



Bridging the Gap GCSE to A Level Politics Project

To help you get ready for Y12 the Politics department have put together a project for you to complete. This will help to introduce you to key topics that you will study in Y12. Before you get started on that, there is a course breakdown for the Politics A Level.

Government and Politics A-Level 2020/21			
What do we study in Year 12?	Component 1 UK Politics Democracy and Participation Political Parties Electoral Systems Voting Behaviour and the Media Conservatism, Liberalism, Socialism	Component 2 Governing the UK The Constitution Parliament Prime Minister and Executive Relations between Institutions Feminism	
What do we study in Year 13?	Component 3 Representative Process in the USA The US Constitution and Federalism US Congress US Presidency US Supreme Court and US Civil Rights US Democracy and Participation Comparative Theories		
How am I assessed at A Level?	Component 1 (33%) 2 hour exam <u>Section A</u> One 30 mark Q from choice of two, with a source One 30 mark question from a choice of two <u>Section B</u> One 24 mark question from a choice of two	Component 2 (33%) 2 hour exam <u>Section A</u> One 30 mark Q from choice of two, with a source One 30 mark question from a choice of two <u>Section B</u> One 24 mark question from a choice of two	Component 3 (33%) 2 hour exam <u>Section A</u> One 12 mark question from a choice of two. (AO1, 2) <u>Section B</u> One 12 mark question (AO1, 2) <u>Section C</u> Two 30 mark questions from a choice of three (AO1, 2, 3).

	All assess AO1,2,3	All assess AO1,2,3	
Component One UK Politics	Students will investigate in detail how people and politics interact. They will explore the emergence and development of the UK's democratic system and the similarities, differences, connections and parallels between direct and indirect democracy. They will focus on the role and scope of political parties that are so central to contemporary politics, including the significance of the manifestos they publish at election time and their relevance to the mandate of the resulting government.		
Component Two Governing the UK	This component is fundamental to understanding the nature of UK government, since it enables students to understand where, how and by whom political decisions are made. The component also gives students a base of comparison to other political systems. The component introduces students to the set of rules governing politics in the UK, the UK constitution, which is different in nature from most of the rest of the world. It further introduces students to the specific roles and powers of the different major branches of the government – legislative, executive, and judiciary – as well as the relationships and balance of power between them, and considers where sovereignty now lies within this system.		
Component Three Representative Processes in the USA	The USA has been considered by some to be a 'beacon of democracy'. As a world power, understanding the nature of US democracy, and the debates surrounding it, is crucial given the considerable impact that the USA has on UK, European and global politics. Students will explore the US Constitution and the arguments surrounding this guiding document of US democracy. In learning about the key institutions of government in the USA and analysing the manner in which they achieve this power and exercise it over their citizens, students will judge ultimately whether 'liberty and justice for all' has been achieved in the USA. Students will be expected to highlight the debates on the nature of democracy in the USA and evaluate the extent to which it remains an issue.		
AO1	AO2	AO3	
Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of political institutions, processes, concepts, theories and issues.	Analyse aspects of politics and political information, including in relation to parallels, connections, similarities and differences.	Evaluate aspects of politics and political information, including to construct arguments, make substantiated judgements and draw conclusions.	

You will study UK Politics and UK Government in Y12, as well as core and non-core political ideas such as Feminism. This project will help you gain an appropriate level of understanding and contextual knowledge to start the course in September.

Key Words List

Before you get started on any of the tasks outlined below, you need to look up definitions for each of the key terms below, and write them in.

The Executive

The Legislature

The Judiciary

Constitution

Codified

Unitary

Entrenched

Treaties

Devolution

MPs

Referendum

Constituency

Mandate

Voter Turnout

Political Participation

Suffrage/The Franchise

Pressure Groups

Manifesto

Think Tank

Lobbyist

Sovereignty

Cabinet

Shadow Cabinet

Right Wing

Left Wing

Coalition Government

Minority Government

Safe Seats

Marginal Seats

UK Political Parties

There are a number of Political Parties in the UK. Some will fit under the category of 'major parties' and some will fit under the category of 'minor' or 'third parties'. Your task is to research each party and establish the following for each:

- 1) Is it a minor/major party?
- 2) Who is the current leader?
- 3) How many seats in Parliament, if any, does the party hold?
- 4) What are their core beliefs?
- 5) Find 3 examples of relevant policies which they outlined in their most recent manifesto. Try to cover the key areas; tax/environment/immigration/healthcare/schools/housing/benefits etc.

Political Parties to Research:

- Conservatives
- Labour
- Liberal Democrats
- SNP
- Plaid Cymru
- Sinn Fein
- DUP
- The Green Party
- The Brexit Party
- UKIP

Engaging with the News

Keeping up to date with Politics and current affairs is of the upmost importance to succeed in your Politics A Level. Your knowledge of Politics is going to grow over the next two years, but you MUST engage with the news consistently to be in with a chance of securing a good grade in this subject. You will not find everything you need in your textbook.

There are a number of TV shows which you can watch to keep yourself up to date. Get familiar with these over the Summer. Please watch at least one episode of each of these, but the more the better!

Question Time – BBC, Thursday Evening – Political debate with a live studio audience

Daily Politics – BBC, Sunday Morning– A bit heavy going, but in depth analysis of recent developments

The Andrew Marr Show – BBC, Sunday Morning – Senior politicians interviewed by Andrew Marr

Have I got news for you – BBC Iplayer

The News- BBC/ITV/Channel 4/Sky News – It is important to watch a range of channels.

Prime Ministers Questions – BBC, Wednesday Lunchtime – MPs ask the PM questions for 30 minutes.

Find a news website you trust and will use to keep up to date with the news in Year 12, this is a minimum expectation of the course.

Suggested Reading

Every newspaper, no matter whether broadsheet or tabloid will talk extensively about politics.

Read some articles (available online) on politics from the following:

The Times, The Telegraph, The Guardian, The Sun, The Daily Mail

Further Reading: Any biography on any of the following: Margaret Thatcher, John Major, Tony Blair, Gordon Brown, David Cameron will help gain an insight into the underworld of Government.

Component 1 & 2: UK Politics

Task 1: Democracy

Democracy is a word you will hear an awful lot over the next two years, so you need to know what it means. Search to find a definition and then make a list of governments which are democratic and ones which are not.

You also need to find definitions for the following terms:

Direct Democracy:

Representative Democracy:

Then find advantages and disadvantages of both systems.

Task 2: Voting

Research to find all of the possible elections which somebody (over the age of 18) could vote in. Did you realise there were elections outside of general elections? Look at the voter turnout for smaller, local elections, versus general elections – how could you try to encourage more people to vote?

What voting system does the UK have? Why do some people not like this?

Search the internet to find 3 suggestions that experts have come up with as to how the UK could reform the voting system.

Task 3: Devolution

Devolution refers to the sharing out of power (but not sovereignty) within a political system. The UK has devolved power to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland – but in differing amounts.

Research to find out the following about EACH of the 'devolved powers' (Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland):

- 1) Do they have their own version of a parliament?
- 2) If so, what is it called and when was it set up?
- 3) If so, how are representatives elected to it?