5.15 Comparative US/UK Democracy and Participation: Test Pack

EDEXCEL 9PL0 · about 20 minutes

Total Marks

Name: _____ Date: ____ / ____ / _____

Answer ALL questions. Short answer questions may be brief but should use full sentences where asked. The two extended, levels-marked questions (the 12-mark source-based and the 30-mark essay) require well-structured, developed responses using accurate comparative knowledge, examples and evaluation.

1 Define the US Electoral College as an institution used to elect the President of the United States, naming its total number of electors as of 2024.

(Total for Question 1 is 2 marks)

2 State two features that distinguish US primary/caucus candidate selection from the UK closed party selection processes for general election candidates.

(Total for Question 2 is 2 marks)

3 State two reforms that have been proposed to address participation problems in the US, with a one sentence explanation of how each reform would increase participation. Explain why using both reforms could address a wider range of participation problems.

(Total for Question 3 is 5 marks)

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4 Explain one way in which the UK electoral system reduces administrative barriers to voter participation, referring to registration or turnout measures used in Great Britain as of 2024.

(Total for Question 4 is 3 marks)

5 Explain two ways in which UK First Past the Post (FPTP) shapes party strategy in general elections, compared with the US presidential system.

(Total for Question 5 is 6 marks)

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Mark scheme · 5.15 Comparative US/UK Democracy and Participation: Test Pack

Question 1

Defines the Electoral College as the body of electors who formally elect the US President and Vice President	**B1**
gives the correct total number of electors, 538, as of 2024	**B1**

Answer: The Electoral College is the constitutional body of electors who formally elect the US President and Vice President. In 2024 it had 538 electors: 435 allocated by representation in the House, 100 by the two Senate seats for each state, and 3 for Washington DC.

Question 2

one accurate distinguishing feature, e.g. public primaries/caucuses involve voters or party members across states, rather than local party panels	**B1**
a second accurate distinguishing feature, e.g. the US process is prolonged and nationalised across many states, whereas UK selection is typically managed by local party organisations or central party shortlists	**B1**

Answer: Examples: US primaries and caucuses often involve a formal public vote by party members or registered voters across many states in a prolonged national process; UK closed selection typically involves a local party panel or centrally administered shortlist where only party members or approved selectors choose the candidate.

Question 3

one accurate reform, e.g. automatic or same-day registration	**B1**
brief explanation of effect, e.g. would reduce registration friction and encourage turnout	**B1**
a second accurate reform, e.g. public financing or small donor matching	**B1**
brief explanation of effect, e.g. would reduce dependence on big donors and increase small donor engagement	**B1**
explains why the two reforms together address different participation barriers, e.g. registration barriers to voting and financial barriers to political engagement	**B1**

Answer: Examples: automatic or same-day registration could reduce bureaucratic barriers and make voting easier, while public financing or small donor matching could reduce candidates' reliance on large donors and encourage broader small donor participation. Together, these reforms could address both administrative barriers to voting and financial barriers to political engagement, reaching people deterred for different reasons.

Question 4

identifies one UK measure, e.g. online registration	**B1**
develops explanation, e.g. an online application avoids completing and posting a paper form, reducing administrative effort	**B1**
links to effect on participation, e.g. making registration easier tends to support higher turnout among groups less likely to register	**B1**

Answer: In Great Britain in 2024, online registration let eligible citizens submit an application without completing and posting a paper form. This reduced the administrative effort involved in registering and could support participation among people deterred by paperwork. Citizens still had to apply.

Question 5

identifies one effect, e.g. focus on marginal constituencies	**B1**
develops that effect, e.g. resources and local campaigning concentrated in marginals where small swings decide seats	**B1**
identifies a second effect, e.g. tactical voting concerns shape party positioning	**B1**
develops that effect, e.g. parties may moderate policy to attract swing voters in key seats and voters may vote tactically to defeat a less preferred candidate	**B1**
provides comparative link to US, e.g. FPTP localised campaigns differ from US state-level Electoral College focus	**B1**
further development or example, e.g. UK national leaders still campaign nationally but local seat battles are decisive	**B1**

Answer: Under FPTP parties concentrate resources on marginal constituencies where small swings can change the seat result, leading to intense local campaigning; they also face tactical voting pressures and may moderate positions to attract key swing voters in those seats. This differs from the US, where campaign focus is state-level for the Electoral College and nationalised primaries shape candidate selection.

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