

Politics Sixth Form Bridging Guidance

Entry Criteria: students are expected to have achieved the standard entry criteria for A levels.

Exam board: AQA

Qualification: History A-Level

Qualification web link: <https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/government-and-politics/as-and-a-level/politics-7152/introduction>

A Level Units:

Unit 1 – The Government and Politics of the UK

This unit focuses on the following; Parliament, the Prime Minister and cabinet, judiciary, devolution, democracy and participation, elections and referendums, political parties, pressure groups and the European Union. It will also focus on important issues in Politics and current affairs such as Britain's exit from the EU, Britain's approach to Climate Change, recent voting behaviour and election, government response to the pandemic, methods of protest against government and many more.

Unit 2 – The Government and Politics of the USA and Comparative Politics

This unit focuses on the following; the constitutional framework, Congress, the President, judiciary, elections and direct democracy, political parties, pressure groups, civil rights and comparative politics. Students will then compare the US system to that of Britain. It will also focus on important issues in US Politics like USA's approach to international relations, Climate Change, the upcoming Presidential election of 2020, and many more. We'll study the individual approaches of Presidents like Barak Obama and Donald Trump and how they differ.

Unit 3 – Political Ideas

This unit focuses on the following; liberalism, conservatism, socialism, nationalism, feminism, multiculturalism, anarchism and ecologism.

A Level Assessment:

Unit 1: Government and Politics of the UK (33% of the total A Level)

Externally examined assessment of:

Section A – three compulsory questions, explain and analyse (3 x 9 marks)

Section B – one essay question linked to an extract (25 marks)

Section C – one essay question (25 marks)

Unit 2: Government and Politics of the USA and comparative politics (33% of the total A Level)

Externally examined assessment of:

Section A – three compulsory questions, explain and analyse (3 x 9 marks)

Section B – one essay question linked to an extract (25 marks)

Section C – one essay question (25 marks)

Unit 3: Political Ideas (33% of the total A Level)

Externally examined assessment of:

Section A – three compulsory questions, explain and analyse (3 x 9 marks)

Section B – one essay question linked to an extract (25 marks)

Section C – one essay question (25 marks)

Further studies and career opportunities:

Students completing the A Level in Politics have gone on to study Politics, Sociology, Ethics, Law, PPE, Advertising or Journalism at university, and the qualification is highly regarded by employers in industries including politics, international organisations, the media, government and the civil service. Students often study A Level Politics alongside subjects like History, Sociology, English, Economics, Drama and Languages.

Politics A Level Suggested Bridging Activities and reading

The best preparation for a course in Politics is to keep up with current events. This means watching the news and reading the quality newspapers (either online or print). Try to read a variety of newspapers and watch a variety of TV news stations, they have different points of view and agendas. For example, you could read the Times, the Telegraph and the Guardian, and watch Sky, BBC, CNN and FOX news channels, and follow their social media accounts. See if you can identify which side they take and which political views they hold. Politics in 2025 is fast moving, with a number of high profile developments both in Britain, the USA, and all over the world, keeping up to date is essential!

See where you stand on Politics, use a site like this and try the quiz:

<https://www.politicalcompass.org/>

UK Politics

Research the most recent general election campaign of 2024. Make a profile of the main parties: Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrat, Reform, Green, SNP – their leaders, main policies and campaigns.

Follow the media coverage, re-watch the debates and interviews.

Analyse who won and why. Create a written report detailing the results: - How many seats did each party win in Parliament?

- Which party won the most seats in England, Scotland, Ireland and Wales?
- What sorts of people voted for each party – think about this in terms of age, gender, social class and other demographic features. Find out the percentages of people in these categories who voted for each party.
- Which issues did people think were important when they voted?

The BBC news section on the election is really good, and it will have a good analysis of the results after the election: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/topics/crggn4j2lm0t>

Outside of this, to prepare for the course, here are some useful links for reading and research:

Some nice introduction videos to Parliament, the House of Commons and the House of Lords:

<https://learning.parliament.uk/resources/what-is-the-house-of-commons-video/>

<https://learning.parliament.uk/resources/who-is-in-the-house-of-lords/>

Some background reading on elections:

<https://www.parliament.uk/elections>

<https://www.parliament.uk/about/how/elections-and-voting/general/>

This site goes through all the factors involved in deciding who won since WW2:

http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/vote_2005/basics/4393311.stm

And this analysis of why the Conservatives won in 2019 is very useful:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/election-2019-50774061>

This booklet is quite detailed but still useful:

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

After reading the above, think about making notes and answers to the following questions:

- What do you think are the most important issues facing Britain and the world right now? What do you think should be done about them?
- What do you think are the main factors that influence people to choose a political party to vote for?

Research Task: Make profiles of these 5 Prime Minister's of Great Britain: Boris Johnson, Theresa May, David Cameron, Gordon Brown and Tony Blair. Find out their main beliefs, policies, achievements and failures.

USA politics:

Similar to the UK, the USA held a presidential election in November of 2024. Research who the candidates were, their policies and campaigns.

Analyse who won and why. Create a written report detailing the results: -

Which candidate won the most votes? What parts of the country were important in deciding the result?

- What sorts of people voted for each candidate – think about this in terms of age, gender, social class and other demographic features. Find out the percentages of people in these categories who voted for each candidate.
- Which issues did people think were important when they voted?

The BBC news section on the election is really good, and it will have a good analysis of the results after the election: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/topics/cj3ergr8209t>

Things to watch:

As well as keeping up with the news and current affairs stories, there are many other programmes that you can watch that will help prepare you for studying Politics, some examples are:

The Thick of It (UK)

The West Wing (USA)

These are available on Netflix and other platforms.