1.4 Pressure Groups, Think Tanks and Lobbyists in UK Politics: 30-minute Pack

EDEXCEL 9PL0 · about 30 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. Short answer questions may be brief but must be accurate. Time guidance: 30 minutes for the whole pack.

1 Explain how direct action by an outsider group such as Extinction Rebellion might aim to influence government or public opinion. Give one concrete example of a tactic and its intended effect.

(Total for Question 1 is 4 marks)

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2 Using the source, evaluate the claim that direct action is an effective method for outsider groups to change government policy.

(Total for Question 2 is 30 marks)

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Mark scheme · 1.4 Pressure Groups, Think Tanks and Lobbyists in UK Politics: 30-minute Pack

Question 1

identifies direct action as disruptive public activity intended to draw attention and create pressure	**B1**
gives one concrete tactic, e.g. road blockades, die-ins, or disruption of transport hubs	**B1**
explains intended effect on public or government, e.g. forcing media coverage, raising urgency, or increasing political cost of inaction	**B1**
brief development or caution, e.g. noting such tactics can provoke public hostility as well as attention	**B1**

Answer: Direct action is disruptive public activity designed to attract attention and create pressure; for example Extinction Rebellion has used road blockades in city centres to force sustained media coverage and create a sense of urgency that raises the political cost of inaction, although such tactics can also generate public hostility that undermines sympathy for the cause.

Question 2

Level 0 No relevant material.	**0**
Level 1 Basic use of the extracts with limited development; paraphrase rather than analysis; little or no contextual knowledge; no sustained judgement.	**1-6**
Level 2 Accurate use of the extracts with some development; limited integration of contextual knowledge about outsider groups or examples; begins to weigh effectiveness but judgement is not well supported.	**7-12**
Level 3 Clear analysis using both extracts and relevant contextual knowledge; evaluates how direct action can produce media attention and local concessions, and how it can provoke public backlash; partly substantiated judgement.	**13-18**
Level 4 Detailed evaluation using both extracts and wide contextual knowledge, exploring conditions under which direct action succeeds or fails (timing, clarity of demands, combination with litigation or lobbying), with a reasoned and supported judgement on effectiveness.	**19-24**
Level 5 Sophisticated evaluation that integrates both extracts with extensive, well-selected contextual evidence and analysis, considers counterarguments and long-term effects on democracy and legitimacy, and reaches a balanced, well-substantiated conclusion on the overall effectiveness of direct action for outsider groups.	**25-30**

Indicative content:

- Use of Extract A: direct action generates media coverage and can force local institutions to respond, but may not translate to national policy change and can reduce public sympathy if too disruptive.
- Use of Extract B: direct action can change politicians cost-benefit calculations, especially when timed around votes or events, and is more effective when combined with clear demands and legal strategies.
- Contextual knowledge: examples include Extinction Rebellion causing local council briefings and delays to transport but limited national legislative change; the 2011 London student protests secured media attention but limited policy reversal on fees.
- Contextual knowledge: success where direct action combined with other tactics, for example Stonewall combining campaigning with litigation and lobbying to achieve policy shifts on equalities over time.
- Evaluation of factors: timing, clarity of demands, public sympathy, media framing, capacity to sustain pressure, legal avenues and the political salience of the issue influence effectiveness.
- Counterargument: direct action can backfire by alienating the public or prompting legal restrictions, reducing political space for the group's demands, as Extract A suggests.
- Conclusion possibilities: direct action is sometimes effective in shifting local policy and agenda setting and can be effective when integrated into a broader strategy, but on its own it rarely guarantees major national policy change and risks reputational costs.

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