



Victorian Certificate of Education 2012

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STUDENT NUMBER

Figures

Words

Letter

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AUSTRALIAN POLITICS

Written examination

Friday 16 November 2012

Reading time: 3.00 pm to 3.15 pm (15 minutes)

Writing time: 3.15 pm to 5.15 pm (2 hours)

QUESTION AND ANSWER BOOK

Structure of book

<i>Section</i>	<i>Number of questions</i>	<i>Number of questions to be answered</i>	<i>Number of marks</i>
A	4	4	60
B	4	1	20
			Total 80

- Students are permitted to bring into the examination room: pens, pencils, highlighters, erasers, sharpeners and rulers.
- Students are NOT permitted to bring into the examination room: blank sheets of paper and/or white out liquid/tape.
- No calculator is allowed in this examination.

Materials supplied

- Question and answer book of 16 pages.
- Additional space is available at the end of the book if you need extra paper to complete an answer.

Instructions

- Write your **student number** in the space provided above on this page.
- All written responses must be in English.

Students are NOT permitted to bring mobile phones and/or any other unauthorised electronic devices into the examination room.

SECTION A

Instructions for Section A
Answer **all** questions in the spaces provided.

Australian democracy

Question 1

Critics say that compulsory voting is undemocratic, that it illustrates a tendency for over-government, that it is unfair for voters who have no preference between the parties, that it has made life easier for the parties than it should be, that it causes parties to ignore their safe electorates, and that it forces to the polling booth those whose views are not worth having and whose votes tend to increase the informal tally. To those concerned that the abolition of compulsory voting would see a drop in turnout, the critics point to what they describe as ‘healthy’ turnouts in other democracies which have voluntary voting systems.

Source: Scott Bennett, extract from ‘Compulsory voting in Australian national elections’, Research Brief No. 6, 2005–2006, Parliamentary Library, Parliament of Australia

- a. What is meant by the term ‘compulsory voting’, as it is used in Australian politics?

2 marks

- b. Outline **two** ways in which compulsory voting might be considered undemocratic.

4 marks

Australian democracy in perspective

Question 2

The Australian political system is in some ways democratic, and in some ways not. The relationship between Prime Minister, Parliament and electorate seems to me the most democratic part of the system. The undemocratic features include bicameralism, federalism, monarchy, and some others. In calling certain features undemocratic I don't necessarily mean they're bad . . . My own view is that democracy (in the sense of deciding by majority vote) is not an absolute or basic political value. There is no guarantee that democratic decision making will produce justice for racial, linguistic, religious and other minorities, or that it will produce just and wise decisions about relations with other nations (e.g. on war, trading policies), or about environmental questions and other matters affecting the interests of future generations.

Source: John Kilcullen, extract from 'Democracy in Australia', © 1995, 2000, www.mq.edu.au

- a. Identify one democratic and one undemocratic feature of the Australian political system referred to by John Kilcullen.

2 marks

- b. Explain Kilcullen's view that democracy is 'not an absolute or basic political value'.

3 marks

Domestic policy

Question 3

Due to copyright restriction,
this material is not supplied.

Source: Phillip Hudson, 'Senate votes to pass carbon tax by 36 votes to 32', *Herald Sun*, 8 November 2011

- a. In relation to Australian politics, what is meant by the term 'the Coalition'?

2 marks

- b. Explain the significance of the Greens' votes in the passage of this legislation.

3 marks

- c. Describe **two** key factors (other than what is discussed in the extract above by Phillip Hudson) that can influence the formulation of Australian domestic policy.

4 marks

Foreign policy

Question 4

The business of Australian foreign policy is to advance Australia’s national interests – and to do so in a manner consistent with Australian values . . .

. . . the business of Australian foreign policy is to make a difference in shaping the international events that in turn shape our nation’s future.

This, in essence, is the difference between a passive and an active Australian foreign policy.

. . . throughout our federated history, we have been anxious to carve out¹ a future for our nation in what has often been an uncertain and volatile part of the world . . .

Because to maintain our territorial integrity, preserve our political sovereignty and to advance our national economic interest was not, and is not, an easy thing.

Source: Kevin Rudd, extract from the speech, ‘Australia’s foreign policy priorities and our candidature for the UN Security Council’, 1 June 2011

¹**to carve out** – to create or to make

a. What is meant by ‘Australia’s national interests’?

2 marks

b. Describe **two** examples in which recent Australian foreign policy has been used to ‘make a difference in shaping the international events that in turn shape our nation’s future’.

4 marks

SECTION B – Essay questions**Instructions for Section B**

Answer **one** of the following four questions in the space provided.

Question 1

‘Despite some recent reforms, the Australian Parliament fails to operate effectively.’

To what extent do you agree?

OR

Question 2

‘The electoral and voting methods used in Australia are not as democratic as those used in other political systems.’

To what extent do you agree? This question should be answered with reference to one other political system that you have studied this year.

OR

Question 3

‘The formulation of domestic policy is relatively easy. However, the successful implementation of domestic policy is far more difficult.’

To what extent do you agree?

OR

Question 4

‘Maintaining national security is the most important objective of Australian foreign policy.’

To what extent do you agree?

20 marks

