



POL.CPI3 Classical and Modern Liberalism: Tensions Within the Tradition

EDEXCEL 9PL0 · Calculators not allowed · about 70 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / ____

Answer ALL questions. Short answer questions may be brief, but present full sentences for any question worth 4 marks or more. The final 30-mark essay must be a developed, structured response. This pack focuses on the internal tensions within liberalism between classical and modern strands.

- 1** Define 'negative liberty' as it is used in classical liberal thought, naming the relevant topic of liberalism.

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

- 2** Define 'positive liberty' as it is used in modern liberal thought, naming the topic of liberalism.

(Total for Question 2 is 1 mark)

- 3** State two features of the minimal or 'nightwatchman' state associated with classical liberalism, for the topic of liberal ideas on the state.

(a) Give the first feature of a minimal state. (1)

(b) Give the second feature of a minimal state. (1)

(Total for Question 3 is 2 marks)

- 4** State two features of the enabling welfare state associated with modern liberalism, in the context of liberal ideas on state intervention.

(a) Give one feature of an enabling welfare state. (1)

(b) Give a second feature of an enabling welfare state. (1)

(Total for Question 4 is 2 marks)

- 5** Explain, in the context of classical liberalism, the harm principle and how it informs limits on state power. Name the thinker commonly associated with the principle where appropriate.

(Total for Question 5 is 3 marks)

- 6** Explain why modern liberals argue that redistribution can increase individual freedom, in the context of positive liberty and the enabling state.

(Total for Question 6 is 3 marks)

- 7** Distinguish between classical and modern liberal views of the state, focusing on their core disagreements and any important overlap. This is a 10-mark short answer for the topic of liberalism internal tensions.

(Total for Question 7 is 10 marks)

- 8** Explain, in the context of liberal responses to economic failure, how market failure can be used to justify state intervention as taught under modern liberalism.

(Total for Question 8 is 5 marks)

- 9** Explain how classical liberals argue that state intervention can threaten individual autonomy, in the topic area of liberal disagreements over the state.

(Total for Question 9 is 6 marks)

- 10** Analyse the extent to which liberals agree on the principle of individualism, focusing on the classical versus modern liberal debate within the topic of liberalism.

(Total for Question 10 is 12 marks)

- 11** Evaluate the extent to which liberals disagree over the role of the state. In your answer refer to the classical and modern strands of liberalism, their theoretical justifications and practical policy implications. This is the pack's extended essay and carries the full 24 marks.

Evaluate the extent to which liberals disagree over the role of the state.

(Total for Question 11 is 24 marks)

- 12** Identify the late 19th century thinker most associated with developing the modern liberal idea that the state should enable individual development, naming the thinker and the general period.

(Total for Question 12 is 1 mark)

Mark scheme · POL.CPI3 Classical and Modern Liberalism: Tensions Within the Tradition

Question 1

- **B1** one concise, correct definition, eg freedom from interference by others or the state
- **Answer: Negative liberty is freedom from interference by others or the state, allowing individuals to act without external constraints.**

Question 2

- **B1** one concise, correct definition, eg the capacity or opportunity to act to fulfil one's potential
- **Answer: Positive liberty is the capacity or real opportunity to act so as to fulfil one's potential, often requiring enabling conditions provided by the state.**

Question 3

- (a) **B1** one accurate feature, e.g. provision of core functions like law, order and defence only
- (a) **Answer: Provision of core functions only, such as law and order, defence and protection of property.**
- (b) **B1** one accurate feature, e.g. minimal economic intervention with laissez-faire policies
- (b) **Answer: Minimal economic intervention, favouring laissez-faire markets and low taxation.**

Question 4

- (a) **B1** one accurate feature, e.g. state provision of education and health to expand individual opportunity
- (a) **Answer: State provision of public services such as education and healthcare to expand individuals' opportunities.**
- (b) **B1** one accurate feature, e.g. redistributive taxation or targeted welfare to correct structural barriers
- (b) **Answer: Redistributive taxation and targeted welfare aimed at correcting structural barriers to individual development.**

Question 5

- **B1** identifies the harm principle as the idea that the state may only prevent harm to others, not regulate individual self-regarding actions
- **B1** links the principle to limits on state power, eg justifying minimal interference in personal choices
- **B1** names John Stuart Mill or references On Liberty as the contextual thinker or text
- **Answer: The harm principle, associated with John Stuart Mill, holds that the state is justified in restricting liberty only to prevent harm to others, not to prevent self-regarding actions; this limits state power by supporting minimal interference in individuals' private choices.**

Question 6

- **B1** identifies that redistribution funds public services and welfare that expand opportunities
- **B1** explains that this increases capacity to exercise choice, ie positive liberty
- **B1** provides brief development or example, eg public education enabling social mobility
- **Answer: Modern liberals argue redistribution funds services and welfare that expand people's capacities to act, so redistributive policies increase positive liberty by creating real opportunities, for example public education and training can enable social mobility and meaningful choice.**

Question 7

- **Level 1** (1-3): Limited, generalised statements about classical and modern liberal views with little accurate detail or development.
- **Level 2** (4-6): Clear identification of key differences, such as negative versus positive liberty and minimal versus enabling state, with some developed explanation and at least one example or consequence.
- **Level 3** (7-8): Detailed, accurate distinctions across several dimensions (state size, purpose, economic policy, conception of freedom), showing how each view justifies its position and noting one area of overlap.
- **Level 4** (9-10): Sophisticated, well-structured distinctions that compare and contrast classical and modern positions across theory and practice, explain underlying philosophical reasons, and identify shared liberal ground such as commitment to individual rights and consent.
- **Indicative content:**
 - Classical liberals prioritise negative liberty, arguing for a minimal state limited to protecting life, property and contract, and favour laissez-faire economics. Modern liberals prioritise positive liberty and support an enabling welfare state to remove barriers to freedom and correct market failure.
 - Classical liberals justify the minimal state through social contract ideas and the harm principle, emphasising consent and non-interference. Modern liberals justify state intervention as enabling individuals to exercise choice and develop capacities, citing structural disadvantages and unequal starting points.
 - On economics, classical liberals favour low taxation and minimal redistribution, while modern liberals accept progressive taxation and public spending to fund education, health and social security for equal opportunity.
 - Overlap: both strands value individualism, the rule of law and rights, and oppose authoritarian collectivism; both typically reject revolutionary collectivist redistribution that abolishes property rights.
 - A full answer organises these contrasts clearly and may give a brief example, such as classical support for laissez-faire markets versus modern support for state-funded schooling to enable positive liberty.

Question 8

- **B1** identifies market failure types, eg public goods, externalities, information asymmetry or monopoly
- **B1** explains how public goods or externalities lead to underprovision or harmful outcomes absent state action
- **B1** links to state remedies, eg regulation, taxation, provision or subsidy
- **B1** explains how remedies increase individuals' real choices, connecting to positive liberty
- **B1** gives a brief example, eg state regulation to control pollution or public funding of education
- **Answer: Market failures such as public goods, externalities, information asymmetry and monopoly can produce poor social outcomes; modern liberals argue the state can correct these failures through regulation, taxation, subsidies or direct provision, for example pollution controls or publicly funded education. Such remedies increase real choices and capacities, thereby enhancing positive liberty.**

Question 9

- **B1** identifies that intervention may create dependence and reduce incentives for self-reliance
- **B1** identifies that intrusive regulation can limit personal choices and lifestyles
- **B1** identifies that expansion of state power risks bureaucratic overreach and erosion of civil liberties
- **B1** explains the classical liberal consequence, eg paternalism undermines consent and responsibility
- **B1** provides development or example, eg welfare dependency arguments or regulation of personal behaviours
- **B1** links to broader classical liberal theory, eg preference for voluntary associations and market solutions
- **Answer: Classical liberals argue that state intervention can create dependence, reduce incentives for self-reliance, and restrict personal choices through intrusive regulation; expanding bureaucratic power risks erosion of civil liberties and paternalism undermines individual consent and responsibility. Examples include arguments that generous welfare can foster dependency, or that regulation of private behaviour limits negative liberty.**

Question 10

- **Level 0** (0): No relevant content.
- **Level 1** (1-4): Basic, partial statements about individualism with limited development. May conflate classical and modern positions.
- **Level 2** (5-8): Clear explanation of classical and modern liberal conceptions of individualism, with some analysis of similarities and differences.
- **Level 3** (9-12): Detailed, balanced analysis explaining where the strands share a common commitment to individual rights and where they diverge over the role of society and the state in enabling individual development, reaching a supported judgement.
- **Indicative content:**
 - Agreement: both classical and modern liberals place the individual at the centre of political theory, defending individual rights, rule of law and tolerance of plural lifestyles.
 - Classical emphasis: individualism framed as self-reliance, personal responsibility, and freedom from state interference, stressing property rights and market choice.
 - Modern emphasis: individualism includes concern for individuals' real capacities to choose, so enabling public services and redistribution are necessary to secure substantive freedoms.
 - Analysis should consider whether the difference is substantive or only semantic: both oppose collectivist subordination of the individual but disagree over whether formal liberties are sufficient without social and economic provisions.
 - A good conclusion might judge that liberals broadly agree on prioritising the individual but disagree significantly on what the state must do to make that ideal meaningful, so agreement is strong in principle but contested in policy.

Question 11

- **Level 0** (0): No relevant content.
- **Level 1** (1-6): Basic, partial knowledge of liberal strands with little or no developed analysis or evaluation. Argument is descriptive rather than analytical.
- **Level 2** (7-12): Clear, mostly accurate knowledge of classical and modern liberal positions with some developed analysis. Evaluation is present but may be unbalanced or underdeveloped.
- **Level 3** (13-18): Detailed, accurate knowledge and sustained analysis of both strands, addressing theoretical justifications and policy consequences; evaluation weighs the strengths and limits of each position and advances a considered judgement.
- **Level 4** (19-24): Sophisticated, wide-ranging and well-evidenced knowledge used to construct a balanced, critical evaluation that directly compares theoretical bases, empirical examples and practical implications of classical and modern liberal approaches to the state, reaching a clear, well-substantiated judgement on the extent of disagreement.
- **Indicative content:**
 - Clarify the claim: disagreement over the role of the state can be about size, scope, purpose and methods of intervention. Distinguish negative versus positive liberty as the core philosophical fault line.
 - Case for substantial disagreement: classical liberals defend a nightwatchman state limited to protecting rights and enforcing contracts, motivated by the harm principle, consent and individual responsibility; modern liberals argue for an enabling state to secure positive liberty through education, health, welfare and regulation to counter structural inequalities and market failure.
 - Policy contrasts: laissez-faire economics, low taxation and property rights protection versus progressive taxation, welfare provision and regulation to secure opportunity and correct market failures.
 - Philosophical justifications: classical liberal trust in spontaneous order and market solutions; modern liberal emphasis on capability, social justice and the conditions for meaningful choice.
 - Case for significant convergence: both strands affirm the centrality of the individual, private property rights and opposition to authoritarian collectivism; both prefer evolutionary reform over revolutionary transformation and often accept limited state roles in areas like national defence and policing.
 - Contextual and pragmatic overlap: in practice many liberal parties and governments have combined elements of both strands, for example supporting markets alongside social safety nets, suggesting disagreement is often about degree and emphasis rather than absolute rejection of the other strand.
 - Critical evaluation: assess strengths and weaknesses of each position, for instance classical concerns about dependency and loss of autonomy versus modern claims about structural barriers and unequal starting points; consider empirical evidence on outcomes of different policies such as education investment or deregulation.
 - Reach a judgement: a strong conclusion may argue that liberals disagree fundamentally at the level of the conception of freedom, so the disagreement is real and consequential for policy, but there is also considerable overlap in commitment to individual rights and pragmatic acceptance of mixed approaches, so the extent of disagreement varies by issue and historical context.
 - Responses that take a plausible alternative judgement are creditworthy if supported by coherent argument and evidence.

Question 12

- **B1** names T H Green or another recognised modern liberal thinker from the late 19th century
- **Answer: T H Green, late 19th century.**