2.3 Constitutional Reform Since 1997 and Debates on Further Reform: Test Pack

EDEXCEL 9PL0 · about 20 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. For levels-marked questions, write a well-structured, developed response using accurate political knowledge, named Acts and examples, and precise terminology. At least two answers (the source-based question and the final essay) must be written in full sentences. Spend about 20 minutes on this paper.

1 Define devolution as used in the context of UK constitutional reform since 1997, naming the territorial governments it created.

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

2 State two powers commonly devolved to the Scottish Parliament under the Scotland Act 1998, as applied since 1999.

(Total for Question 2 is 2 marks)

3 Give the year the Human Rights Act received Royal Assent in the UK context.

(Total for Question 3 is 1 mark)

4 Identify the Act of Parliament that created the Supreme Court of the United Kingdom and state the year the Court replaced the Appellate Committee of the House of Lords.

(Total for Question 4 is 2 marks)

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5 Explain briefly one major effect of the House of Lords Act 1999 on the composition of the House of Lords.

(Total for Question 5 is 3 marks)

6 Give the year the Fixed-term Parliaments Act was passed and the year it was repealed by the Dissolution and Calling of Parliament Act, as required for covering reforms and subsequent reversal.

(Total for Question 6 is 3 marks)

7 Explain, in the context of UK constitutional reform debates since 1997, what is meant by English Votes for English Laws (EVEL) and one argument in favour of it.

(Total for Question 7 is 4 marks)

8 Explain two arguments against comprehensive reform of the House of Lords since 1997, including one practical obstacle.

(Total for Question 8 is 4 marks)

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Mark scheme · 2.3 Constitutional Reform Since 1997 and Debates on Further Reform: Test Pack

Question 1

a concise definition of devolution as the statutory transfer of powers from the UK Parliament to separate elected bodies, and naming at least one devolved institution (Scotland, Wales, or Northern Ireland) **B1**

Answer: Devolution is the statutory transfer of specified powers from the UK Parliament to elected territorial institutions; since 1997 this created the Scottish Parliament, the Welsh Senedd (initially National Assembly for Wales), and the Northern Ireland Assembly.

Question 2

one accurate devolved power, e.g. education **B1**

a second accurate devolved power, e.g. health or housing **B1**

Answer: Any two of: education; health; housing; most aspects of justice and policing within transferred areas; transport powers (as devolved over time).

Question 3

1998 cao **B1**

Answer: 1998.

Question 4

Constitutional Reform Act 2005 cao **B1**

2009 cao **B1**

Answer: The Constitutional Reform Act 2005 created the Supreme Court, which began work and replaced the Appellate Committee of the House of Lords in 2009.

Question 5

identifies the major effect, e.g. removal of most hereditary peers **B1**

develops why this changed composition, e.g. reduced number of hereditary peers from several hundred to 92 hereditary peers **B1**

notes consequence, e.g. increased relative importance of life peers and appointed members **B1**

Answer: The House of Lords Act 1999 removed the automatic right of most hereditary peers to sit, reducing hereditary peers to 92 members, which increased the relative dominance of life peers and changed the chamber from a large hereditary majority to a mostly appointed upper house.

Question 6

2011 cao **B1**

2022 cao **B1**

notes that repeal restored prerogative dissolution powers to the Prime Minister in practice **B1**

Answer: The Fixed-term Parliaments Act was passed in 2011 and was repealed by the Dissolution and Calling of Parliament Act in 2022, a repeal which effectively restored the Prime Minister's traditional prerogative route to requesting dissolution.

Question 7

identifies what EVEL is, e.g. a parliamentary procedure to allow only English MPs to vote on England-only legislation **B1**

develops why it was proposed, e.g. to address the West Lothian question where devolved MPs could vote on English-only matters **B1**

gives one argument in favour, e.g. increased democratic fairness for English voters or reducing perceptions of unequal influence **B1**

brief consequence or example, e.g. temporary procedural EVEL measures were introduced in 2015 and used sparingly **B1**

Answer: EVEL refers to parliamentary procedures designed so that only MPs representing English constituencies can decide on England-only legislation, proposed to resolve the West Lothian question where MPs from devolved nations could influence English domestic law; one argument in favour is that it increases democratic fairness for English voters by ensuring laws affecting only England are made primarily by English MPs.

Question 8

identifies one substantive argument against reform, e.g. loss of expertise or a less independent revising chamber **B1**

develops that point, e.g. appointed life peers can bring specialised experience and are not subject to electoral pressures **B1**

identifies a practical obstacle, e.g. difficulty of reaching consensus on the size and electoral method for a reformed second chamber **B1**

develops the obstacle, e.g. political parties disagree over elected versus appointed models and reform risks politicising the chamber **B1**

Answer: Arguments against comprehensive Lords reform include the risk of losing the practical expertise and independence life peers provide, since elected members may be more partisan, and a major practical obstacle is the lack of cross-party consensus on the chamber's future size and selection method, with debate over elected versus appointed members making reform politically difficult.

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