1.12 The SNP, Plaid Cymru and Classifying the UK Party System: Test Pack

EDEXCEL 9PL0 · about 20 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 Define the primary constitutional aim of the Scottish National Party (SNP) as represented in UK politics.

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

2 State one constitutional aim of Plaid Cymru in Welsh politics.

(Total for Question 2 is 1 mark)

3 Explain briefly why the SNP has opposed the renewal or replacement of the UK Trident nuclear deterrent, citing the policy area in the prompt.

(Total for Question 3 is 2 marks)

4 State two policy positions commonly associated with the SNP's social democratic orientation, excluding constitutional questions.

(Total for Question 4 is 2 marks)

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5 Identify and explain two reasons why first-past-the-post (FPTP) electoral mechanics make it difficult to classify the UK as a stable multi-party system, together with one qualification to this argument, naming FPTP in the prompt.

(Total for Question 5 is 6 marks)

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6 Explain two ways in which Plaid Cymru has influenced devolved politics in Wales, naming Wales and devolution in the prompt.

(a) Explain one way Plaid Cymru has influenced Welsh Government policy since devolution. **(3)**

(b) Explain one way Plaid Cymru has affected the stance of UK parties on Welsh issues at Westminster. **(3)**

(Total for Question 6 is 6 marks)

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

Question 1

one accurate definition, for example: 'to achieve Scottish independence, establishing Scotland as a sovereign state separate from the United Kingdom' cao **B1**

Answer: The SNP's primary constitutional aim is Scottish independence, to make Scotland an independent sovereign state separate from the United Kingdom.

Question 2

one accurate aim, e.g. greater devolution for Wales or Welsh self-government, or advocating Welsh national interests cao **B1**

Answer: Plaid Cymru aims for greater Welsh devolution and the promotion of Welsh national interests, including the long-term goal of greater self-government for Wales.

Question 3

identifies a relevant reason, e.g. opposition on moral, fiscal or sovereignty grounds **B1**

development, e.g. argues Trident renewal diverts spending from public services in Scotland and is inconsistent with Scottish political priorities **B1**

Answer: The SNP opposes Trident renewal on moral and political grounds, arguing nuclear weapons are unacceptable, and on fiscal and policy-priority grounds, claiming renewal diverts public money from services in Scotland and conflicts with the SNP's policy priorities.

Question 4

one accurate non-constitutional policy position, e.g. support for a strong public health service like the NHS; progressive taxation or redistributive spending; expanded public services or support for welfare provision; social justice, workers rights or public-sector investment **B1**

a second, distinct accurate non-constitutional policy position (any from the list above); no further mark for development, for repeating the same policy in other words, or for a constitutional position such as independence **B1**

Answer: Examples include support for a well-funded, publicly delivered NHS; progressive taxation and redistributive public spending; support for welfare measures and social justice policies; and pro-public-sector investment and workers rights. Any two distinct, accurate policies earn full marks.

Question 5

identifies reason one, e.g. FPTP favours larger parties and penalises smaller or evenly spread parties **B1**

explains effect, e.g. national vote shares for smaller parties may not translate into seats, concealing multi-party sentiment **B1**

identifies reason two, e.g. FPTP produces regional concentration effects where concentrated parties win many seats while dispersed parties win few **B1**

explains effect, e.g. regional parties like SNP convert concentrated support into many seats, complicating national classification **B1**

identifies a qualification, e.g. tactical voting and two-party incentives under FPTP reduce visible multi-party competition **B1**

explains qualification, e.g. tactical voting can suppress smaller parties' performance in seats despite broader support **B1**

Answer: FPTP favours larger parties and penalises smaller parties whose support is broadly spread, meaning that significant national vote shares for smaller parties may not yield seats and so hide multi-party support. FPTP also amplifies regional concentration, allowing regionally concentrated parties like the SNP to win many seats while nationally dispersed parties win few, which complicates whether the UK appears multi-party at national level. Additionally, tactical voting under FPTP encourages a two-party dynamic in many constituencies, reducing visible multi-party competition.

Question 6

(a) identifies influence, e.g. policy adoption on Welsh language promotion or education **B1**

(a) development, e.g. Plaid pressure led to legislation or programmes promoting Welsh language and culture **B1**

(a) further development or example, e.g. coalition or cooperation arrangements where Plaid shaped government priorities **B1**

(a) Answer: Plaid Cymru has shaped Welsh Government priorities on issues like Welsh language promotion and education policy, with party pressure contributing to legislation and programmes that promote the Welsh language and culture; in periods of coalition or cooperation Plaid has been able to see its policy priorities implemented.

(b) identifies effect, e.g. encouraging other UK parties to adopt clearer positions on Welsh devolution or regional funding **B1**

(b) development, e.g. competition for Welsh voters led to policy concessions on devolution, funding or public services **B1**

(b) further development or example, e.g. Plaid's presence forces UK parties to address Welsh priorities in manifestos **B1**

(b) Answer: Plaid Cymru's presence has pressured UK-wide parties to take clearer positions on Welsh devolution, regional funding and public services; competition for Welsh voters has led to policy concessions and manifesto commitments tailored to Welsh priorities.

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