6.5 Power and Developments

EDEXCEL 9PL0 · about 60 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer all 12 questions. Allow about 60 minutes. The short questions build knowledge for essay work. Date evidence, define your criteria and support classifications and judgements. No calculator is needed.

1 Explain why calling a state an emerging power is an argument about change rather than simply a description of its population size.

(Total for Question 1 is 2 marks)

2 In classifying political systems, distinguish non-democratic from autocratic government, and distinguish a failed state from a state labelled rogue.

(Total for Question 2 is 4 marks)

3 Illustrative systems exercise. State A holds competitive elections and permits opposition, but its executive intimidates independent journalists and weakens courts. In State B, central institutions cannot maintain security or deliver basic administration. Explain a provisional classification for each, and one consequence for international cooperation. These states are fictional.

(Total for Question 3 is 5 marks)

4 Examine two ways in which a shift from unipolarity towards multipolarity could affect efforts to resolve conflict or environmental problems. Use examples and distinguish a change in the distribution of power from evidence of successful cooperation.

(Total for Question 4 is 12 marks)

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5 Power-comparison exercise. A historical evidence snapshot reported in the August 2024 Edexcel Paper 3B marking guidance gives the USA approximately 40% of global military spending and China approximately 14%, with China ranked second. These rounded shares are not October 2026 data. Calculate the USA:China spending ratio in its simplest whole-number form and the gap in percentage points. Explain two reasons why this comparison cannot by itself settle which state is more powerful overall.

(Total for Question 5 is 5 marks)

6 Evaluate the extent to which developments in power since 2000 have created a multipolar world order. In your answer consider hard and soft power, state classifications, spheres of influence, global institutions, bilateralism and nationalism, and the spread of democracy, rule of law and liberal economies.

(Total for Question 6 is 30 marks)

Mark scheme · 6.5 Power and Developments

Question 1

Connects emerging status to rising economic power or influence over time. **B1**

Explains that population size alone cannot establish either that trend or its conversion into influence, oe. **B1**

Answer: Emerging power describes rising economic capacity and influence over time. A large population alone does not establish that resources are increasing or being converted into international influence.

Question 2

Non-democratic: lacks central democratic characteristics such as meaningful political competition and accountability. **B1**

Autocratic: effective rule concentrated in one ruler with very weak or absent checks; it is a form of non-democratic government. **B1**

Failed: state institutions cannot function as a viable political unit, for example through loss of security or administrative capacity. **B1**

Rogue: a contested label about threatening external conduct; it does not establish institutional collapse. **B1**

Answer: Non-democratic government lacks central democratic features; autocratic government concentrates effectively unchecked rule in a single ruler. State failure concerns inability to function as a viable political unit, whereas rogue is a contested foreign-policy label for a state judged threatening to others.

Question 3

Proposes semi-democratic or another defensible provisional classification for A. **B1**

Supports that classification by connecting competitive elections with intimidation or weakened courts; reward a different classification if its criteria and supporting evidence are clear. **B1**

Proposes failed state or a carefully qualified state-failure classification for B. **B1**

Links B to inability to provide security or administration, rather than simply disapproving of its government. **B1**

Explains one consequence for cooperation using either state, such as difficulty implementing an agreement when administrative capacity is absent. **B1**

Answer: State A may be semi-democratic because elections coexist with authoritarian restrictions on scrutiny. State B may be a failed state because basic state capacity has collapsed. Cooperation may be hindered by unreliable commitments, rights concerns or inability to implement agreements. More evidence is needed before treating either classification as settled.

Question 4

Level 0 No rewardable material. **0**

Level 1 Limited relevant knowledge and simple assertions about power or cooperation; little developed explanation. **1-3**

Level 2 Some accurate knowledge and relevant examples, with partially developed links between polarity and cooperation. **4-6**

Level 3 Mostly accurate and appropriately selected knowledge supports two clear analytical chains explaining effects on conflict or environmental cooperation. **7-9**

Level 4 Precise knowledge and well-chosen examples support two sustained analytical chains. Explains mechanisms and their conditions, distinguishing resources, influence and outcomes. Different valid arguments are equally creditworthy. **10-12**

Indicative content:

- AO1: 6 marks; AO2: 6 marks. Assess knowledge and analysis by best fit. This is an analytical question, so a final evaluative verdict is not required. Content is illustrative, not a checklist.
- Unipolarity can allow a dominant state to supply security or coordinate bargaining, but weaker states may resist a settlement they see as imposed. The USA after the Cold War is the specification example of a unipolar centre.
- Multipolarity can increase the number of actors able to block a settlement, but can also give agreements wider legitimacy if major centres accept shared obligations. The mechanism, not the label alone, explains the outcome.
- Issue 4 asks for consideration of a shift towards multipolarity since 2000. Evidence of a stronger role for China or other centres can support this account, but does not establish that each centre has equal capabilities.
- The August 2024 evidence snapshot places US military spending above China, while China is second. This illustrates unequal material resources; it cannot alone establish the number of poles or actual success in conflict resolution.
- A return of spheres of influence may make local bargains easier for major powers while restricting smaller states' choices. The local August 2024 guidance records Russia's invasion of Ukraine in 2022, an example of coercion, not evidence that Russia has achieved all its objectives.
- Environmental cooperation can depend on several economic centres accepting costs; rivalry and bargaining may obstruct agreement or create incentives for reciprocal commitments. Explain a concrete mechanism and support claims about actual agreements with dated evidence.
- Credit other valid examples and analyses. Do not require the assertion that the world is already wholly multipolar.

Question 5

Uses the common global denominator to compare 40 with 14, for example 40/14 or 40:14.	**M1**
Obtains 20:7 as the simplest whole-number ratio (about 2.86:1), dependent on method.	**A1**
Obtains a gap of 26 percentage points, not 26%. Ratio and gap remain approximate because the inputs are rounded.	**B1**
Explains one limitation, such as spending being an input that does not guarantee capability, efficiency or desired outcomes.	**B1**
Explains a distinct limitation, such as omitted soft power, alliances, economic leverage, dated evidence or differing purchasing power. Credit any two valid explained limitations across these last two marks.	**B1**

Answer: 40:14 simplifies to 20:7, or about 2.86:1. The gap is 26 percentage points. Spending measures an input rather than successful influence; soft power, alliances, economic leverage or effectiveness may produce a different comparison.

Question 6

Level 0 No rewardable material.	**0**
Level 1 Limited knowledge; assertions about world order with little analysis or supported evaluation.	**1-6**
Level 2 Some relevant knowledge and partial analysis. Evaluation is uneven and the judgement has limited support.	**7-12**
Level 3 Generally accurate knowledge supports relevant analytical chains and consideration of competing arguments. A reasoned judgement is present but its criteria or evidence are uneven.	**13-18**
Level 4 Accurate, well-selected dated evidence supports sustained analysis and balanced evaluation of competing interpretations. A supported judgement uses clear criteria for polarity and recognises important limitations.	**19-24**
Level 5 Precise knowledge supports coherent, sustained analysis and evaluation across the argument. Weighs competing evidence, distinguishes capabilities from outcomes and reaches a supported judgement using explicit criteria. Unipolar, bipolar, multipolar or qualified interpretations can all receive full marks when supported; no contested conclusion is compulsory.	**25-30**

Indicative content:

- AO1: 10 marks; AO2: 10 marks; AO3: 10 marks. Use best fit across knowledge, analysis and evaluation. Indicative content is not exhaustive and different valid evidence and supported conclusions receive equal credit.
- Define polarity through the concentration and distribution of effective power. Distinguish a global pole from a regional influence, an institution or a member of a grouping. Explain the criteria used for counting a pole.
- Issue 4 (May 2026) asks students to consider the shift from US unipolarity towards multipolarity since 2000. This is a proposition to investigate with evidence, not a conclusion that must be endorsed to gain marks.
- The USA is the named superpower example. Its approximate 40% share of global military spending in the August 2024 guidance, compared with China's 14%, supports an argument for continuing material asymmetry. These rounded historical inputs cannot establish October 2026 shares or automatically demonstrate effective hegemony.
- China's second-place military-spending rank in that snapshot and its named emerging-power status support discussion of changing capabilities. An emerging power may also be argued to have become a great power if dated evidence and criteria justify that classification. The labels need not be mutually exclusive.
- The specification's BRICS examples are Brazil, Russia, India, China and South Africa, as printed in May 2026. This is not an exhaustive contemporary membership register. A grouping is not necessarily a unified pole: demonstrate common action before aggregating members' capabilities. Date any membership claims.
- Soft power depends on attraction and legitimacy, not merely publicity or the existence of diplomatic contact. Military force may achieve a narrow aim while damaging attraction; attraction may ease cooperation without overcoming a rival's vital security interests.
- Issue 4 requires consideration of renewed spheres of influence involving Russia, the USA and China. The 2022 Russian invasion of Ukraine is evidence of coercive action recorded in local guidance, but a sphere-of-influence claim requires evidence about effective control and the responses of other states. Do not treat claimed influence as legitimate entitlement.
- Declining global institutions, greater bilateralism and nationalism may indicate fragmentation and bargaining among several centres. Alternatively, bilateral deals can reflect one state's dominance; institutional disagreement alone does not prove institutional disappearance. Weigh capacity and actual outcomes.
- Democracy, rule of law and liberal economies are distinct. Market opening need not produce accountable government; elections without rights or independent checks need not establish liberal democracy. Similar economic models across states need not mean a common foreign policy or one centre of power.
- Democratic, semi-democratic and autocratic classifications require evidence about competition, accountability and constraints. Failed concerns institutional capacity; rogue concerns a contested judgement about threatening foreign policy. Avoid using either as a neutral synonym for an adversary.
- Judge whether the evidence supports continuing US unipolarity, increasing US-China bipolarity, multipolarity or different patterns in different policy areas. Compare both supporting and contrary evidence, and explain the limits of the judgement. No one interpretation is required.