

N5

National Qualifications

2026

Modern Studies

Tuesday, 19 May

Instructions to Candidates

Candidates should enter their surname, forename(s), date of birth, Scottish candidate number and the name and level of the subject at the top of their first answer sheet.

Total marks – 80

SECTION 1 — DEMOCRACY IN SCOTLAND AND THE UNITED KINGDOM — 26 marks

Attempt Part A AND Question 7, only Part A is provided in this paper.

Part A Democracy in Scotland page 3.

Question 7 pages 5 to 9.

SECTION 2 — SOCIAL ISSUES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM — 28 marks

Attempt Part D AND Question 14, only Part D is provided in this paper.

Part D Crime and the law page 10.

Question 14 pages 11 to 17.

SECTION 3 — INTERNATIONAL ISSUES — 26 marks

[Braille page 2] Attempt Part E AND Question 21, only Part E is provided in this paper.

Part E World powers page 18.

Question 21 pages 20 to 23.

You must clearly identify the question number you are attempting on your answer sheet.

Sources marked with an asterisk differ in some respects from those in the printed paper.

Marks are shown in square brackets at the end of each question or part question.

An owl in the margin indicates a new question.

[Braille page 3] SECTION 1 — DEMOCRACY IN SCOTLAND AND THE UNITED KINGDOM — 26 marks

Attempt Part A AND Question 7

Part A Democracy in Scotland

Question 7

PART A — DEMOCRACY IN SCOTLAND

In your answers to Questions 1, 2 and 3 you should give recent examples from Scotland.

ow Question 1

A range of methods are used by groups to gain influence in a democracy.

Select one of the groups below:

- pressure groups
- trade unions.

Describe, in detail, two methods that are used by the group you have selected to gain influence in a democracy. [4 marks]

ow Question 2

Some people are more likely than others to participate in politics in Scotland.

Explain, in detail, two reasons why some people are more likely than others to participate in politics in Scotland. [6 marks]

[Braille page 4] ow Question 3

Committees play an important role in the Scottish Parliament.

Explain, in detail, two reasons why committees play an important role in the Scottish Parliament. [6 marks]

[Now go to Question 7]

[Braille page 5] ow Question 7*

Study Sources 1, 2 and 3 and then answer the question which follows.

SOURCE 1

2024 UK General Election results

In May 2024, the UK Prime Minister at the time, Rishi Sunak, announced that an early general election would be held on 4th July. The previous general election had taken place on 12th December 2019. The announcement came as a surprise to many, given how well Labour were doing in national opinion polls. These polls correctly predicted that Labour would win by a landslide.

After six weeks of campaigning, the Labour Party won a historic majority. Sir Keir Starmer became Prime Minister, making him Labour's first Prime Minister in 14 years. Speaking to his supporters, the new Prime Minister declared that "change begins now". The Conservatives, on the other hand, failed to retain power, winning less than a quarter of the vote. Many high-profile Conservative MPs, including Liz Truss and Grant Shapps, lost their seats to Labour candidates. However, it was a successful night for Nigel Farage, whose **[Braille page 6]** Reform UK party became the third largest party in the UK by votes, with the election of five MPs.

In Scotland, the SNP were left severely disappointed by their results. The voters' verdict on the SNP was damning with many switching their support back to the Labour Party. It was a similar story in Wales, where the Conservative Party were wiped off the political map as voters also turned back to Labour.

The 2024 General Election used the First Past The Post (FPTP) voting system. Under FPTP, the number of seats a party wins does not always match the percentage of votes they receive. This means the system is not fully proportional and leads many to argue that FPTP is unfair and undemocratic.

SOURCE 2

Scottish results in the 2024 UK General Election % vote share.

[Braille page 7] In the table below, political party is followed by: % vote share; change from 2019.

Labour : 35%; +16%.

SNP: 30%; –15%.

Conservatives: 12.7%; –12%.

Liberal Democrats: 9.7%; +0.2%.

Distribution of Scottish seats by political party

Party	Number of seats	Change from 2019
.....		
Labour	37	+36
SNP	9	–39
Liberal Democrat	6	+4
Conservative	5	–1

[Braille page 8] SOURCE 3

2024 UK General Election selected statistics

Results by number of seats

Party	Number of seats	Change from 2019
.....		
Labour	412	+211
Conservative	121	-251
SNP	9	-39
Reform UK	5	+5
Green	4	+3

Results by % of votes and seats

In the table below, Party is followed by: % of votes; % of seats.

Labour: 33.7; 62.2.

Conservative: 23.7; 18.6.

Reform UK: 14.3; 0.8.

Green: 6.7; 0.6.

SNP: 2.5; 1.4.

Now Using Sources 1, 2 and 3, what conclusions can be drawn about the 2024 UK General Election?

You should reach a conclusion about each of the following:

- the dominant political party in **[Braille page 9]** Scotland after the election
- the electoral performance of the Labour Party in 2024 compared to 2019
- the electoral performance of the Conservative Party in 2024 compared to 2019
- the proportionality of the results of the election.

Your conclusions must be supported by evidence from the sources. You should link information within and between the sources in support of your conclusions.

Your answer must be based on all three sources. [10 marks]

[Now go to SECTION 2]

[Braille page 10] SECTION 2 — SOCIAL ISSUES IN THE UNITED KINGDOM —
28 marks

Attempt Part D AND Question 14

PART D — CRIME AND THE LAW

In your answers to Questions 11, 12 and 13 you should give recent examples from the United Kingdom.

Now Question 11

Criminal courts exist in the UK.

Describe, in detail, two criminal courts that exist in the UK. [4 marks]

Now Question 12

There are many consequences of crime for the perpetrator.

Describe, in detail, two consequences of crime for the perpetrator. [6 marks]

Now Question 13

There are many causes of crime.

(a) Explain, in detail, the causes of crime. [8 marks]

You should give a maximum of three explanations in your answer.

OR

The government is effective in tackling crime.

(b) Explain, in detail, why the government is effective in tackling **[Braille page 11]** crime.

You should give a maximum of three explanations in your answer. [8 marks]

[Now go to Question 14]

ow Question 14*

Study Sources 1, 2 and 3 and then answer the question which follows.

You are an adviser to the Scottish Government. You have been asked to make a recommendation on who should be appointed as the new drug commissioner to tackle the drug problem in Scotland.

Option 1 - Appoint Ava Reid

Option 2 - Appoint Graeme Mathieson

SOURCE 1

Ava Reid

CEO of a charity that supports drug harm reduction.

If I were appointed, my priorities would be:

Safe drug consumption rooms

I would seek to increase the number of facilities across the country where individuals can use drugs under the supervision of medical staff. This would help reduce the risks linked to drug use.

Targeted resources

I would ensure that more resources are directed to the local authority areas where **[Braille page 12]** drug-related death rates are the highest, such as the Scottish Borders and East Renfrewshire.

Mental health support

Many people who use drugs also experience mental health challenges. I would aim to improve access to counselling, mental health care and social support to help individuals manage their drug use.

Other priorities

I would campaign and put pressure on the UK government to decriminalise certain drugs, as this policy has proven to be a success wherever it has been implemented.

I would also work with the police to develop prevention programmes that divert drug addicts away from the criminal justice system and into treatment.

Graeme Mathieson

Doctor with 15 years' experience of working in addiction services.

If I were appointed, my priorities would be:

Education

I would ensure that there is an increase in school-based education programmes in an attempt to raise awareness of the dangers of drugs.

[Braille page 13] Treatment programmes

I would make sure that treatment programmes are available to everyone who needs them. This would cost around £80 million and would help people with addictions to recover and live healthy, crime-free lives.

Family support

Families who have lost loved ones to drug addiction also need help. I would ensure that they receive the support they need to overcome the trauma this can cause.

Other priorities

I would improve access to meaningful activities for young people — such as sport, music and the arts — to give them healthy alternatives to spending time on the streets or getting involved with drugs.

I would also work to ensure there is a strict zero-tolerance approach applied to recreational drug use.

[Braille page 14] SOURCE 2

In the table below, local authority area is followed by: Drug-related death rate per 100,000 people.

Glasgow City: 41.1.

Dundee City: 35.6.

Inverclyde: 35.6.

North Ayrshire: 29.5.

South Ayrshire: 25.1.

Aberdeen City: 23.3.

City of Edinburgh: 20.6.

Perth and Kinross: 18.

Scottish Borders: 13.5.

East Renfrewshire: 7.5.

The results of two opinion polls are shown below.

Should there be a strict zero-tolerance approach to recreational drugs?

In the table below, opinion is followed by: percentage of poll.

Strongly agree: 11%.

Agree: 23%.

Neither agree nor disagree: 7%.

Disagree: 42%.

Strongly disagree: 17%.

[Braille page 15] Should there be further support for families affected by drug addiction?

In the table below, opinion is followed by: percentage of poll.

Strongly agree: 25%.

Agree: 40%.

Neither agree nor disagree: 10%.

Disagree: 20%.

Strongly disagree: 5%.

SOURCE 3

THE DAILY NEWS

"Scotland's drug deaths worst in Europe"

In 2024, there were 1,017 drug-related deaths recorded in Scotland, which was 155 fewer than in the previous year. However, some areas, such as Glasgow and Inverclyde, still have drug-related death rates that remain much higher than the Scottish average.

Scotland has now been the drug-death capital of Europe for seven years in a row, with Estonia having the next highest rate. It is estimated that to tackle this problem the government would need to fund treatment programmes costing around £900 million — a figure that seems almost impossible to achieve given other **[Braille page 16]** priorities.

Some people argue that a harm reduction approach would be a more effective method to tackle Scotland's drug problem. This could include creating additional safe

drug consumption rooms across the country. In addition, they believe there should be more support available for people who struggle with mental health issues.

In recent years, while there has been a focus on educating young people on the dangers of drug use, many believe that more still needs to be done in this area. Providing activities for young people in their communities is also seen as a crucial way to help them make better choices and stay away from drugs.

Many argue that supporting drug users in the community could lead to more positive outcomes at a lower financial cost to the government. This approach could involve the criminal justice system, with the aim of diverting drug users away from prison and giving them more support in the community.

The decriminalisation of drugs remains an ongoing debate. While this policy has been viewed as a success in some countries, it has proved to be a failure elsewhere.

It is clear that, while there has been some improvement in tackling Scotland's drug **[Braille page 17]** issue, significant challenges remain.

ow You must decide which option to recommend, either appoint Ava Reid (Option 1) or appoint Graeme Mathieson (Option 2).

(i) Using Sources 1, 2 and 3, which option would you choose?

(ii) Give reasons to support your choice.

(iii) Explain why you did not choose the other option.

Your answer must be based on all three sources. [10 marks]

[Now go to SECTION 3]

[Braille page 18] SECTION 3 — INTERNATIONAL ISSUES — 26 marks

Attempt Part E AND Question 21

PART E — WORLD POWERS

In your answers to Questions 15, 16 and 17 you should give recent examples from a world power you have studied.

ow Question 15

Citizens in all world powers have political representatives.

Describe, in detail, two political representatives that citizens have in the world power you have studied.

In your answer you must state the world power you have studied. [4 marks]

ow Question 16

World powers can have a political influence on other countries.

Describe, in detail, two ways that the world power you have studied has a political influence on other countries.

In your answer you must state the world power you have studied. [6 marks]

ow Question 17

Some people are more socially and economically successful than others.

Explain, in detail, two reasons why some people are more socially OR economically successful than others.

[Braille page 19] In your answer you must state the world power you have studied. [6 marks]

[Now go to Question 21]

[Braille page 20] ow Question 21*

Study Sources 1, 2 and 3 and then answer the question which follows.

SOURCE 1

Profile of Australia

Australia is a constitutional monarchy and part of the Commonwealth — an international association of fifty-six independent countries. Australia's head of state is King Charles III, who is also the monarch of the United Kingdom. He is not elected or appointed — he is the King and therefore head of state by birthright. Some Australians dislike this because King Charles III is British and lives in the UK. They believe Australia should become a republic, where there is no monarchy and where political power belongs to the people. They argue it is unfair to have a head of state who is not elected or an Australian citizen.

In October 2024, King Charles III visited Australia and said that it is up to the Australian people to decide whether the country remains a constitutional monarchy or becomes a republic. Around this time, public opinion research on this issue showed a wide range of views. Some people wanted Australia to become a republic and supported a referendum on **[Braille page 21]** the issue. However overall, most people preferred Australia to remain as a constitutional monarchy.

The last time Australians voted on this issue was in 1999, when they chose to keep the monarchy. Some believe this was a once-in-a-lifetime decision and that another referendum should not be held. They argue that Australia should instead focus on current problems, such as unemployment and the cost of living.

SOURCE 2

Public opinion poll - refer to the 3 tables below.

"Do you believe Australia should remain a monarchy or become a republic?"

Overall poll

Remain a monarchy 57%

Become a republic 43%

In the table below, age group is followed by: "Yes%; "No%.

Under 35: 48; 52.

35 to 49: 54; 46.

50 to 64: 67; 33.

65+: 61; 39.

[Braille page 22] In the table below, gender is followed by: "Yes%; "No%.

Male: 53; 47.

Female: 60; 40.

SOURCE 3

Should Australia hold a referendum on becoming a republic?

Luke: We had a referendum in 1999, and we voted to remain a constitutional monarchy. We should not need to vote on this again.

Lucia: We should listen to the King who says we should be able to have a referendum if we want.

Shane: We should be able to choose an Australian citizen instead of having a British King or Queen as the unelected head of state.

Masai: We should become a republic as this is what the younger generation, who are the future of Australia, want.

Elira: We should be addressing important issues such as rising electricity costs rather than waste time debating whether Australia should become a republic or not.

Tara: The Royal Family are fascinating — I love watching the royal **[Braille page 23]** weddings on TV and buying the memorabilia!

Alf: Australia being a constitutional monarchy and having the same head of state as the United Kingdom gives me a sense of security. This is the view of many older people like myself.

Now Using Sources 1, 2 and 3, give reasons to support and oppose the view of Lily Robertson.

View of Lily Robertson: There should be a referendum on whether Australia becomes a republic.

In your answer you must:

- give evidence from the sources that supports Lily Robertson's view

AND

- give evidence from the sources that opposes Lily Robertson's view.

Your answer must be based on all three sources. [10 marks]

[END OF QUESTION PAPER]