3.1 Conservatism

EDEXCEL 9PL0 · about 60 minutes · Write-in edition

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. For levels-marked questions, write a well-structured, developed response using accurate political knowledge, named thinkers and precise terminology. This pack forms part of Edexcel Paper 1 (9PL0/01), Section B: Core Political Ideas.

1 This question is about the two strands that make up New Right conservatism.

(a) State two ideas associated with the neo-liberal strand of New Right conservatism. **(2)**

(b) State two ideas associated with the neo-conservative strand of New Right conservatism. **(2)**

(Total for Question 1 is 4 marks)

2 This question is about privatisation as an example of New Right economic policy.

(a) State two examples of privatisation carried out in the UK during the 1980s. **(2)**

(b) Explain one economic argument in favour of privatisation. **(3)**

(Total for Question 2 is 5 marks)

3 Evaluate the extent to which one-nation conservatives and New Right conservatives agree about the role of the state.

(Total for Question 3 is 24 marks)

4 Analyse the extent to which Margaret Thatcher's governments (1979 to 1990) reflected New Right conservative ideas.

(Total for Question 4 is 9 marks)

5 Analyse the extent to which conservatives agree on the desirability of change in society.

(Total for Question 5 is 12 marks)

6 This question is about an academic description of New Right conservatism.

(a) Identify the academic commentator, and the year of the relevant work, associated with describing the New Right synthesis as combining 'a free economy' with 'a strong state'. **(2)**

(b) Explain what is meant by describing the New Right as wanting 'a strong state, free economy'. **(4)**

(Total for Question 6 is 6 marks)

Mark scheme · 3.1 Conservatism

Question 1

(a) one accurate idea, e.g. a free market economy with minimal state intervention **B1**

(a) a second accurate idea, e.g. privatisation of state-run industries, deregulation, or monetarist economic policy **B1**

(a) Answer: Any two of: a free market with minimal state intervention in the economy; privatisation of state-owned/nationalised industries; deregulation of business; monetarist economic policy (controlling the money supply to control inflation); 'rolling back' the size of the state.

(b) one accurate idea, e.g. a strong state on law and order **B1**

(b) a second accurate idea, e.g. support for traditional moral/family values, or a strong national defence **B1**

(b) Answer: Any two of: a strong state on law and order; support for traditional family and moral values; strong national defence and a robust foreign policy; scepticism about multiculturalism and rapid social change.

Question 2

(a) one accurate, correctly dated example, e.g. British Telecom (1984) **B1**

(a) a second accurate, correctly dated example, e.g. British Gas (1986) **B1**

(a) Answer: Any two of: British Telecom (privatised 1984); British Gas (privatised 1986); British Airways (privatised 1987); the Housing Act 1980 'Right to Buy' scheme, allowing council tenants to purchase their homes.

(b) identifies a valid economic argument, e.g. competition/market discipline increases efficiency **B1**

(b) development, e.g. state-run monopolies lack the competitive pressure to control costs or innovate **B1**

(b) further development or example, e.g. privatisation can also raise revenue for the government and widen share ownership **B1**

(b) Answer: Privatisation exposes previously state-run monopolies to competitive market pressure, which proponents argue increases efficiency and encourages innovation, since a state monopoly has less incentive to control costs; privatisation can also raise revenue for the government and, through share sales to the public, widen individual share ownership.

Question 3

Level 0 No relevant content. **0**

Level 1 Basic, limited knowledge of one-nation and/or New Right conservatism, with little or no developed analysis or evaluation. Examples, if present, are generalised or inaccurate. **1-6**

Level 2 Clear, mostly accurate knowledge of both strands with some developed analysis; evaluation is present but may be one-sided, assertive rather than substantiated, or only loosely tied to named examples. **7-12**

Level 3 Detailed, accurate knowledge deployed in a sustained analysis engaging with both strands, using well-selected, accurate examples and thinkers; evaluation weighs agreement against disagreement and reaches a reasoned judgement, though development may be uneven. **13-18**

Level 4 Sophisticated, wide-ranging and accurate knowledge used to construct a tightly argued evaluation that directly compares one-nation and New Right positions on the state, using precise, well-chosen examples and thinkers throughout, and reaches a clearly substantiated, balanced judgement on the extent of agreement. **19-24**

Indicative content:

- Case for significant disagreement: one-nation conservatives (associated with Disraeli's paternalism and the post-war 'middle way' consensus) accept, and at times actively support, state intervention in the economy and welfare provision to preserve social cohesion, viewing this as a pragmatic duty (noblesse oblige) of the privileged to the less fortunate.
- Case for significant disagreement: New Right (Thatcherite) conservatives sought to 'roll back the frontiers of the state' economically - privatisation (e.g. British Telecom 1984, British Gas 1986), trade union reform (Employment Acts 1980, 1982, 1988), and monetarist policy - arguing extensive state welfare and intervention fosters dependency and economic inefficiency; this is a direct rejection of one-nation economic paternalism.
- Case for underlying agreement: both strands support a strong state in matters of law and order, national defence, and upholding property rights and established institutions (monarchy, Parliament, family); neither strand favours a minimal 'night-watchman' state across the board, since both value state authority to preserve social order.
- Case for underlying agreement: both strands are sceptical of radical or utopian schemes for remaking society, and both are ultimately pragmatic rather than dogmatic, tracing a shared Burkean caution about untested, abstract change even where their specific policies diverge sharply.
- Andrew Gamble's 'The Free Economy and the Strong State' (1988) captures the New Right's own internal combination of economic withdrawal and social/security-focused state strength, which can be read either as evidence the New Right departs sharply from one-nation paternalism (in economic policy) or as evidence that both strands share a belief in a strong, authoritative state (just applied to different domains).
- A substantiated conclusion might argue the two strands disagree sharply and consequentially over the state's economic and welfare role, but agree at a deeper level on the necessity of state authority to preserve order, property and traditional institutions, so the overall answer to 'the role of the state' depends on distinguishing its economic role from its social/security role.
- Credit should be given to answers reaching either conclusion (substantial disagreement or substantial underlying agreement) provided the argument is supported by accurate, well-explained evidence and does not present either strand as the sole 'authentic' form of conservatism.

Question 4

Level 0 No relevant content.	**0**
Level 1 Basic, limited knowledge of Thatcher-era policy, with little or no developed analysis of the link to New Right ideas.	**1-3**
Level 2 Clear, accurate knowledge of relevant policies with some developed analysis of the New Right link, though the argument may not fully address the extent of the claim.	**4-6**
Level 3 Detailed, accurate knowledge used to construct a sustained analysis directly addressing the extent to which the governments reflected New Right ideas, including at least one point of qualification or limitation, reaching a supported judgement.	**7-9**

Indicative content:

- Evidence for a strong New Right link: privatisation of major nationalised industries, e.g. British Telecom (1984) and British Gas (1986), reflecting neo-liberal support for a smaller state role in the economy.
- Evidence for a strong New Right link: trade union reform through a series of Employment Acts (1980, 1982, 1988) and the Trade Union Act (1984), and monetarist economic policy targeting the money supply to reduce inflation, both consistent with neo-liberal aims.
- Evidence for a strong New Right link: the Housing Act 1980 ('Right to Buy'), extending property ownership, and firm rhetoric on law and order and national defence (e.g. during the Falklands conflict, 1982), consistent with the neo-conservative strand.
- Points of qualification/limitation: some historians and political scientists note that overall state spending did not fall as sharply as New Right rhetoric implied, and spending on defence and policing (a strong state) actually increased, showing the government combined free-market economics with an assertive, rather than minimal, state in some areas.
- Points of qualification/limitation: certain universal welfare commitments, such as core NHS funding, were largely maintained rather than dismantled, suggesting a degree of pragmatic departure from a purist New Right position in areas seen as electorally sensitive.
- A balanced conclusion might argue the governments reflected New Right ideas strongly and consistently in economic policy (privatisation, trade union reform, monetarism) but less completely in overall levels of state spending and authority, so the claim holds to a large, but not total, extent.

Question 5

Level 0 No relevant content.	**0**
Level 1 Basic, limited knowledge of conservative strands, with little or no developed analysis of attitudes to change.	**1-4**
Level 2 Clear, accurate knowledge of at least two conservative strands with some developed analysis of their differing attitudes to change, though the comparison may be incomplete.	**5-8**
Level 3 Detailed, accurate knowledge of multiple conservative strands used to construct a sustained, well-evidenced analysis of the extent of agreement on change, reaching a supported judgement.	**9-12**

Indicative content:

- Traditional/Burkean conservatism accepts change as necessary but insists it must be cautious, incremental and rooted in existing institutions - 'change to conserve' - so that reform strengthens rather than destroys the established social fabric.
- One-nation conservatism goes further in actively supporting pragmatic social reform (e.g. paternalistic welfare and workplace protections) where this is judged necessary to preserve social cohesion and avert the kind of division Disraeli described as 'two nations'.
- New Right conservatism, by contrast, pursued deliberate, significant economic and social transformation (e.g. large-scale privatisation and trade union reform in the 1980s) that some critics argue was itself a radical break with the status quo, sitting uneasily with a purely Burkean caution about disruptive change.
- More traditionalist/reactionary conservative voices resist most social change, valuing continuity and established custom above almost any reform, showing that 'desirability of change' is contested even within the ideology's more cautious wing.
- A strong answer notes the underlying point of agreement: even the most reform-minded conservative strands present their changes as necessary to preserve some deeper continuity (social order, national identity, property rights), so all strands share a preference for evolutionary rather than revolutionary change, even where they differ sharply on how much, and what kind of, change is acceptable.
- A balanced conclusion might argue conservatives agree change should never be revolutionary or based on abstract theory, but disagree significantly on how much deliberate reform (whether paternalistic or free-market) is compatible with that principle, so agreement exists at the level of method but not at the level of scale or direction.

Question 6

(a) Andrew Gamble cao **B1**

(a) 1988 (the publication year of 'The Free Economy and the Strong State') cao **B1**

(a) Answer: Andrew Gamble, in his 1988 work 'The Free Economy and the Strong State'.

(b) identifies that 'free economy' refers to the neo-liberal wish to minimise state intervention in economic life (free markets, privatisation, deregulation) **B1**

(b) identifies that 'strong state' refers to the neo-conservative wish for firm state authority in non-economic areas **B1**

(b) accurate examples of the 'strong state' element, e.g. robust law and order policy, strong national defence, and firm action to uphold traditional social values and institutions **B1**

(b) develops the explanation by showing how the two elements relate, e.g. a strong state is needed to uphold the free market and social order, or the apparent tension of wanting the state to withdraw from economic life while being assertive in maintaining order, morality and national security **B1**

(b) Answer: The phrase captures the fusion at the heart of New Right conservatism: a 'free economy' means the neo-liberal aim of a minimal state role in economic life (free markets, privatisation, deregulation), while a 'strong state' means the neo-conservative aim of firm state authority over law and order, national defence and traditional social values. The combination can appear paradoxical, since it calls for the state to withdraw from managing the economy while remaining assertive and authoritative in maintaining order and morality.