



National
Qualifications
SPECIMEN ONLY

S858/76/12

**Politics
Paper 2**

Date — Not applicable

Duration — 1 hour 30 minutes

Total marks — 28

Attempt **BOTH** questions.

Write your answers clearly in the answer booklet provided. In the answer booklet you must clearly identify the question number you are attempting.

Use **blue** or **black** ink.

Before leaving the examination room you must give your answer booklet to the Invigilator; if you do not, you may lose all the marks for this paper.



* S 8 5 8 7 6 1 2 *

Total marks — 28
Attempt BOTH questions

1. Study **Sources A** and **B**, then answer the question which follows.

SOURCE A

US Congressional committees

Membership of US committees, especially Senate committees, has always had high status. Congressional committees are often referred to as 'little legislatures' because of the influence they have. In a nation which prides itself on the separation of powers, Congressional committees also provide an invaluable service to the nation by investigating the Executive's work. Congressional committees have significant budgets to carry out detailed investigations and can rely on a large staff of investigators.

In recent times, US committees have become very politically-divided with members taking positions on bills according to party lines. Although this partisanship has impacted on members' willingness to scrutinise government as Republican and Democrat members adopt opposite positions, Congressional committees are often controlled by the opponents to the President. For example, during the 1990s Congressional committees controlled by the Republicans carried out a number of investigations into the Democratic President, Bill Clinton, over alleged scandals in office.

Senate committee meetings, especially, can often be lively and combative. UK MP George Galloway famously made a flamboyant appearance at the Senate Homeland Security and Governmental Affairs committee in 2005.

There have been calls to improve the workings of committees. Many in the USA feel that the influence of professional lobbyists should be reduced. Information could be shared much better with the public so voters can be empowered to make more informed decisions about whether to keep or replace the elected officials who are acting as their representatives. However, Congressional committees do have some significant powers such as the ability to compel witnesses to attend hearings and to acquire information under oath. Indeed, lying under oath and failure to disclose information has resulted in imprisonment in the past.

1. (continued)

SOURCE B

Parliamentary committees in the United Kingdom

House of Commons committees hold inquiries to produce reports on a range of matters, from the conduct of government to specialist subject areas. Membership of Parliamentary committees hasn't always been as valued as it could be. But in recent years their profile has risen following investigations and public hearings into the conduct of British banks and phone hacking allegations against a number of newspapers. However, critics have long argued that Parliamentary committees are limited by a lack of staff and resources to carry out detailed scrutiny of the executive branch.

While MPs can belong to committees in the Commons and peers belong to committees in the Lords, there are also some joint committees where members from the two Houses of Parliament work together. Despite being, in theory, independent from the government, the balance on House of Commons committees reflects party support in the House. As a result, committees usually have a majority controlled by the governing party. For a long time, party whips had too much power and committees were accused of editing reports critical of the government as a result of the influence of government whips. Even now, sometimes hearings can be dull and MPs are not always able to get key information from witnesses. Witnesses are able to talk about irrelevant issues knowing that in a few minutes they will be free to leave.

Many people feel that Parliamentary committees could be improved in order to make them more effective. The practice of giving each committee member five or 10 minutes to question witnesses can be counter-productive. While the vast majority of those called to attend committees do so, Parliament does not have any real effective power to fine or imprison people who refuse to attend or who mislead it.

Using only the information in Sources A and B:

Compare the role of US Congressional committees and UK Parliamentary committees in scrutinising the actions of government.

In your answer you **must** make **three** points of comparison and reach an overall conclusion.

8

[Turn over

2. Study Sources A–G, then answer the question which follows.

Source A : Seats and votes by party (2007–2011)

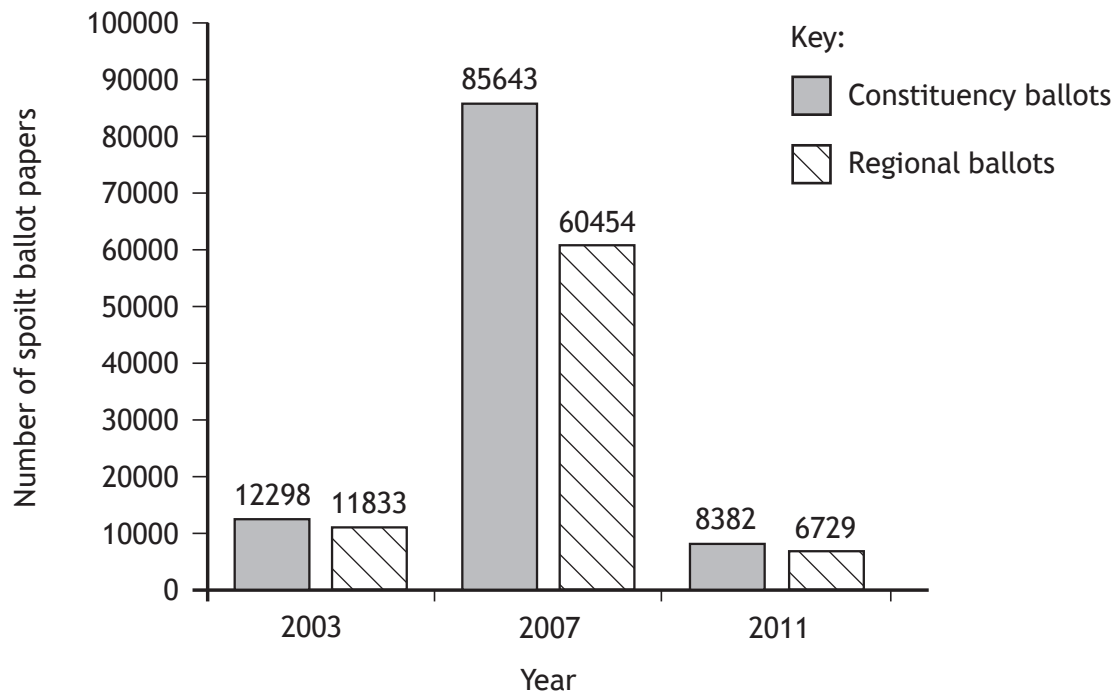
	Total seats		% Seats		% Votes (constituency + regional)		Difference between % seats and % votes	
	2007	2011	2007	2011	2007	2011	2007	2011
SNP	47	69	36.4	53.5	33.2	44.7	+3.2	+8.8
Labour	46	37	35.7	28.7	31.8	29.0	+3.9	+0.3
Conservative	17	15	13.2	11.6	15.8	13.1	-2.6	-1.5
Lib Dems	16	5	12.4	3.9	14.3	6.6	-1.9	-2.7
Green	2	2	1.6	1.6	2.2	2.2	-0.6	-0.8

Source B: MSPs by region (2011)

Region	SNP	Lab	Con	Lib Dem	Green	Others	Total
Central Scotland	9	6	1	0	0	0	16
Glasgow	7	7	1	0	1	0	16
Highlands and Islands	9	2	2	2	0	0	15
Lothian	8	4	2	0	1	1	16
Mid-Scotland and Fife	9	4	2	1	0	0	16
North-East Scotland	11	3	2	1	0	0	17
South of Scotland	8	4	3	1	0	0	16
West of Scotland	8	7	2	0	0	0	17
Total	69	37	15	5	2	1	129

2. (continued)

Source C: Spoilt ballot papers (2003–2011)



Source D: Selected Scottish Parliamentary election statistics (2003–2011)

	2003	2007	2011
Male MSPs	78	86	84
Female MSPs	51	43	45
Ethnic minority MSPs	0	1	2
Constituency candidates	406	334	321

Source E: Voter turnout by region (2003–2011)

Region	2003	2007	2011
Central Scotland	48.5%	50.5%	48.0%
Glasgow	41.5%	41.6%	40.7%
Highlands and Islands	52.3%	54.7%	53.4%
Lothian	50.5%	54.1%	54.8%
Mid-Scotland and Fife	49.7%	52.8%	52.0%
North-East Scotland	48.3%	50.7%	48.8%
South of Scotland	52.3%	53.6%	53.0%
West of Scotland	53.3%	56.5%	53.1%
Total	49.4%	51.7%	50.4%

[Turn over

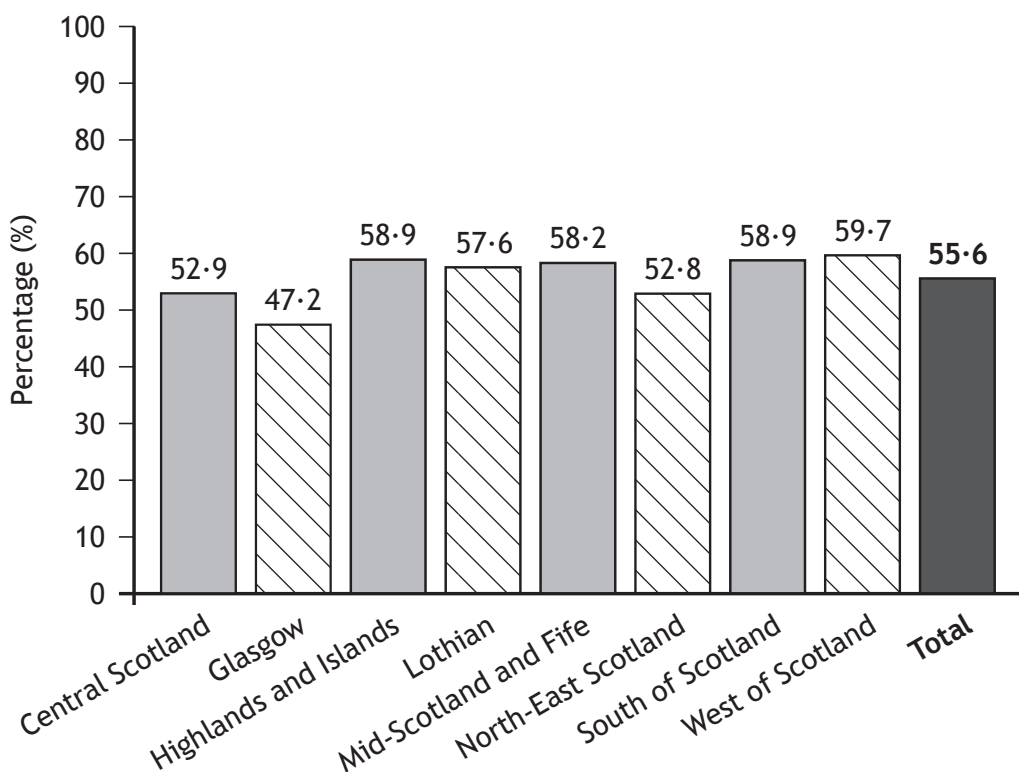
2. (continued)

Source F: Information on Scottish Parliamentary election (2016)

The Scottish Parliament election, held on 5 May 2016, resulted in the SNP being the largest party with 63 MSPs, two short of an overall majority. The Conservatives were second with 31 MSPs, pushing Labour into third place with 24 MSPs. The Scottish Green Party with 6 MSPs overtook the Liberal Democrats who remained on 5 MSPs. There were 84 males elected in 2016 and 45 females. Two MSPs were from ethnic minority backgrounds.

A total of 313 candidates contested constituency seats at the election, an average of 4.3 candidates per constituency. This is the smallest number of candidates to date at any Scottish Parliament election. Ten parties stood candidates in constituency contests, down from 12 in 2011. The number of independent candidates standing in constituency contests declined from 14 in 2011 to eight in 2016. There were a total of 13,202 spoilt ballots, of these 9279 were spoilt constituency ballots and 3923 were spoilt regional ballots.

Source G: Voter turnout by region 2016



2. (continued)

Compared to 2007, the 2011 election was a fantastic result for the SNP. Right across the country Labour were convincingly defeated and were clearly the biggest losers. The 2011 election was also great for democracy marked by greater participation in the political process and fairer representation for all. However by comparison, in both these areas, the 2016 election was hugely disappointing.

Using only the information in Sources A–G:

To what extent does the evidence contained in these sources support the viewpoint above?

20

[END OF SPECIMEN QUESTION PAPER]



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Marking Instructions

These marking instructions have been provided to show how Qualifications Scotland would mark this specimen question paper.

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General marking principles for Higher Politics

Always apply these general principles. Use them in conjunction with the detailed marking instructions, which identify the key features required in candidates' responses.

- (a) Always use positive marking. This means candidates accumulate marks for the demonstration of relevant skills, knowledge and understanding; marks are not deducted for errors or omissions.
- (b) If a candidate response does not seem to be covered by either the principles or detailed marking instructions, and you are uncertain how to assess it, you must seek guidance from your team leader.
- (c) Marking must be consistent. Never make a hasty judgement on a response based on length, quality of handwriting or a confused start.
- (d) Use the full range of marks available for each question.
- (e) The detailed marking instructions are not an exhaustive list. Award marks for other relevant points.

Marking principles for each question type

For each of the question types the following provides an overview of marking principles.

The types of questions used in this paper are:

- To what extent . . . [20-mark information-handling question]
- Compare . . . [8-mark information-handling question]

Source-based compare question that assesses information-handling skills (8 marks)

- Candidates will have two sources at an appropriate SCQF level
- Credit candidates who synthesis information between sources
- For full marks candidates must refer to both sources in their answer

Source-based interpreting electoral data question that assesses information-handling skills (20 marks)

- Candidates will have up to seven sources at an appropriate SCQF level
- Credit candidates who synthesis information both within and between sources
- For full marks candidates must refer to all sources in their answer

General marking guidelines for source-based questions (compare) – 8 marks

	1 mark	2 marks	3 marks
<p>Analysis</p> <p>Identification of relevant points of comparison.</p> <p>Award up to 3 marks.</p>	<p>One accurate point of comparison identified from two sources.</p>	<p>Two accurate points of comparison identified from two sources.</p>	<p>Three accurate points of comparison identified from two sources.</p>
<p>Analysis</p> <p>Comments that identify relationships/implications/make judgements.</p> <p>Award up to 3 marks.</p>	<p>One relevant analytical comment based on one point of comparison.</p>	<p>Two relevant analytical comments based on two points of comparison.</p>	<p>Three relevant analytical comments based on three points of comparison.</p>
<p>Overall conclusion</p> <p>Award up to 2 marks.</p>	<p>Straightforward overall conclusion about the comparison based upon analysis of evidence.</p>	<p>Detailed overall conclusion about the comparison based on analysis of evidence.</p>	

General marking guidelines for source-based question (interpretation of electoral data) – 20 marks

		1 mark	2 marks	3 marks
Interpretation of data linked to the first part of the viewpoint	Component 1	One aspect of data is interpreted accurately and linked to the first component of this part of the viewpoint.	All relevant aspects of data are interpreted accurately and linked to the first component of this part of the viewpoint.	In addition, all identified aspects of data are synthesised to provide a commentary linked to this component.
	Component 2	One aspect of data is interpreted accurately and linked to the second component of this part of the viewpoint.	All relevant aspects of data are interpreted accurately and linked to the second component of this part of the viewpoint.	In addition, all identified aspects of data are synthesised to provide a commentary linked to this component.
Interpretation of data linked to the second part of the viewpoint	Component 1	One aspect of data is interpreted accurately and linked to the first component of this part of the viewpoint.	All relevant aspects of data are interpreted accurately and linked to the first component of this part of the viewpoint.	In addition, all identified aspects of data are synthesised to provide a commentary linked to this component.
	Component 2	One aspect of data is interpreted accurately and linked to the second component of this part of the viewpoint.	All relevant aspects of data are interpreted accurately and linked to the second component of this part of the viewpoint.	In addition, all identified aspects of data are synthesised to provide a commentary linked to this component.
	Component 3	One aspect of data is interpreted accurately and linked to the third component of this part of the viewpoint.	All relevant aspects of data are interpreted accurately and linked to the third component of this part of the viewpoint.	In addition, all identified aspects of data are synthesised to provide a commentary linked to this component.

		1 mark	2 marks	3 marks
Evaluation of extent of validity of the viewpoint	Evaluation of first part of the viewpoint	An overall evaluative comment is made on the validity of one component of the first part of the viewpoint with supporting justification.	An overall comment is made on the validity of both components of the first part of the viewpoint with supporting justifications.	
	Evaluation of the second part of the viewpoint	An overall evaluative comment is made on the validity of one component of the second part of the viewpoint with supporting justification.	An overall evaluative comment is made on the validity of two components of the second part of the viewpoint with supporting justifications.	An overall evaluative comment is made on the validity of all components of the second part of the viewpoint with supporting justifications.

Marking Instructions for each question

Question		General marking instructions	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
1.		<p>Candidates must demonstrate they can make accurate comparisons and draw valid conclusions.</p> <p>For full marks, candidates must refer to all sources and also say to what extent the evidence supports the viewpoint.</p>	8	<p>Award marks where candidates refer to the following aspects of the question:</p> <p>Source A</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congressional committees have significant budgets to carry out detailed investigations and can rely on a large staff of investigators • Congressional committees are often controlled by the opponents to the president. For example, during the 1990s Congressional committees controlled by the Republicans carried out a number of investigations into the Democratic President, Bill Clinton, over alleged scandals in office • however, Congressional committees do have some significant powers such as the ability to compel witnesses to attend hearings and to acquire information under oath. Failure to disclose information or to lie under oath has resulted in imprisonment in the past. <p>Source B</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • critics have long argued that Parliamentary committees are limited by a lack of staff and resources to carry out detailed scrutiny of the executive branch • as a result, committees usually have a majority controlled by the governing party. For a long time, party whips had too much power and committees were accused of editing down reports critical of the government as a result of the influence of government whips • while the vast majority of those called to attend committees do so, Parliament does not have any real effective power to fine or imprison people who refuse to attend or who mislead it. <p>Award marks for any other relevant comparisons.</p>

Question	General marking instructions	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
	<p>Analysis Comparisons involve:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • identifying areas of differences • identifying areas of similarity • making evaluative comments on the extent of these differences/similarities. <p>For full marks, candidates must use both sources and make three points of comparison.</p> <p>Award up to 2 marks for each accurate point of comparison and analytical comment.</p> <p>Award up to a maximum of 6 marks for accurate comparisons with associated analysis.</p> <p>Award up to 2 marks for an overall conclusion.</p>		<p>Analysis Candidates may make individual evaluative comments as they address each part of the viewpoint, or they may produce a summative evaluation of each part of the viewpoint in the conclusion to their answer – award marks for both approaches.</p> <p>The following response would be awarded 1 mark as it identifies one point of comparison from two sources (1 mark).</p> <p><i>In the UK, committees lack staff and resources to carry out detailed scrutiny of the government. In the US however, they have significant budgets and can rely on a large staff of investigators.</i></p> <p>The following response would be awarded 2 marks as it identifies one point of comparison from two sources (1 mark) and makes a relevant analytical comment (1 mark).</p> <p><i>In the UK, committees lack staff and resources to carry out detailed scrutiny of the government. In the US, however, they have significant budgets and can rely on a large staff of investigators. This means that US committees are much better equipped to carry out investigations of the executive branch. They are not hampered by some of the restrictions facing UK committees who may lack sufficient resources or expertise to find out information.</i></p> <p>The following response would be awarded 2 marks as it makes a detailed overall conclusion (2 marks).</p> <p><i>Overall, US Congressional committees are more able to carry out detailed scrutiny, compel witnesses to attend, and are less likely to be under the control of party whips as in the UK and so the US committees can scrutinise the actions more effectively than in the UK.</i></p>

Question	General marking instructions	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
2.	<p>Candidates must demonstrate that they can interpret and evaluate electoral data.</p> <p>For full marks, candidates must refer to all sources and also say to what extent the data supports the statement made.</p> <p>Analysis/evaluation Award up to 3 marks for answers that correctly interpret electoral data that links to an individual component of the viewpoint.</p> <p>Award 1 mark for an evaluation of the validity of each individual component.</p> <p>For full marks, candidates must address both parts of the viewpoint.</p>	20	<p>Award marks where candidates refer to the following aspects of the question:</p> <p>Component 1 ‘Compared to 2007, the 2011 election was a fantastic result for the SNP.’</p> <p>Award 1 mark if a candidate only addresses one aspect of data, award 2 marks if they address both aspects of data.</p> <p>Aspect 1 (seats) – Source A: The SNP won a majority of seats in the Scottish Parliament; it increased the number of MSPs by 22, they defeated Labour nationally and the gap between the two parties grew from 1 seat to 32 seats.</p> <p>Aspect 2 (votes) – Source A: The SNP increased its share of the vote by 11.5% and were clearly ahead of Labour in second place.</p> <p>Synthesis – 1 mark In terms of both seats and votes it was a great night for the SNP.</p> <p>Evaluation of the component – 1 mark The evidence from the sources supports the viewpoint as the SNP increased their performance in every aspect of the election and easily won – this can only be seen as a fantastic result.</p> <p>Component 2 ‘Right across the country Labour were convincingly defeated and were clearly the biggest losers.’</p> <p>Award 1 mark if a candidate only addresses one aspect of data, award 2 marks if they address all three aspects of data.</p> <p>Aspect 1 (seats) – Source A: Labour were clearly defeated by the SNP, Labour lost 9 seats and were now a large way behind the SNP however the Lib Dems lost 11 seats.</p>

Question	General marking instructions	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
			<p>Aspect 2 (votes) – Source A: Labour’s vote fell by 2.8% but the Lib Dems’ vote fell by 7.7%.</p> <p>Aspect 3 (regional performance) – Source B: In most regions the SNP defeated Labour convincingly but Labour tied with the SNP in Glasgow and won 7 seats to the SNP’s 8 in the West of Scotland.</p> <p>Synthesis – 1 mark Labour were clearly defeated in the 2011 election. In terms of seats and votes, Labour were not the night’s biggest losers and they were not defeated by the SNP in every part of the country, though they were in most areas of the country.</p> <p>Evaluation of the component – 1 mark The SNP did not defeat Labour convincingly in every part of the country. They did in most areas but Labour was level in one area and only slightly behind the SNP in another, so they did not defeat Labour in every area. SNP returned the same number of MSPs as Labour in Glasgow and they only just returned more than Labour in the West of Scotland so this was hardly convincing. Labour also were clearly not the night’s biggest losers – the Lib Dems lost the greatest share of the vote and the most seats. Therefore, the evidence only really supports the view that it was a great night for the SNP.</p> <p>Component 3 ‘. . . greater participation in the political process. . .’</p> <p>Award 1 mark if a candidate only addresses one aspect of data, award 2 marks if they address all three aspects of data.</p> <p>Aspect 1 (spoilt ballots) – Source C: There was a marked decline in the number of spoilt ballot papers in 2011. There was a significant fall in spoilt papers for both the constituency ballots and the list ballots between 2007 and 2011. The number of spoilt papers was also lower than in 2003.</p> <p>Aspect 2 (constituency candidates) – Source D: the number of candidates standing in constituencies fell for the 2nd successive election from 406 in 2003 to 321 in 2011.</p>

Question	General marking instructions	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
			<p>Aspect 3 (turnout) – Source F: turnout in 2011 was greater than in 2003 but it fell between 2007-2011 (from 51.7% to 50.4%). Turnout did increase in Lothian slightly, from 54.1% to 54.8%, but it fell in every other region between 2007-2011. Turnout was better in 2011 than in 2003 in most regions.</p> <p>Synthesis – 1 mark In terms of spoilt ballot papers there was greater participation but there were fewer candidates standing so there was less participation. In addition, there was a decline in turnout nationally and in almost every single region. However, there was an improvement due to the decline in spoilt ballot papers.</p> <p>Evaluation of the component – 1 mark The viewpoint states that the 2011 election was a great night for democracy marked by greater participation, but in almost every area turnout in 2011 actually fell. Nationally turnout decreased from 2007, so fewer people turned out to vote so there was actually less participation by this measure. In addition, the number of candidates standing in constituencies in 2011 actually fell and was significantly below the figures for 2003, so again there was a reduction in participation. The only improvement was a reduction in the number of spoilt ballot papers. Overall, the evidence does not support the view that there was greater participation – in two out of three measures there was less participation.</p> <p>Component 4 ‘. . . fairer representation for all.’</p> <p>Award 1 mark if a candidate only addresses one aspect of data, award 2 marks if they address both aspects of data.</p> <p>Aspect 1 (representativeness of results) – Source A: the SNP increased their over-representation in parliament from +3.2% to +8.8% and the Liberal Democrats’ under-representation increased from –1.9% to –2.7%. The Green Party’s under-representation remained the same, opposing the view that there was fairer representation for all. There was some evidence of fairer representation in 2011 as the gap between the % of seats and % of votes fell for both the Labour party (from +3.9% to –0.3%) and the Conservatives (–2.6% to –1.5%).</p>

Question	General marking instructions	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
			<p>Aspect 2 (representation of groups) – Source D: There was an increase in ethnic minority representation with an additional MSP elected in 2011 to increase the total number of ethnic minority MSPs to 2. There was also an increase in the number of female MSPs from 43 to 45, although the figures were not as good as those in 2003.</p> <p>Synthesis – 1 mark The result was less representative for the main parties but there was a slight improvement in the representation of women and minorities.</p> <p>Evaluation of the component – 1 mark The view states that there was fairer representation for all – there was an improvement in female and ethnic representation and, for some parties, the difference between their share of the votes and share of seats narrowed and was fairer (for Labour) but for the SNP the result was more unrepresentative as they had a much bigger advantage in 2011 than in 2007. Therefore, although there was fairer representation for most there was not fairer representation for all as the viewpoint suggests.</p> <p>Component 5 'However by comparison, in both these areas, the 2016 election was hugely disappointing.'</p> <p>Award 1 mark if a candidate only addresses one aspect of data, award 2 marks if they address both aspects of data.</p> <p>Aspect 1 (participation) – Source E: The number of constituency spoilt ballot papers rose from 8392 to 9279 but the number of regional spoilt ballots fell from 6729 to 3923.</p> <p>Source F: turnout nationally rose from 50.4 to 55.6%, turnout increased in every region in 2016 compared to 2011.</p> <p>Aspect 2 (representation) – Source E: The number of female and ethnic minority candidates stayed the same as in 2011.</p>

Question	General marking instructions	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
			<p>Synthesis – 1 mark There was a big improvement in turnout in 2016 which saw more voters participate although there were slightly more constituency spoilt ballots but there were fewer spoilt ballot papers overall. There was no improvement in the representation of women.</p> <p>Evaluation of the component – 1 mark The viewpoint indicates that 2016 was highly disappointing compared to 2011 but in terms of participation this is not the case. There was a big improvement in turnout nationally, and in every region, so participation by this measure actually improved. While there was a slight rise in constituency spoilt ballots there was a greater decrease in regional spoilt ballots. There was also only a very slight decrease in the number of candidates standing. Overall, this shows there has been an improvement in participation which is not disappointing. In terms of representation, there was no change in the representation of women and minorities so this also cannot be seen as hugely disappointing. Overall, the second part of the viewpoint is not really supported by the evidence.</p>

[END OF SPECIMEN MARKING INSTRUCTIONS]

Published: June 2026

Change since last published:

'Duration of exam increased by 15 minutes to 1 hour 30 minutes'