1.2 Direct versus Representative Democracy and Debates on Reform: Test Pack

EDEXCEL 9PL0 · about 15 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. Short answer questions may be answered in notes or bullet points; for levels-marked questions write in full sentences and construct a developed argument.

1 Define 'direct democracy' in the context of UK political debate about referendums and citizen-initiated votes.

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

2 State two features of the UK government petitions site (e-petitions) that make it a form of participatory democracy, giving the feature and its practical effect.

(Total for Question 2 is 2 marks)

3 Explain two arguments in favour of lowering the voting age to 16 in UK general elections, giving one empirical example or rationale for each argument.

(Total for Question 3 is 4 marks)

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4 Give two specific UK examples of direct democracy mechanisms that have been used since 2000, with one correct date for each, naming the referendum or mechanism and the year it occurred.

(Total for Question 4 is 2 marks)

5 Explain the difference between an initiative and a referendum in the context of direct democracy proposals in the UK national context.

(Total for Question 5 is 3 marks)

6 State two proposed reforms to increase participation in UK politics and give a one sentence rationale for each reform.

(Total for Question 6 is 4 marks)

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Mark scheme · 1.2 Direct versus Representative Democracy and Debates on Reform: Test Pack

Question 1

a concise definition stating that direct democracy involves citizens voting directly on policy or law, rather than electing representatives to decide — **B1**

Answer: Direct democracy is a system in which citizens vote directly on policy decisions or laws, for example by referendums or initiatives, rather than delegating those decisions to elected representatives.

Question 2

one accurate feature, e.g. petitions are open to the public to start and sign online — **B1**

a second accurate feature, e.g. petitions that reach certain thresholds are considered for debate in Parliament — **B1**

Answer: Any two of: members of the public can create and sign petitions online; petitions reaching a specified signature threshold are considered for a government response and may be scheduled for debate in Parliament; the system gives citizens a direct channel for placing issues on the political agenda.

Question 3

identifies argument one, e.g. increased representation of young people and their policy interests — **B1**

development or example, e.g. the 2014 Scottish independence referendum included 16 and 17 year olds and saw high turnout among younger voters in some areas — **B1**

identifies argument two, e.g. promoting lifelong voting habits and political socialisation — **B1**

development or example, e.g. engaging citizens earlier increases the chance they will remain active voters in future elections — **B1**

Answer: Arguments in favour include that lowering the voting age would increase representation of young people and ensure policies affecting them are better reflected, and that including 16 and 17 year olds promotes political socialisation and the development of lifelong voting habits, as seen in debates following the 2014 Scottish independence referendum.

Question 4

one accurate example with correct year, e.g. Scottish independence referendum, 2014 — **B1**

a second accurate example with correct year, e.g. UK EU membership referendum, 2016 — **B1**

Answer: Examples: Scottish independence referendum, 2014; UK EU membership referendum, 2016.

Question 5

identifies that a referendum is a vote called by government or Parliament on a specific question — **B1**

identifies that an initiative is a citizen-led proposal for a vote, often requiring a petition or signatures — **B1**

explains the constitutional consequence, e.g. initiatives are not currently a formal part of UK national law-making and would require legal change to be binding — **B1**

Answer: A referendum is a government or parliamentary decision to hold a public vote on a specific question, whereas an initiative is a process by which citizens trigger a public vote, typically via a petition or signature threshold; the UK does not currently have a national statutory initiative process, so introducing initiatives would require legal and constitutional change.

Question 6

one accurate reform with correct rationale, e.g. compulsory voting to increase turnout and citizen engagement — **B1**

a second accurate reform with correct rationale, e.g. lowering the voting age to 16 to include younger citizens and build lifelong voting habits — **B1**

development of first reform, linking to effect on turnout or legitimacy — **B1**

development of second reform, linking to political socialisation or representation of youth interests — **B1**

Answer: Any two of: compulsory voting, intended to raise turnout and broaden political engagement by making voting a civic duty; lowering the voting age to 16, intended to include younger citizens in decision making and encourage lifelong voting habits; expanded use of e-democracy tools, intended to lower participation costs and reach citizens who do not attend traditional politics.

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