



National
Qualifications
2025

2025 Politics Paper 2

Higher

Question Paper Finalised Marking Instructions

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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.
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"> parliamentary democracy tends towards political decisions becoming oppositional and polarisation of discussion parliamentary democracy can be hierarchical; decisions are made by politicians and some people feel left out by the process parliamentary systems have opportunities for scrutiny and accountability, but these can be about point scoring. <p>Source B</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> participatory democracy is based on negotiation and compromise, and is not competitive in participatory democratic systems, the decisions are made by the people and more people feel engaged in the process in participatory democratic systems, there is a high level of transparency as people can see how decisions are made and can ask questions themselves. <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 at 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.</p> <p><i>Source A states that in a parliamentary system ‘A feature of parliamentary democracy is that there is a government and an opposition. However, polarisation on issues and policies tends to prevent detailed discussion. This can help create an aggressive and oppositional style of politics.’ However, Source B says that in a participatory system people are encouraged to ‘build negotiation skills and to start to see how politics does not have to be a ‘winner takes all’ situation’.</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>Source A states that in a parliamentary system ‘A feature of parliamentary democracy is that there is a government and an opposition. However, polarisation on issues and policies tends to prevent detailed discussion. This can help create an aggressive and oppositional style of politics.’ However, Source B says that in a participatory system people are encouraged to ‘build negotiation skills and to start to see how politics does not have to be a ‘winner takes all’ situation’. This shows that participatory democracy tends to focus more on consensus whereas parliamentary democracy can increase conflict.</i></p> <p>The following response would be awarded 1 mark as it makes a straightforward, overall conclusion.</p> <p><i>Overall, participatory democracy allows people to be more active in decision-making compared to parliamentary democracy.</i></p> <p>The following response would be awarded 2 marks as it makes a detailed, overall conclusion.</p>

Question			General marking instructions	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
					<i>Overall, participatory democracy allows people to be more active in decision-making compared to parliamentary democracy. People are encouraged to work together to solve problems and more people feel like they have power over their own lives. This makes participatory democracy superior.</i>

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</p> <p>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 other Scottish Parliament elections, the 2021 election saw the biggest improvement in diversity of MSPs and Parliament became close to being fully representative of Scottish society.’</p> <p>Award 1 mark if candidate only addresses one aspect of data, award 2 marks if they address both aspects of data.</p> <p>Aspect 1 (gender) – Sources A and B The 2021 election saw an increase of 13 female MSPs which is a jump of 10% compared to the next best improvement, 1999 to 2003, which saw an increase of three female MSPs and a 3% increase (Source A). This equates to 45% of the Parliament whereas females make up 48.6% of Scotland’s population (Source B).</p> <p>Aspect 2 (ethnicity) – Sources A and B Source A shows that the 2021 election saw the largest increase in ethnic minority MSPs, with an increase of four MSPs, or 3.1%. This is bigger than previous years. Source A shows that ethnic minorities in the 2021 election made up 4.6% of the Scottish Parliament, while ethnic minorities make up 7.1% of Scotland’s population (Source B).</p> <p>Synthesis – 1 mark The sources show that in terms of both gender and ethnicity, the 2021 Scottish Parliament election returned an increase in diversity.</p> <p>Evaluation of the validity of the viewpoint – 1 mark The 2021 election did see the biggest improvement in diversity with the largest increase for both female and ethnic minority MSPs, with female MSPs increasing by 10% and ethnic minority MSPs rising by 3.1%. This was larger than any other election year. For women, Parliament was still under representative as the female population is 48.6% whereas the Parliament was only 45% female. However, this is less than 4% of a difference, which is close. For ethnic minorities the Parliament was also under representative as ethnic minorities made up 4.6% of MPs, whereas</p>

Question	General marking instructions	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
			<p>ethnic minorities make up 7.1% of the Scottish population. The statement is therefore inaccurate, as while there were improvements in diversity, the 2021 election was still not close to being fully representative.</p> <p>Component 2 – ‘However, in every election year, the Welsh Parliament has had a more diverse chamber than the Scottish Parliament.’</p> <p>Award 1 mark if candidate only addresses one aspect of data, award 2 marks if they address both aspects of data.</p> <p>Aspect 1 (gender) – Source A Source A shows that for five out of the last six elections, the Welsh Parliament had a higher percentage of females elected than the Scottish Parliament.</p> <p>Aspect 2 (ethnicity) – Source A Source A shows that for four out of the last six elections, the Welsh Parliament had more ethnic minorities elected. For 1999 and 2003, the two were equal with no ethnic minorities elected.</p> <p>Synthesis – 1 mark For both gender and ethnic groups, the Welsh Parliament usually does better in terms of diversity.</p> <p>Evaluation of the validity of the viewpoint – 1 mark The Welsh Parliament is usually a more diverse chamber when looking at gender. It has had a higher percentage of elected female members in five of the last six elections. However, the statement is not fully accurate as for the first two elections both Parliaments failed to return any members from an ethnic minority. This means the Welsh Parliament was not more diverse with regard to ethnicity in all elections, only in four out of six.</p>

Question	General marking instructions	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
			<p>Component 3 – ‘In all UK general elections since 2010, the changes in turnout each year have seen similar trends in all nations of the UK.’</p> <p>Award 1 mark if candidate only addresses one aspect of data, award 2 marks if they address all four aspects of data.</p> <p>Aspect 1 (Scotland) – Source C Source C shows that in Scotland, the trend in turnout increased from 2010 to 2015 by just over 6%, it then decreased in 2017 before increasing again in 2019 by 1.7%.</p> <p>Aspect 2 (Wales) – Source C In Wales, the turnout increased in 2015 by less than 1%, it then increased again in 2017 before decreasing in 2019.</p> <p>Aspect 3 (Northern Ireland) – Source C In Northern Ireland, the turnout increased in 2015 by 0.5% before increasing in 2017 by over 7% in and decreasing in 2019 by 3.6%.</p> <p>Aspect 4 (England) – Source C In England, the turnout increased in 2015 by 0.5% and 2017 by 3.1% before decreasing in 2019 to 67.4%.</p> <p>Synthesis – 1 mark In all nations except Scotland the turnout increased twice in a row and decreased once whereas in Scotland it increased once before decreasing then increasing again.</p> <p>Evaluation of the validity of the viewpoint – 1 mark The turnout changes have been similar in England, Wales and Northern Ireland with all three nations increasing between 2010–2015 and 2015–2017, before decreasing between 2017–2019. However, in Scotland this was not the case as turnout in Scotland did not increase between 2015–2017, it actually decreased but increased again between 2017–2019. This means that the change in turnout was not similar as although all nations did see two increases and one decrease it was in different years.</p>

Question	General marking instructions	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
			<p>Component 4 – ‘In Scotland, a majority of voters have turned out to vote in all elections.’</p> <p>Award 1 mark if candidate only addresses one aspect of data, award 2 marks if they address all four aspects of data.</p> <p>Aspect 1 (UK Parliament general elections) – Source C When voting for the UK Parliament, the majority of Scottish voters have always turned out. The lowest turnout has been 63.8% in 2010.</p> <p>Aspect 2 (Scottish Parliament election) – Source D In Scottish Parliament elections, 49.4% of voters turned out in 2003. This was the lowest turnout in the most recent elections with the highest being 63.5% in 2021.</p> <p>Aspect 3 (Scottish local council elections) – Source D In local council elections, voters tend not to turn out to vote as much. All the elections except two are below 50%, with the highest being only 59.1% in 1999.</p> <p>Aspect 4 (Scottish European Parliament constituency elections) – Source D None of the European Parliament elections hit a majority in regard to turnout. The highest was just under 40% with the lowest being 24.7% in 1999.</p> <p>Synthesis – 1 mark UK general elections are the only elections to consistently achieve a majority turnout in elections with all other elections in Scotland having at one time failed to reach a majority turnout.</p> <p>Evaluation of the validity of the viewpoint – 1 mark The statement is not correct. While all UK general elections in Scotland have seen a majority of voters turn out, all other elections in Scotland have seen at least one year where turnout was below 50%. This demonstrates that a majority of voters do not turn out to vote in all elections.</p>

Question	General marking instructions	Max mark	Specific marking instructions for this question
			<p>Component 5 – ‘In the devolved nations, the most recent elections to the national legislatures saw the best turnout.’</p> <p>Award 1 mark if candidate only addresses one aspect of data, award 2 marks if they address all three aspects of data.</p> <p>Aspect 1 (Scottish Parliament elections) – Source D In 2021, the Scottish Parliament election saw a turnout of 63.5%, this is the highest ever with the previous high being in 1999.</p> <p>Aspect 2 (Northern Ireland Assembly elections) – Source E In the Northern Ireland Assembly elections, the turnout was 63.6% in 2021 this is not the highest as the previous election saw a high of 64.7%.</p> <p>Aspect 3 (Welsh Parliament elections) – Source F In the Welsh Parliament elections, the most recent election achieved a turnout of 46.6%, which was 0.3% higher than the second-best turnout.</p> <p>Synthesis – 1 mark Both the Welsh and Scottish Parliaments elections had the highest turnout in 2021, but the Northern Irish Assembly election saw the highest turnout in 2017.</p> <p>Evaluation of the validity of the viewpoint – 1 mark The statement is not accurate as while the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Parliament had the highest turnout in the most recent elections, the Northern Irish Assembly saw the highest turnout in the 2017 election and not in the last election. This means that not all devolved nations saw the best turnout in the most recent elections, only two out of the three did as Northern Ireland’s most recent election had over 1% less votes than in the previous election.</p>

[END OF MARKING INSTRUCTIONS]