of the degree of change and high levels of synopticity.

Final mark $10+9+9+7 = 35$



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

A little more content could have got this right to the top of L3.

Paper Summary

Based on their performance on this paper, candidates are offered the following advice:

- Read the question carefully, then read it carefully again, and ensure that they are answering the question.
- Maintain a contemporary focus and avoid overly historical commentary. Unless the question specifically indicates otherwise, candidates should now expect to spend most of their time on post-2010 content, and pre-1997 should be discussed only very briefly if at all.
- Maintain a practical political focus that links theory to policy.
- Endeavour to strike a balance between range and depth of points, particularly on short responses where three well explained points will usually out-perform seven brief points or one very in-depth point.
- Prioritise argument over assertion, the specific over the general, and the particular groups or individual offering synoptic arguments over 'some argue that'.
- Ensure that any and all statistical evidence cited is robust and accurate.
- Ensure that they include sufficient balance in all essay questions, particularly where they wish to structure their response from a personal point of view, which can be a perfectly acceptable approach.

Grade Boundaries

Grade boundaries for this, and all other papers, can be found on the website on this link:

<http://www.edexcel.com/iwantto/Pages/grade-boundaries.aspx>

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