

X235/12/01

NATIONAL
QUALIFICATIONS
2015

THURSDAY, 4 JUNE
1.00 PM – 2.00 PM

POLITICS
HIGHER
Paper 1

Answer **both** questions.



Study the Sources below and answer the questions which follow.

Source A: Opinion Polls

Political Parties can no longer rely on the loyalty of specific sections of the electorate automatically voting for them. With an increase in the number of floating voters, as well as disengagement with politics in some sections of society, parties have to ensure as much as possible that they are aware of the views of voters. In response, political parties are making increasing use of data gathered from focus groups and opinion polls to inform their campaign strategies and policy positions. Opinion polls are surveys that are carried out in order to gauge the views of the public. Using different methodologies, organisations such as MORI, Angus Reid Associates and ComRes carry out surveys in order to identify how the public view the positions that parties take on major issues and the standing of the party leaders as well as the general image of the parties in the public mind.

During an election campaign, polls are published on an almost daily basis, allowing the parties to identify what the public thinks about their performance. As well as providing a picture of likely voting intentions, it is claimed that opinion polls provide an accurate indication of the popularity of key policies and this allows the parties to adapt their campaigns and policies to better represent the views of the voters. However, it has also been argued that polls may give a misleading picture of the level of support for parties as some voters may not express their true feelings or beliefs, perhaps feeling under pressure to give a particular response to the pollsters. For example, in 1992 the majority of opinion polls significantly underestimated the level of support for the Conservatives. The polling organisations eventually identified a group of “shy Tories” who were often reluctant to state their political persuasions to the pollsters.

Another criticism levelled against the accuracy of polls is that some people may refuse to respond to questions from pollsters or answer calls from strangers. As a result, some opinion polls may be fundamentally flawed due to a non-response bias. In addition, it has been alleged that the methodology used by the pollsters may also produce misleading results due to sampling errors. For example, in the 2012 US Presidential Election, it was claimed that many polling organisations had understated support for President Obama because their telephone polls did not sample those who only had a mobile phone.

The polling organisations have responded by arguing that they have adapted their methodologies to accurately reflect public opinion, and in order to further boost confidence in the accuracy of their results they have committed to a high level of transparency and publish full details of their surveys. Another alleged advantage is that polls can accurately capture the public mood on major issues, thus allowing parties to respond to the preference of the electorate. This was shown when polls identified a significant shift in public opinion against Britain’s involvement in the war in Iraq, which resulted in political parties changing their policy towards Iraq.

Source B**Results and Opinion Poll Data for Recent Referenda held in the UK (%)**

Issue	Final opinion poll		Actual result	
	Yes	No	Yes	No
Scottish Devolution (1997)	72	28	74	26
Welsh Assembly (1997)	67	33	63	37
Good Friday Agreement (1998)	71	29	71	29
London Mayor (1998)	74	26	72	28

Results and Opinion Poll Data for the 2010 General Election (%)

Party	Angus Reid Final opinion poll 2010	ComRes Final opinion poll 2010	Actual result 2010 General Election
Conservative	36	37	36
Labour	24	28	29
Liberal Democrats	29	28	23

Question 1

Use only the information in Sources A and B.

What are the arguments for and against the use of opinion polls?

(6)

[Turn over

Source C

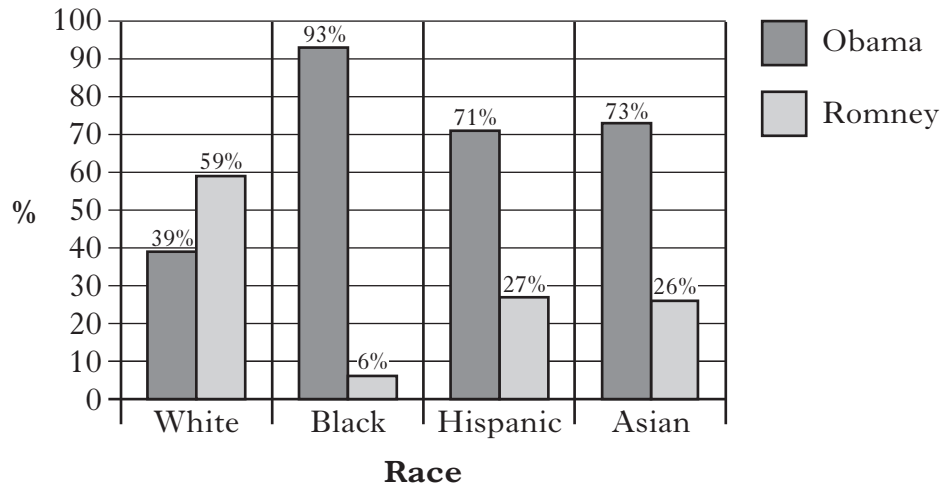
After defeating his Republican rival John McCain in 2008, Barack Obama was re-elected as the President of the United States in November 2012, this time defeating the Republican Party candidate Mitt Romney. In 2012, Obama received 65,910,437 votes, compared to the 69,498,516 he received in 2008. To be elected President in the United States, the winner must receive more than 270 Electoral College votes. In the 2012 Election, Obama won 26 states, which equated to 332 Electoral College Votes. This compares to the 28 states he won in 2008, which resulted in 365 Electoral College votes. To run a successful campaign, Presidential candidates have to raise a considerable amount of money. A major proportion of their campaign spending goes towards television advertising.

Source D: Campaigning Fundraising and Spending by Candidate (2008 and 2012)

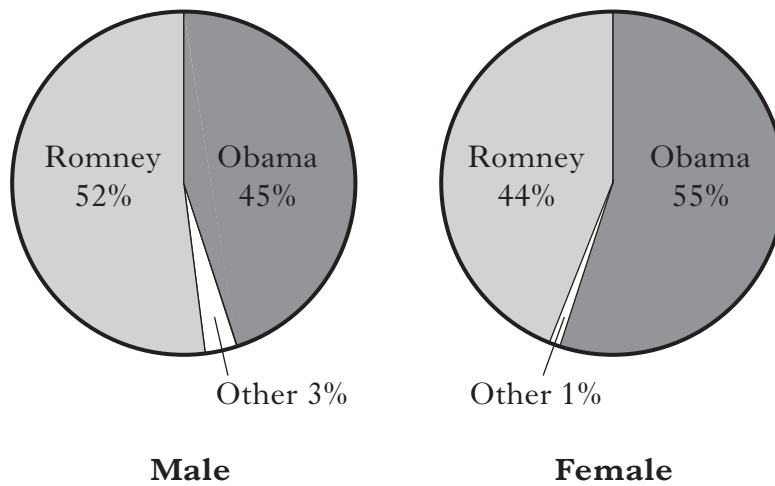
2008	Total Raised	Total Spent	Spending on Advertising	Other Spending
Obama (Democrat)	\$778.6 m	\$760.3 m	\$280 m	\$480.3 m
McCain (Republican)	\$383.9 m	\$358 m	\$134 m	\$224 m

2012	Total Raised	Total Spent	Spending on Advertising	Other Spending
Obama (Democrat)	\$1072.6 m	\$985.7 m	\$580.1 m	\$405.6 m
Romney (Republican)	\$992.5 m	\$992 m	\$470.3 m	\$521.7 m

Source E: Voting by Race in the 2012 Presidential Election (%)



Source F: Voting in the 2012 Presidential Election by Gender (%)



[Turn over for Q2 on Page six

Source G: Voting by: Age, Community, Region and Income in the 2012 US Presidential Election (%)

Age	18–24	25–29	30–39	40–49	50–64	65+
Obama	60	60	55	48	47	44
Romney	36	38	42	50	52	56

Community	Big Cities (Population over 500,000)	Mid-sized Cities (Population 50,000 to 500,000)	Towns (Population 10,000 to 49,999)	Suburbs	Rural Area
Obama	69	58	42	48	37
Romney	29	40	56	50	61

Region	Obama	Romney
Midwest	52·60	45·77
Northeast	58·93	39·5
Pacific West	58·91	38·37
Greater South	44·32	54·37
Inner West & Plains	43·07	54·52

Income	Under \$30,000	\$30,000 – 49,999	\$50,000 – 99,999	\$100,000 – 199,999	\$200,000 – 249,000	Over \$250,000
Obama	63	57	46	44	47	42
Romney	35	42	52	54	52	55

Question 2

Use only the information in Sources C, D, E, F and G.

Barack Obama’s 2012 Presidential Election campaign was even more successful than his campaign in 2008 and in both elections he significantly outperformed his Republican rival’s ability to raise and spend money. In the 2012 Presidential election, he comprehensively defeated his Republican rival Mitt Romney in all areas and in all sections of society.

To what extent does the information in **Sources C, D, E, F** and **G** support this viewpoint? **(14)**

[END OF QUESTION PAPER]

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