4.5 Core Ideas and Principles of Anarchism

EDEXCEL 9PL0 · about 50 minutes · Write-in edition

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. Write full sentences for questions worth 4 marks or more. Spend approximately 70 minutes on this pack: about 25 minutes on the short and medium questions and about 45 minutes on the extended 30-mark essay.

1 State two foundational principles shared by anarchists about human organisation, as taught in Edexcel Non-core Ideas: Anarchism.

(Total for Question 1 is 2 marks)

2 State one immediate practical challenge anarchists acknowledge about replacing the state with voluntary institutions, in the context of Non-core Ideas: Anarchism.

(Total for Question 2 is 1 mark)

3 Explain, with two brief points, why anarchists argue that political authority is different from organisation and why they reject the former while accepting the latter.

(Total for Question 3 is 4 marks)

4 Explain two anarchist objections to the state as an institution of coercion and provide one short development for each objection.

(Total for Question 4 is 5 marks)

5 Analyse two anarchist objections to the state, using the shared core principles of anarchism rather than strand-specific claims.

(Total for Question 5 is 10 marks)

6 Evaluate the extent to which anarchists agree that the state is unnecessary, using shared core principles of anarchism and avoiding strand-specific detailed theorists.

(Total for Question 6 is 24 marks)

7 Explain how anarchists justify the claim that removing the state would reduce violence and domination, using up to three linked points.

(Total for Question 7 is 5 marks)

Mark scheme · 4.5 Core Ideas and Principles of Anarchism

Question 1

one accurate principle, such as belief that people can voluntarily cooperate without coercive authority — **B1**

a second accurate principle, such as the belief that order can arise spontaneously from below rather than being imposed from above — **B1**

Answer: Any two of: belief in voluntary cooperation without coercive authority; belief that social order can emerge spontaneously from below; rejection of political authority and the state as inherently oppressive; distinction between authority (rejected) and organisation (accepted).

Question 2

names a practical challenge, e.g. coordinating large scale infrastructure or defence without centralised authority — **B1**

Answer: Coordinating large scale infrastructure or defence without centralised authority is a common practical challenge anarchists acknowledge.

Question 3

identifies that authority implies hierarchical power to command and enforce, whereas organisation can be non-hierarchical and voluntary — **B1**

explains that anarchists reject authority because it risks coercion and domination — **B1**

identifies that organisation is accepted because it can coordinate activity through voluntary agreements and mutual aid — **B1**

explains that anarchists favour bottom-up, decentralised organisation to enable cooperation without coercion — **B1**

Answer: Authority, for anarchists, means a hierarchical power to command and enforce decisions; organisation means cooperative arrangements for coordination. Anarchists reject authority because it enables coercion and domination, but accept organisation when it is voluntary, decentralised and based on mutual agreement, because this allows coordination without oppressive command.

Question 4

identifies first objection, that the state uses coercive monopoly of force to enforce obedience — **B1**

develops first objection, e.g. coercive enforcement undermines freedom and can be abused by elites — **B1**

identifies second objection, that the state perpetuates hierarchical institutions and social inequality — **B1**

develops second objection, e.g. state structures can entrench class privilege and block grassroots self-organisation — **B1**

offers a brief concluding link showing these objections support the anarchist case for abolishing or radically transforming the state — **B1**

Answer: One objection is that the state maintains a coercive monopoly of force to enforce obedience; this coercion undermines individual autonomy and can be abused by elites. A second objection is that the state institutionalises hierarchies and social inequality, protecting privileged groups and preventing grassroots self-organisation; together these objections support the anarchist argument for abolishing or radically transforming the state to remove coercive domination.

Question 5

Level 1 Basic identification of one or two objections with limited development and little analysis, relying on general assertion rather than explanation. — **1-3**

Level 2 Clear identification and explanation of two relevant objections, with some analysis of how each objection follows from anarchist principles, though development may be uneven. — **4-7**

Level 3 Detailed analysis of two distinct anarchist objections, showing how each objection derives logically from anarchist core principles and offering linked reasoning or example to develop the analysis fully. — **8-10**

Indicative content:

- Objection 1, coercive monopoly of force: the state centralises the legitimate use of force, enabling repression and undermining individual autonomy; analyse how this follows from anarchism's rejection of authority and optimistic view of cooperative human nature, showing that coercion is unnecessary and harmful.
- Development 1: show that concentration of force creates asymmetries that corrupt institutions and enable elite domination, and give a generic example such as policing or conscription to illustrate potential abuse without naming specific thinkers.
- Objection 2, institutionalised hierarchy and inequality: the state perpetuates social hierarchies and protects privilege, preventing horizontal self-organisation; link to anarchist emphasis on organisation without authority and the belief that order can emerge from below.
- Development 2: analyse how state bureaucracy and legal structures can entrench class or status differences, blocking voluntary cooperative forms, and explain why anarchists see decentralised organisation as both more just and more effective.
- Synthesis: compare the two objections to show they are complementary rather than identical, one emphasising coercion and the other emphasising structural inequality, and explain how both support the anarchist case against the state.

Question 6

Level 0 No relevant content.	**0**
Level 1 Basic, limited knowledge of anarchist core principles with simple or undeveloped assertions about the state's necessity. Little evaluation or reasoning.	**1-6**
Level 2 Clear, accurate knowledge of anarchist core principles and coherent argumentation. Some analysis and evaluation of the claim that the state is unnecessary, but the response may be one-sided or lack detailed consideration of challenges.	**7-12**
Level 3 Detailed, accurate knowledge deployed with sustained analysis and evaluation. The argument engages with strengths and weaknesses of the anarchist position, uses well-chosen examples, and reaches a reasoned judgement.	**13-18**
Level 4 Sophisticated, wide-ranging knowledge and evaluation linking anarchist core principles to nuanced analysis. The response weighs agreement and disagreement among anarchists, considers practical and theoretical challenges, and reaches a well-substantiated, balanced judgement on the extent of agreement that the state is unnecessary.	**19-24**

Indicative content:

- Shared anarchist claim that the state is unnecessary: the state is a coercive institution that concentrates power, undermines freedom and social equality, and therefore can and should be replaced by voluntary, decentralised forms of organisation.
- Support from core principles: rejection of authority implies the state is illegitimate; optimistic view of human nature implies people can cooperate voluntarily; belief in spontaneous order suggests complex coordination can emerge from below without central command; distinction of authority versus organisation supports acceptance of non-hierarchical institutions rather than the state.
- Evidence and analysis in favour: examples of mutual aid, cooperative economic arrangements and local assemblies show non-state coordination in practice; decentralised networks can be resilient and empower participants rather than subjecting them to top-down rule.
- Limits and counterarguments: practical concerns about scaling voluntary institutions to manage large infrastructures, health systems and national defence; risk that informal hierarchies or private concentrations of power could replace the state; coordination problems in plural, large-scale societies where unanimous voluntary agreement is difficult.
- Internal disagreements and qualifications among anarchists: while the pack avoids strand detail, note that some anarchists emphasise near-total abolition of state structures whereas others accept transitional federations or minimal coordinating bodies, so 'unnecessary' can be interpreted differently across the tradition.
- Evaluation of the claim's plausibility: weigh normative appeal and theoretical coherence against empirical feasibility concerns. Consider whether the state causes the problems anarchists target or whether it sometimes mitigates them, for example by providing universal public goods that voluntary institutions struggle to deliver reliably.
- Possible conclusion lines: a balanced judgement might be that anarchists coherently argue the state is unnecessary in principle and that many functions could be organised voluntarily, but significant practical barriers and risks of new forms of domination mean the claim is persuasive as a critique and aspiration rather than an immediately practical blueprint for large, complex societies.
- Responses that reach either a strong endorsement or a cautious rejection of the claim can be credited if they demonstrate deep knowledge of core principles, clear analysis and a concluding judgement supported by evidence and reasoning.

Question 7

identifies that the state concentrates coercive power which can be used to suppress and control populations	**B1**
identifies that state power can be used to legitimate violence by elites or foreign interventions	**B1**
explains that removing centralised coercion would disperse power and reduce opportunities for institutional abuse	**B1**
identifies that voluntary norms and horizontal accountability could provide non-coercive conflict resolution	**B1**
brief conclusion linking these points to the claim that overall violence and domination would be reduced	**B1**

Answer: Anarchists argue the state concentrates coercive power that can be used to suppress or control populations and to legitimate elite violence or foreign intervention; by dispersing power and relying on horizontal accountability and voluntary norms, opportunities for institutional abuse are reduced and non-coercive mechanisms for conflict resolution can develop, so overall violence and domination would fall.