A-Level Edexcel Papers 1 & 2 Mark Breakdown & Advice

Section A:

- For any questions 3 marks or more, at least 1 mark is reserved for application, even if it doesn't say so in the question. You MUST reference the data provided to score full marks
- Common mistakes in section A: when you're asked to calculate something like total government spending on a subsidy, you MUST look at x-axis to see if the quantity provided is in hundreds, thousands, millions, etc and make sure you write your answer out in those terms. Also, you MUST write the currency. For example, in June 2017 Paper 1 they ask you to calculate size of government subsidy in India - you had to express your answer in Rupees to get full marks

Section B:

5 mark - just answer the question, making sure that you make TWO data references whatever extracts or figures they ask you to reference. No evaluations.

8 mark - 2 knowledge 2 application 2 analysis 2 evaluation

Two pretty basic analysis paragraphs and two brief evaluations will suffice. You can do two passing comments gaining one mark each for 2 Evaluation marks - for example, generally saying impact depends on the magnitude (size) would score 1 mark, but if you apply to data and briefly comment on whether this is significant or not, that would score 2 marks evaluation in an 8 marker.

10 mark - 2 Knowledge 2 application 2 analysis 4 evaluation

Two analysis paragraphs and one well developed evaluation will suffice. There are 2 application marks available so make sure you are referencing data at least two times.

If you struggle to make one strong and well developed evaluation, and you have time, then do a second evaluation.

12 mark - 2 Knowledge 2 application 4 analysis 4 evaluation

Two well developed analysis and 1 well developed evaluation will suffice. An example of a strong evaluation in Paper 2 on a question regarding increased government spending:

"However, an increase in government spending may result in crowding out in the economy. This is where the public sector grows but at the expense of the private sector. For example, as the UK government invests into opening more NHS hospitals, this will divert business away for private health clinics and could result in them shutting down. As such, the jobs that are created in the public sector may be offset by job losses in the private sector, causing no change to the rate of unemployment."

If you're struggling to make a strong evaluation or you have time, then you can do a second evaluation to be safe, however priority in questions 12 and above is depth of response, rather than how many points you make.

15 Mark - 3 knowledge 3 application 3 analysis 6 evaluation

Two very well developed paragraphs of analysis with data application and two very well developed evaluations will score you full marks.

An example of a strong analysis paragraph analysis for a question on benefits of a merger:

One benefit of the merger between _____ and _____ is that they are better placed to tap into economies of scale. This is where a firms long run average costs are falling with output. For example, they can utilise purchasing economies of scale whereby they bulk buy their raw materials (apply to context, for example, if it were two supermarkets, they could bulk buy their vegetables) which reduces the costs of each unit. The firm would therefore be operating closer to its MES and thus become more productively efficient. [If question was generally benefits of merger, this would suffice, but if it wanted benefits **to consumers**, then I would add: These lower costs would enable the firm to also set lower prices, which increases both consumer surplus and allocative efficiency].

Section C

25 mark - 4 knowledge 4 application 8 analysis 9 evaluation

Two extremely well developed analysis and evaluations, plus a judgement, will score you full marks.

My recommended layout is as follows:

INTRODUCTION

If you are short on time, or if the question doesn't lend itself to any key definitions such as June 2018 Paper 3 question about increased demand for coffee, then don't bother with an introduction.

However, if you have time and there are key terms it's an easy way to set a good tone for the essay and pick up some knowledge marks. The key things to do in an introduction are as follows:

- Define key terms that are both explicitly mentioned in question or implied. For example, June 2017 Paper 1 has a question on imposing a 20% tax on soft drinks. The explicit definition here is Ad Valorem tax, but a definition that I would also definitely mention and explain is demerit goods: they're taxing soft drinks precisely because that's what they are! Being able to spot implied definitions is very impressive.
- Briefly explain context of question, if the question lends itself to that. The soft drinks question, I would very briefly explain there is an obesity crisis in the UK with record numbers of kids are now obese (over 20,000 according to the Department of Health)

PARAGRAPH 1: IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS

It is imperative that you go into major depth when explaining your first point. I hate to use the word blag, but in a 25, the depth of your response is so crucial to ensuring you score top marks so develop as many chains of reasoning as possible, show off with relevant economic concepts, throw in diagrams where appropriate and know how to develop even the most minor points into a number of points. For example, if my point was about how a firms demand has increased, I would draw a cost and revenue diagram shifting out AR and MR. I would explain that this causes output to rise from Q1 to Q2, the price to rise from P1 to P2 and the firms costs may also fall

from C1 to C2 as the firm can now tap into greater economics of scale as they're producing more output. I would then give an example of an economy of scale they can tap into such as purchasing economies of scale. I would then apply this to the firm, what things could they bulk buy? Any of their raw materials, so just choose one or two and explain that, it counts as application! After that I would explain that their profits have risen by referencing the diagram. I would then explain that they could invest these profits and give an example of what they could invest it into. For example, creating new products, potentially producing a wider range of goods including cheaper items to cater to lower income households, etc (do you see how much I'm dragging this out?!) and round it off by mentioning that higher profits and investment leads to greater dynamic efficiency.

It should be chunky! Throw in economic terms, constantly apply to real world and develop lots of chains of reasoning. The best answers are those who develop the points more thoroughly, not those who make lots of different points even if these are impressive.

EVALUATION 1

Not as dense as the analysis, but still very well developed with strong chain of reasoning. To make more sense of this, I've written two evaluations that are the same point, but one would be a Level 2 evaluation whereas the second is Level 3 evaluation. It's evaluation the tax on soft drinks from June 2017 Paper 1:

"However, the impact on the market depends on the price elasticity of demand for soft drinks. If they are inelastic, then demand will not go down significantly and so the tax may be ineffective."

Compared to:

"However, the impact on the market depends on the price elasticity of demand for soft drinks. Given that sugar is habit-forming and firms such as Coca Cola and Pepsi have extremely strong brand loyalty due to heavy marketing, the demand is likely to be very inelastic with a low PED. As such, the incidence of tax will fall mainly on the consumer and thus the number of units consumed will not fall significantly, especially in the short run. Given this, the tax may be ineffective in dealing with the obesity crisis."

Do you see the difference?

If you've put together an excellent evaluation like the second one, move onto the next analysis. If you haven't AND you have time, then do another evaluation. If you're short on time, then move on no matter what.

ANALYSIS 2: IN-DEPTH ANALYSIS

Repeat what you did in the first analysis paragraph but obviously with a new point!

EVALUATION 2

Just like the previous segment, a nice in-depth evaluation would work well. You can often make it more chunky by having an over arching point and then explaining it through two means. For example, an issue that can arise from high taxes on tobacco is government failure. The way I can develop this is two-fold: encourages illegal smuggling which may mean people are consuming even more harmful substances. Also, the tax is regressive as it hurts the pockets of low income households more so it worsens income inequality. By having a good topic sentence about how tax causes government failure, it allows me to make two points in that one paragraph to add more depth to it!
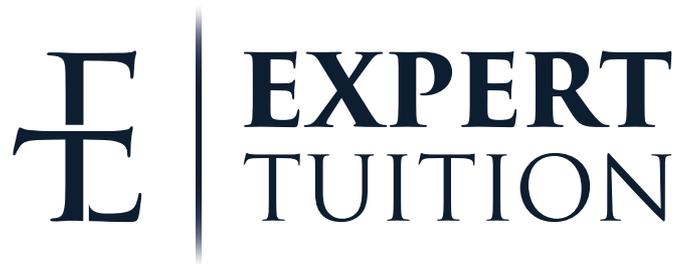
JUDGEMENT

It is imperative that you have a judgement in a 25 marker. In particular, a great judgement will do the following:

- clearly state which side of the debate you're on. If the question is whether x is better than y, then definitely choose a side. You can also say if you think neither are right solution or maybe combination of the two, but make it clear where you stand. If the question is about the impact, then you're stating whether it's effective overall or not.
- Prioritise one or two of the points you've made in essay. Don't repeat the point, but make it clear that this argument led you to this judgement.
- If possible, offer policy advice

An example of a great judgement for the June 2017 Paper 1 tax question:

On the balance of evidence, a tax is an extremely effective way of dealing with the obesity crisis in the UK, but not alone. In the short run, the impact is likely to be minimal as demand is price inelastic due to habitual behaviour. However, if the government hypothecates (invests) the tax revenue they generate into awareness campaigns and to subsiding healthy alternatives, then the tax would be highly effective in the long run as it reduces imperfect information in the market.