

## Descriptors for Intermediate and Higher Modern Studies

### Unit 1: Political Issues in the United Kingdom

Intermediate Course		Higher Course	
<b>Study Theme 1A: Government and Decision Making in Scotland</b>	1) Decision making in Scotland: the Scottish Parliament; the Executive; the powers, structure and functions of the Scottish Parliament and Executive. The functions of local councils and councillors.	<b>Study Theme 1A: Devolved Decision Making in Scotland</b>	1) Decision making in Scotland: the Scottish Parliament as an arena for conflict, co-operation and decision making; functions; organisation of and procedures for business. The Scottish Executive; the respective roles of the First Minister and the Cabinet. The effects of the electoral system on decision making for Scotland at Holyrood level.
	2) Influences on the decision making process in Scotland: the voting system, the media and pressure groups. Case Study: evaluation of pressure groups in action.		2) Representation of Scottish interests at Westminster. The distribution of powers between the Scottish Parliament and the UK Parliament; co-operation and conflict between the Scottish Parliament and Scottish Executive and the UK Parliament. The effects of the electoral system on Westminster decision making for Scotland.
<b>Study Theme 1B: Government and Decision Making in Central Government</b>	1) Decision making for the UK: the UK Parliament: the House of Lords and the House of Commons; the powers of the Prime Minister; the Cabinet; the work of a backbencher.	<b>Study Theme 1B: Decision Making in Central Government</b>	3) Local government in Scotland: role, functions, finance and reform. COSLA, co-operation and conflict with the Scottish Executive. The effects of the electoral system on local authority decision making.
	2) Participation in the voting system; forms of participation. Reasons for variations in voter turnout at elections. Influence of the media on the political system and level of participation. Case Study: the influence of the press on politics.		1) The Executive; the respective roles of the Prime Minister and Cabinet; accountability to Parliament; the role of senior civil servants in the UK political system.
			2) Parliament (House of Commons and House of Lords) as an arena for conflict, co-operation and decision making; functions; organisation of and procedures for business.
			3) Influences on the decision making process in the UK: the extent of these pressures, their impact and legitimacy.

Intermediate Course		Higher Course		
		<b>Study Theme 1C: Political Parties and their Policies (including the Scottish Dimension)</b>	1)	Political parties: ideology, membership, organisation and finance; influences on decisions within parties and on the formulating of party policies: the role of party leaders, MPs, party members, the media and voters.
			2)	Conflict and consensus within and between parties; ideological differences within and between parties; reasons for changes in party ideologies and/or policies. Electoral success.
			3)	Party policies on taxation, law and order, education and Europe: trends and differences.
		<b>Study Theme 1D: Electoral Systems, Voting and Political Attitudes</b>	1)	The UK, Scottish, European Parliamentary and Scottish local government electoral systems; effects on the distribution of power within and among parties, in elected bodies and between the electorate and the elected.
			2)	Voting patterns; explanations of voting behaviour.
			3)	The shaping of political attitudes through the media; opinion polls; referenda; voter participation.

## Unit 2: Social Issues in the United Kingdom

Intermediate Course		Higher Course	
<b>Study Theme 2A: Equality in Society: Wealth and Health in the United Kingdom</b>	1) Poverty: causes and consequences; the role in tackling poverty of: central government; the Scottish Parliament; local authorities; the voluntary sector and the private sector.	<b>Study Theme 2: Wealth and Health Inequalities in the United Kingdom</b>	1) Evidence of inequalities in wealth and health; causes of inequalities in wealth and health; consequences of inequalities in wealth and health.
	2) Causes of ill health; causes of health inequalities; health needs in the UK; how these health needs are met by: central government; the Scottish Parliament; local authorities; the voluntary sector and the private sector.		2) With reference to ethnicity and gender: the extent of social and economic inequalities; the nature and effect of government responses to deal with these inequalities.
			3) The principles of the Welfare State. The debate over the provision of and funding of health care and welfare; individual and collective responsibility.
<b>Study Theme 2B: Crime and the Law in Society</b>	1) Types of crime; causes of crime; the law in Scotland regarding alcohol, drugs and road traffic.		
	2) Role of the police; branches of the police; different approaches to policing; the court system in Scotland; sentencing policy; the Scottish juvenile justice system.		

### Unit 3: International Issues

Intermediate Course		Higher Course	
<b>Study Theme 3A: The Republic of South Africa</b>	1) Social and economic issues: main regional and cultural differences; inequalities in lifestyle in terms of employment, wealth, health, land, housing, education and law and order issues; responses to these inequalities.	<b>Study Theme 3A: The Republic of South Africa</b>	1) The South African political system: the role and powers of the South African government at national, provincial and local levels.
	2) Political issues: participation and representation within the political system; the influence of different political groups on the political process.		2) Political issues: participation and representation. Political parties and support from different groups. Political trends. 3) Social and economic issues: the nature and extent of social and economic inequalities; demands for change; the effectiveness of government responses and the consequences among and within different racial groups.
<b>Study Theme 3B: China</b>	1) Social and economic issues: main regional and cultural differences; inequalities in lifestyle in terms of wealth, housing, health, education; rural and urban contrasts. Government responses to these issues.	<b>Study Theme 3B: China</b>	1) The Chinese political system: the role and powers of the Chinese government at national, regional and local level.
	2) Political issues: participation and representation within the political system; the influence of different political groups on the political process; human rights issues and government responses.		2) Political issues: participation and representation. The role of the Chinese Communist Party and the extent of political opposition. Political trends. 3) Social and economic issues: the nature and extent of social and economic inequalities; demands for change; the effectiveness of government responses and the consequences for different groups.

Intermediate Course		Higher Course	
<b>Study Theme 3C: The United States of America</b>	1) Social and economic issues: main regional and cultural differences; inequalities in terms of employment, income, health, housing, education and law and order amongst ethnic minorities. Government responses to these issues.	<b>Study Theme 3C: The United States of America</b>	1) The USA political system: the role and powers of the USA government at federal, state and local level.
	2) Political issues: inequalities of representation and participation in the political process by different groups. Government responses to these issues.		2) Political issues: participation and representation; immigration. Political parties and support from different groups. Political trends.
<b>Study Theme 3D: The European Union</b>	1) Comparative lifestyles between a community in the UK and a community in another European Union country: living standards, education, housing, family life and leisure.	<b>Study Theme 3D: The European Union</b>	1) Aims, growth and achievement of the European Union (EU). The main institutions and their influence within the Union.
	2) Social and economic issues in Europe: European integration; enlargement; the implications for the UK of the single European currency; regional development; social policy and fishing/farming issues; military co-operation.		2) Co-operation and conflict with reference to political, social and economic issues: constitutional arrangements; enlargement; the single market and single currency; regional and social policy.
			3) Case study of the Common Agricultural Policy and the Common Fisheries Policy

Intermediate Course		Higher Course	
<b>Study Theme 3E: Development in Brazil</b>	1) Social and economic issues: main regional and cultural differences; inequalities in lifestyle: wealth, health, housing, education, land, law and order. Responses to these inequalities by federal, state and other organisations. Economic issues: trade, aid and foreign debt.	<b>Study Theme 3E: The Politics of Development in Africa (with the exception of the Republic of South Africa)</b>	1) Health and health care issues; access to education, food and safe water. The links between health, education, food and development.
	2) Political issues: extent of participation in the political system; human rights issues, government responses.		2) Economic, political and social factors affecting development.
		3) The respective roles of African governments, African Union, the European Union, Non-Governmental Organisations, the United Kingdom and the United Nations in promoting development.	3) The organisation and role of the United Nations (UN): aims, membership, institutions, decision making procedures, reforms/changes. The role of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO): international role, reforms/changes.
		<b>Study Theme 3F: Global Security</b>	1) The organisation and role of the United Nations (UN): aims, membership, institutions, decision making procedures, reforms/changes. The role of the North Atlantic Treaty Organisation (NATO): international role, reforms/changes.
			2) Origins and consequences of recent threats to peace and security, including international terrorism, demanding an international response.
			3) International responses: the EU, NATO and the UN responses to recent threats to peace and security including international terrorism.