The political system provides an effective check on the government. Discuss.

1. Power of president – commander in chief of armed forces. Barack Obama, George Bush. Examples of military action – Bin Laden assassinated. CHECKS – only Congress can declare war – e.g. Iraq war. Congress can amend executive policies – e.g. the Patriot Act.
2. Power of appointment – can hand-pick cabinet, supreme court justices. E.g. Sonia Sotomayer appointed first Hispanic justice. CHECKS – appointments have to be confirmed by Senate. E.g. in 2014, Congress became majority Republican. Obama (a Democrat) cannot expect to appoint whoever he wants to Supreme Court.
3. Power of veto and pocket veto – if legislative branch send a bill for him to sign, he can refuse. CHECK – Congress can over-ride Presidential vetoes with a 2/3 majority. Pocket veto – can delay signing a bill, example. CHECK – same as before, 2/3 majority over-ride.
4. Legislative powers and executive orders – State of the Union. Decide direction they want the country to follow – ideas for policies, e.g. Obamacare, school funding etc. CHECK – Congress have to introduce laws on behalf of President and also vote for laws. Also, Supreme Court can say that laws are unconstitutional. E.g. Supreme Court said it was unconstitutional to have segregated schools. Executive Orders – can introduce law without presidential approval. E.g. Obama proposed an EO in relation to electronic attacks. CHECK – 2/3 majority over-ride from Congress.

Rights and responsibilities – Discuss the rights and responsibilities of citizens in a world power you have studied.

1. The right to vote – important democratic right. Enshrined in the constitution. E.g. vote for President every 4 years – Democrat or Republican Party etc. Over 1 million elected posts in the USA. Limitations and responsibilities. Language barrier for minorities etc. Responsibility to use vote - ANALYSIS – important right and ensures that all Americans can take part although there are restrictions.
2. First Amendment – freedom of speech, religion, protest, etc. Examples of protests, e.g. against Obamacare, Iraq War etc. Responsibilities – protest peacefully, respect other religions etc. Limitations – Edward Snowden accused of leaking state secrets – no freedom of speech? Patriot Act discriminates against some Asian Americans – religious discrimination. Overall – rights to an extent, BUT limitations.
3. Right to bear arms – 2nd Amendment. Right to defend self and family, responsibility to use responsibly. NRA membership figures etc. Limitations – Sandy Hook massacre, Columbine Massacre. Overall – important right which is abused by some.
4. Right to stand as a candidate or join party. Republican or Democrat Party, or Libertarian Party, Green Party. (Tea Party). Stand as a senator, president. President – American citizen, born there over 35. Limitations – only one of the pass 44 presidents have been non-white. Only one has not been Protestant. No female presidents ever. Presidents and politicians tend to be rich. Overall – important right for Americans although not a level playing field.

Discuss the government responses to Social and Economic Issues

1. Obamacare – tackle health inequality. Made it illegal for insurance companies to discriminate based on gender, existing conditions etc. Help the poor to get health insurance coverage – especially minorities (African Americans and Hispanics). ANALYSIS – GOOD – because millions more Americans are now insured. BAD – Taxes have to rise more stress on some families. MINI CONCLUSION – how successful?
2. TANF – tackling income inequality (poverty). Grants given to families who are poor, many minority families benefit. GOOD – child poverty reduced for single parent families – more now in work. BAD – child poverty is still too high. Give figures of poverty for blacks and Hispanics – compare to whites and Asian Americans.
3. Affirmative Action – tackles educational and employment inequalities. Encourages universities and employers to take on more minorities, women, poorer people etc. e.g. Outreach programmes (see page 25). GOOD – more minorities in top jobs/university. Black middle class has increased dramatically in recent years – because of AA? BAD – it is discriminatory (against whites etc.). Best person for job/ university place should get it. OVERALL – good or bad?
4. NCLB – tackling educational inequalities. Introduced by George Bush. Financial incentives to schools to ensure that pupils are getting better grades (literally and numeracy). GOOD – encouraging schools/teachers to work harder to get money and attainment amongst Black and Hispanic children has improved. BAD – tests made easier so more pass and schools get money. Results manipulated etc. OVERALL – good or bad?
5. American Recovery and Reinvestment Act has created about 3 million new jobs.

Explain the extent to which Social and Economic Inequalities exist

1. INCOME AND EMPLOYMENT – explain why this is an issue – who is worst affected. i.e. blacks and Hispanics – give figures such as Ethnic minorities are 3 times more likely to suffer poverty then whites.

Blacks Living in Poverty

1970 – 33.5%

2001 – 22.7%

2012 – 28% (cutbacks in afirmative action + 2008 recession

* Average incomes:

White - $48977

Black - $30134

Explain the effects of the 2008-2009 recession have been worse on Ethnic Minorities as redundancies tend to be from the bottom up. Langauge barriers, illegal immigrants find it harder to get jobs, Discrimination against minorities, Poor education in some areas and high crime.

1. EDUCATION – explain the problems, especially for minorities.

% High School Graduates

White – 90%

Black – 82%

* Hispanic – 60% Give figures. Inner city schools suffer from lack of funding as schools are located in deprived areas.
* This means a lack of resources such as teachers, books, computers.
* Discipline problems.
* Parents are less likely to encourage educational achievement.
* High School Graduates (2007)
* White – 90%
* Asian – 93.2%
* College Graduates
* White – 38%
* Asian – 50%
* This explains why Asians are earning higher incomes and look like becoming the wealthiest group in the USA.

1. HEALTH – Blacks and Hispanics do not have equality with Whites when it comes to health.

**Evidence:**

Life Expectancy Infant Mortality

Whites – 77 Whites– 6 per 1000

Blacks – 72 Blacks- 14.1 per 1000

Hispanics are the ethnic minority group least likely to have private health insurance.

repeat same structure as above

1. HOUSING AND CRIME – Hispanics and Blacks more likely to live in inner city ghettos, have poor education leading to unemployment or low paid work. repeat same structure as above