1.12 The SNP, Plaid Cymru and Classifying the UK Party System: 10-minute Pack

EDEXCEL 9PL0 · about 10 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. Short answer questions may be brief but must be clear. For levels-marked questions, write a developed response using accurate political knowledge, examples and precise terminology. The two final questions are levels-marked extended responses. Write full sentences for the two levels-marked questions (the 12-mark source-based and the 30-mark essay).

1 State how many Westminster seats the SNP won at the 2015 UK general election and name the year in the prompt.

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

2 Explain two arguments in favour of describing Scotland as a dominant-party system for a period, citing the 2015 election in your answer.

(Total for Question 2 is 5 marks)

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3 Explain two effects of the SNP's 2015 Westminster landslide on UK-wide politics, naming the 2015 election in the prompt.

(a) Explain one parliamentary effect of the SNP winning 56 of 59 Scottish seats in the 2015 general election. **(2)**

(b) Explain one political or strategic effect of the SNP surge on UK government policy or party strategy after 2015. **(2)**

(Total for Question 3 is 4 marks)

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Mark scheme · 1.12 The SNP, Plaid Cymru and Classifying the UK Party System: 10-minute Pack

Question 1

states '56 seats' and that this was at the 2015 general election cao — **B1**

Answer: The SNP won 56 of the 59 Scottish Westminster seats at the 2015 UK general election.

Question 2

identifies one argument, e.g. SNP dominance in seat share in 2015 showing near-hegemonic control of Scottish Westminster representation — **B1**

develops that argument, e.g. suggests that dominance allowed SNP to set the Scottish agenda and act as a near single-party voice for Scotland — **B1**

identifies a second argument, e.g. sustained electoral success in Scottish Parliament elections and local government as evidence of dominant-party characteristics — **B1**

develops second argument, e.g. sustained control of institutions enables policy continuity and marginalises rivals — **B1**

additional development or example linking back to 2015 and its aftermath — **B1**

Answer: One argument is that the SNP's near-total capture of Scottish Westminster seats in 2015 gave it a dominant parliamentary voice for Scotland, enabling it to shape debates and act as the primary representative of Scottish opinion at Westminster. A second argument is that the SNP's repeated electoral success in Scottish Parliament and local elections shows sustained dominance that marginalises rivals and allows policy continuity, reinforcing the dominant-party character. Both points are supported by 2015 seat outcomes and subsequent electoral performance.

Question 3

(a) identifies an effect, e.g. reduction of Labour representation from Scotland and change to party balance in Westminster — **B1**

(a) development, e.g. this weakened Labour's overall parliamentary strength and altered the geographic base of UK party support — **B1**

(a) Answer: One parliamentary effect was the sharp reduction in Labour MPs from Scotland, which weakened Labour's overall Commons numbers and shifted the geographic base of UK party support, making Westminster politics more dominated by English constituencies.

(b) identifies an effect, e.g. increased salience of Scottish issues or Conservative strategy adjusting to Scottish nationalism — **B1**

(b) development, e.g. UK parties changed campaigning or policy priorities to respond to the loss of Scottish seats — **B1**

(b) Answer: A strategic effect was that UK party leaders and the government placed greater emphasis on policy positions that appealed to English and UK-wide voters, and rival parties adjusted campaigns to try to win back Scottish voters, recognising that the electoral map had changed after the SNP surge.

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