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Examiners' Report

June 2017

GCE Government & Politics 6GP02 01

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Introduction

The Summer 2017 examination for 6GP02 was an extremely accessible paper with a great deal of breadth and choice for candidates who had worked well and who had prepared thoroughly. It provided a very good basis for those who had revised and were prepared to do well and reach the higher level thresholds set on the paper. It was extremely pleasing for Examiners to see so many well-prepared candidates display a range and breadth of knowledge and understanding combined with an increased level of contemporary political awareness and a ready willingness to critically analyse the questions set. Examiners commented strongly on a continued improvement in essay performance and evidence of better planning for the essay questions. Q1 on the Judiciary increased in popularity attracting 34% of the responses, a significant and welcome increase on previous examination series where the response rate has been 20%-25%. Q2 on Parliament was more popular, attracting 66% of the responses. Q3 on the Cabinet and Prime Minister was the most popular extended essay question with a little under 55% of candidates opting for it. The least popular essay question was Q4 on Devolution and constitutional change which attracted a little over 45% of candidate responses. The time factor again this year did not seem to be an issue with relatively few unanswered or partially answered questions.

There were several major areas commented upon by Examiners and these will be developed in reference to each question and sub-section as appropriate in the body of the report.

In relation to Question 1(a) and to a lesser extent Question 2(a), with reference to both source questions, many candidates introduced a range of reasons from their own knowledge which were not mentioned in the sources and for which no credit could be given. Candidates often did not quote evidence that was clearly in the sources and it is the collective view of a number of Examiners that candidates seem to be looking for problems that are simply not there. Centres might continue to take this on board in their preparation for and assessment of the source based questions. Candidates should be reminded that the source material is always of value to part (b) responses and often to part (c) as was clearly evident this year in Q1 and Q2.

Examiners were again a little disappointed in the level of response of some candidates to the two part (b) sections in Q1 and Q2. Many candidates tended here to be very 'source reliant' failing to advance and develop their own knowledge as required by the question. Candidates need to be aware that each question requires information from the source and their own knowledge. Candidates frequently do not quote information which is clearly in the source nor do they develop points from their own knowledge or develop the points made in the source as own knowledge and therefore move into level 3. This is a point that has been made before but it does bear repetition with many candidates limiting themselves to level 2 at best.

Examiners commented that the question on the Judiciary, here Q2, has witnessed a considerable improvement both in the number of candidates, up from 25% to 34% and in the quality of the outcomes. This year it was linked to the extent to which judges are scrutinised more carefully, the Human Rights Act's effect on judicial power and the independence and neutrality of judges in relationship to the executive and legislative branches. This year it was no longer the province of the few, there were far more very good/excellent answers. The general message of the last few years from Examiners is that questions on the judiciary and civil liberties have tended to produce a binary outcome, the very good and the very poor. Encouragingly this year there were more good/very good responses and far fewer weaker ones. Examiners believe that the role and increased

importance of the Judiciary and the issues of the protection of rights and liberties are of fundamental importance in the UK political system, it is a regular topic which is asked each year and it deals with the sorts of issues that should be of relevance and concern to candidates. Centres do now seem to be devoting more time to it in the preparation of their candidates and the space allowed for it in the schemes of work.

Examiners commented on the continued improvement in the use of relevant examples this year and references to the effects of Brexit was noted in questions on the judiciary (Q1), and as a constitutional reform that competes with and exceeds others including devolution (Q4). It remains a critical area for development for all candidates and all centres as we move into the new specification. Higher level responses invariably use more up to date and informed examples which clearly lift the overall mark and grade in all questions and this is no more apparent than in Q1(a) and (b) and Q2(a) and (b).

Examiners commented that candidates seem to perform better when there is clear evidence that essays have been planned. The better responses invariably do commence with a plan and Examiners believe that a few minutes thought prior to the essay to marshal ideas together is one of the keys to success.

Question 1

On Q1(a), Examiners commented that most candidates were able to identify 3 valid points from the source, as asked. Most were able to pick out from: their work is discussed more by politicians, journalists and the general public, the growth in judicial review, the introduction of the Human Rights Act (HRA), the increased importance of the EU and the growing power of the executive and the publicity surrounding that monitoring. Good answers were able to expand on these points further to achieve level 3. For example, candidates using the point that politicians and the media are commenting on judges' rulings made good use of the Gina Miller Article 50 Case and/or the Belmarsh Case as illustration. However, some candidates scored no marks as they did not refer to the source at all, relying solely on their own knowledge. The message should be clear to centres, if candidates ignore the instruction in the question altogether, however good your answer (and there were some very good ones) you will score no marks. It is vital that candidates read the question as set and use information only from the source in part (a) questions. Many candidates limited themselves to 3/5 marks by simply copying out or bullet pointing 3 points from the source. Several candidates treated the single point about politicians, media and public commenting on judicial decisions more as 3 separate points: at best, such responses could score 2/5 marks.

On Q1(b), Examiners commented that many candidates seemed to make hard work of this question. The source provided several points about how the HRA has changed the role of judges including their role as a law maker, the increased role of judicial review and their involvement in new areas such as moral and political issues. Many candidates dutifully reiterated some or all of these without adding to them. Many candidates were unable to convincingly develop their own knowledge, thus restricting their AO1 marks and, in turn, making it more difficult to generate AO2 marks. Such responses remained firmly in level 2 at best. To achieve level 3 there must be references to both the source and own knowledge. Centres are also strongly advised to teach the HRA in detail, emphasising that the ECHR (which is incorporated in to UK law) is not connected to EU law or the ECJ – sadly still a very common error. Good responses were able to go beyond the source, illustrating their answer by reference to appropriate cases. Surprisingly perhaps, few candidates made the connection between judges' ruling on moral and political issues with the right to privacy, rights of asylum seekers and the right to protest. Some candidates wrongly asserted that Gina Miller brought her case under the HRA which could not be credited.

On Q1(c), Examiners commented warmly on the fact that the judiciary question has increased in popularity significantly this year. The overall quality of the responses was also impressive with fewer candidates seeming to choose it as a question of last resort. This is a pleasing development as we head towards the new specification. There were a small number of excellent answers which benefitted from the use of contemporary knowledge and who clearly understood the relationship between the Judiciary and the other two branches of government. Most candidates understood the difference between neutrality and independence and were able to offer good accounts of how both are maintained in the UK. Lower level responses were often little more than lists of how judicial independence and neutrality are maintained. Stronger answers assessed the impact of recent changes such as the 2005 Constitutional Reform Act and realised, that despite the separation of powers, the government can still influence judicial appointments, sentencing and funding. A few candidates referred to the slowness of Liz Truss to support the Supreme Court judges against the press furore that greeted the Article 50 ruling as evidence of how the judiciary are still vulnerable to media and political interference and a few made similar use of David Cameron's demand for stiff sentences for convicted rioters in 2011 or his breach

of sub-judice rules by publicly defending Nigella Lawson. Such answers were almost always well rewarded, particularly those that showed that judges have been subjected to attacks from both Labour and Conservative politicians and media. As expected the Griffith Thesis was used to discuss how far judges are neutral. Few candidates got beyond the 'male, pale and stale' biased judges idea which, though valid, needed further development by considering the impact of training given by the JSB, the importance of judicial precedent etc. Similarly, candidates were often confused about the Kilmuir Rules, but those who understood the effect of their effective suspension were able to score highly. Once again it needs to be stressed that to score well in questions on the judiciary, candidates need to understand the role of the judiciary, examples of conflict with politicians and the media, the impact of recent reforms and above all the need to provide balance. For example, while many candidates were aware that judges have been criticised by politicians and the media, few showed that this is only in a small minority of cases.

This response fails to move in parts (a) and (b) from the source to show how the candidate has knowledge and understanding in any depth.

Chosen question number: **Question 1** **Question 2**

(a) Judges are subject to greater ^{scrutiny} due to as the source says 'our work is now being discussed far more'. People actually care about what the judiciary is doing since judges are being asked to determine more public policy issues. It is also due to that ^{there} is a need for a judiciary which protects citizens from administrative abuses and maintains the role of law.

As judges have become more confident in using their powers, the country needs to know what they're doing at all times. Especially when civil liberties have no real protection from the government, the judiciary has stepped up to guard those liberties.

(b) The Human Rights 1998 incorporated key provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights. It changed the role of the judge because for the first time there was statute law which could be used to effectively check and balance the executive and the legislature. The source supports this since 'The 1998 Act is a command by Parliament to the judiciary to make law' in which the judiciary has... been reluctant to intervene or... prohibited from intervening. It also talks about how 'Before the 1998 Act, our role in relation to government acts was more limited'.

The HRA has given the judiciary a 'quasi-statute-writing-function', this ~~means that the~~ ^{because the} judiciary ~~can make his~~ the responsibility to make sure the HRA is being followed by the government and legislature. An example of this is the ~~2009~~ ²⁰⁰⁴ Terror Assets case when 2001 Terror Suspects when the judiciary said that the government had to change release the men because of its conflict with the HRA.

- (c) Judicial Independence and Neutrality
- For Independent legal profession
- Consolidated fund
 - free from scrutiny
 - security of tenure (70)
 - Lord Chief Justice
- Legal training
 - Unable to join political parties
- Not allowed to be ~~comment~~ ^{be} public figures

Judicial Independence is the idea that the judiciary should be independent to make decisions without interference from outside sources. Judicial Neutrality entails that the judiciary itself should be independent from any bias against defendants, and also should keep to themselves.

The independence of the judiciary is maintained by a plethora of measures. The ^{members of} judiciary ~~are~~ the judiciary are paid out of the Consolidated Fund which is free from government scrutiny meaning threat of pay cuts by the legislature or executive are rendered ineffective. Judges also have security of tenure once appointed a judge can be in service until the retirement age of 70, threats of being dismissed are taken care of by this. In 2005, the Constitutional Reform Act was passed, this was done in

((c) continued) an effort to adhere more to Montesquieu's Separation of Powers doctrine where he detailed that there should be three separate branches of government; the legislative, executive and Judiciary. The CRA divided the role of the Lord Chancellor into three distinct roles, one for each branch. The Lord Chief Justice who was originally the second-in-command of the Judiciary became the head of the Judiciary. This reform now separated the Judiciary from the other two branches and allows to act independently without worry of conflicts of interest. The government also does not manage the legal profession, The Law Society manages and represents the legal profession. The Law Society is an independent organization as well. ~~The power of Parliament~~ and Judges are appointed to their jobs by the Judicial Appointments Committee (JAC), which is an independent committee who thoroughly check all candidates. The Prime Minister can only pick from a shortlist given to ~~them~~ ^{them} by the JAC, thus lowering chances of having a judge who is chosen due to political sympathies. Neutrality of the Judiciary is ~~kept~~ ^{kept} by ensured because a judge is not

((c) continued) allowed to either vote or join a political party, thus lowering the chances of political bias. It is also maintained by the legal training taught in the UK, the training is specifically tailored to ensure judges only take a legalistic approach to all decisions. Judges are also not allowed to become public figures due to the ~~the~~ Kilmuir rules established in the 1950s although they've been relaxed since the 80s.

However the judiciary is not free from bias because most of the profession are white middle-aged and Oxbridge taught and male. This leads to a general Conservative bias among the judiciary. Lady Hale who is the deputy chief of the Supreme court is the only female in the 13 strong group. The profession as of 2016 has been reported to only have 30% of it staffed with women, and 5% of it with Black and minority ethnic backgrounds.

Its independence

The independence of the judiciary from other branches of government is also limited. The Sentencing Council which is a government organization

((c) continued) Cho uses what the Judiciary should be giving for particular crimes They introduced mandatory sentencing which means that the freedom of judges to make independent decisions has been lowered.

In conclusion, the Judiciary is sufficiently independent from the two other branches of government however institutions such as the Sentencing Council threaten this. Judicial neutrality on the other hand is still a work in progress. The number of women has increased from 10% in 1998 to 30% in 2016, so while there are obvious flaws they're being worked upon.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

- a) This is heavily reliant on simply lifting the source to the answer booklet - and thus it gains 2 marks only.
- b) Once again, this section (b) is a huge lift of the source and the candidate fails to develop their own knowledge and understanding. A02 is at the lowest level.
- c) In contrast to a lacklustre performance in (a) and (b) the candidate here raises their game and does address the question - enough detail and depth to reach level 3.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Simply repeating the source will gain some marks - but it is far better to develop it and show that the content is fully understood.

This response presents a more even performance – scoring well in all sections.

Chosen question number: **Question 1** **Question 2**

(a) The work of the judiciary is being discussed ~~is~~ by the public, politicians and ~~the~~ the media which scrutinise the work of judges. ~~A reason~~ A reason for this is because judges are asked to determine public policy issues.

Secondly, the judiciary has been given greater powers by the HRA which has lead to these powers being scrutinised. For example, judges are allowed to 'make law' this is a huge responsibility so the other two branches of government will scrutnise these laws.

Finally, judges need to protect the rights of citizens and therefore they will declare some doings as incompatible with Articles. Because ~~of this~~ some of their rulings might go against the

(a) continued) governments wants the rulings of the judiciary are more scrutinized than ever. The judges after ruling on human rights must review the merits of their ~~decis~~ decision and so are scrutinising ~~there~~ their own rulings.

(b) Firstly, judges are more frequently called upon on moral and political issues. Before the HRA^{the} judges' role was more limited in relation to government acts. For example, the Supreme Court was called upon by Gina Miller over the commencement of Brexit negotiations showing how the judges are being called upon for fundamental decisions.

Secondly, Judges must read and give effect to legislation ~~in~~ in court. For example, this is when judges use legislation in court to create the ruling of a case. If someone were to be tried for murder it is up to the judges to enact the penalty for murder.

Thirdly, judges must tell Parliament when legislation

((b) continued) cannot be made to comply for example the Supreme Court ruled it was against the human rights of suspected terrorists to be held indefinitely without trial. So Parliament passed the Terrorism Prevention Act which gave out control orders ~~the~~ in order to give ~~state~~ legislation ~~the~~ the ability to be complied.

The Human Rights Act gave judges the possibility to issue a 'declaration of incompatibility', in addition it strengthened their ability to perform judicial review. Thus the HRA has given judges a greater more powerful role of keeping the other two branches in check and protecting our ~~state~~ civil liberties.

(c) ~~The~~ The judiciary is separate from other branches of ~~the~~ ^{government} due to the Constitutional Reform Act of 2004. This saw the Lord Chancellor removed from the cabinet and Commons, the creation of the Secretary of State for Judicial Affairs and in 2009 the Law Lords moved from the House of Lords to the Supreme Court. Although this movement was largely symbolic it highlighted that the judiciary was ever more independent from the other branches of government.

However, this can lead to a lack of support for the judiciary in Parliament. There is no strong voice to speak up for the judiciary in court. An example of this is after the court case about the commencement of Brexit negotiations when the Daily

((c) continued)

Mail branded the Supreme Court as enemies of the state. It is up to Liz Truss to protect the neutrality of the Supreme Court. However, she did not condemn the remarks and so compromised the image of the SC and its neutrality.

The judiciary is free from bias because of the sub-judice rule. This means that whilst a case is ongoing ~~members~~ people involved are not allowed to talk about it because they will be treated with being ⁱⁿ contempt of court. Judges ~~also~~ also have life tenure so they cannot be removed easily and do not fear losing their job because of their views or ruling. Moreover they have a very high salary so it is very hard to bribe

((c) continued) them. Judges are allowed to stay relatively anonymous keeping them away from the media and its influences.

Nevertheless, the judiciary is not independent because Parliamentary sovereignty means that decisions they make can be ~~overruled~~ made ~~future~~ by parliament. For example the Supreme Court ruled it was wrong for the government to freeze bank accounts of suspected terrorists so parliament passed the Terrorist Asset Freezing Act. This is an example of how the decisions of the judiciary can be undermined by parliament and therefore the judiciary is influenced and not totally separate ~~from~~ ^{from} the other branches.

((c) continued)

Part of the Reform Act (2005) was a change in the appointment process. The independent appointment council was created so no longer could the PM choose the judge for the Supreme Court. This helped eliminate political choosing of judges. The Head of the Judiciary was also appointed. A special board of people with political experience were asked to help appoint the Supreme Court judges.

However, the Supreme Court can be seen as bias because it is not representative. All judges are white, over 50, 10 of them are males, most are privately educated and went to either Oxford or Cambridge. In 2014 there was a case

((c) continued)

on pre-nuptial agreements. 10 judges, all male, ruled against whilst 1 judge (Lady Hale) ruled in favour. This shows how the demographics of the Supreme Court creates bias in its decisions.

To further this point in 2017 the case brought by Gina Miller against David Davies shows the bias in the Supreme Court. 5 judges had relationships with European courts and the majority of judges showed sympathetic views towards the EU. In this situation a judge should withdraw from the case because of a conflict of interest but they didn't, adding to the bias ~~argument~~ nature argument of the SC.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This script does use the source but then enhances and develops it in a manner which indicates a sound understanding of content.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

This is up to date with reference to the recent Gina Miller case - but a point worth noting is that when candidates introduce cases this invariably helps them scaffold a good answer with insight.

Question 2

On Q2(a), most candidates could identify three basic points from the source, typically three of decline in power of parties, growing independence of select committees, a more dynamic House of Lords with the Conservative majority removed and the improved position of backbenchers. However, once again, very many candidates failed to go on and develop this source material to its full extent and remained at 3/5 marks. Stronger candidates could achieve a maximum by developing their awareness and/or giving examples of Select Committees/Backbench Business Committee/House of Lords activity and so on. It seemed that many candidates missed out on relatively easy marks by not converting the source material. In contrast, some weaker candidates largely ignored the source altogether and tried to introduce unnecessary own knowledge usually for zero reward. Centres should perhaps stress that there are accessible marks available for parts (a) and (b) in the source material.

On Q2(b), Examiners found the responses to this question a little disappointing. Candidates did not find the material that was available in the source quite as obvious as in Q1 or in recent series, for example how 'handling strategies' and 'dissent amongst government backbenchers' impacted on the role of the Lords. Nevertheless, stronger candidates generally blended own knowledge along with source information quite effectively to get into L3 standard. Most answers seemed to get into at least level 2, combining a limited understanding from source and own knowledge, or merely from own knowledge. Weaker answers were usually thinly developed and either quoted too much from source or largely ignored the source, as well as indicating poorly developed and vague/generalised personal knowledge of the role of the Lords. Weaker responses also failed to deal with the issue of significance and therefore restricted the marks available for AO2.

The stronger answers were more specific and developed in terms of providing at least 3 clearly explained points relating to the significance of the Lords as was required, and usually brought in valid source extracts/references that were explained, as well as wider legislative knowledge such as the Salisbury Convention, Parliament Acts 1911 and 1949, 1999 House of Lords reforms, and various policy examples where the Lords have been influential, e.g. tax credits vote in 2015. Such answers also picked up on the issue of balance and often brought in arguments both for and against whether the Lords has become more significant (or not).

On Q2(c), Examiners commented that generally candidates responded well to this question. They had been well prepared and their levels of knowledge and use of current examples was very pleasing. Most candidates understood what the question was asking, although the range, depth and quality of suggested reforms did significantly vary. There was a general understanding that there is a solid case to be made that Parliament does require further reform, as well as an awareness that various reforms have taken place over recent years. Key areas for potential ongoing reform were consistently highlighted; namely House of Lords, House of Commons, the representation of MPs and the electoral system, Select Committees and the influence of backbenchers vs. the party whips. Such reform was developed and explained in varying detail. Less able candidates often mentioned many such points briefly, but did not analyse or explain them in sufficient terms. Common weaknesses in approach here included candidates concentrating on past reforms rather than addressing the debate about the need for future reform, a one-sided approach typically outlining the need for future reform but failing to provide the counter arguments. Some answers were too narrow and examined House of Lords reform and/or Electoral reform only.

However, the depth of knowledge and analysis was as ever the key to defining the overall quality. Strong candidates went into such reforms in more significant detail and developed analytical comment, and were often able to offer balanced argument as to whether the reforms were required or not. Stronger answers also sought to offer a balanced debate as to the desirability of reform, and many candidates highlighted good arguments relating to specific reforms, e.g. House of Lords (being seen as incomplete/unfinished business) against the counter-argument that further reforms potentially make it a mirror of the Commons (leading to gridlock). Other higher-level candidates also displayed an impressive knowledge of recent reforms such as the Wright Committee proposals, Fixed Term Parliaments, the Backbench Business Committee and the general modernisation of Parliament that has occurred since the late 1990s. Some responses validly argued that reform has gone far enough and no more is required, and on this basis, there was a variation of ways in which the question could be answered to a good standard.

The points stressed in the report, about developing the source and being confident in showing knowledge and understanding are absent here in parts (a) and (b) and denies full marks.

Chosen question number: **Question 1** **Question 2**

(a) Parliamentary Power has been Strengthened from a decline in the 'cohesion of Political Parties' which were Constraining its independence. There has also been a Growth in the independence and importance of Select Committees, whose reports make a difference to Policy decisions. Finally, Parliamentary Power has been Strengthened through Changes made to the Structure in the House of Lords since 1999, it's made the house more dynamic by removing the Conservative majority.

(b) The House of Lords is still significant in playing a role of passing of legislation. First off, any legislative has to be passed by both houses of Parliament, therefore the Lords are still very important in the process. If the Lords are unsatisfied with a piece of legislation they can suggest amendments which have to ~~be~~ considered by the Commons in order for them to get an approval from the Lords. To add to this Committee Stages also scrutinise legislation which makes it significant in the process.

There have emerged 'handling strategies' with legislation, whereby a series of consultations between both houses of Parliament are held to smooth out any potential problems around certain bills. With this the Lords can hold a piece of legislation for a year being a significant factor to take into account, if a party is trying to pass legislation quickly; for example before an election.

Dissent among government backbench MPs will be exploited by the House of Lords.

((b) continued) If it exists, then ministers will know they will have to make concessions in the Commons and that this will strengthen the hands of the Lords, who may become more assertive. With this they can more effectively hold the government to account over certain pieces of legislation.

(c) Parliament is in need of major reform to a certain extent. Both houses could clearly use improvement, the Lords to be more democratic, the Commons to be less of an 'elected dictatorship' and to be held more accurately to account. Having said this, there is no immediate desire for reform from the public nor from Parliament itself.

The House of Lords is considered undemocratic, this is because they're unelected. Having a second chamber with the power to hold up legislation and make amendments to it is seen as unfair to the public somewhat, because elected representatives are creating this legislation on behalf of the people. A suggested reform is to have an elected second chamber, this isn't needed immediately as the Lords do not hold that much power and having two elected chambers seems rather pointless. However, it would undeniably make Parliament more democratic.

((c) continued) With the house of Commons, there is suggestion to reform the idea that submitted questions, for the weekly Prime ministers questions, should be reformed from being submitted 10 days prior down to three days. This would increase the validity and current awareness of the questions themselves. This change can be considered necessary, however it isn't needed drastically and there is no outright request for it as the questions asked are still topical.

Another reform for the lords is that they be fully appointed, which would increase their validity and representation of women and ethnic groups. Doing this would also destroy the idea of hereditary peers which is extremely undemocratic and disliked by the public. Again it is not needed immediately but there is desire for it. A compromise was suggested from the coalition of 2010, to have a half elected and half appointed second chamber; however a lack of consistency and support for this showed a reform wasn't essential.

((c) continued) A reform to the electoral system to a more proportionally representable system is somewhat required. First Past the Post ends up with a big majority party in the Commons leading to an 'elected dictatorship'. This perhaps the most important reform, however, it was dismissed by the public looking at the 2011 AV referendum.

To conclude, reforms are needed to both houses to perhaps increase their democratic status, however it is not needed crucially at this time, shown by a lack of desire for change from the public.



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Examiner Comments

This is a mid level 2 response, it fails to capitalise on the source and to fully convert the material in to marks.



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Examiner Tip

The (c) section of this response moves about and lacks a clear plan. This invariably results in a lack of coherent thought and ideas running through the response making mark collection difficult to maximise.

This response shows how candidates can score marks unevenly across a question.

Chosen question number: **Question 1** **Question 2**

(a) One way in which parliamentary power has been strengthened according to the source is due to the growth of select committees. The source tells us they 'make a difference to policy decisions'. This strengthens parliamentary power as it means they can come up with new policies and talk about recent events to keep parliament in power. This will affect the outcome of a political decision. Additionally, the changes in the structure of the House of Lords has ^{strengthened} ~~made~~ parliamentary sovereignty as it means it will become a bit more 'dynamic' and democratic compared to current ~~of~~ arrangements. By removing the 'in-built conservative majority' means that parliamentary power has strengthened due to greater authority. ~~Also~~ ~~parliamentary~~ power has been strengthened through the role of the backbench MP's as they now have the 'ability to set agenda items'. This means they can also get involved in decisions. Backbench MP's can effectively scrutinise as they have ^{more} freedom and time.

* This strengthened parliamentary power in the House of Lords as there were now fewer hereditary peers than before.

(b) According to the source, the role of the House of Lords has become significant in the passing of legislation as consultations happen between both houses in Parliament. This makes the House of Lords important as they have a say in the legislation. The source tells us they 'smooth out potential problems around certain bills'. Also the source states 'the bills will come under more intense scrutiny' which means the House of Lords is important when passing legislation as it is thoroughly scrutinised in order to make sure only good laws are passed.

~~From my own knowledge,~~ The House of Lords has become significant in the passing of legislation as it has the Parliament Act which states that they can pass legislation back and forth, trying to amend it if they don't agree for up to 3 times. They can also delay a bill which gives them power.

(c) Parliament still requires major reform in the following ways: the House of Lords is still stuck in stage 1, the electoral system used, devolved assemblies. This essay will come to a conclusion that ~~the~~ parliament still requires reform. However it may seem that parliament is not needed of reform as devolution has happened, elected mayors in areas they want etc.

One of the ways Parliament requires major reform would be due to the electoral system used in the House of Commons for the general election. The reasons why this reform needs to happen is due to it being flawed and not representing the people proportionally. This means that ~~or~~ it leads to wasted votes and the participation crisis due to too many safe seats. ~~It~~ This also means that the winning party has a landslide victory and will always win the seats as they are part of the 2 party system. The system simply requires one more seat than the 2nd party which is why it is a plurality majority system which is unfair and undemocratic that needs to be changed. The reform that should take place should be proportional representation in order to win seats equal or more equal to the way the electorate votes.

((c) continued) However, it is disagreed that Parliament needs to ~~change~~ reform as the system used at the moment has been tried and tested. This means that the system works and has worked for centuries. Therefore there is no need to change it as the public support it.

Overall, the Reform does need to take place as there are many wasted votes and low turnout which affect the electorate.

Another major reform that Parliament still requires is the House of Lords Reform. This was attempted by Blair where he managed to get rid of all but 92 hereditary peers. However reform still needs to take place as we are still stuck in stage 1. The House of Lords is an unelected, illegitimate chamber which either needs to be abolished or elected as it is not as important as the Commons.

The Upper house has 26 Lord Spirituals which is made up of bishops and archbishops, 92 hereditary peers who have gained their membership through the bloodline and several hundred life peers, who have expensive and ~~are~~ ^{live} in for their whole lifetime. The reform that needs to take place is to elect the House of Lords as it will give them legitimacy and sovereignty. However, this would take away the traditional element (hereditary peers) and the moral element (bishops) which

((c) continued) one supported by the public. The reform would also create voter apathy and fatigue due to too many elections taking place. This would cause more harm than good. It is also argued that the reform shouldn't take place as it would just create a deadlock between the House of Commons and House of Lords which would also be seen as a mirror of the House of Commons, so no reform is needed for the House of Lords. Overall, the House of Lords does need major ~~to~~ reform in order to make parliament better ~~as~~ the House of Lords needs Parliamentary Sovereignty.

main
argument
what

Thirdly, Parliament could have a major reform taking place ~~however~~ by having a devolved assembly for England. This reform should take place as the other 3: ~~the~~ Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland have devolution. This is because Parliament allowed them ^(statute law) to have it. It would only seem fair for England to also have a devolved assembly. However, there is no need as it is doing fine the way it is. ^{Parliament can take back devolution.} ~~Therefore~~ Overall, the devolved assemblies are more proportional and reform should take place in England for devolution.

In conclusion, Parliament still has major reforms

((c) continued) that ~~might~~ need to take place like changing the electoral system to a more proportional one and to reform the House of Lords by making it an elected chamber. These reforms would make parliament a lot more democratic and legitimate.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Comments

Question (a) gains full marks but then the answer in (b) plummets down the scale. However, we have recovery in section (c) which is a clear improvement and is level 3 to the one above.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Tip

As with all areas, politics changes and candidates have a three-fold task – firstly to know and understand recent changes (here it is Parliament), secondly to have an opinion on the merit or otherwise of these changes and thirdly to speculate as to what form further possible reform could take.

Question 3

On Q3, Examiners commented that this was an extremely popular and generally well answered question. Centres clearly prepared their candidates very well for this topic and the levels of organisation, understanding and use of relevant contemporary examples were often impressive.

Candidates adopted several approaches to answering this question, all of which, if done well, could be rewarded handsomely. The most popular approach was to discuss how far cabinet can restrict the Prime Minister (PM) before moving on to consider other potential constraints on a PM's power. To be able to score well on AO2 and AO3, candidates adopting such an approach needed to keep the question in mind and show whether, for example, parliament, the media and events were greater or lesser constraints on the PM than cabinet. Quite a lot of candidates had breadth and even depth of knowledge, but did not reach level 3 for AO2 or AO3 as they did not relate this knowledge to assessing the importance of this factor in the question.

Some candidates tried to turn the question in to 'how presidential/powerful is the Prime Minister?' While the point about the development of what Foley has called the 'British presidency' was certainly appropriate, it needed to be made relevant. Very good responses showed how cabinet has been marginalised, at least at times, by the increasingly powerful Downing Street Machine or by PM's like Thatcher and Blair exercising spatial leadership, but were also able to show that a slim parliamentary majority, a divided governing party or an unfavourable political climate can undermine a PM's authority and embolden the cabinet against him/her. Particularly good answers showed awareness of the interplay of these factors and/or whether changes such as the growth in influence of SPADs have been permanent. There were some good references to George Jones's 'elastic band theory' of prime ministerial power and to Foley. The best answers often referred to specific PM's to illustrate how the cabinet had been tamed then reckoned with (Thatcher); filled with enemies (Major); bypassed completely (Blair); a symbol of disunity (Brown). Stronger answers also commented on how the composition of the cabinet under the 2010 coalition agreement had been strengthened and how Cameron could simply not ignore it.

Most candidates, including those who produced stronger answers, organised their essays into three parts: the Cabinet as a limitation; the evaluation of those limitations/strength of a PM versus the Cabinet; other limitations. However, in weaker answers, the essay moved from one topic to the next, with the Cabinet popping up at regular intervals. Whilst this was presumably meant to demonstrate balance, this approach gave the impression of several loosely connected paragraphs which had not been planned out, thus undermining a real sense of argument. Some weaker answers read as historical narratives of the premiership from Thatcher to May without ever really confronting the issue of how far cabinet constrained each. Such responses could not score much higher than low level 2.

It is pleasing to see that many candidates have clearly been trained to write coherent answers that do focus on the question and it was actually very rare to see essays that were not written in clear paragraphs or without at least some attempt at structure.

This response is quite brief and lacks a depth of knowledge and understanding.

Chosen question number: **Question 3** **Question 4**

Prime ministerial power is the power that ~~the~~ the PM uses in his post and given to him through parliamentary sovereignty gained by winning the election and having a majority in the House of Commons.

The Cabinet is a very important limitation on Prime ministerial power as the Prime Minister's cabinet is his ~~main~~ ^{main} advisers on policy, ~~the~~ the cabinet will support the prime minister due to collective responsibility. The cabinet is able to limit the PM power due to its ability to advise and block some of his policy. The cabinet is also able to issue a vote of no confidence on the PM and get them kicked out of government. This happened with Margaret ~~that~~ Thatcher.

Another limitation that the PM has on his power is by being involved in a coalition, for example, ~~in~~ in the 2010 general election with Nick Clegg and David Cameron. By being in a coalition ~~the~~ the PM's powers are limited due to both leaders needing to agree on policy and legislation if not able to do so legislation will not be able

to pass, this then limits the ~~Prime~~ PM's powers massively as they are not able to pass any legislation.

~~Another~~ Another way the PM powers can get limited is through the ~~House~~ House of Lords delaying their legislation by a year, by doing so they may be able to stop some of their most powerful legislation this then limits the power that the PM has, stopping him from exerting too much and controlling his powers through legislation.

Another way his ~~powers~~ powers may be limited is by the PM not being able to get a ~~clear~~ clear majority in the House of Commons. This then doesn't allow him the PM to be legitimate and by this happening to the PM, the distinction to exercise power is very small. This will weaken his position, making it harder and therefore very unlikely for him to use his powers to their full potential due to some consequences of his actions, risk of being voted out of power.

Another way the PM will have limitations on his power is that ~~the~~ their government will need to be constantly made accountable to ~~the~~ parliament and if not its ~~power could be~~ government could be kicked out of power. ~~A~~ Also the judiciary will be used to continuously check that governments powers are kept in check and ~~A~~ that the PM is not over exercising its powers.

A final way ~~of~~ the PM powers are limited is that a Prime Minister (PM) is able to stretch his powers to the limit due to our constitution being ~~extre~~ extremely flexible, but by doing so this triggers the elastic theory, where ~~its~~ ~~so~~ the ~~A~~ PM's constraints ~~that~~ then become stronger limiting its powers.

~~A~~ To conclude, the Cabinet is very important in limiting the PM powers however ~~of~~ ~~so~~ there is also many other factors that can limit its power which are also very important, but I believe the Cabinet is most important in limiting the PM's powers.



ResultsPlus Examiner Comments

This response fails to connect fully with the question, it appears more like a series of statements than a coherent and fluent response.



ResultsPlus Examiner Tip

Examples are vital both for AO1 and AO2. In this response, they have been poorly employed. We get PM's mentioned at the end of the first page then PM's in office versus their Cabinets or other limitations are ignored.

This presents a much stronger approach to the essay and easily attains level 3.

Chosen question number: **Question 3** **Question 4**

Plan:

Cabinet

- Heseltine Thatcher

- coalition → Cameron + Clegg

- elections events - Brown

Others:
- coalition?

- ~~constit~~ Parliament

no confidence
↑

The contention in the statement argues that Cabinet is the most important limitation on Prime Ministerial power. Now, to some extent this is true because there are gross limitations regarding cabinet, such as individuals within it. But there are also an eclectic mix of other factors, one of which brought down Callaghan in 1979. I will discuss these factors in greater depth now.

Ignoring a Cabinet will surely not end well, as Margaret Thatcher found out in 1990. Thatcher was essentially ousted by her Cabinet after a decade of dominating the political landscape in Britain. This should be a warning to future prime ministers of Britain, as handling Cabinet badly can severely limit one's power. Similarly, Jeremy Corbyn's Shadow cabinet, albeit not the

same as Cabinet per se, highlights some issues. If your front bench resign, this is clearly embarrassing. Jeremy Corbyn's power as leader of the opposition became ~~was~~ weakened as a result of this and encouraged 172 out of 212 Labour MPs to say they had no confidence in him. Cameron had a fairly united Cabinet during coalition and this allowed him to implement most of his political programme. Collective Ministerial Responsibility has seemingly ~~had~~ held May's Cabinet together so far, despite reports that Home Secretary Amber Rudd disagrees with May's direction.

Elections tend to make Prime Ministers, but Prime Ministers can also be broken by them thus reducing their power to zero - quite a big limitation. When Gordon Brown took over as PM from Blair in 2007, not holding an election seemingly cost him his job, as come 2010, and his popularity had diminished. Most recently, Theresa May became prime minister in 2016. Polls had her approval ratings at nearly 50%, and Corbyn's much, much lower. Since calling the 2017 General Election, her power has seemingly been limited, with the latest poll

before this exam showing the difference between May and Corbyn at just 3%. YouGov has also predicted May to not win a majority. If YouGov is right, then she will have lost her parliamentary majority of ~~12~~ 12 and therefore this election would have limited her power.

David Cameron was faced a unique election scenario in 2010 whereby he formed a coalition government with the Liberal Democrats. Yes, the coalition meant he had a majority government, but there were now new ~~time~~ limitations on his power. Every Cabinet committee had to have either a Liberal Democrat chair or deputy chair. Cameron had to hold a referendum on changing the Westminster election system to Alternative Vote in 2011; this was an early term of coalition. Cameron had to work with Nick Clegg and consult him on appointments. The power of patronage is a power procured from the Monarch and usually the Prime Minister is ~~to~~ free to exercise this alone, but Cameron had Clegg to convince first.

Furthermore, the doctrine of collective responsibility was seemingly suspended, since Vince Cable regularly spoke out to the media against the government. This eroded the glue that holds the executive ^{together} in place and placed a risk on the PM's power becoming limited.

Ultimately, parliament is there to hold the executive to account. The executive has no separate or additional mandate. Indeed, the executive come from the legislature, Theresa May, for instance has been the MP for Maidenhead since 1997 and is seeking re-election today. Parliament, therefore, can unseat the government. This is not possible in America, for instance, as President Trump was elected separately to Congress and Senate so has a personal mandate that Theresa May does not have. James Callaghan in 1979 fell victim to a confidence motion of no confidence in the House of Commons; he lost by just one vote. So, he resigned and a general election was called. Therefore, Parliament can in theory place a large limitation on the power of the prime minister.

Furthermore, Parliament holds the balance of

power and could easily outvote the Prime Minister if it so wished. The UK constitution has no provision for an 'executive order' or any way of a Bill becoming law except by going through Parliament. The PM cannot by-pass the Commons. Since the Monarch stopped getting involved politically the First Lord of the Treasury (Prime Minister) is effectively *primus inter pares* (first among equals) and can be outvoted by his or her colleagues in Cabinet, as Brown regularly was.

To conclude, Cabinet makes up the other part of the executive, so naturally plays a large role in governing the country with the Prime Minister. While the Prime Minister is the leader of the government (not Head of State), he or she can only enjoy ruling if they are supported by Cabinet. This issue is complicated by Blair pushing Cabinet aside and instead using political advisers, but Blair was popular among Cabinet colleagues. Similarly was Brown, until they conspired against him and he brought back the importance of Cabinet. But to answer the contention in the statement it depends on the time. ~~an~~ External forces come and go, like the

2008 banking crises. Clearly, ignoring Cabinet is bad and they can unseat you if they wish - but so can Parliament. But as Parliament is largely not bound by collective ministerial responsibility whereas Cabinet is, Parliament place a larger limitation on a prime minister's power as they ~~are~~ are free to criticise, block legislation and call a motion of no confidence to bring down the prime minister's government. Therefore I would disagree with the contention to some extent.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

Note how the response considers a wide range of factors and crucially is studded with examples and reflections.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

Coherence and quality in essays serve to deliver more marks than simply quantity.

Question 4

Q4 was a pleasingly popular essay question that was generally answered well despite the unusual focus on devolution in the question. As ever it was answered to varying degrees of depth and quality, with the basic requirement being an ability to assess the significance of devolution and to then compare it to other constitutional reforms of recent times. Most candidates could offer basic coverage in terms of explaining what devolution is as a political concept and how it has impacted on the UK since the late 1990s, but the depth of this aspect varied considerably, and weaker candidates tended to cover/explain this central reform of the question rather thinly.

The weaker answers offered an outline summary of devolution covering the basics of what it was and how it had been applied. Some of these answers either covered only devolution and made no comparison to other reforms, or covered a series of reforms in equal brevity. Stronger answers developed a more analytical style, highlighting various features of each reform and how significant they were for the UK's constitutional structure and model. The top-level answers looked at not only the key features of reforms, but also often the positives and negatives of the devolution policy, in particular, providing some concrete comment/evidence of how effectively devolution has worked over recent years in relation to the powers of central government and to the concept of sovereignty. As a political concept, sovereignty was mentioned quite regularly and to varying degrees of effectiveness. Some stronger answers also cited the example of Northern Ireland quite well as an example (to be credited), where devolved powers have been withdrawn and how this impacted on broader sovereignty in the UK. This specific further regional case study, while not mentioned in the question, was introduced by better answers alongside other devolved areas like the GLA to broaden the debate. Very strong answers often made reference to the West Lothian question and EVEL.

What distinguished the very strong from the good responses was the depth to which devolution was considered in the first place, and then the range of comparison with other constitutional reforms of recent years. Some reasonable 'middling' answers looked at devolution and its significance quite thinly, while also offering a broad spread of other recent constitutional reforms as part of a comparative framework in which to answer the question. These were usually worthy of a solid L2/L3 standard, but very top answers had more depth and detail on devolution (as the mark scheme required), before then moving on to a range of other comparative reforms in less depth (due to both time constraints and emphasis requirements). Such valid/common other reforms included the Human Rights Act, reform of the House of Lords, the Freedom of Information Act, the Fixed Term Parliaments Act and electoral reform. Some otherwise solid answers got the balance of comparison and analysis a bit wrong, spending too little time on devolution and too much time on some of the other reforms, and for that they could not get as high marks for A01.

This essay covers the correct terrain but fails to develop and articulate a clear view on the relevance of each item when compared to Scottish and Welsh devolution to reach a level 3 mark.

Chosen question number: **Question 3** **Question 4**

Since 1997, there has been a considerable turn in the favour of constitutional reform. These It is convention that these changes to the constitution are down to the public to decide upon - and therefore they are put forward to the people via referendums.

In 1997, there was a referendum to decide whether Scotland should have its own parliament with law-making powers. There was massively in favour 'yes' vote, and therefore the ~~referend~~ action took place. The same year, there was a referendum in Wales to decide whether they should be entitled to a Welsh assembly with modest powers, though not by a huge degree, it was again a 'yes' vote. These changes were not only significant with regard to Scotland's and Wales' new political power, but it was a constitutional change that meant undermining of complete ~~for~~ parliamentary sovereignty. Prior to these referendums, parliament had totally sovereign rule of the British

isles - so it is even further important in that regard. However, ~~at~~ due to the fact that the UK has an uncodified constitution - the UK parliament still has the power to overrule ~~a~~ Scottish and Welsh parliament, so Parliamentary sovereignty, in legal terms is still retained. Despite this the devolved powers are somewhat legitimized by the great emphasis UK parliament places on convention - ~~but~~ because of this emphasis it would be unthinkable for parliament to either overrule the referendums, or any legislative decision the two assemblies make. For this reason, it is a very important constitutional change, and is the first in recent times to undermine parliamentary sovereignty.

In ~~1999~~, 1998, Northern Ireland had a referendum for the same purpose, this also was passed with a 'yes' vote, and maintains the same principles and same effect as the devolution of ~~the~~ powers to Scotland ~~&~~ and Wales.

In 1998 also, there was a referendum to decide whether London should have its own elected mayor, a 'yes' vote was passed, and this entitled London to its own small amount

of sovereignty - comparatively with the devolution to Scotland and Welsh assemblies, it is not a hugely important constitutional change. However, it moved beyond this, and in 2011 there were 11 cities in the UK with an elected mayor - this is a sign of considerable constitutional change.

~~In 1999~~ The House of Lords Reform Act was introduced in 1999, this saw hereditary peers in the house reduced right down to 92, and they were replaced with 'life peers' (appointed peers), this was a significant constitutional change because even though it is not wholly democratic, life peers were admitted to the Lords on merit, rather than via their bloodline. This change saw a huge wealth of experience and expertise to the common due to the 'life peers' professional knowledge. This is important because it means this can be put to use in scrutinising gov't legislation, and may enable the lords to better use their ability to delay. It is important because gov't can now be better held to account by the knowledge and experience in the Lords.

For this reason it is a significant constitutional change.

The Freedom of Information Act was passed in 2000 and is incredibly important because it guarantees a free media. This massively ~~increased~~ ~~the~~ ~~media's~~ meant that there was access to all information, and people could now see what they wanted - rather than what the gov't wanted to see them to see. This is a very significant change because people could now form their own opinions, and many immoral proceedings could be uncovered. by ~~them~~

The 1998 Human Rights Act ~~was~~ determined that the European Convention of Human Rights was to become legally binding on all except the UK Parliament. This is a hugely influential piece of legislation because it ensures the protection of every individual citizen's freedoms and rights. Although this is not binding to gov't, the ~~new~~ emphasis placed on convention means that they will only overturn this legislation under exceptional circumstances. This is a

massively important constitutional change as it guarantees the protection of every UK citizen.

In 2005, the Constitutional Reform Act was introduced. This saw the creation of a new, independent from parliament judiciary, ~~this replaced the old~~ called the Supreme Court. ~~This massively undermined parliamentary sovereignty~~ because it replaced the old judiciary, which was made up of 12 judges who sat in the Lords. This meant that the judges were potentially politically active, or could be influenced by those who were, which of course is hugely undemocratic, especially in a position of such power. The Supreme Court was completely independent of parliament control, and meant they could act independently. ~~This massively under~~ is a massive constitutional change, ~~and~~ ~~massively~~ ~~undermining~~ parliamentary sovereignty. As with all constitution change in the UK, it is not codified so can be overturned, however as this can be applied to all change it does not lessen its significance.

In 2011, the Welsh assembly ~~had enough~~ another referendum for ~~even~~ its own law making powers - this was accepting, adding to the further ~~of~~ dispersion of Parliamentary ~~sovereignty~~ power.

To conclude, in recent times there has been a great deal of constitutional change and reform, all of which has been important. However, the most important change is the Constitutional Reform Act 2005, this is the only legislation which completely undermines parliamentary sovereignty (barring the matter of the unmodified constitution) ~~and~~ as it stands independently from parliament control. The Welsh and Scottish devolution are very important, and could be considered a catalyst, however their powers are weak and still ultimately under parliament control.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Comments

This gains a level 2 reward and with only a little more effort it could have entered the top level.



ResultsPlus
Examiner Tip

There are no 'stock answers' to most essay questions and they will draw across a wide spectrum of the relevant specification - hence reading and re-reading the question is important.

In contrast to the previous essay this does merit a level 3 reward.

Chosen question number: **Question 3**

Question 4

The UK constitution has faced multiple reforms in modern times. Devolution of power is one of the reforms that have taken place alongside House of Lords Reform and others. It can be viewed as the most significant change although there are arguments which suggest otherwise.

On the one hand, Scottish and Welsh devolution ~~has~~ has been the most significant change to the UK constitution as it has decentralised Westminster's powers. Through this decentralisation, ~~Scotland~~ The Scottish Parliament ^(Holyrood) is capable of creating primary legislation as of 2005. Most evident examples are their scrapping of tuition fees and free care for the elderly. As of the referendum in 2011, the Welsh Assembly has also been granted primary legislation powers; similarly to Scotland, they are able to raise or decrease tax by 3%. Despite the fact that national issues are still controlled by Westminster, the introduction of devolution has been significant as it has taken the legislative powers of Scotland and Wales away from Parliament. In comparison to other reforms,

it can be argued this is the most drastic change, and thus the most significant.

Another reason as to why devolution in Scotland and Wales has been the most significant change to the UK constitution, is that it has enhanced the democracy. Devolution grants ~~partmen~~ ~~rights~~ ~~groups~~ ~~of~~ ~~people~~ ~~to~~ ~~have~~ ~~more~~ ~~opinion~~ more people the opportunity to voice their opinions and be represented more effectively. ~~the~~ ~~Labour's~~ ~~policy~~ ~~of~~ ~~devolution~~ ~~since~~ ~~1997~~ ~~has~~ ~~been~~ ~~given~~ ~~Scotland~~ ~~and~~ ~~Wales~~ ~~outlets~~ ~~of~~ ~~democracy~~, allowing to legislate for themselves. Furthermore, the Additional Member Electoral System is used in both Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly. This allows the citizens of both Scotland and Wales to ~~be~~ ~~represented~~ more proportionally, with smaller parties such as the Green and SNP having more of an influence than they do in Westminster. This proves that devolution is a significant change taken place in the UK as it ~~has~~ ~~been~~ ~~that~~ ~~has~~ increased the democracy by allowing people to be represented more equally and legislate their own policies.

On the other hand, other reforms have also been the cause of significant change in the UK. For example, the House of Lords reform 2011 was the first step of a more modern and effective parliamentary system. With the removal of all but 92 hereditary peers, and replacing them with experts in different fields, the House of Lords can now scrutinise the commons more effectively. This is significant as it is ~~the~~ the first time that the Commons is held accountable to such an extent. This reform has improved democracy in the UK, and can be seen as ^{introducing} ~~doing~~ the same amount of change as devolution in Wales and Scotland. In addition, the House of Lords reform is also incomplete, with ~~plans to~~ ^{future ideas} ~~to~~ complete the reform, it can be seen that this constitutional reform ~~will bring~~ ~~significant~~ will bring even more significant change.

Also, the constitutional reform act 2005 changed the entire structure of the judiciary. This was seen through the creation of the supreme court breaking

The link between Parliament and the judiciary by removing the House of Lords as the highest court of Appeal. Also the Judicial Appointments Commission being the new way of appointing judges as well as the diluted powers of Lord Chancellor to Lord Chief Justice Lord Thomas; Lord Speaker Baron Forder and the Secretary of State for Justice Elizabeth Truss (was under Theresa May). These three changes from one constitutional reform have redesigned the structure of the judiciary and the way powers are no longer as fixed. Evidently, this is more significant than the devolution of Scotland and Wales as it has brought about more change.

The Northern Ireland Parliament is another reason as to why devolution ~~is not the~~ ^{is not the} most significant reform taken place in modern times. This parliament came as a result of the Good Friday Agreement in 1998 and was the beginning of devolution as we know it along with Scottish Parliament and the Welsh Assembly. However, the Northern Ireland Parliament was suspended by

Westminster from 2002-2007. This proved that Westminster still had the authority to carry out its wishes, including ~~reversing~~ taking power back from devolved bodies. This is significant as ~~throughout~~ the notion of parliamentary sovereignty remains and is capable of removing power from both Scotland and Wales. Thus, it is proved that the devolution of Scotland and Wales not being the most significant change in the UK.

To conclude, the UK has witnessed much constitutional reform. ~~and as a result of these reforms~~ ~~As a result of these reforms~~ Despite there have been significant changes brought about by devolution of Scotland and Wales through decentralisation of Westminster's powers and extending democracy. Despite this, the constitution has also been changed significantly by other reforms such as the House of Lords reform and the constitutional reform Act. Therefore, although being significant, devolution of Scotland and Wales cannot be considered as the most significant.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Comments

Each different change to the UK's constitution is considered and the remit and scope of the question remains a focus throughout.



ResultsPlus

Examiner Tip

The key hallmarks to a good essay is that the focus of the essay remains in constant sight throughout the response, there is no deviation or transgression from the essay title and the issues raised. The question is easily gleaned from the response.

Paper Summary

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

- On part (a) questions there is no avenue for credit of material which is not present in the source – it must be source linked to gain credit.
- On part (b) questions note that to reach level 3 there has to be elements from both the source and own knowledge.
- On part (c) questions candidates appeared more assured and comfortable in handling and presenting opposing sides of a political argument – and this is central to gaining AO2 marks.
- The critical importance for L3 responses is the need to use contemporary and informed examples. This applies equally to Q1 and Q2 (a) and (b) and to the essays. The situation has improved but this was a crucially limiting factor in all questions.
- The need for a balanced answer when a question requires an assessment to be made 'Discuss, 'To what extent?' 'How far?' and so on.
- The need to read questions carefully and to answer the question as set and not necessarily something that has been pre-prepared.

Grade Boundaries

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