2.5 Parliament's Legislative Process and Scrutiny of the Executive: 10-minute Pack

EDEXCEL 9PL0 · about 10 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. Short answer questions may be brief but must be accurate. For levels-marked and source-based questions write a developed, well-structured response using accurate terminology and named examples where appropriate. Show any planning clearly.

1 State one principal function of the Second Reading of a Government public Bill in the House of Commons.

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

2 Explain the purpose of Prime Minister's Questions (PMQs) in the House of Commons and outline one limitation of PMQs as a tool for sustained scrutiny of government policy.

(Total for Question 2 is 4 marks)

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3 State two formal parliamentary mechanisms used specifically to scrutinise the executive and name the principal feature of each.

(Total for Question 3 is 2 marks)

4 Explain the role of departmental select committees in scrutinising government policy, giving two specific functions these committees perform and a brief development of each function.

(Total for Question 4 is 5 marks)

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Mark scheme · 2.5 Parliament's Legislative Process and Scrutiny of the Executive: 10-minute Pack

Question 1

One valid function, such as debating the main principles of the Bill and usually holding a vote at the end to decide whether it proceeds	**B1**

Answer: To debate the main principles of the Bill and to hold a vote on whether the Bill should proceed to the committee stage.

Question 2

Identifies the purpose, for example to allow MPs to question the Prime Minister directly on current issues and government actions in a high visibility forum	**B1**
Develops the purpose, for example PMQs promotes direct political accountability, enables opposition to challenge the PM, and signals issues to the media and public	**B1**
Identifies a limitation, for example the short, time-limited format encourages brief answers and theatrical exchanges rather than detailed examination	**B1**
Develops the limitation, for example it prevents thorough evidence-based probing and can prioritise spectacle over detailed policy interrogation	**B1**

Answer: PMQs allows MPs to question the Prime Minister directly, providing high public visibility and immediate political accountability; it enables the opposition to challenge the PM and places issues on the public agenda. A limitation is the short, adversarial format, which encourages brief answers and theatrical exchanges rather than sustained, evidence-based scrutiny, limiting its usefulness for detailed examination of complex policy.

Question 3

One valid mechanism named with a correct principal feature, for example Select Committees, which hold inquiries, take evidence and publish reports	**B1**
A second valid mechanism named with a correct principal feature, for example Prime Minister's Questions, which provide a weekly oral question and answer session with the Prime Minister in the House of Commons	**B1**

Answer: Select Committees, which hold inquiries, take evidence from witnesses and publish reports; Prime Minister's Questions, a weekly oral question and answer session where MPs question the Prime Minister directly.

Question 4

Identifies a first function, for example conducting inquiries and taking evidence from ministers, officials and external experts	**B1**
Develops the first function, for example evidence gathering allows committees to test government claims and expose weaknesses	**B1**
Identifies a second function, for example producing reports with recommendations to which the government must respond	**B1**
Develops the second function, for example reports can shape public debate and press the government to change policy or explain its actions	**B1**
Identifies that select committees have the power to call for persons, papers and records, strengthening their capacity to scrutinise	**B1**

Answer: Departmental select committees conduct inquiries and take formal oral and written evidence from ministers, officials and outside experts, which allows them to test government claims and expose policy weaknesses. They produce reports with recommendations to which the government must respond, and such reports can shape public debate and pressure ministers to change policy or provide fuller explanation. Committees also have the power to call for persons, papers and records, which strengthens their ability to obtain information and scrutinise government action.

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