5.13 Comparative US/UK Executives: The President and the Prime Minister: Test Pack

EDEXCEL 9PL0 · about 15 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. Short answer questions may be brief; extended answers and levels-marked responses should use full sentences and relevant comparative detail. The final question is a 30-mark evaluative essay. Total time suggested 15 minutes.

1 Name the constitutional mechanism, used in the United States, by which the President can be removed from office following charges brought by the House of Representatives and trial by the Senate.

(Total for Question 1 is 1 mark)

2 State the UK mechanism that can force the resignation of a Prime Minister by showing they no longer have the confidence of the House of Commons.

(Total for Question 2 is 1 mark)

3 State two consequences, as of the 2024 political context, of the US President having a fixed four-year term compared with the UK Prime Minister's tenure being dependent on Commons support.

(Total for Question 3 is 2 marks)

4 Explain briefly how the US separation of powers affects the President's ability to enact major legislation compared with a UK Prime Minister commanding a large Commons majority.

(Total for Question 4 is 2 marks)

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5 Identify and explain two formal constraints on the US President's conduct of foreign policy or military action.

(Total for Question 5 is 3 marks)

6 Explain how the threat of removal by a party leadership contest or no confidence motion can constrain a UK Prime Minister's policy choices, giving one concrete example from the last two decades.

(Total for Question 6 is 6 marks)

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Mark scheme · 5.13 Comparative US/UK Executives: The President and the Prime Minister: Test Pack

Question 1

Impeachment by the House of Representatives followed by conviction in the Senate **B1**

Answer: Impeachment by the House of Representatives and conviction by the Senate.

Question 2

A vote of no confidence in the House of Commons **B1**

Answer: A vote of no confidence in the House of Commons.

Question 3

one correct consequence, e.g. Presidents cannot be easily removed mid-term except by impeachment **B1**

a second correct consequence, e.g. Prime Ministers must maintain party and Commons support to remain in office **B1**

Answer: Any two of: Presidents serve a fixed four-year term and so are secure from routine removal mid-term except by impeachment; Prime Ministers depend on maintaining party and Commons support and can be removed by a vote of no confidence or party leadership change.

Question 4

identifies that the US President must secure congressional majorities, so opposition control of one or both chambers can block legislation **B1**

identifies that a UK Prime Minister with a large Commons majority can usually pass government legislation through a whipped majority more easily **B1**

Answer: Because of separation of powers the US President needs cooperation from both houses of Congress to pass major bills, so opposition control can block legislation; a UK Prime Minister with a large Commons majority normally relies on a whipped party vote and so can usually enact the government programme more readily.

Question 5

identifies one constraint, e.g. Congress power to declare war and control of military funding **B1**

explains that Congress can refuse to authorise use of force or cut funding, limiting presidential action **B1**

identifies a second constraint, e.g. Senate advice and consent to treaties, requiring two-thirds of senators present and distinct from presidential ratification, and confirmation of senior foreign policy appointments **B1**

Answer: Any two of: Congress can declare war and controls military funding, so it can refuse authorisation or funding for prolonged operations; the Senate gives advice and consent to treaties, requiring two-thirds of senators present and remaining distinct from presidential ratification, and confirms senior diplomatic and defence appointments, limiting unilateral presidential decisions in these areas.

Question 6

identifies the mechanisms: party leadership challenge and vote of no confidence **B1**

explains that reliance on party support forces the PM to consider party factions and backbench opinion before implementing controversial policies **B1**

gives one accurate example, correctly identified **B1**

develops the example to show constraint on policy choices **B1**

offers a further development, e.g. consequence for timing or content of policy **B1**

links back to the general point about constraint on the Prime Minister **B1**

Answer: Party leadership challenges and the formal vote of no confidence mean a Prime Minister must retain the support of their parliamentary party and backbenchers; for example, Theresa May faced intense Conservative backbench pressure over her Brexit Withdrawal Agreement in 2018-2019, survived a confidence vote in December 2018 but was weakened and forced to delay and modify policy, illustrating how fear of losing leadership can constrain choices on timing and content of major policies.

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