6.6 Regionalism and the European Union

EDEXCEL 9PL0 · about 55 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer all 12 questions. Use full sentences for explanations. Question 5 is a 12-mark AO1/AO2 analysis; Question 6 is a 30-mark AO1/AO2/AO3 evaluation requiring a supported judgement. Use dated examples. Allow about 55 minutes.

1 The May 2026 Issue 4 specification labels its North American example NAFTA/USMCA. Identify the agreement added in that update and explain why this syllabus label alone does not show that both agreements operate simultaneously.

(Total for Question 1 is 2 marks)

2 Explain the difference between supranational and intergovernmental decision-making. Illustrate your explanation with any relevant, dated EU example or examples.

(Total for Question 2 is 3 marks)

3 Explain widening and deepening in European integration, using the Maastricht development of 1993 to illustrate one of these processes.

(Total for Question 3 is 3 marks)

4 Explain two factors encouraging European integration and connect each to a relevant development or institutional feature. Use the historical Maastricht context of 1993 where helpful.

(Total for Question 4 is 4 marks)

5 Analyse why states may both pool and defend sovereignty through regional organisations. Use realism and liberalism in your analysis and develop examples from regional cooperation.

(Total for Question 5 is 12 marks)

6 Evaluate the view that regional organisations resolve global problems more effectively than individual states. Consider the EU and other regional organisations, using dated examples and a supported judgement.

(Total for Question 6 is 30 marks)

Mark scheme · 6.6 Regionalism and the European Union

Question 1

USMCA, the United States Mexico Canada Agreement. **B1**

The label identifies material for study; it does not establish the legal commencement, replacement or termination dates of either agreement. **B1**

Answer: USMCA was added. A syllabus listing establishes coverage, not simultaneous legal operation or the dates of an agreement.

Question 2

Supranational authority can bind a member state even when that government opposes a particular decision, within powers conferred by treaties. **B1**

Intergovernmental decision-making rests on bargaining among sovereign governments; unanimity is one possible procedure, not the definition of every intergovernmental body. **B1**

Applies the distinction accurately using any relevant, dated EU example or examples. For example, in the EU in 2021, binding judicial decisions or qualified-majority legislation could constrain dissenting governments, whereas intergovernmental cooperation rested on agreement among governments. Accept any accurate application; neither a particular institution nor both examples are required. Do not classify every Council decision as intergovernmental simply because ministers take part. **B1**

Answer: Supranational rules can bind an opposing government within delegated competences. Intergovernmental cooperation centres on bargaining among sovereign governments. In the EU in 2021, qualified-majority decisions could bind dissenting governments, illustrating the supranational constraint on national discretion.

Question 3

Widening means adding member states. **B1**

Deepening means increasing the scope or strength of shared policies or regional authority. **B1**

The Maastricht development in 1993 illustrates deepening through the EU project, rather than merely an increase in membership. Accept a more specific accurate account of political or economic integration. **B1**

Answer: Widening adds members; deepening extends integration. Maastricht in 1993 advanced the EU project, illustrating deepening.

Question 4

Identifies one relevant factor encouraging European integration. Accept economic, political or security factors, such as expected economic gains, peace, political stability or collective international influence. **B1**

Explains how the first factor encourages integration and connects it to a relevant development or institutional feature. Accept any accurate connection; an economic mechanism is not required. **B1**

Identifies a second, distinct relevant factor. Both factors may be political, economic or security-related; they need not come from different categories. **B1**

Explains how the second factor encourages integration and connects it to a relevant development or institutional feature. For example, shared institutions can make political cooperation more durable, while common action can increase collective influence. Accept any accurate connection; Maastricht in 1993 is optional. **B1**

Answer: Economic cooperation can widen markets and encourage exchange, giving governments a reason to integrate. Shared institutions can also make political cooperation more durable and increase collective influence; the Maastricht development of 1993 provides a deepening context.

Question 5

Level 0 No relevant knowledge or analysis. **0**

Level 1 A few relevant ideas about sovereignty or cooperation, with little explanation of the connection between them. **1-3**

Level 2 Some accurate knowledge and a recognisable explanation of pooling or defending authority. Theory or application remains general, or the relationship between the two processes is only partly developed. **4-6**

Level 3 Accurate concepts and relevant examples support developed causal analysis of both pooling and defending sovereignty. Realist and liberal explanations are connected to state choices, though some connections lack precision. **7-9**

Level 4 Precise knowledge and well-chosen examples support sustained analysis of why pooling and defending authority can coexist. Realist and liberal explanations illuminate incentives and constraints, with clear links between decision rules, state interests and regional outcomes. **10-12**

Indicative content:

- AO1 and AO2 have equal weight, 6 marks each, assessed through a best-fit overall level. This is analysis, not an AO3 judgement task. No particular conclusion is required.
- Pooling authority delegates decisions in specified fields. A government may gain collective influence while losing discretion over a particular rule. Binding EU judicial decisions as of 2021 makes that distinction concrete.
- A liberal account links institutions, predictable rules and repeated cooperation to gains from interdependence. Pooling can lower the cost of coordination and make commitments more credible.
- A realist account explains cooperation as a strategy for security or bargaining power. States may cooperate yet resist arrangements that expose vital interests or produce unfavourable relative gains.
- Defending sovereignty can shape the design of regional organisations. AU and ASEAN sovereignty concerns as of 2021 offer contrasts to the EU without implying that their institutions are identical.
- The two processes can be complementary: a state can seek greater effective influence through joint action while protecting authority in other fields. Alternatively, divergent interests can make them conflict.
- Dated application can use EU collective economic influence as of 2023. Economic regionalism, including the NAFTA/USMCA example named in May 2026 Issue 4, does not by its label alone establish the same depth of authority as the EU.
- Credit other accurate examples and defensible theoretical interpretations. Do not require the USA option comparative framework or agreement with a preferred account.

Question 6

Level 0 No relevant response. **0**

Level 1 Isolated relevant knowledge with assertions about effectiveness. Explanation and supporting evidence are slight; judgement is absent or unsubstantiated. **1-6**

Level 2 Some accurate knowledge supports a partly developed argument. Analysis or evaluation is general, and counterarguments receive limited attention. Any judgement has only partial support. **7-12**

Level 3 Mostly accurate knowledge and relevant examples support developed arguments on competing views. Analysis connects regional action to outcomes, and some evaluation weighs its effectiveness against action by states. Judgement is reasoned but unevenly supported. **13-18**

Level 4 Accurate, selected knowledge and dated examples support coherent analysis and sustained weighing of regional and state capacities. Counterarguments are addressed and the judgement follows from explicit criteria, with only occasional gaps. **19-24**

Level 5 Precise knowledge and well-chosen dated examples support a sustained, convincing comparison of effectiveness across relevant problems and organisations. Analysis tests causal claims and evaluation weighs counterarguments consistently. A fully supported judgement may agree, disagree or qualify the proposition. **25-30**

Indicative content:

- AO1, AO2 and AO3 have equal weight, 10 marks each, assessed through best fit. Indicative content is non-exhaustive. Credit supported alternatives and equally well-evidenced conclusions agreeing, disagreeing or qualifying the view; no preferred political judgement is required.
- Effectiveness needs a criterion: preventing conflict, reducing poverty, protecting human rights or limiting environmental harm. Formal agreement and institutional existence are not evidence that a problem has been resolved.
- Regional cooperation can coordinate responses to problems crossing borders and pool resources. Shared rules can limit free riding, but success depends on compliance, funding and implementation by member states.
- EU collective market weight and WTO participation as of 2023 offer a mechanism for trade influence. That influence can improve bargaining capacity without guaranteeing poverty reduction or equal gains among members.
- Binding EU judicial authority as of 2021 can support consistent application of shared rules. It can also provoke sovereignty objections. The European Court of Human Rights belongs to the separate Council of Europe: its work cannot be counted as an EU institutional achievement.
- The AU and ASEAN show that regionalism can coexist with strong sovereignty concerns. The Arab League adds a political regional organisation for comparison. Assess actual capacity and cooperation rather than assuming all three reproduce EU institutions.
- For conflict, regional knowledge and coordinated pressure may assist cooperation, but national interests and limited shared military resources can constrain regional responses. A state with resources and a clear policy may sometimes respond more decisively.
- For poverty and the environment, coordination can tackle cross-border incentives. However, regional plans require domestic enforcement and can shift costs between members. Trade cooperation alone does not prove improvements in either area.
- Realist reasoning can emphasise power asymmetry, relative gains and selective state consent. Liberal reasoning can emphasise interdependence, rules and durable cooperation. Either interpretation earns credit when supported and applied rather than merely named.
- European integration includes widening and deepening. The Maastricht development of 1993 illustrates deepening; the UK departure in 2020 shows that membership is not irreversible. Neither development alone proves that regional organisations are effective or ineffective globally.
- NAFTA/USMCA is the updated North American example in May 2026 Issue 4. A syllabus listing does not independently establish the dates or legal status of its agreements. Credit accurate, dated agreement evidence if supplied by a candidate; do not require an unsupported chronology.
- A qualified conclusion could find regional organisations more effective for shared rules or bargaining but dependent on states for delivery. Full credit is also available for a substantiated case that state action is generally stronger, or that regional organisation is generally more effective.