4.1 Core Ideas and Principles of Feminism

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

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. Short answer responses may be brief phrases or sentences. For levels-marked questions (10 and 30 marks) write extended, structured responses using accurate political knowledge and clear evaluation where required. The pack covers Non-core Ideas: Feminism (foundational principles).

1 Define the term 'patriarchy' as it is used in feminist political theory.

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

2 State the sex/gender distinction used by feminists when analysing oppression.

(Total for Question 2 is 1 mark)

3 State one way policy makers might address inequality of outcome between women and men.

(Total for Question 3 is 1 mark)

4 Identify one institutional example feminists cite as evidence of patriarchy outside the family.

(Total for Question 4 is 1 mark)

5 Give two brief examples of how feminists use the slogan 'the personal is political' to connect private life and public policy.

(Total for Question 5 is 2 marks)

6 State two different conceptions of equality debated within feminist thought.

(Total for Question 6 is 2 marks)

7 Explain briefly why feminists argue that the gender pay gap demonstrates systemic inequality. Refer to the UK context as of the 2024 general election.

(Total for Question 7 is 3 marks)

8 Explain two ways the slogan 'the personal is political' broadens the feminist concept of politics. Give one development point for each way.

(Total for Question 8 is 2 marks)

9 Analyse two feminist ideas about the causes of womens oppression.

(Total for Question 9 is 10 marks)

10 Explain two political implications of accepting that 'the personal is political' for feminist campaigning tactics. Develop both implications, including a further example, and briefly evaluate the tactics.

(Total for Question 10 is 6 marks)

11 Evaluate the extent to which feminists agree on the nature of patriarchy.

(Total for Question 11 is 24 marks)

12 Explain the difference between formal legal equality and substantive equality for women, giving one example of each from public policy.

(Total for Question 12 is 5 marks)

Mark scheme · 4.1 Core Ideas and Principles of Feminism

Question 1

A concise definition identifying patriarchy as a system or structure in which men hold primary power and women are subordinated, oe — **B1**

Answer: A social and political system in which men hold primary power and women are systematically subordinated across institutions and cultural practices.

Question 2

Sex is biological differences; gender is socially constructed roles and expectations associated with sex cao — **B1**

Answer: Sex refers to biological characteristics; gender refers to socially constructed roles, behaviours and expectations associated with being male or female.

Question 3

names a valid policy, e.g. mandatory gender pay gap reporting with sanctions, or positive action in hiring and promotion — **B1**

Answer: Introduce mandatory gender pay gap reporting with enforcement and targets, or implement positive action measures in recruitment and promotion.

Question 4

identifies an institution, e.g. workplace pay structures, the criminal justice system, parliamentary representation, or healthcare provision — **B1**

Answer: Under-representation of women in Parliament and senior corporate positions is commonly cited as institutional evidence of patriarchy.

Question 5

one accurate example, e.g. domestic violence framed as a social and political problem requiring legal intervention — **B1**

a second accurate example, e.g. unpaid care and domestic labour seen as public policy issues for welfare and employment law — **B1**

Answer: Examples: treating domestic violence as a public policy and criminal justice issue; framing unpaid care and domestic labour as matters for welfare and employment policy rather than only private family arrangements.

Question 6

one accurate conception, e.g. equality of opportunity — **B1**

a second accurate conception, e.g. equality of outcome (or substantive equality) — **B1**

Answer: Equality of opportunity and equality of outcome (substantive equality).

Question 7

identifies that the gender pay gap shows aggregate differences in pay between men and women in the labour market — **B1**

links the gap to structural factors, e.g. occupational segregation, care responsibilities, and part-time work patterns — **B1**

briefly situates the point in context, e.g. cites that as of 2024 the UK median gender pay gap persisted and was a focus of policy debate — **B1**

Answer: Feminists argue the gender pay gap is systemic because aggregate pay differences reflect structural factors such as occupational segregation, disproportionate care responsibilities falling on women, and higher rates of part-time work among women; as of the 2024 general election the UK median pay gap remained a policy concern, indicating persistent structural barriers rather than only individual choices.

Question 8

explains one way and develops it, e.g. connects private experience to public policy making — **B1**

explains a second way and develops it, e.g. shows how naming private problems can create collective political mobilisation — **B1**

Answer: It broadens politics by treating private experiences, such as domestic abuse, as matters for public policy and law, requiring state response. It also empowers collective mobilisation by naming shared private problems and turning them into political campaigns for legal and social change.

Question 9

Level 0 No relevant content.	**0**
Level 1 Basic identification of two causes with limited explanation and little or no analysis.	**1-3**
Level 2 Clear explanation of two causes with some analysis of how each causes womens oppression; may be descriptive rather than comparative.	**4-6**
Level 3 Detailed, accurate explanation and analysis of two causes, showing how each produces systemic oppression and offering some comparison or assessment of their relative importance.	**7-10**

Indicative content:

- A structural explanation: patriarchy as a system of social, economic and political arrangements that privilege men and institutionalise womens subordination through laws, workplace practices, cultural norms and political under-representation.
- How structural patriarchy produces oppression: gendered division of labour, occupational segregation, lower pay, under-representation in decision-making and policies that assume unpaid care are private responsibilities.
- A socialisation or cultural explanation: gender as socially constructed through norms, expectations, media portrayals and education that teach and reinforce gender roles from childhood.
- How socialisation produces oppression: internalised gender norms limit aspirations and choices, produce gendered behaviour that is policed by society, and legitimise unequal treatment as natural or deserved.
- Brief alternative causes to consider, in analysis: economic class intersecting with gender, legal and institutional discrimination, or state policies that fail to redistribute care responsibilities, showing the student can situate the two chosen ideas among wider causal claims.
- Comparative assessment: stronger answers assess which cause might be more fundamental or more amenable to policy change, for example arguing that cultural change is necessary to make institutional reforms effective, or that institutional change can alter incentives that shape cultural practice.

Question 10

one implication stated, e.g. increased use of consciousness-raising groups to share experiences	**B1**
development of that implication, e.g. turning shared experience into public demands for legal change	**B1**
a second implication stated, e.g. focus on policy areas such as family law, welfare and workplace regulations	**B1**
development of that implication, e.g. shifting campaigning resources from purely electoral tactics to service provision and legal reform efforts	**B1**
further development or example, e.g. campaigns to criminalise marital rape or to secure statutory paid parental leave	**B1**
brief evaluative comment, e.g. such tactics can mobilise survivors but may also risk politicising intimate choices	**B1**

Answer: Implications include use of consciousness-raising and testimonial strategies to make private problems public and thereby press for legal reform; and focusing campaigning on policy fields such as family law, welfare support and workplace regulation, for example campaigning to criminalise marital rape or to secure statutory paid parental leave. These tactics can empower survivors and change law and services, though they may also raise complex debates about state intervention in intimate life.

Question 11

Level 0 No relevant content.	**0**
Level 1 Basic, limited knowledge of patriarchy with little or no analysis or evaluation. Points are general and not developed with examples.	**1-6**
Level 2 Clear knowledge of patriarchy and some analytical development. Evaluation is present but likely partial, with limited use of evidence or comparison between positions.	**7-12**
Level 3 Detailed knowledge of different feminist accounts of patriarchy and sustained analysis. Evaluation weighs points of agreement and disagreement, using relevant examples and some synthesis, though final judgement may be qualified.	**13-18**
Level 4 Sophisticated, comprehensive knowledge and evaluation across AO1, AO2 and AO3. Directly compares competing accounts of patriarchy, analyses their explanatory power and policy implications, addresses strengths and limits of each view and reaches a clear, well-substantiated final judgement on the extent of agreement among feminists.	**19-24**

Indicative content:

- Areas of broad agreement: most feminists accept that patriarchy denotes systemic male dominance and womens subordination that operates across public and private spheres, rather than only a set of isolated individual acts of sexism; they agree that this system produces inequalities in power, resources and status.
- Points of disagreement in emphasis: some feminists stress structural and institutional mechanisms that produce patriarchy, pointing to laws, labour markets and state policies; others emphasise cultural and ideological processes of gender socialisation and sexual norms that reproduce patriarchy through everyday practices.
- Disagreement over causes and central mechanisms: some accounts prioritise material and economic explanations, arguing capitalism intersects with patriarchy to produce womens oppression; others prioritise gender itself as the primary axis of domination and focus on male power as independent of class or economic structures.
- Different understandings of scope: some feminists argue patriarchy is a global, near-universal system with deep historical roots; others stress variation by culture, class, race and sexuality and emphasise intersectionality, arguing patriarchy is experienced differently depending on other forms of oppression.
- Implications for policy and strategy: agreement that patriarchy must be challenged, but disagreement about remedies, for example whether legal reform and equal opportunities will suffice or whether deeper redistributive and cultural change is required to achieve substantive equality.
- Evaluation of epistemic limits: consider how different evidence bases and disciplinary approaches (sociology, political economy, psychology) lead to divergent descriptions of patriarchy, and how empirical variation complicates claims of a single, uniform system.
- Synthesis and judgement: a reasoned conclusion might argue feminists broadly agree on the core concept that male-dominated structures limit womens power, but sharply disagree on the primary causes, the scale and universality of patriarchy, and the best remedies; therefore agreement exists at the level of naming the problem, but not at the level of detailed explanation or policy prescriptions.
- Use of examples: strong answers may refer to policy debates (e.g. maternity and parental leave reform, pay gap interventions, violence against women legislation) and to empirical differences in how patriarchy operates across contexts to support evaluation.

Question 12

defines formal legal equality as equal treatment before the law	**B1**
gives an example of formal equality, e.g. equal voting rights or non-discrimination laws	**B1**
defines substantive equality as addressing structural barriers to produce similar outcomes	**B1**
gives an example of substantive equality policy, e.g. childcare subsidies, quota systems, or family leave reform to enable equal labour market participation	**B1**
briefly contrasts the two, e.g. formal equality may not change underlying social practices that produce unequal outcomes	**B1**

Answer: Formal legal equality means equal treatment under the law, for example non-discrimination statutes or equal voting rights. Substantive equality seeks to remove structural barriers so women achieve similar outcomes, for example state-subsidised childcare, quotas for corporate boards or enhanced parental leave to enable equal labour market participation. Formal equality does not necessarily change social structures that produce unequal outcomes, whereas substantive policies aim to do so.