

The following answer provides a good illustration of how a well-planned essay with appropriate content will earn very good marks.

Of course it has some flaws. Under exam conditions with only 22.5 minutes available it is extremely difficult to produce an essay which is ideally constructed and avoids all errors in spelling and grammar. You may also spot areas where the student could have provided more accurate information and added more detail to his examples (e.g. Tibet is mentioned briefly but there is no reference to the crushing of Tibetan protests since China invaded – presumably because there was insufficient time).

The key point is that this student has produced a well-structured essay with a logical pattern. It makes points then goes on to explain these and provide relevant examples. There are also points of analysis, again with examples.

This essay was graded a clear A.

#### **Q. To what extent are there demands for political reform in China?**

*A. The People's Republic of China has been ruled as a communist state since 1949 and many people believe it is time for political reform. Many of the strict communist laws introduced in 1949 are still in place although recently, there has been reform regarding the economy which has allowed China to prosper.*

*The Communist Party of China (CPC) has been in control since 1949, initially led by Mao Zedong. When Mao took over, China was a huge country with even bigger problems so strict laws were needed. The CPC is the only party in China with any degree of power, which doesn't sound democratic as there are only ever CPC candidates in elections. However, there is some democracy within the CPC and recent leaders have seen the benefits of allowing more freedoms in the economy and socially. These reforms have kept most of the population happy reducing the demand for political reform.*

*Much of the demands for political reform have been quashed due to recent economic reforms which has made China's economy the fastest growing in the world. For example, China's GDP has risen from 500 billion Yuan in 1978 to over 4 trillion in 2004. This rapid growth has been down to the communist government introducing some capitalist ideas to the economy. Free enterprise is encouraged as well as wealth which has caused many citizens*

to be better off. However, these reforms have also widened the gap between the rich and poor, much like the Western powers like the US and the UK. Nevertheless, most of China has benefited from the economic reforms, thus reducing the demand for political reform.

Along with the economic changes, there have been some limited political democracy and freedoms. For example, non-CPC members are allowed to stand for local elections thus providing some kind of opposition to the CPC. Also there are newspapers such as the China Daily actively promoting discussion on several contentious issues. Non-government organisations (NGOs) like Greenpeace and Oxfam are now allowed to work openly in China.

However, this freedom is minimal compared to the West's idea of 'social freedom'. There are still strict laws against opposition to the government on a wide scale and even speaking of protest, far less doing it, can result in jail. An extreme example of this was in Tiananmen Square in 1989 where around 2,000 protesters were killed when government forces opened fire on them. China still has strict laws involving the media. To illustrate this, since 1998 at least 100 people have been jailed for using the internet. Google is also threatening to pull out because China fails to deliver the free internet Google delivers. These examples might show that there is some demand for political freedom and perhaps it is very slowly moving towards a more socially open state.

There is a greater demand for political reform in some areas of China than others. For example, in Hong Kong the people want to experience the same kind of freedom they had under British rule, which owned Hong Kong until 1997. The leaders of China have responded by proposing a compromise where 50% of the Hong Kong leaders are elected and the other half are elected by the CPC. This is evidence of some kind of lee-way. Tibet is also an area where there is great demand for political reform. Tibet, led by the Dalai Lama, feel they should be an independent state whereas China maintains they own Tibet.

In conclusion, changes in recent years have helped to limit demand for major political change. However, where there is demand, the government hasn't shown any sign of relenting to pressure for major change and any opposition continues to be crushed.

The key point to remember is that there is **no** magic formula and **no** short cut to achieving an A. It is hard work and so it should be. As the above essay illustrates, a good mark comes not from **quantity** but from a well-planned logical answer with a good content, examples and analysis.