

A Level Politics Transition Booklet



This pack contains information about A Level Government and Politics and a programme of activities and resources to prepare you to start an A Level in History in September. Please use this during the summer term and the summer holidays to prepare for your A Level course.



Expectations and Workload

We are delighted you have chosen to study Politics. You can expect well-planned and resourced lessons delivered by teachers who genuinely want to see you achieve your potential. In return we expect you to arrive promptly and properly equipped to all lessons. You will also be expected to use your private study time in an organised and effective way to supplement and reinforce what you have learnt in class. **Simply turning up to most of the lessons will not be enough to secure your target grade.** The work you do outside of your lessons will have a very significant impact on your results. **Significantly, Politics is a contemporary subject that is always changing, keeping up to date with the news, political development and current affairs is essential.** Above all else, we expect you to display *enthusiasm* and *passion* for Politics.

About the course: The specification we teach is produced by AQA. The unit code is 7152 (A level) and a full copy of this specification and other useful information is available at:

<https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/politics/as-and-a-level/politics-7152>

The skills you will develop studying politics:

- **Knowledge and understanding** of basic political ideas, concepts, structures and processes, the relationship between them and how they work at different levels.
- An ability to interpret and **analyse** political information in various forms and from various sources, and to apply a range of political ideas concepts and theories.
- An ability to **evaluate** arguments, theories, values and ideologies to explain political behaviour and suggest solutions to controversial issues.
- The skills to **organise and present an argument with relevance, clarity and coherence using good English.**



Year 12

UK Politics:

Democracy & participation, political parties, electoral systems, voting behaviour, the media.

UK Government:

The Constitution, Prime Minister & the Executive, relationships between the branches of government.

Core Politics Ideas:

Liberalism, Conservatism, Socialism.

Non-core Political Ideas:

One of – Nationalism, Feminism, Ecologism/Environmentalism, Anarchism

Year 13

Government and Politics of the USA:

The US constitution, federalism, US congress, US presidency, US Supreme Court, civil rights, US democracy & participation, comparative theories.

Assessment:

This course will be assessed at the end of the second year (Year 13) across three exams.

Paper 1: **Government and Politics of the UK** 2hrs

Paper 2: **Government and Politics of the USA and comparative politics** hrs

Paper 3: **Political Ideas** 2hrs

Compulsory Summer Work

Task 1: What is Politics?

You will need to download the following booklet:

<https://assets-learning.parliament.uk/uploads/2019/12/How-it-Works-booklet.pdf>

Read through the booklet and complete the following activities:

In your own words write a short definition for each of these keywords/ phrases:

Term	Definition
Politics	
Suffrage	
Political Participation	
Democracy	
Direct Democracy	
Representative Democracy	
Member of Parliament (MP)	
General Election	
Devolution	
Devolved Assemblies	
Parliament	
By-election	
Referendum	
Manifesto	
First-Past-The-Post (FPTP)	
Constitution	

Uncodified Constitution	
Parliamentary sovereignty	
Legislature	
Executive	
Judiciary	
Role of Parliament	
Bicameral legislature	
House of Commons	
Constituency	
Frontbencher minister	
Backbench MP	
The Speaker	
The Opposition	
House of Lords	
Crossbencher	
Life Peer	
Hereditary Peer	
Select Committee	
Legislative Committee	
Government Bills	
Private Members Bills	
Political Party	
Party Whips	
Party Rebel	

Coalition government	
Pressure Group	
Lobbying	
Petition	



Task Two: British Politics

Investigate the role of an MP.

1) Research your local MP, who is he/she; which party do they represent; which constituency do they represent; what have they recently shown an interest in; research their voting history to see where they stand on key issues.

<https://members.parliament.uk/>

<https://www.theyworkforyou.com/>

Create a profile of your local MP with information about how they voted on key issues such as Brexit/Education/Healthcare.

2) Research on of the main UK political parties

Labour
Liberal Democrats
Conservatives
UKIP
Plaid Cymru
Scottish Nationalist Party
Democratic Unionist Party

Create a fact-file/research document that details the following:

1. The Party history/how they were founded and formed
2. Significant Leaders of the party
3. Their key ideologies/values
4. Three current policies
5. Their most recent performance in the 2019 General Election
6. Their current leadership

Task Three: Political Ideologies

Research the following ideologies and find out their views on the state, the individual and economics. Use this website to help: <https://studyrocket.co.uk/revision/a-level-politics-aqa>

Note: You may wish to access some websites/texts from the reading list to help or to conduct further research on an ideology which you find interesting.

	Views on the State	Views on the Individual	Views on Economics
Liberalism			
Conservatism			
Socialism			

Below are the links to the Politics A Level textbooks that we will be using in class to support the delivery of course content.

Publisher	Link
Hodder	<p>Year 12 – UK Government and Politics https://www.hoddereducation.co.uk/subjects/government-politics/products/16-18/pearson-edexcel-a-level-uk-government-and-politics</p> <p>Year 12 – Political Ideas https://www.hoddereducation.co.uk/subjects/government-politics/products/16-18/political-ideas-for-a-level-liberalism,-conser-(5) https://www.hoddereducation.co.uk/subjects/government-politics/products/16-18/political-ideas-for-a-level-liberalism,-conser-(3)</p> <p>Year 12 – US Government and Politics and comparative politics https://www.hoddereducation.co.uk/subjects/government-politics/products/16-18/pearson-edexcel-a-level-us-government-and-politics</p>
Revision guides	<p>Revision Notes – UK Government and Politics https://www.hoddereducation.co.uk/subjects/government-politics/products/a-level-(1)/my-revision-notes-pearson-edexcel-a-level-uk-poli</p> <p>Revision Notes – Political Ideas https://www.hoddereducation.co.uk/subjects/government-politics/products/a-level-(1)/my-revision-notes-pearson-edexcel-a-level-politic</p> <p>Revision Notes – Course Overview https://www.hoddereducation.co.uk/subjects/government-politics/products/16-18/need-to-know-aqa-a-level-politics</p>

Suggested Wider Reading

Websites/Current Affairs

The Week (<http://subscription.theweek.co.uk/subscribe/>)
 The Economist (<https://subscriptions.economist.com>)
 The Guardian <http://www.guardian.co.uk/>
 The Telegraph <http://www.telegraph.co.uk/>
 The Independent <http://www.independent.co.uk/>
 The Times <http://www.thetimes.co.uk/>
 BBC News <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/>
 Politics Home <http://www.politicshome.com/uk/>
 Labour List <http://labourlist.org>
 Conservative Home <http://www.conservativehome.com>

General Reading

Below are a list books for general reading around politics. There are countless others...

Anthony King *The Blunders of Our Governments*
 Gerry Stocker *Why Politics Matters: Making Politics Work*
 Anthony King *Who Governs Britain?*
 Julian Knight *British Politics for Dummies*
 Kenneth Minogue *Politics: A Very Short Introduction*
 Paul Kelly *The Politics Book*
 Tony Wright *British Politics: A Very Short Introduction*
 Paul Collier 'The Bottom Billion'
 Richard M Valley *American Politics: A Very Short Introduction*
 Steven Gauge *The Little Book of Politics*
 Andrew Marr *The History of Modern Britain*
 Kevin Bloor *The Definitive Guide to Political Ideologies*

British Politics and History

Andrew Marr *A History of Modern Britain*
 Andrew Rawnsley *The End of the Party*
 Ben Pimlott *Harold Wilson*
 Charles Moore *Margaret Thatcher: The Authorised Biography (Vol. 1)*
 Dominic Sandbrook *Never Had It So Good: A History of Britain from Suez to the Beatles*
Seasons in the Sun: The Battle for Britain, 1974-1979,
State of Emergency: The Way We Were: Britain, 1970-1974
White Heat: A History of Britain in the Swinging Sixties 1964-1970
 John Campbell *The Iron Lady*
 John Murray and Anthony Sampson *Who Runs This Place?: The Anatomy of Britain in the 21st Century*
 Jeremy Paxman published a book on the First World War and he also made a documentary based on it, *Great Britain's Great War*
 Jonathan Powell's memoir about the Blair government is very entertaining, *The New Machiavelli*
 Iain Dayle *The Prime Ministers*

Maria Sobolewska and Robert Ford *Brexitland: Identity, Diversity and the Reshaping of British Politics*

David Goohart *The Road to Somewhere: Reshaping British Politics*

Owen Jones *The Establishment*

Useful Web links

- BBC – Politics section – http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/default.stm
- Democracy live – <http://news.bbc.co.uk/democracylive/h i>
- The Guardian – <http://politics.guardian.co.uk/>
- History Learning Site – www.historylearningsite.co.uk/gbpolitics.htm
- Tutor2u – www.tutor2u.net/revision_notes_politics.asp
- UK Parliament – www.parliament.uk
- 10 Downing Street – www.number-10.gov.uk/output/Page1.asp
- <https://studyrocket.co.uk/revision/a-level-politics-aqa>
- The Conservative Party – www.conservatives.com/
- The Labour Party – www.labour.org.uk/home
- The Liberal Democrats – www.libdems.org.uk
- UK Polling Data <http://ukpollingreport.co.uk>
- UKIP <http://www.ukip.com/>

Journals and Magazines

A number of magazines and journals may contain articles relevant to all units of the specification. As politics is a current and evolving subject it is a good idea to keep up to date with current affairs, these publications offer insightful analysis of current political events.

- Politics Review. Published by Philip Allan. www.philipallan.co.uk
- Total Politics. www.magazine-group.co.uk
- First Past the Post (digital magazine). www.tutor2u.net
- The New Statesman. www.newstatesman.com
- The Spectator. www.the-spectator-magazine.co.uk
- Standpoint. www.standpointmag.uk
- The Economist. www.economist.com
- Global Politics. www.global-politics.co.uk
- Prospect <http://www.prospectmagazine.co.uk/>
- This Week <http://www.theweek.co.uk/>

Podcasts

Podcasts are a great way to keep up to date with current affairs and hear a range of different views and opinions. Most are available on Spotify/Apple music and other podcast platforms. Here are a sample of a few which you may like to try. We recommend listening to at least one a week.

- Talking Politics
- The Argument (USA politics)
- The A-Level Politics show
- Pod Save America (USA politics)
- Americast (US Politics)
- Today In Focus
- Newscast (BBC)
- Intelligence Squared
- The Prime Ministers
- The Guardian UK Politics Weekly
- Payne's Politics
- The Political Party

TV and Film

Current affairs programmes such as:

Andrew Marr, Newsnight, Peston, Question Time, plus some fun stuff: Have I got News for You, The Last Leg, Mock The Week.

The BBC also have a range of documentaries on key political figures and events – It is worth checking iPlayer for these.

Other TV/Film – note – these may not all be directly linked to the course but will introduce you to some interesting political ideas/political insights

- The West Wing / House of Cards / The Wire / Madam Secretary / The Newsroom / VEEP / The thick of it / Yes, Minister / Black Mirror / Cobra
- Documentaries: White Riot / Knock down the house, get me roger stone, citizenfour, Fahrenheit 9/11, Inside Job, The Edge of Democracy, Citizen Koch, Capitalism A Love Story, Sicko, The Corporation, RBG, The spirit of '45, Accidental Anarchist, The Central Park Five, The Great Hack, Quest,
- Films: The Ides of March, The Post, Frost / Nixon, Game change, In the Loop, Vice, Syriana, Election. Dr Strangelove, Good Night and Good Luck, the Manchurian Candidate, W, On the basis of sex, Official Secrets, Selma, Made in Dagenham