5.9 US Elections: The Electoral College, Primaries and Caucuses: 10-minute Pack

EDEXCEL 9PL0 · about 10 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 clear evaluation where required. The final two questions are source-based and essay tasks and require full-sentence answers.

1 State what is meant by an open primary, a closed primary and a caucus in US nomination contests.

(Total for Question 1 is 3 marks)

2 Explain why turnout is generally lower in primaries and caucuses than in general elections in the US electoral process.

(Total for Question 2 is 6 marks)

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Mark scheme · 5.9 US Elections: The Electoral College, Primaries and Caucuses: 10-minute Pack

Question 1

States what an open primary is, allowing any registered voter to participate regardless of party	**B1**
States what a closed primary is, limited to voters registered with the party holding the primary	**B1**
States what a caucus is, a local meeting of party members to select delegates often involving discussion and rounds of voting	**B1**

Answer: An open primary allows any registered voter to take part regardless of party; a closed primary restricts participation to voters registered with that party; a caucus is a local meeting of party members who discuss and select delegates through in-person rounds of voting.

Question 2

Level 0 No relevant content.	**0**
Level 1 Basic explanation with limited use of examples or causal detail.	**1-3**
Level 2 Clear, developed explanation of why turnout is generally lower in primaries and caucuses than in general elections, with examples or consequences.	**4-6**

Indicative content:

- Primary and caucus turnout tends to be lower because they attract more partisan or engaged voters, occur at different times of year with less publicity, and can impose higher participation costs, especially for caucuses that require time and presence.
- General elections attract broader interest, are more heavily covered, involve decisions for many offices including the presidency or midterms, and usually have simpler, more accessible voting methods such as early voting and widespread polling stations.
- Consequences include nominees selected by a narrower slice of the electorate, which can affect candidate positioning and general election competitiveness.

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