

WHAT WILL I STUDY IN A-LEVEL POLITICS?



A-level politics is a fantastic way to start to understand how the world works. Here is what you will study. This poster just looks at some of the key questions you will analyse.

PAPER ONE - GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS OF THE UK

1 THE NATURE AND SOURCES OF THE BRITISH CONSTITUTION

- What is a constitution?
- Why does Britain have an uncodified constitution?
- What are the constitutional changes of recent years?
- Do we have enough rights in Britain?
- What do we do when individual and collective rights are in conflict?

2 THE STRUCTURE AND ROLE OF PARLIAMENT

- What are the different powers of the Commons and the Lords? How are they significant?
- What extent of power does parliament have over the government?
- How are the people represented in Parliament?

3 THE PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET

- How is policy made?
- Is the prime minister really first among equals?
- When has the PM dictated policy to the cabinet?
- What does the cabinet do?
- What is the significance of individual vs collective responsibility?

4 THE JUDICIARY

- What is the composition of the Judiciary? How do they get appointed?
- What power does the Supreme Court have?
- What is the judicial influence on government?

5 DEVOLUTION

- What are the roles, powers and responsibilities of the different devolved bodies in the UK?
- What is the debate surrounding devolution?
- What impact does devolution have on government of the UK?

6 DEMOCRACY AND PARTICIPATION

- How has suffrage changed since the Great Reform Act (1832) to the present?
- How can the media influence elections?
- How does class/race/gender/age affect participation?
- How do patterns of voting behaviour change over time?

7 POLITICAL PARTIES

- How did the main parties' ideas change and shape over time?
- How do parties work with the media?
- Where do parties get their funding?
- How has the development towards a multi-party system in the UK impacted government and policy?

8 PRESSURE GROUPS

- What is pluralism?
- How do pressure groups affect democracy?
- What methods do pressure groups use?
- What political agenda do different pressure groups have?

9 EUROPEAN UNION

- What are the aims of the EU?
- To what extent have their aims been achieved?
- What impact does the EU have on UK politics and policy making?



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PAPER TWO- GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS OF THE USA AND COMPARATIVE POLITICS (UK/US)

1

THE CONSTITUTIONAL FRAMEWORK OF US GOVERNMENT

What is the nature of the US constitution? How is it significant?
How does the separation of powers work?
What protection of civil liberties and rights are there under the US Constitution? Are they far-reaching enough?
How does the separation of powers work? Do they checks and balance?



2

THE LEGISLATIVE BRANCH OF GOVERNMENT: CONGRESS

What are the roles of Congress, the House of Representatives and the Senate?
What are the different strengths of the houses?
What is the relationship with the judiciary and the president?
Who has oversight over who?



3

THE EXECUTIVE BRANCH OF GOVERNMENT: PRESIDENT

What are the formal and informal powers of the president?
What are the sources of the presidents power?
Does the president have too much or too little power?
What is the debate between 'Imperial versus Imperilled Presidency'.



4

THE JUDICIARY

What is the composition of the Judiciary? How to they get appointed?
What is the significance of the judiciary in shaping one area of public policy in terms of, for example, federalism, civil rights, race, gender, punishment?
How have landmark Supreme Court cases changed America?



5

THE ELECTORAL PROCESS AND DIRECT DEMOCRACY

What electoral systems are used in the USA?
Is the electoral college a democratic system?
How is incumbency significant?
How does campaign finance work?
What factors influence voting behaviours?



6

DEMOCRACY AND PARTICIPATION

How has suffrage changed since the Great Reform Act (1832) to the present?
How can the media influence elections?
How does class/race/gender/age affect participation?
How do patterns of voting behaviour change over time?



7

POLITICAL PARTIES

What are the main two parties ideologies and values?
What are the weaknesses of the parties?
How important are the internal divisions within parties?
How has the Democrat and Republican parties changed over time?



8

PRESSURE GROUPS

What is the extent of political pluralism in the USA?
How are pressure groups involved in funding US elections?
What is the role significance of Political Action Committees and Super PAC's regarding electoral finance?



9

CIVIL RIGHTS

What are the protection of civil liberties protected? Looking in detail at the constitution, the Bill of Rights and subsequent amendments, and landmark rulings of the Supreme Court.
What is the impact of salient political issues concerning civil rights and liberties - e.g abortion, gender, disability rights, religion, immigration.



COMPARATIVE POLITICS

You will analyse the key differences between many aspects of the the US and UK political systems:

- Methods, influence and effectiveness of civil rights campaigns in the UK and the USA.
- Comparisons of the two party systems and how they operate in the UK and the USA
- The relative extent of the powers of the UK Supreme Court and the US Supreme Court and the bases of those powers within their systems of government
- Why does the USA has a two party system whilst the UK is moving towards a multi-party system?
- What are the powers, composition, structure, strengths and weaknesses of political systems?

WHAT WILL I STUDY IN A-LEVEL POLITICS?

A-level politics helps you understand the different ways people think. In paper three you will look at a variety of different ideologies, which might help you to form your own! You will look at great thinkers through the ages and their views. This poster looks at some of the theories you will evaluate and analyse.

PAPER THREE - POLITICAL IDEAS

1 LIBERALISM

Key concepts:

- The individual and freedom
- Human nature, the state, society and the economy
- Classic and modern Liberalism
- What are the key ideas of Locke, Mill, Rawls, Hill-Green, Wollstonecraft and Friedan?



2 CONSERVATISM

Key concepts:

- Government, the free market, the individual, the state
- Authority, tradition, private property, human nature, society and the economy
- Traditional conservatism and the new right
- What are the different strands in conservative thinking?
- What are the key ideas of Hobbs, Burke, Oakeshott, Rand and Nozick?

3 SOCIALISM

Key concepts:

- Marxism, class analysis and fundamental goals of socialism
- Human nature, the state, society and the economy
- Revolutionary socialism and social democracy
- What is class struggle? In what ways are there tensions between revolutionary socialism and social democracy
- What are the key ideas of Marx & Engles, Luxemburg, Webb, and Crossland?



4 NATIONALISM

Key concepts:

- Nation, sovereignty of the people
- Human nature, the state, society and the economy
- Minority nationalism and state nationalism
- How has nationalism developed over time? How have things changed recently?
- What are the key ideas of Rosseau, Gottfried von Herder, Mazzini, and Gavvey?



5 FEMINISM

Key concepts:

- Equality of treatment, recognition of gender differences
- Human nature, the state, society and the economy
- Liberal feminism and radical feminism
- How has feminism developed over time? What is post-feminism?
- What are the key ideas of Beauvoir, Gilman, Miller, Rowbotham, Hooks?



6 MULTICULTURALISM

Key concepts:

- Equality of opportunity, anti discrimination
- Human nature, the state, society and the economy
- Integration and segregation
- How are migrants integrated or segregated? How does assimilation work?
- What are the key ideas of Berlin, Kymlicka, Modood and Parekh?



7 ANARCHISM

Key concepts:

- Autonomy of the individual, opposition to and abolition of coercive relationships, opposition to government and society without government
- Human nature, the state, society and the economy
- Individual anarchist traditions and collectivist anarchist traditions.
- How can society work without government?
- What are the key ideas of Stirner, Bakunin, Kropotkin and Proudhon?



8 ECOLOGISM

Key concepts:

- The intrinsic relationship between humankind and nature, sustainability
- Human nature, the state, society and the economy
- Light greens and dark greens.
- What are the debates surrounding ecologism?
- What are the key ideas of Leopold, Carson, Bookchin, Merchant and Schumacher?

