

Transition Material for A Level Politics De Lisle College

Exam board: Edexcel



Introduction

It is great that you are considering studying Politics at A Level.

This pack contains a programme of activities and resources to prepare you to start an A Level in Politics in August. It is aimed to be used over the summer holidays to ensure you are ready to start your course. This will include keeping up to date with current affairs, and researching about current and past political events and figures.

About the course

Edexcel Politics specification and exam structure

Politics is a linear course. There are 3 units which make up the A –Level;

Unit 1: UK Politics (worth 33%) (Exam length: 2 hours)

This unit examines in detail how people and politics interact. You will explore the emergence and development of the UK's democratic system and the similarities, differences, connections and parallels between direct and indirect democracy. You will learn about 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. You will also learn about the role of the media in politics.



Unit 2: UK Government (33%) (Exam length: 2 hours)

This unit is fundamental to understanding the nature of UK government, since it enables you to understand where, how and by whom political decisions are made. You will learn about 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. You will also study 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 decide where sovereignty (power) now lies within this system.

Unit 3: Comparative Politics – American Politics (33%) (Exam length: 2 hours)

You will begin by studying 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, you will judge ultimately whether 'liberty and justice for all' has been achieved in the USA. You will compare and contrast politics and institutions in the US with those in the UK.



Where to keep up to date

Politics is a fascinating subject as it effects everything from how the world runs to our everyday lives, and it is constantly changing. As a result, success in politics A-level will only come if you have an up to date knowledge of what is happening in the world around you. The political landscape is always moving and events that happen during the course are relevant to the exam. Therefore it is vital you keep up to date with the latest news.

To do this it is vital that you read, watch and listen to the news from a variety of sources, over the summer you should select a couple from each of the following lists to follow:

Newspapers and Magazines

- The Times
- Independent
- The Guardian
- Daily Telegraph
- New Statesmen
- The Spectator
- The Economist
- Financial Times



N.B most of these have either online apps or print versions.

News and radio programmes

- BBC 6 o'clock or 10 o'clock news
- Channel 4 news
- Question Time (BBC)
- Daily Politics Show (BBC)
- Newsnight (BBC)
- Today Programme (Radio 4)
- PM (Radio 4)
- Any Questions (Radio 4)
- This week at Westminster (Radio 4)

N.B Again many of these can be downloaded as podcasts or watched again on the internet.



Books

Although the changing nature of politics means textbooks become outdated very quickly, we will study a number of political thinkers whose ideas influence the world today. The following are a good place to start to gain a better understanding of political ideology:

- The Oxford Very Short Introduction Guides e.g to Politics, Conservatism, Liberalism
- Machiavelli's *The Prince*
- Thomas More's *Utopia*

Tasks for the Summer

Complete the following tasks and corresponding knowledge organiser sheets about the UK and US political systems. You can use websites such as www.bbc.co.uk and www.politics.co.uk to help you.

1. Who are the UK Prime Ministers of the post-war era?
2. Who are the US Presidents of the post-war era?
3. Who's who in UK politics today?
4. What is the demographic and political make up of the UK parliament?
5. What were the turnouts at recent elections, and what electoral systems are used?
6. What are the election results since 2010?
7. What are the key referendums that have happened since 2010?
8. What were the key manifesto pledges of the Conservatives, Labour and Liberal Democrats at the last UK election?

United Kingdom		
Prime Minister	Party	Term
<i>Clement Attlee</i>	<i>Labour</i>	1945-51
		1951-55
		1955-57
		1957-63
		1963-64
		1964-70
		1970-74
		1974-76
		1976-79
		1979-90
		1990-97
		1997-2007
		2007-10
		2010-16
		2016-19
		2019-

	United States	
President	Party	Term
<i>F D Roosevelt</i>	<i>Democrat</i>	1933-1945
		1945-53
		1953-61
		1961-63
		1963-69
		1969-74
		1974-77
		1977-81
		1981-89
		1989-93
		1993-2001
		2001-09
		2009-17
		2017-2021
		2021-

Person	Party	Position / Role	Main aims
Boris Johnson			
Rishi Sunak			
Sir Keir Starmer			
Rachel Reeves			
Caroline Lucas			
Jeremy Corbyn			
Mark Drakeford			
Nicola Sturgeon			
Nigel Farage			
Edwin Poots			
Sadiq Khan			
Theresa May			

Number of Female MP's and MP's from an ethnic minority

	2010	2015	2017	2019
Women				
Ethnic minority				

Political Make up of the 2019 Parliament

	Number	Which parties?
Parties in Parliament 2019		

Party	Seats	% of vote	Membership
Conservative			
Labour			
LibDems			
SNP			
DUP			

Turn outs and Electoral Systems

Election	Turnout
1992	
1997	
2001	
2005	
2010	
2015	
2017	
2021	

System	Where used?
FPTP	
AMS	
STV	
SV	

Election and Referendum Results

Election	Type of government	Share of Vote	Share of Seats	Majority
2005	Labour majority	35%	55%	66
2010				
2015				
2017				
2019				

Date	Issue	Turnout	Result	
			For	Against
2011	Change to AV for general elections			
2014	Scottish independence			
2016	Remain or leave the EU			