St Mary's School
CAMBRIDGE

Lower Sixth Politics

Sample Entrance Examination

Time allowed: 45 minutes

Name: _____

INSTRUCTIONS :

- **Answer all questions**
- **Dictionaries or reference materials are forbidden**

Read the extract below and answer ALL of the questions:



During November and early December 2010, the UK experienced a wave of student protests. The main target of the student protest was the coalition government's decision to almost triple university tuition fees, allowing them to rise to £9000 a year. The protests also aimed to highlight issues relevant to young people including access to education, youth unemployment and the coalition's plan to scrap educational maintenance allowances (EMAs), which supported students from poorer families in further education. The campaign of protest involved sit-ins in about 30 universities culminating on 9 December ('Day X') with tens of thousands of students and education workers demonstrating in central London whilst parliament debated tuition fees.

What does the revival of student protest tell us about emerging pressure politics in the UK? Some argue that the coalition's programme of spending cuts has radicalized a generation of young people previously only concerned with personal advancement (careers and qualifications). If students are more strident and dedicated than the UK has seen for many years, this creates the possibility that coalition policies may be challenged by an ongoing campaign of direct action (strikes, demonstrations, sit-ins and high street disruption). This new-style political activism involves bottom-up, looser organisation and the widespread use of information technology (iPhones, Google maps, social networking websites and so on). However, others question whether the protests provide evidence that students have become politicized pointing out that modern students are primarily concerned with self-interest (avoiding increased fees) rather than issues such as justice or fairness. Further concerns have been raised about the link between direct action and violence as in the attack on a car containing Prince Charles and the Duchess of Cornwall, and about whether such activism may be a threat to democracy.

Question 1

Using the extract explain the main aims of the student protesters

Question 2

The extract mentions a number of different methods used by protesters. Which of these methods do you think are acceptable and which are not in a democracy? Make sure you explain why.

Question 3

Explain the main aims and tactics used by any protest group or movement that you are familiar with.