1.8 Short-Term Factors and the 2019 General Election Case Study

Total Marks

EDEXCEL 9PL0 · about 60 minutes · Write-in edition

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. Short answers may be bullet points unless full sentences are requested. For levels-marked questions write a developed, structured response and use precise political terminology. This pack focuses on short-term influences on voting in the 2019 general election, including leadership images, the governing party record, campaign events and the dominant issue of Brexit, plus turnout variation by constituency, age and region.

1 State one way in which party leader image can influence voter choice during a general election, with reference to 2019.

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

2 Explain briefly how a single dominant issue can shape electoral outcomes, using Brexit in the 2019 election as the example.

(Total for Question 2 is 2 marks)

3 Explain two ways campaign organisation and targeting can produce short-term changes in seat outcomes, with a 2019 example for each way.

(Total for Question 3 is 6 marks)

4 Evaluate the reasons for the outcome of the 2019 general election, focusing on short-term and campaign factors such as leadership images, the governing party record, the campaign itself and the single dominant issue of Brexit. Reach a reasoned judgement on which short-term factor was most important.

(Total for Question 4 is 30 marks)

5 Explain two ways turnout varied in the 2019 general election, by age and by region, giving one statistic or fact for each variation.

(Total for Question 5 is 4 marks)

6 Explain how the Conservative campaign slogan and central message in 2019 constituted a short-term strategic advantage, and give one example of its implementation.

(Total for Question 6 is 5 marks)

7 Using the following two brief extracts about the 2019 campaign, evaluate the extent to which leader image mattered to the election result. Extract A, from a campaign analysis published in December 2019: 'Voters repeatedly cited the ability of the Conservative leader to present a simple solution to Brexit as decisive in persuading previously undecided leave voters.' Extract B, from a poll of marginal-seat voters: 'While many disliked party records, our respondents said the leader was the tiebreaker in deciding between parties when Brexit was the immediate choice.'

(Total for Question 7 is 12 marks)

Mark scheme · 1.8 Short-Term Factors and the 2019 General Election Case Study

Question 1

one valid effect, e.g. leaders perceived as decisive can attract swing voters, as was claimed for Boris Johnson in 2019	**B1**

Answer: A leader seen as decisive and able to 'get Brexit done' could win swing voters, as argued for Boris Johnson in 2019.

Question 2

explains that a single dominant issue focuses voters' priorities and can override other considerations	**B1**
applies this to 2019 by noting Brexit mobilised leave and remain voters and reshaped traditional party loyalties	**B1**

Answer: A single dominant issue concentrates voters on one priority which can override long-term loyalties; in 2019 Brexit mobilised leave voters and encouraged tactical voting that reshaped traditional party support across many constituencies.

Question 3

identifies first way, e.g. microtargeting swing voters with leaflets and social media	**B1**
develops with 2019 example, e.g. Conservatives targeted Red Wall marginals with tailored messages on Brexit and public spending	**B1**
identifies second way, e.g. concentrating ground campaign resources to increase turnout among favourable demographics	**B1**
develops with 2019 example, e.g. local Conservative organisers and volunteers focused door-to-door canvassing in key northern marginals to convert leave-leaning Labour voters	**B1**
explains short-term mechanism, e.g. shifting small numbers in marginals can change seat outcomes	**B1**
ties mechanism to 2019 consequence, e.g. these tactics helped several seat-level turnovers from Labour to Conservative	**B1**

Answer: Microtargeting swing voters with tailored leaflets and social media messages, as Conservative campaign teams did in Red Wall marginals stressing Brexit delivery and local priorities; and concentrating ground campaign resources to boost turnout among favourable groups, such as intensive door-to-door canvassing by Conservative volunteers in northern marginals, both short-term tactics that shifted small voter numbers in decisive seats in 2019.

Question 4

Level 0 No relevant content.	**0**
Level 1 Basic and generalised knowledge of the 2019 election with little developed analysis. Limited or no evaluation, and judgement, is offered.	**1-7**
Level 2 Clear and accurate knowledge of several short-term factors with developed analysis. Evaluation is present but may be uneven, descriptive or one-sided; judgement is tentative.	**8-15**
Level 3 Detailed and accurate knowledge used to construct a sustained analysis of the interaction between short-term factors, with balanced evaluation and a reasoned judgement supported by evidence and examples from 2019.	**16-23**
Level 4 Sophisticated, wide-ranging and precise knowledge integrated into a coherent, incisive evaluation that compares leadership image, party record, campaign strategy and issue salience. The response weighs competing explanations, shows awareness of limits and local variation, and reaches a clear, well-substantiated judgement on the most important short-term cause.	**24-30**

Indicative content:

- Leadership image: argument that Boris Johnson's presentation as decisive and focused on delivering Brexit attracted undecided and leave-leaning voters; examples of polling showing a late lead in leader approval in key segments and the centrality of leader messaging in campaign adverts and broadcasts.
- Governing party record: argument that the Conservative record on public services, austerity legacies and previous coalition compromises created vulnerabilities, but that in 2019 the record was less salient than Brexit; counter-evidence that concerns about the NHS and public services influenced some voters and prevented even larger Conservative swings in some remain-leaning areas.
- Campaign itself: the Conservatives' clear, repeated slogan and targeted microcampaigning in former Labour leave seats; effective ground operation and resource allocation in marginals; the role of tactical voting and the organisation of local campaigns in shifting small numbers of voters in decisive seats.
- Single dominant issue of Brexit: argument that Brexit's salience focused voters on competence and delivery, overriding long-term attachments and causing realignment in many constituencies; evidence from high leave-vote seats that switched to Conservative in December 2019.
- Interactions: leader image mattered because it was judged through the prism of Brexit competence; campaign organisation amplified the leader message in key marginals; the governing party record was downplayed where Brexit dominated voting priorities but mattered in some local contexts.
- Limits and local variation: some remain-leaning constituencies resisted national trends; turnout differences by age and region limited potential gains for remain-leaning challengers; the impact of tactical voting varied across seats and sometimes produced unintended effects.
- Evaluation of relative importance: reasoned lines might conclude Brexit salience was the primary short-term cause, with leader image the crucial proximate mechanism that converted Brexit preference into Conservative votes, while campaign organisation and tactical voting were important accelerants. Alternatively, a well-evidenced response might place campaign targeting as the decisive short-term enabler of conversion in marginals.
- Judgement: the best answers will weigh these strands, cite precise examples of seat changes and turnout patterns, and justify why one short-term factor is judged most consequential across the election as a whole, while acknowledging variation and limits.

Question 5

identifies turnout variation by age, e.g. lower turnout among younger voters compared with older voters	**B1**
provides a supporting fact or statistic for age, e.g. surveys showed turnout among 18-24s was notably below national average in 2019	**B1**
identifies turnout variation by region, e.g. higher turnout in some English shire seats compared with lower turnout in parts of London or Scotland	**B1**
provides a supporting fact or statistic for region, e.g. the Conservatives gained many former Labour leave-voting seats in northern England where turnout remained robust	**B1**

Answer: Turnout varied by age, with younger voters (18 to 24) showing lower turnout than older groups in 2019, reducing the potential boost for remain-leaning parties. Regionally, turnout remained relatively high in many English midland and northern leave-leaning constituencies where the Conservatives gained seats, while turnout was lower in some urban remain-leaning wards, altering the geographic distribution of votes.

Question 6

identifies the central message, e.g. 'Get Brexit done' or equivalent	**B1**
explains why this was a short-term advantage, e.g. it simplified a complex issue and appealed to undecided leave voters	**B1**
identifies one implementation example, e.g. targeted leaflets promising delivery, or repeated leader-line in broadcasts	**B1**
explains how the implementation reinforced the advantage, e.g. clarity on leaflets and social media persuaded marginal voters	**B1**
consequence, e.g. contributed to shifts in marginal seats and to perceptions of Conservatives as the party that could resolve Brexit	**B1**

Answer: The Conservatives' central message to 'get Brexit done' simplified a divisive issue into a clear, decisive pledge that appealed to leave and undecided voters; it was implemented through repeated leader messaging in TV appearances and targeted leaflets promising delivery, which reinforced the impression the party would resolve the deadlock and helped swing marginal seats.

Question 7

Level 0 No relevant material.	**0**
Level 1 Basic use of the extracts, with simple assertions that leader image mattered or did not matter, and little development or contextual knowledge.	**1-3**
Level 2 Clear use of the extracts combined with some relevant factual knowledge of the 2019 campaign; evaluation is present but not well developed or one-sided.	**4-6**
Level 3 Developed use of both extracts with accurate, specific knowledge of the campaign; evaluation weighs how leader image interacted with other short-term factors and begins to reach a supported conclusion.	**7-9**
Level 4 Sophisticated, balanced evaluation driven by the extracts, integrated with precise factual evidence from the 2019 campaign and clear judgement on the extent to which leader image decided the result, including its limits relative to issue salience and local factors.	**10-12**

Indicative content:

- Extract A and B both claim leader image was decisive for undecided or marginal voters because the Conservative leader offered a clear solution to Brexit, making the leader a focus for voters seeking resolution.
- Use of contemporary evidence: opinion polls in late 2019 showed increased personal approval ratings for the Conservative leader relative to other party leaders among certain voter segments, and press coverage framed the election as a choice of leadership as much as of party record.
- Counterpoint: leader image worked through the dominant issue of Brexit, meaning it was less about personality per se and more about whether the leader was trusted to deliver the Brexit outcome voters wanted; thus leader image may have mattered because it was tied to issue competence.
- Local variation: in some constituencies local issues or candidate reputation still mattered and muted the leader effect; in a number of remain-leaning marginals the leader effect was insufficient to overturn local remain preferences.
- Limits and caution: extracts rely on self-reported voter reasons which can overstate leader influence; other short-term factors such as clear party messages, tactical voting and the Conservative campaign ground operation also played important roles.
- Judgement: a balanced evaluation could conclude leader image was an important short-term determinant in many key marginals because it crystallised the Brexit choice, but it was not the sole cause of the Conservative victory and its effect varied by constituency and voter group.