



Question & Answer document

Higher Modern Studies Question Paper webinar

MANDATORY CONTENT/EXAM COVERAGE

Q1

How might questions on ‘The UK constitutional arrangement’ topic within the Democracy in the UK unit be framed?

A1

The full range of essay questions, ‘*To what extent*’, ‘*Discuss*’, ‘*Analyse*’ and ‘*Evaluate*’ may be asked of any bullet point in the Course Assessment Specification mandatory content list. Questions will always be framed in a broad manner to allow candidates to apply their knowledge of the issues they have studied to the questions set.

In the ‘The UK constitutional arrangement’ topic, “The role and powers of government” might look at the success of the government in discharging its powers type of question.

“Changes to the role and powers of the Scottish/UK parliaments” might look on the split of powers post devolution and changes to this since then. This might also include changes which have been debated but not actually introduced such as Independence.

“The ongoing debate over European Union membership” might cover the debate for and against Brexit/EU membership. Details of the Council of Ministers and other EU institutions would not be directly examined.

Q2

Would coverage of local councils be expected in the Democracy unit?

A2

Local Councils would not be explicitly referred to in a question at Higher level. However, if a candidate commented on local councils in a response it would be credited as long as accurate and relevant to the question.

Q3

What coverage might be expected of the judicial element in the democracy unit and can it be explicitly examined in the question paper?

A3

The bullet point which the judiciary is relevant to- *the relationship(s) between the three branches of government (legislature, executive and judiciary)* – talks only of the “relationship” between the three branches. The judicial element of the UK political system will not be explicitly examined in a Higher Modern studies essay question. It would only be part of a much broader question regarding the ability of the legislature or of the executive to pass laws/get its way etc. without opposition or obstacle from the other two branches.

Q4

What coverage might be expected of the House of Lords in the Democracy unit and can it be explicitly examined in the question paper?

A4

As with the judiciary, the House of Lords’ role in the UK political system will not be explicitly examined in a Higher Modern Studies essay question but, if relevant to the question posed, might be a factor that a candidate chooses to bring in and analyse in their response to a question within *‘The study of representative democracy’*.

ESSAY QUESTIONS**Q5**

Should candidates’ essays questions on World Issues discuss more than one or more international organisations?

A5

This will depend on the wording of the question. If the question refers to an “international organisation”, singular, then candidates should consider the issue in relation to one international organisation they have studied. In the 2015 and 2016 Higher Question Papers the wording of the World Issues exam questions clearly stated “international organisations” which required candidates to analyse more than one international organisation.

Q6

What is the maximum mark that can be awarded for a fully developed, balanced point/paragraph in an essay?

A6

6 marks.

Q7

Is it good practice for candidates to signpost analysis and evaluation in essay responses with indicative phrases such as “this shows”, “this highlights”, “the consequences of this”, “as a result” etc?

A7

It would be good practice for centres to instruct their candidates on how they can apply their knowledge of the issues studied to illustrate the skills of analysis and evaluation. Some candidates may benefit from instruction on the use of transitional words and phrases which show logic, organisation, line of argument, connections and/or relations between issues. This will also make it easier for markers to identify analysis and evaluation so would be deemed good practice. This does not mean that candidates will be given no marks if such words/phrases are not used.

Q8

How many developed points should a candidate provide in a 20 mark essay response?

A8

There is no definitive 'number' of developed points a candidates must provide and the approach adopted by candidates varies widely dependant on how fully they are able to develop points. Most centres advise their candidates to develop 4-5 points in response to the 20-mark essay question.

Q9

How can candidates 'earn the full range of marks for the conclusion element in a 20 mark essay?

A9

Conclusion marks can be given throughout the answer and do not need to come at the end in a "conclusion".

A four mark conclusion should make a clear link back to the judgement required by the question. It should contain evaluative comments and some element of balance e.g. *"Although FPTP has the massive advantage of creating a strong link between representative and constituency, it's major flaw which renders it inefficient in representing voters is...."*

Such single paragraph 4 mark conclusions are rare. A candidate can "gather" four marks by giving smaller 1 or 2 mark evaluative comments (many teachers use the term "mini-conclusions").

Q10

What if a candidate introduces 'new' evidence or points in their conclusion?

A10

New evidence or points in a paragraph at the end may not actually be "conclusions" in themselves. Where 'new' evidence or points do not support an evaluation or conclusion it may attract Knowledge or Analysis marks if accurate and relevant.

‘OBJECTIVITY’ QUESTIONS

Q11

Can pupils be expected to accurately comment on the reliability of the sources in the ‘objectivity’ question if the origin is unfamiliar to them?

A11

Credit will always be given for comments and evaluations on the reliability of sources which are justified and developed. If candidates are unfamiliar with a source’s origin, e.g. the author or publisher, then they may still attempt to comment and explain why this enhances or diminishes the reliability of the source.

There will be always an explanation of what the source is - e.g. in 2016 “*Source: Adapted from an academic website for students and teachers of international affairs*”, “*Source: Adapted from the website of the Russian Government’s news agency*” – which should always allow candidates to critically comment and evaluate source reliability whether it is well known to them or not by providing additional information other than the author/publisher/origin.

Q12

If candidates evaluate the reliability of just one source can they still be awarded 2 marks for ‘comment/analysis of the origin and reliability of the sources’?

A12

Yes, accurate, detailed evaluation of one source **or** accurate evaluation of two sources can be awarded the full 2 marks in this element.

Q13

Will new evidence, not previously cited in the main body of a response, be credited in the overall judgement to ‘objectivity/to what extent is it accurate’ questions?

A13

Yes.

‘CONCLUSION’ QUESTIONS

Q14

Can the overall conclusion to the ‘conclusion’ source question consider and comment on any issue within the context of the source?

Evidence from one source could be enough. It depends on the candidate’s use of the evidence, evaluative comments etc. It would probably be easier to get two marks if two sources are referenced.