

# Making Synoptic Links

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**AQA A LEVEL POLITICS**

# What is synoptic assessment?

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- Synoptic assessment requires students to work across different parts of a qualification and to show their accumulated knowledge and understanding of a topic or subject area.
- Synoptic assessment enables students to show their ability to combine their skills, knowledge and understanding with breadth and depth of the subject.
- Not making synoptic links in your answers can limit the number of marks you are able to achieve.

# AS Paper (UK government & politics)

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- This paper assesses synoptic links in the 25 mark essay questions, which require you to draw on material from across the range of your study of politics. Marks are limited to 20/25 without synoptic links.

In your answer you should draw on material from across the whole range of your course of study in politics.

**Either**

**0 4**

'A prime minister's power to hire and fire government members is unlimited.' Analyse and evaluate this statement.

**[25 marks]**

**Or**

**0 5**

'There is a strong case for Britain retaining its uncodified constitution.' Analyse and evaluate this statement.

**[25 marks]**

# AS Paper (UK Government & Politics)

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- Within your answer you should cross-reference different parts of politics, drawing together ideas of UK politics and UK government.
- **'Cabinet is no longer the main decision-making body in the UK.'** Analyse and evaluate this statement.
  - Structure of the Executive: the government stretches further than the cabinet, with ministers that don't attend the Cabinet still having a huge say over decisions.
  - Influence of the Media: the media can influence what and how people see the work of the government, meaning that important decisions can be influenced by the media and how they portray it.
  - Separation of Powers: the judiciary is (in theory) a neutral and independent branch of government, but can still influence government decisions, such as the 2019 ruling that the prorogation of parliament was unlawful.

# A-Level Paper 1 (UK government & politics)

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- This paper assesses synoptic links in the 25 mark essay questions, which require you to draw on material from across the range of your study of politics. Marks are limited to 20/25 without synoptic links.

In your answer you should draw on material from across the whole range of your course of study in Politics.

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**Either**

**5**

'There are many factors that can give the prime minister power over cabinet colleagues.'  
Analyse and evaluate this statement.

**[25 marks]**

**Or**

**6**

'Despite their weaknesses select committees play an increasingly central role in British Politics.' Analyse and evaluate this statement.

**[25 marks]**

# A-Level Paper 1 (UK government & politics)

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- Within your answer you should cross-reference your study of all aspects of politics, including UK government and politics, US government and politics and political ideas.
- **'The Executive's control over Parliament has reduced in recent years.'** Analyse and evaluate this statement.
  - the voting system for Westminster elections means that minority governments are very rare, meaning that the Executive is more likely to hold absolute control. (link to Voting Systems)
  - Increasing scrutiny of the Executive by Parliament can be an example of 'limited government' as written by John Locke. (link to Liberalism)
  - The way in which the Executive and Parliament interact has remained mostly the same over the years, due in part to the usual majority government that is elected, which reflects traditional values of society as written by Edmund Burke. (link to Conservatism)

# A-Level Paper 2 (US government & politics)

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- This paper assesses synopticity in Section A when answering a question on comparative theory. When using rational, cultural or structural theory, make sure to use relevant examples for both US and UK government and politics.

**3**

Explain and analyse three ways that structural theory could be used to study executive/legislative relations in the UK and US.

**[9 marks]**

# A-Level Paper 2 (US government & politics)

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- For Section C (the 25-mark essays), direct synoptic links will need to be made when comparing aspects of UK and US government and politics.
- **'The constitutional power of the Prime Minister exceeds the power of the President.'**  
**Analyse and evaluate this statement.**
  - Primus inter pares for the UK Prime Minister and Article II of the Constitution for the US President.
  - 5 year terms for the UK Prime Minister and 4 year terms for the US President.
  - Parliamentary sovereignty over the UK Prime Minister and checks and balances over the US President.



# A-Level Paper 3 (Political ideas)

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- This paper assesses synopticity when answering questions on non-core political ideas. Without synoptic links you will be limited to 20/25 marks.

Answer the question set on **one** of the following ideologies  
In your answer you should draw on material from across the whole range of your course of study in Politics.

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## Feminism

0 5

With reference to the feminist thinkers that you have studied, analyse and evaluate the changing nature of feminism.

[25 marks]

## Nationalism

0 6

'Nationalism has an anti-character; it is defined by what it opposes.' Analyse and evaluate this statement with reference to the nationalist thinkers that you have studied.

[25 marks]

# A-Level Paper 3 (Political ideas)

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- When answering Question 2, you should refer to both Realism and Liberalism (if relevant) and any other relevant ideologies from Paper 1 (Conservatism, Liberalism and Socialism).
- **'Nationalism supports self-determination for all.' Analyse and evaluate this statement with reference to the nationalist thinkers that you have studied.**
  - Taking the liberal view of freedom, a nation is free to define itself in accordance with self-determination. John Stuart Mill described liberty as more than a natural law. ([Link to liberalism](#))
  - The core ideas of democracy include the consent of the citizens, meaning that a state is only as legitimate as its population make it. ([Link to UK politics](#))

# Your Turn!

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**Write down any synoptic links to the following Paper 1 questions:**

- 'The EU has succeeded in achieving its aims.' Analyse & evaluate this statement.
- 'There should be more devolution in England.' Analyse & evaluate this statement.

**Write down any synoptic links to the following Paper 2 questions:**

- 'There are more similarities than differences between federalism and devolution.' Analyse & evaluate this statement.
- 'Civil rights are more effectively protected in the UK than the US.' Analyse & evaluate this statement.

# Your Turn!

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**Write down any synoptic links to the following question for your ideology:**

- 'Feminists agree about the role of the state.' Analyse & evaluate this statement.
- 'Nationalism is a progressive ideology.' Analyse & evaluate this statement.
- 'Multiculturalism supports diversity.' Analyse & evaluate this statement.
- 'Ecologists agree over environmental ethics.' Analyse & evaluate this statement.
- 'Anarchists are in agreement over human nature.' Analyse & evaluate this statement.