

Politics



A Level Politics is a subject that allows you to understand and engage in the political world around us. It suits students who have an enquiring mind, who want to find out more about the issues and personalities that dominate our society. It is not a subject with clear 'right' or 'wrongs', it is a subject based on debate, discussion and argument. Politics will be a new subject to the majority of students on the course, but there is a lot you can do to prepare for the start of the A Level.

We study **Edexcel A Level Politics (2017)**.



Course Outline:

Year 12	Year 13
<p><u>UK Politics:</u> Democracy & participation, political parties, electoral systems, voting behaviour, the media. <u>Core Politics Ideas:</u> Liberalism, Conservatism, Socialism. <u>UK Government:</u> The Constitution, Prime Minister & the Executive, relationships between the branches of government.</p>	<p><u>Non-core Political Ideas: (One only of the following)</u> Multiculturalism, Nationalism, Feminism, Ecologism, Anarchism <u>Government and Politics of the USA:</u> The US constitution, federalism, US congress, US presidency, US Supreme Court, civil rights, US democracy & participation, comparative theories.</p>
<p><u>Exam:</u> Paper 1: UK Politics & Core Political Ideas Paper 2: UK Government & Non-Core Political Ideas Paper 3: Comparative Politics (USA)</p>	

You will need to keep up to date on current affairs and will need to develop an understanding of political concepts, ideas, political institutions and who's who. To do this get reading online and in print, watch political programmes and listen to podcasts.

- Read a QUALITY newspaper (such as The Times, The Guardian, The Telegraph or their weekend equivalent) at least once a week – best to get one on a Saturday or Sunday. **The Week** is a great magazine that gives you an accessible summary of the news

- Read magazines and specific politics journals such as **Politics Review**, as well as political biographies if you can. Michelle Obama's is a good one to start with.
- Watch current affairs programmes such as Panorama, Despatches etc. and specific politics programmes such as The Andrew Marr Show (BBC iplayer). Watch films about politics – UK: The Iron Lady (2011) / The Queen (2007) / The Loop (2009) / Made in Dagenham (2010) – US: All the Presidents Men (1976) / Knock Down the House (2019) / The Ides of March (2011) / JFK (1991)
- There are some excellent politics podcasts: <https://tunein.com/podcasts/Podcasts/The-A-Level-Politics-Show-p1243794/> <https://crooked.com/podcast-series/pod-save-america/> <https://www.talkingpoliticspodcast.com/>

Online politics websites: There are so many – the BBC Politics section is a good starting point, but also <https://www.politico.com/> / <https://edition.cnn.com/politics/> / <https://www.politics.co.uk/>

And finally! The weekly quiz! https://www.tutor2u.net/politics/blog/a-week-is-a-long-time-uk-politics-quiz-8-april-2020?fbclid=IwAR32CF-1S0ncgHI-eqvyU_fyvAGc34a-d8HgddwHHXdXQSy71jpUBBjNzQQ

Summer Activities in Preparation for A level Politics:

You will need to download the following booklet: <https://assets-learning.parliament.uk/uploads/2019/12/How-it-Works-booklet.pdf>

A copy of this is also on the Oaklands Politics page, go to: <https://www.oaklandscatholicschool.org/curriculum/subject-areas/politics>

Read through the booklet and complete the following activities. Bring them with you to your first A Level Politics lesson.

Task 1: In your own words write a short definition for each of these keywords/ phrases:

Politics	Suffrage	Political Participation	Democracy	Direct Democracy	Representative Democracy	General Election
By-election	Devolution	Devolved Assemblies	Referendum	Manifesto	First-past-the-post	Constitution
Uncodified Constitution	Parliamentary Sovereignty	Legislature	Executive	Judiciary	Role of Parliament	Bicameral Legislature
Human Rights Act 1998	Constitutional Reform Act 2005	Fixed Term Parliament Act 2011	Parliamentary Reform Acts 1911 / 1949	House of Commons	House of Lords	Hereditary Peer
Frontbencher	Backbencher	The Opposition	Select Committee	Party Whips	Party Rebel	Partisan

Task 2: Investigate the role of an MP.

- a.) Research your local MP or another MP that you are interested in. 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/>

b.) Investigate the role of an MP by playing the game in the link below.

<https://learning.parliament.uk/resources/mp-for-a-week/#cta-target>

Task 3: Research one pressure group that currently exists in the UK.

Who are they? What type of group are they? (causal, sectional, insider, outsider)
What are they campaigning for and why? What methods have they used to campaign? Do you think they have been successful so far?

Task 4: Keep a diary of 10 political events as they unfold over the coming weeks. Research the story and print out / make notes on what happened. Which individuals were involved / which branches of government were involved (the 3 branches are: legislative / executive / judiciary) and how did they interact?

Here's a couple recent stories that demonstrate some of the political concepts we will study in our course:

UK – Boris Johnson went into hospital, but who runs the country?

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-52193461> Unlike the US, we do not have a 'codified constitution' that clearly sets out the procedure of what to do when the Prime Minister is incapacitated.

US – can Donald Trump really 're-open' America

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-52274969> This opens the federalism debate, where does power lie in America, with the President or with the states?