

Using the Source

1.1: Democracy and Participation

Time: 45 minutes

Exam Board: Edexcel

The key areas of assessment

- Current systems of representative democracy and direct democracy.
- A wider franchise and debates over suffrage.
- Pressure groups and other influences.
- Rights in context.

Instructions

- Use black ink or ball-point pen.
- Fill in your name in the space below.
- Answer **one** question.
- This test must be completed in **45 minutes**.

Name: _____

Mark: _____ / 30

Grade: _____

Answer ONE question from EITHER Question 1(a) OR Question 1(b)

EITHER

- 1(a) *This source is taken from a website called The Speaker, and is from an article published in March 2018 entitled "Pressure Groups: Helping Or Hindering Democracy?" The author, Emily Oxbury, gives a detailed report into whether pressure groups are beneficial to UK politics.*

Occasionally, pressure groups stand for issues which only affect a small number of people, rather than campaigning for what is best for the nation. Many Anti-Heathrow expansion groups caused major problems after the proposed third runway, including one group who hosted a 'die in' at one of the terminals. This caused a great deal of upheaval for hundreds of travellers, although only about 100 people were protesting. Pressure groups certainly should have the right to protest, however, it becomes unfair when these protests disrupt others.

Overall, pressure groups with a large amount of public support, financial backing and a clear aim can certainly help to enhance democracy, as they are often very influential and lead to the government making changes or improvements, with public opinion in mind. However there are certain ways in which pressure groups can exploit their abilities, sometimes resulting in violent and undemocratic actions, and this often happens due to the loophole that pressure groups cannot be held accountable for their actions.

(Source: <https://speakerpolitics.co.uk/analysis/250-pressure-groups-helping-or-hindering-democracy>)

Using the source, evaluate the view that pressure groups are beneficial to British politics.

In your response you must:

- *compare and contrast the different opinions in the source*
- *examine and debate these views in a balanced way*
- *analyse and evaluate **only** the information presented in the source.*

(30)

OR

- 1(b) *This source is taken from an article from the Independent, and the writer, Barney Stephenson, gives a detailed argument about whether or not the voting age should be reduced from 18 to 16.*

In 1969, Harold Wilson's Labour government lowered the voting age from 21 to 18. Fifty years on, some believe the time has come to lower the voting age to 16. Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn stated: "We cannot allow this Conservative government to deny one and a half million people their full rights as citizens."

In 2017 a bill brought by Labour MP Jim McMahon failed to go to a vote after running out of debating time despite the backing of the other opposition parties. Politicians who advocate lowering the voting age often argue that at 16, citizens have taken on enough responsibilities to deserve the chance to have their say. Molly Scott Cato, the Green Party's candidate for Bristol West, believes: "At 16, you're eligible to pay taxes, you can leave home, you can get married, you can even join the armed forces."

Conservatives have countered advocacy of lowering the voting age by asserting that 18 is the age when somebody becomes recognised as an adult and full citizenship rights are obtained. Questioned on the issue before the last election, Theresa May said: "I continue to think it's right for it to be 18. Of course we now expect young people to stay in educational training up until 18."

ONS research highlights that there are 88 out of 650 constituencies where the number of 16- and 17-year-olds outnumber the majority held by the sitting MP. Thirty-four are held by Conservative MPs who are the most vulnerable to losing their seats should the franchise be extended – based on the notion that young people are more likely to vote Labour.

(Source: <https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/should-the-voting-age-be-lowered-to-16-a8882731.html>)

Using the source, evaluate the view that the voting age for all elections should be lowered to 16.

In your response you must:

- *compare and contrast the different opinions in the source*
- *examine and debate these views in a balanced way*
- *analyse and evaluate **only** the information presented in the source.*

(30)

