

Government and Politics



Departmental Handbook

THE LANGLEY ACADEMY

Updated: June 2017

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Section 1

General Information

Department Plan:**Aims:**

The aims of the subject of Government and Politics are as follows:

- To ensure the students achieve a pass in the Linear A-Level courses
- To utilise value added data to track progress of students and intervene if they are falling below expectations
- To ensure that the standards of all lessons and resources are as high as possible
- To provide a wide range of teaching and learning styles to suit individualised learning.
- To provide students with an understanding of politics and political concepts that will allow them to participate fully as citizens.
- To develop social and organisational skills
- To work within agreed school policies.
- To promote achievement, challenge and excellence wherever possible
- To utilise and manage both traditional and electronic resources
- To promote the subject to ensure a continual uptake at both AS and A2 levels.

Organisation:

Teaching groups for 'A' Level Government and Politics are determined by the choices of year 12 students in the September of year 12. A 6th form induction week is also held in the July of year 11, but choices are confirmed in September. The number of groups depends on the number of blocks that Government and Politics is offered in – this is usually one. Government and Politics asks for one specific entry requirement – a grade 5 in English – otherwise students are free and encouraged to pursue the course. Amendments to the group occur when students wish to leave, or join, or as a result of testing, where a student is unable to continue the course because of unacceptable results. In all cases, permission can only be granted by the Head of 6th Form.

Time:

The course is delivered in 9, 1 hour periods a fortnight for year 12 and 9 1 hour periods a fortnight for year 13. In terms of allocation of time to each study unit, the schemes of work give an approximate time for each study unit to be completed. These are flexible

and they give the opportunity for work experience, mock examinations and unforeseen circumstances. The time allocations do not assume the whole syllabus will be covered, leaving time for a considerable revision period before final examinations. **Course:** The subject area follows the Edexcel specification:

Content and assessment overview

The Pearson Edexcel Level 3 Advanced GCE in Politics consists of three externally-examined papers.

Students must complete all assessment in May/June in any single year.

Component 1: UK Politics (*Component code: 9PL0/01)
<p>Written examination: 2 hours 33⅓% of the qualification 84 marks</p>
<p>Content overview</p> <p>1. Political Participation, students will study:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • democracy and participation, political parties, electoral systems, voting behaviour and the media. <p>2. Core Political Ideas, students will study:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conservatism, liberalism, socialism.
<p>Assessment overview</p> <p>Section A: Political Participation</p> <p>One 30-mark question from a choice of two (each question uses a source) – students must complete one of these. Plus one 30-mark question from a choice of two – students must complete one of these.</p> <p>All questions assess AO1, AO2 and AO3.</p> <p>Section B: Core Political Ideas</p> <p>One 24-mark question from a choice of two, which assesses AO1, AO2 and AO3.</p>
Component 2: UK Government (*Component code: 9PL0/02)
<p>Written examination: 2 hours 33⅓% of the qualification 84 marks</p>
<p>Content overview</p> <p>1. UK Government, students will study:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the constitution, parliament, Prime Minister and executive, relationships between the branches. <p>2. Non-core political ideas, students will study:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one idea from the following: anarchism, ecologism, feminism, multiculturalism, nationalism.

Assessment overview**Section A: UK Government**

- One 30-mark question from a choice of two (each question uses a source) – students must complete one of these. Plus one 30-mark question from a choice of two – students must complete one of these.
- ☐ All questions assess AO1, AO2 and AO3.

Section B: Non-core Political Ideas

- ☐ One 24-mark question from a choice of two, which assesses AO1, AO2 and AO3.

Component 3: Comparative Politics (*Component code: 9PL0/3A or 3B)
<p><i>Written examination: 2 hours</i></p> <p><i>33⅓% of the qualification</i></p> <p><i>84 marks</i></p> <p><i>Students study either USA (9PL0/3A)</i></p>
<p>Content overview</p> <p>For USA (3A), students will study:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the US Constitution and federalism, US Congress, US presidency, US Supreme Court and civil rights, democracy and participation, comparative theories.
<p>Assessment overview for 3A and 3B</p> <p>Section A</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One 12-mark question from a choice of two, which assesses AO1 and AO2. <p>Section B</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One compulsory 12-mark question focused on comparative theories, which assesses AO1 and AO2. <p>Section C</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two 30-mark questions from a choice of three, which assess AO1, AO2 and AO3.

Section 2

Teaching and Learning Policy

Nature of the subject and aims for teaching

Government and Politics is a two year 'A' level course designed to teach the student about the political institutions and concepts that are influential in Britain today in year 12 with a focus on comparative politics with the USA in year 13. The course also provides the student with insight and knowledge of major issues and controversial subjects relevant in Britain and the USA. It is designed to make the student more aware of the political process and more able to take an active role in the process.

The subject deals with controversial issues and encourages students to form their own ideas and opinions and to use these in debates and discussions. Government and Politics provides academic learning through the topics included in the course, but it also provides the skills and ideas that students can use in the outside world, such as awareness, tolerance and discussion. There is also a cross curricular aspect working closely with history, law, economics and geography departments in particular.

Government and Politics have a variety of distinct aims:

- Developing skills in expression, argument and discussion;
- Developing student awareness and confidence;
- Developing ideas relevant to the British and US political systems.

The goals of this course are the achievement of these aims. Clearly the promotion of good academic standards is a key priority for the course but the course cannot succeed unless students are able to discuss and handle the ideas and concepts in a confident manner.

Teaching Plans

Teaching plans are organised in the department as follows:

Schemes of Work – are available for both years 12 and 13. They outline the order of units to be studied and the amount of time allocated per unit. As stated before, the time allocation system is flexible.

Unit Guides – are provided for each individual unit. This breaks down the required elements of each unit, as well as indicating the resources available for the unit and the aims and objectives of the unit. The number of lessons allocated will be given along with a suitable destination point.

Personal Learning Checklists – A breakdown of key skills required for each topic area, measures a student's strengths and weaknesses in each area.

Moodle – Provides a record of what has been taught and can be used for reference.

Teaching Methods

Government and Politics is a notes based subject, but within that, a variety of ideas and methods are used:

Discussion Students are asked about issues in the news or are asked to lead discussions on a topic of their own choosing:

Study packs These cover several lessons and topics, containing a variety of tasks for students to do, but follow-up sessions are advisable to ensure satisfactory topic coverage;

Presentations Used for revision and class discussion to reinforce idea. These have been particularly useful for concepts and to complete work done with study packages;

Tasks Used to develop student awareness and to make a specific point about a topic; research, paragraphs, ten top points and revision posters have all been successfully used.

Podcasts Effective in harnessing new technologies and providing the opportunity for creativity in presentation.

You Tube When used selectively to illustrate ideas and to provide students with additional examples.

Practice A range of markschemes are available and these can be used to train students in assessment criteria and activities; EDEXCEL markschemes are used to ensure that the marks given are as accurate as possible;

Reading Set chapters before a topic begins helps students to gain an understanding of the topic and concepts. Differentiated reading has been developed to ensure that higher grade students are stretched whilst lower ability can consolidate their learning or read ahead to develop confidence.

Internet The Government and Politics department continue to pioneer online activities using a variety of programmes to interact with the students

Notes will also be used during the course, to convey information, but topics usually contain a mixture of these styles to ensure that there is a variety of teaching methods for students. Notes are set and checked every week to ensure students are completing their work effectively and organising their time well. Resources such as past papers, journals and e-learning materials are used to ensure students have as wide a range of sources as possible. Display boards are also updated with items of interest for students if required.

Students take responsibility for their notes and files, although the HoD may check these periodically. Handouts are provided and textbooks are used in conjunction with classwork. Work in class is provided from sources other than the textbook, therefore students have more than the standard range of sources available. Regular tests and assessment, compared to available progression data can be used as a

guide and can trigger intervention where necessary. Use of targets and Individual Action Planning have allowed problems to be raised and dealt with quickly.

Differentiation

As an 'A' level subject and considering its entry requirements, G&P assumes a good grounding in English but does not presuppose any knowledge of Government and Politics. Complicated ideas and concepts will be defined, where appropriate in a glossary section. In addition more able students are encouraged to use periodicals and the 6th Form library to provide them with more sophisticated ideas and up to date articles.

Information Communication Technology.

ICT provides an extensive resource for research and the presentation ideas. New Media has been at the forefront of presentation of ideas and concepts with social networking, You Tube, Wikispaces and Prezi widely being used to develop interactivity.

Section 3

PORTFOLIO OF GOOD CLASSROOM PRACTICE

Good Classroom Practice

1. List of measures seen as beneficial to G&P teaching:

- Starting lesson with questions on current events and last night's news;
- Glossaries of important words, phrases and terms;
- Example sheets; key examples;
- Quick tests
- Questions given under timed conditions;
- Role-play where appropriate;
- Topic talks;
- Annotated video notes;
- Mark schemes;
- Minimum grade requirements;
- Internet and e-mailing sessions;
- Discussions of a) issues, b) questions;
- Handouts;
- Study skills;
- Use of OHPs;
- Analytical skills and development of ideas;
- Revision programmes and packages;
- Wider reading;
- Consolidation activities.

2. **Specific details of above points:**

➤ **Starting lesson with questions on current events and last night's news**

Help to improve current affairs knowledge and improve level of awareness. Also, allows to develop teacher awareness of how much current affairs knowledge students have;

➤ **Glossaries of important words, phrases and terms**

Particularly useful on Paper 1 and technical topics such as Parliament, Cabinet and Electoral Reform. Also useful as consolidation exercises at the end of topics to test basic knowledge and that definitions are being learned correctly;

➤ **Example Sheets**

Useful in topics that need lots of examples – students write examples on a sheet that goes at the front of the relevant topic or can be compiled for an easy revision guide;

➤ **Key examples**

By looking at the Subject Report, key examples can be highlighted and emphasised where relevant;

➤ **Quick tests**

These can be used to consolidate work. Two formats are used – teacher-led work and Blockbusters, which allows students to comb their notes for the relevant information and consolidate basic ideas;

➤ **Questions given under timed conditions**

This has been seen as particularly helpful in developing ideas and exam strategies. The times are varied – cutting off five minutes from the set time can be helpful to force students to work under more pressured conditions;

➤ **Role-play and workshops where appropriate**

Local Government and Electoral Reform have used role-play to illustrate key trends and ideas. Workshops are given on Stimulus Responses, essay writing and short answer questions to develop skills. These were used with Year 12 and were well received;

➤ **Topic talks**

Used weekly to allow students to argue about points of interest and controversy. Also develops debating skills and can be useful for researching and developing arguments. Also useful for students to learn to justify their ideas and develop counter arguments;

➤ **Annotated video notes**

Provided for the Thatcher Years and Safe With Us – allows development of key ideas and for students to concentrate on the video rather than making notes and losing some of the narrative;

➤ **Markschemes**

Used with both year groups and are given after an essay has been marked to give students an ideal type answer and to give awareness of what higher grade bands are requesting. Exam markschemes are also given to give students a complete ideal type exam answer. Also of use for specific skills and needs, the markschemes are kept on disk and can be altered to change the focus on different skills;

➤ **Minimum grade requirements**

This method has proven extremely beneficial. In Year 13, predicted grades are used and students must achieve these or will have to rewrite work in their own time/in Homework Club. In Year 12, students negotiate own grades during mentoring week. If performance is particularly poor, this can be used as a way of motivating students or, if needed, highlighting problems;

➤ **Internet and e-mailing sessions**

These provide useful breaks in lessons. Booked into the OLC, students can be given time to access party web sites. Each G&P student has an e-mail address and this can be used to direct questions to politicians etc. The time can also be used to see and discuss issues with students;

➤ **Discussions of a) issues b) questions**

General discussion of issues have been outlined above. Questions are discussed to compare ideas and to test question interpretation. Also of use are planning the discussed question under timed

conditions and then discussing work afterwards. Poster work has been done as a follow-up to this activity;

➤ **Handouts**

Given on a wide range of subjects. These are varied and some use different techniques e.g. cloze techniques. A very useful idea was to give each revision topic to an A level student who would then produce a handout on the relevant topic. The topic was one that they were (a) very strong in and had original ideas that the class could benefit from or (b) were weak in and need to go and research carefully;

➤ **Study skills**

Used in specific workshops e.g. short answer questions, essays and Stimulus Questions to allow focus on the skills each type of questions asks for;

➤ **Analytical skills and development of ideas**

Year 13 were given a paper 2 Skills Sheet which was used to highlight the kinds of questions they needed to consider within each essay. This could be referred to as the work was completed and also in marking comments;

➤ **Revision programmes and packages**

Time is allocated at the end of each Year 13 course for revision. The format is simple – two topics per week and a timed piece of work at the end of each week on one of the two topics that week. The timed work will be a variety of essays, short questions and stimulus questions. This should accumulate so by the end, **any** topic could come up. The minimum grade should also apply because the workload on the student should increase so it is in their best interest to get ideas right first time!

➤ **A3 Revision sheets**

Seen as very helpful with synoptic revision and covering the trends for high achievers. Low ability students find them useful to

consolidate basic facts and trends can be used to help high ability students develop ideas further;

➤ **Wider reading**

Used particularly to encourage the high fliers. Reading from Coxall and Robins and Post-war Britain is set at the start of each topic and students are then given extra articles or books as necessary. Books can also be aimed at particular students and a record can be kept of the books taken out and returned. This should also allow checking of what books have been read and if a student is fulfilling their necessary quota of reading. 'Reading' may be books, videos or articles;

➤ **Consolidation activities**

Blockbusters, poster work and discussion have all be introduced **after** a topic has been completed to allow discussion of ideas and principles and for checking that work has been learned and absorbed. Blockbusters is particularly good for students to scour their notes thoroughly but poster work is enjoyed by students and has produced some good display work and preparation work for Open Evenings.

HOMEWORK POLICY

Main Points

1. Sixth Form students are expected to complete 40 hours of study per week, therefore around 4 hours of G&P work per week should be set – expectations for students are given at the start of the course in the Induction Booklet.
2. Some of this should come from the students themselves eg re-reading lesson notes and keeping up to date with the news, which can then be followed up in class discussion.

Homework Activities

3. Homework activities can include the following:
- Essays and short questions – when set, students can prepare, draft and write up their essays and in Year 13, revised for times essays;*
 - Set reading – students are given set chapters of textbooks to read in advance of topics;*
 - Wider reading – as part of targets students are set a number of books that they must read every half-term;*
 - Research activities on a set idea or topic;*
 - Presentations or reviews on a textbook, new book or issue;*
 - Preparation of topic talks (Year 12);*
 - Where students work does not meet their minimum required grade, they will have to rewrite and review their work;*
 - Reviewing class notes and organising revision notes;*
 - Differentiated reading to stretch high grade students and consolidate the knowledge of weaker students;*
 - Denotes written evidence may be required.

Other Policies

4. Formal homework will be marked according to G&P marking policy.
5. For further information, please see attached homework policy. Copies of the staff policy and the policy for the Sixth Form are attached.

SEN SUBJECT SPECIFIC CATEGORIES

To highlight problems to SENCO, the initial causes for concern can be identified through the following guidelines.

Learning Difficulties

- Oral work good but written work not matching this ability – several grades difference will be a cause for concern;
- Limited or no response to strategies already laid down for underachievers (*);

- At least two grades difference between standard of homework and times essays;
- Poor spelling and handwriting, necessitating extra time for exam;
- Sever difficulty in sentence or written work construction;
- Problems in structuring work rationally and logically, although ideas are well understood;
- Specific problems in note-taking or repeating basic examples that have been clearly identified/taught in class, therefore removing element of poor recall;
- Underachievers will do well in AO1 and AO2 but will lack development in AO3/4. Students with organisational difficulties will be noticeably weaker at AO4.

Most Able Students

- Exceptional ability in presentation, ability or awareness of ideas;
 - students showing strengths on topics or exceeding expectations *by a considerable degree* on a given point on the course.
- Suggestions for more able;
 - differentiated reading
 - extension tasks
 - variety of questions
 - range of challenging books and articles given as part of mentoring and report targets

(*) It is expected that underachievers would respond significantly to such strategies. Delineation between SEN needs and underachievers could be measured by their responses.

Section 4

CONTENT

UK Politics content

Subject content	Students should gain knowledge and understanding of:
1 Democracy and participation	<p>1.1 Current systems of representative democracy and direct democracy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The features of direct democracy and representative democracy. • The similarities and differences between direct democracy and representative democracy. <p>Advantages and disadvantages of direct democracy and representative democracy and consideration of the case for reform.</p>
Key terminology	
Legitimacy	
Direct democracy	
Representative democracy	
Pluralist democracy	
Democratic deficit	
Participation crisis	
Franchise/suffrage	
Think tanks	
Lobbyists	
	<p>1.2 A wider franchise and debates over suffrage.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key milestones in the widening of the franchise in relation to class, gender, ethnicity and age, including the 1832 Great Reform Act and the 1918, 1928 and 1969 Representation of the People Acts. • The work of the suffragists/suffragettes to extend the franchise. <p>The work of a current movement to extend the franchise.</p>

	<p>1.3 Pressure groups and other influences.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How different pressure groups exert influence and how their methods and influence vary in contemporary politics. • Case studies of two different pressure groups, highlighting examples of how their methods and influence vary. • Other collective organisations and groups including think tanks, lobbyists and corporations, and their influence on government and Parliament.
	<p>1.4 Rights in context.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Major milestones in their development, including the significance of Magna Carta and more recent developments, including the Human Rights Act 1998 and Equality Act 2010. • Debates on the extent, limits and tensions within the UK's rights-based culture, including consideration of how individual and collective right may conflict, the contributions from civil liberty pressure groups – including the work of two contemporary civil liberty pressure groups.

Subject content	Students should gain knowledge and understanding of:
2 Political parties Key terminology Old Labour (social democracy) New Labour (Third Way) One Nation New Right Classical liberals Modern liberals Party systems Left wing Right wing	<p>2.1 Political parties.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The functions and features of political parties in the UK's representative democracy. • How parties are currently funded, debates on the consequences of the current funding system. <p>2.2 Established political parties.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The origins and historical development of the Conservative Party, the Labour Party and Liberal Democrat Party, and how this has shaped their ideas and current policies on the economy, law and order, welfare and foreign policy. <p>2.3 Emerging and minor UK political parties.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The importance of other parties in the UK. • The ideas and policies of two other minor parties. <p>2.4 UK political parties in context.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The development of a multi-party system and its implications for government. • Various factors that affect party success – explanations of why political parties have succeeded or failed, including debates on the influence of the media.

Subject content	Students should gain knowledge and understanding of:
3 Electoral systems Key terminology First-past-the-post (FPTP) Additional Member System (AMS) Single Transferable Vote (STV) Supplementary Vote (SV) Safe seat Marginal seat	<p>3.1 Different electoral systems.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • First-past-the-post (FPTP), Additional Member System (AMS), Single Transferable Vote (STV) Supplementary Vote (SV). • The advantages and disadvantages of these different systems. • Comparison of first-past-the-post (FPTP) to a different electoral system in a devolved parliament/assembly. <p>3.2 Referendums and how they are used.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How referendums have been used in the UK and their impact on UK political life since 1997. • The case for and against referendums in a representative democracy. <p>3.3 Electoral system analysis.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Debates on why different electoral systems are used in the UK. • The impact of the electoral system on the government or type of government appointed. • The impact of different systems on party representation and of electoral systems on voter choice.

Subject content	Students should gain knowledge and understanding of:
4 Voting behaviour and the media Key terminology Class dealignment Partisan dealignment Governing competency Disillusion and apathy Manifesto Mandate	<p>4.1 Case studies of three key general elections.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Case studies of three elections (one from the period 1945–92, the 1997 election, and one since 1997), the results and their impact on parties and government. • The factors that explain the outcomes of these elections, including: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ◦ the reasons for and impact of party policies and manifestos, techniques used in their election campaigns, and the wider political context of the elections ◦ class-based voting and other factors influencing voting patterns, such as partisanship and voting attachment ◦ gender, age, ethnicity and region as factors in influencing voting behaviour, turnout and trends. • Analysis of the national voting-behaviour patterns for these elections, revealed by national data sources and how and why they vary. <p>4.2 The influence of the media.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The assessment of the role and impact of the media on politics – both during and between key general elections, including the importance and relevance of opinion polls, media bias and persuasion.

Component 2: UK Government and Non-core Political Ideas

There are two sections within this component, UK Government and Political Ideas. Students study UK Government and one political idea from a choice of five from the Political Ideas section.

Overview

Politics is ultimately about people, but most political decisions are made by a branch of government whose roles and powers are determined by a set of rules: the constitution.

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.

Students will explore the following key themes: the relative powers of the different branches of UK government; the extent to which the constitution has changed in recent years; the desirability of further change; and the current location of sovereignty within the UK political system.

UK Government

There are four content areas:

1. The constitution
2. Parliament
3. Prime Minister and executive
4. Relationships between the branches.

Non-core Political Ideas

This section allows students to explore **one** of five additional political ideas. Students will learn about the core ideas and principles, the effects of these ideas, the divisions within each idea and their key thinkers.

The five non-core political ideas to choose from are:

1. Anarchism
2. Ecologism
3. Feminism
4. Multiculturalism
5. Nationalism.

UK Government content

Subject content	Students should gain knowledge and understanding of:
1 The constitution Key terminology Constitution Unentrenched (entrenched) Uncodified (codified) Unitary (federal) Parliamentary sovereignty The rule of law Statute law Common law Conventions Authoritative works Treaties Devolution	<p>1.1 The nature and sources of the UK constitution, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> an overview of the development of the constitution through key historical documents: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Magna Carta (1215); Bill of Rights (1689); Act of Settlement (1701); Acts of Union (1707); Parliament Acts (1911 and 1949); The European Communities Act (1972) the nature of the UK constitution: unentrenched, uncodified and unitary, and the 'twin pillars' of parliamentary sovereignty and the rule of law the five main sources of the UK constitution: statute law; common law; conventions; authoritative works and treaties (including European Union law). <p>1.2 How the constitution has changed since 1997.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Under Labour 1997–2010: House of Lords reforms, electoral reform; devolution; the Human Rights Act 1998; and the Supreme Court. Under the Coalition 2010–15: Fixed Term Parliaments; further devolution to Wales. Any major reforms undertaken by governments since 2015, including further devolution to Scotland (in the context of the Scottish Referendum). <p>1.3 The role and powers of devolved bodies in the UK, and the impact of this devolution on the UK.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Devolution in England. Scottish Parliament and Government. Welsh Assembly and Government. Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive. <p>1.4 Debates on further reform.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> An overview of the extent to which the individual reforms since 1997 listed in section 1.2 above should be taken further. The extent to which devolution should be extended in England. Whether the UK constitution should be changed to be entrenched and codified, including a bill of rights.

Subject content	Students should gain knowledge and understanding of:
2 Parliament Key terminology Parliament House of Commons House of Lords Confidence and supply Salisbury Convention Parliamentary privilege Legislative bills Public bill committees Backbenchers Select committees Opposition	2.1 The structure and role of the House of Commons and House of Lords. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The selection of members of the House of Commons and House of Lords, including the different types of Peers. • The main functions of the House of Commons and House of Lords and the extent to which these functions are fulfilled.
	2.2 The comparative powers of the House of Commons and House of Lords. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The exclusive powers of the House of Commons. • The main powers of the House of Lords. • Debates about the relative power of the two houses.
	2.3 The legislative process. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The different stages a bill must go through to become law. • The interaction between the Commons and the Lords during the legislative process, including the Salisbury Convention.
	2.4 The ways in which Parliament interacts with the Executive. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role and significance of backbenchers in both Houses, including the importance of parliamentary privilege. • The work of select committees. • The role and significance of the opposition. • The purpose and nature of ministerial question time, including Prime Minister's Questions.

Subject content	Students should gain knowledge and understanding of:
<p>3 Prime Minister and Executive</p> <p><i>Key terminology</i></p> <p>Executive</p> <p>Cabinet</p> <p>Minister</p> <p>Government department</p> <p>Royal prerogative</p> <p>Secondary legislation</p> <p>Individual responsibility</p> <p>Collective responsibility</p> <p>Presidential government</p>	<p>3.1 The structure, role, and powers of the Executive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Its structure, including Prime Minister, the Cabinet, junior ministers and government departments. • Its main roles, including proposing legislation, proposing a budget, and making policy decisions within laws and budget. • The main powers of the Executive, including Royal Prerogative powers, initiation of legislation and secondary legislative power. <p>3.2 The concept of ministerial responsibility.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The concept of individual ministerial responsibility. • The concept of collective ministerial responsibility. <p>3.3 The Prime Minister and the Cabinet.</p> <p>3.3.1 The power of the Prime Minister and the Cabinet.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The factors governing the Prime Minister's selection of ministers. • The factors that affect the relationship between the Cabinet and the Prime Minister, and the ways they have changed and the balance of power between the Prime Minister and the Cabinet. <p>3.3.2 The powers of the Prime Minister and the Cabinet to dictate events and determine policy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Students must study the influence of one Prime Minister from 1945 to 1997 and one post-1997 Prime Minister. • Students may choose any pre-1997 and any post-1997 Prime Minister, provided that they study them in an equivalent level of detail, covering both events and policy, with examples that illustrate both control and a lack of control.

Subject content	Students should gain knowledge and understanding of:
4 Relations between branches Key terminology Supreme Court Judicial neutrality Judicial independence Judicial review Elective dictatorship European Union (EU) Four freedoms (EU) Legal sovereignty Political sovereignty <i>Ultra vires</i>	<p>4.1 The Supreme Court and its interactions with, and influence over, the legislative and policy-making processes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role and composition of the Supreme Court. • The key operating principles of the Supreme Court, including judicial neutrality and judicial independence and their extent. • The degree to which the Supreme Court influences both the Executive and Parliament, including the doctrine of <i>ultra vires</i> and judicial review. <p>4.2 The relationship between the Executive and Parliament.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The influence and effectiveness of Parliament in holding the Executive to account. • The influence and effectiveness of the Executive in attempting to exercise dominance over Parliament. • The extent to which the balance of power between Parliament and the Executive has changed. <p>4.3 The aims, role and impact of the European Union (EU) on UK government.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The aims of the EU, including the 'four freedoms' of the single market, social policy, and political and economic union and the extent to which these have been achieved. • The role of the EU in policy making. • The impact of the EU, including the main effects of at least two EU policies and their impact on the UK political system and UK policy making. <p>4.4 The location of sovereignty in the UK political system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The distinction between legal sovereignty and political sovereignty. • The extent to which sovereignty has moved between different branches of government. • Where sovereignty can now be said to lie in the UK.

Definitions of key terminology are given in *Appendix 2: Key terminology glossary*.

Component 3: Comparative Politics

There are two optional sections within this component, Government and Politics of the USA and Global Politics. Students study **one** of these.

Government and Politics of the USA

Overview

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.

The impact of the US government on the world beyond its borders is increasingly a feature of international politics. Students will begin to engage with this interaction by comparing and contrasting politics and institutions in the US with those in the UK. This will develop a wider understanding of politics as a discipline, underpinned by the theoretical concepts of comparative politics.

Content

There are six content areas:

1. The US Constitution and federalism
2. US Congress
3. US presidency
4. US Supreme Court and US civil rights
5. US democracy and participation
6. Comparative theories.

Skills

- ☐ Students must comprehend and interpret political information in relation to areas of US politics.
 - ☐ Students must fully understand and critically analyse and evaluate areas of US politics.
 - ☐ Students must identify parallels, connections, similarities and differences between content studied, providing a basis for comparing the UK with the US.
 - ☐ Students must construct and communicate arguments and explanations with relevance, clarity and coherence and draw reasoned conclusions about US politics.
 - ☐ Students must develop knowledge and understanding of key political concepts. The content supports these skills by presenting the main content for learning in the right-hand side of the content tables.
- Students must use appropriate vocabulary. The content supports this skill by listing key terminology in each content area. The lists are to support teaching of the main content and help students to use appropriate vocabulary in assessment. Students should, therefore, familiarise themselves with the definitions of key terminology for each section, please also

see *Appendix 2: Key terminology glossary*.

Subject content	Students should gain knowledge and understanding of:
1 US Constitution and federalism Key terminology Bipartisanship Checks and balances Codification Constitution Entrenchment Enumerated powers Federalism Limited government 'Principle' Separation of powers	<div> 1.1 The nature of the US Constitution. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vagueness of the document, codification and entrenchment. • The constitutional framework (powers) of the US branches of government. • The amendment process, including advantages and disadvantages of the formal process. </div> <div> 1.2 The principles of the US Constitution (as listed below) and an evaluation of their effectiveness today. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Federalism. • Separation of powers and checks and balances. • Bipartisanship. • Limited government. </div> <div> 1.3 The main characteristics of US federalism. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The nature of the federal system of government and its relationship with the states. </div> <div> 1.4 Interpretations and debates around the US Constitution and federalism. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The extent of democracy within the US Constitution, its strengths and weaknesses and its impact on the US government today. • The debates around the extent to which the USA remains federal today. </div>

Subject content	Students should gain knowledge and understanding of:
2 US Congress Key terminology Congressional caucuses Divided government Filibuster Gridlock Incumbency Mid-term elections Oversight Partisanship Unanimous consent	<p>2.1 The structure of Congress.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bicameral nature, the membership of Congress and the election cycle. <p>2.1.1 The distribution of powers within Congress:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> powers given to Congress in the Constitution, the exclusive powers of each House and the concurrent powers of Congress. <p>2.2 The functions of Congress.</p> <p>2.2.1 Representation.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Congressional elections and the significance of incumbency. Factors that affect voting behaviour within Congress: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> parties and caucuses, constituency, pressure groups and lobbyists. <p>2.2.2 Legislative.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The legislative process, including the strengths and weaknesses of this process. The differences between the legislative process in each chamber. The policy significance of Congress – impact and effectiveness of laws passed. <p>2.2.3 Oversight.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Factors that influence the relationship between Congress and the presidency. The checks on the other branches of government and the extent of its institutional effectiveness. <p>2.3 Interpretations and debates around Congress.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Changing roles and powers of Congress and their relative importance, and debates about adequacy of its representative role. Changing significance of parties in Congress. Significance and effectiveness of the powers outlined in the Constitution.

Subject content	Students should gain knowledge and understanding of:
3 US presidency	<p>3.1 Formal sources of presidential power as outlined in the US Constitution and their use.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The role as the Head of State and as the Head of Government. <p>The significance of these powers with reference to presidents since 1992.</p>
Key terminology	
Domestic politics	
Electoral mandate	
Executive branch	
Executive orders	<p>3.2 Informal sources of presidential power and their use.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The electoral mandate, executive orders, national events and the cabinet. • Powers of persuasion including the nature/characteristics of each president. • Executive Office of the President (EXOP), including the role of the National Security Council (NSC), Office of Management and Budget (OMB) and the White House Office (WHO). <p>The significance of these powers with reference to presidents since 1992.</p>
Imperial presidency	
Imperilled presidency	
Informal powers	
Powers of persuasion	
Unified Government	<p>3.3 The presidency.</p> <p>3.3.1 Relationships between the presidency and the following institutions and why this varies:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Congress and the Supreme Court. <p>3.3.2 Limitations on presidential power and why this varies between presidents:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • changing nature of power over their term in office • Congress, the Supreme Court and the Constitution • the election cycle and divided government. <p>The significance of these limitations with reference to presidents since 1992.</p>
	<p>3.4 Interpretations and debates of the US presidency.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How effectively they have achieved their aims. • The imperial presidency. • The extent of presidential accountability to Congress. • The role and power of the president in foreign policy. <p>With reference to presidents since 1992.</p>

Subject content	Students should gain knowledge and understanding of:
4 US Supreme Court and civil rights Key terminology Conservative justice Imperial judiciary Judicial activism Judicial restraint Judicial review Liberal justice Living constitution Originalism Public policy Stare decisis Strict/loose constructionist Swing justice Constitutional rights Racial equality Affirmative action	<p>4.1 The nature and role of the Supreme Court.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The US Constitution. • The independent nature of the Supreme Court. • The judicial review process (<i>Marbury vs Madison 1803</i> and <i>Fletcher vs Peck 1810</i>). <p>4.2 The appointment process for the Supreme Court.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strengths and weaknesses of the process. • Factors influencing the president's choice of nominee. • The current composition and ideological balance of the Court. <p>4.3 The Supreme Court and public policy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The impact of the Supreme Court on public policy in the US, with a range of examples, including examples post-2005. • Political significance debate: the role of judicial activism and judicial restraint and criticisms of each. <p>4.4 The protection of civil liberties and rights in the US today.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rights protected by the Constitution, by the Bill of Rights, by subsequent constitutional amendments and by rulings of the Supreme Court. <p>4.5 Race and rights in contemporary US politics.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The methods, influence and effectiveness of racial rights campaigns and the impact on current domestic policy: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> o voting rights, affirmative action and representation. <p>4.6 Interpretations and debates of the US Supreme Court and civil rights.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The political versus judicial nature of the Supreme Court. • Living Constitution ideology as against originalism. • How effectively civil and constitutional rights have been upheld by the Supreme Court and the effectiveness of this protection. • The extent of their powers and the effectiveness of checks and balances. • The successes and failures of measures to promote equality, including affirmative action and immigration reform.

Definitions of key terminology are given in *Appendix 2: Key terminology glossary*.

Subject content	Students should gain knowledge and understanding of:
<p>5 US democracy and participation</p> <p>Key terminology</p> <p>Campaign finance</p> <p>Factions</p> <p>Invisible primary</p> <p>Political Action Committees (PACs)</p> <p>Party system</p> <p>Policy group</p> <p>Professional group</p> <p>Single interest group</p> <p>Soft/hard money</p> <p>Super PACs</p> <p>Religious right</p>	<p>5.1 Electoral systems in the USA.</p> <p>5.1.1 Presidential elections and their significance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The main processes to elect a US president, including the constitutional requirements, the invisible primary, primaries and caucuses, the role of National Party Conventions and the electoral college, and the resulting party system. The importance of incumbency on a president seeking a second term. <p>5.1.2 Campaign finance.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The role of campaign finance and the current legislation on campaign finance, including McCain-Feingold reforms 2002 and <i>Citizens United vs FEC</i> 2010. <p>5.2 The key ideas and principles of the Democratic and Republican parties.</p> <p>5.2.1 The distribution of power and changing significance of the parties:</p> <p>Democrats</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> progressive attitude on social and moral issues, including crime greater governmental intervention in the national economy government provision of social welfare. <p>Republicans</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> conservative attitude on social and moral issues more restricted governmental intervention in the national economy while protecting American trade and jobs acceptance of social welfare but a preference for personal responsibility. <p>5.2.2 The current conflicts and tendencies and the changing power and influence that exist within the parties.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Democrats: liberals, moderates and conservatives. Republicans: moderates, social conservatives and fiscal conservatives. <p>5.2.3 Coalition of supporters for each party.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voters: how the following factors are likely to influence voting patterns and why, in relation to one recent presidential election campaign (since 2000) – race, religion, gender and education. <p>5.3 Interest groups in the USA – their significance, resources, tactics and debates about their impact on democracy.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The influence, methods and power of at least one single interest group, professional group or policy group.

Subject content	Students should gain knowledge and understanding of:
5 US democracy and participation (continued)	<p>5.4 Interpretations and debates of US democracy and participation, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • advantages and disadvantages of the electoral process and the Electoral College and the debate around reform • the role of campaign finance and difficulty in achieving effective reform • the role of incumbency in elections • the ways in which interest groups can influence the three branches of government and policy creation, including the role of PACs and Super PACs and their impact on democracy.

Subject content	Students should gain knowledge and understanding of:
6 Comparative approaches	<p>6.1 Theoretical approaches – understanding of these three approaches and the different ways they explain similarities and differences between the government and politics of different countries.</p> <p>Rational</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This approach focuses on individuals within a political system. • A rational approach suggests that such individuals will act rationally, choosing to act in a particular way as it will give them a beneficial outcome. <p>Cultural</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This approach focuses on groups within a political system – this could be voters, parties, pressure groups and so on. • A cultural approach suggests that the shared ideas, beliefs and values of these groups often determine the actions of individuals within them. <p>Structural</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • This approach focuses on the institutions in a political system and the processes within them. • A structural approach suggests that political outcomes are largely determined by the formal processes laid out within a political system. <p>6.2 Similarities and differences in the UK and USA.</p> <p>6.2.1 Compare and debate the following aspects of the UK and US Constitutions and the resulting impact on politics and government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • their nature (codified/uncodified) and their sources, provisions and principles, including separation of powers, checks and balances • the similarities and differences between the US federal system and the UK system of devolution. <p>6.2.2 The extent to which rational, cultural and structural approaches can be used to account for these similarities and differences.</p>

Subject content	Students should gain knowledge and understanding of:
6 Comparative approaches <i>(continued)</i>	<p>6.2.3 Compare and debate the following aspects of the UK and US legislative branches and their resulting impact on politics and government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • powers, strengths and weaknesses of each of the Houses • the extent to which each of the Houses are equal. <p>6.2.4 The extent to which rational, cultural and structural approaches can be used to account for these similarities and differences.</p>
	<p>6.2.5 Compare and debate the following aspects of the UK and US executive branches and their resulting impact on politics and government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • key similarities and differences between the role and powers of the US President and the UK Prime Minister and their impact on politics and government • extent of accountability to the US and UK legislature. <p>6.2.6 The extent to which rational, cultural and structural approaches can be used to account for these similarities and differences.</p>
	<p>6.2.7 Compare and debate the following aspects of the UK and US Supreme Courts and civil rights and their resulting impact on politics and government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • basis for and relative extent for their powers • relative independence of the Supreme Court in the US and UK • effectiveness of the protection of rights in each country • effectiveness of interest groups in the protection of civil rights in the USA and the UK. <p>6.2.8 The extent to which rational, cultural and structural approaches can be used to account for these similarities and differences.</p>
	<p>6.2.9 Compare and debate the following aspects of the UK and US democracy and participation, and their resulting impact on politics and government:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the different nature of the party systems (two-party and multi-party) • degree of internal unity within parties • the policy profiles of the two main parties in each country • debates around campaign finance and party funding • the relative power, methods and influence of pressure groups. <p>6.2.10 The extent to which rational, cultural and structural approaches can be used to account for these similarities and differences.</p>

Definitions of key terminology are given in *Appendix 2: Key terminology glossary*.

Section 5

TRANSITION

The Government and Politics Department is running the new linear specification from September 2017, which is much more thorough in terms of content and also demands a wider understanding of the political world. It is therefore essential that students ‘hit the ground running’ in September, which makes the work during the summer important. Enrolment onto the course is subject to completion of this work.

GOVERNMENT & POLITICS Students

The Politics Department runs a credit system for summer work – you need to gain at least 50 credits for each unit – *Unit 1 UK Politics (9PLO1/02)* *Unit 2 UK Government (9PLO/02)*, (100 in total). The tasks cover a wide range of options and you will hopefully be able to find something that covers your interests in current affairs and the media. **All work needs to be submitted by the end of the second week of the Autumn Term.**

Unit 1 - 25 credits	Unit 1 - 50 credits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create a presentation on one of the main political parties in the UK. What are their beliefs, policies, leaders etc. • Read “A Journey” by Tony Blair and write a 250 word review. • Research one pressure group such as Greenpeace / Hacked Off / Fathers for Justice / Amnesty International and summarise their background and policies. • Track the process of the Labour leadership election: who are the candidates / what are their arguments / etc. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect newspaper articles each week that relate and evidence the topics from the course. Unit 1: Democracy and Participation, Party Policies and Ideas, Elections, Pressure Groups. • Watch the film <i>The Iron Lady</i> by Phyllida Lloyd starring Meryl Streep and write a 500 word review. • Create a 500 word report on the 2015 election: you should cover the key election results / which politicians lost their seats / why was the SNP so important / why did the Liberal Democrats collapse?

Unit 2 - 25 credits	Unit 2 - 50 credits
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Visit a court (you can pop into the public gallery) and write a 250 word report on what it was like. • Go to http://www.politics.co.uk/ and keep a weekly diary of the main UK political issues each week. • Watch Question Time and write a 250 word review of the issues discussed. • Listen to the Weekly News Quiz on BBC Radio 4 - can be found on iPlayer - each week. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collect newspaper articles each week that relate and evidence the topics from Unit 2: Constitution, Prime Minister, Parliament or the Judiciary. Write your own opinion of each issue. • Read <i>The Downing Street Years</i> by Margaret Thatcher and write a 500 word review. • Watch the film <i>Taking Liberties</i> on YouTube and write a 500 word review. • Write to your MP about an issue that you feel is important to you. Bring the letter and the response, if you get one, to your first lesson in September.

We would like to welcome you onto the course and look forward to an exciting two year study of Government and Politics.

APPENDIX 1

KEY WORDS

Appendix 1: Key terminology glossary

This glossary is provided to help centres to teach students about subject-specific key terms. The list is not exhaustive and centres are free to add to the glossary as appropriate.

UK Politics

1. Democracy and participation	
Key term	Definition
Legitimacy	The rightful use of power in accordance with pre-set criteria or widely-held agreements, such as a government's right to rule following an election or a monarch's succession based on the agreed rules.
Direct democracy	All individuals express their opinions themselves and not through representatives acting on their behalf. This type of democracy emerged in Athens in classical times and direct democracy can be seen today in referendums.
Representative democracy	A more modern form of democracy through which an individual selects a person (and/or political party) to act on their behalf to exercise political choice.
Pluralist democracy	A type of democracy in which a government makes decisions as a result of the interplay of various ideas and contrasting arguments from competing groups and organisations.
Democratic deficit	A flaw in the democratic process where decisions are taken by people who lack legitimacy, not having been appointed with sufficient democratic input or subject to accountability.
Participation crisis	A lack of engagement by a significant number of citizens to relate to the political process either by choosing not to vote or to join or become members of political parties or to offer themselves for public office.
Franchise/suffrage	Franchise and suffrage both refer to the ability/right to vote in public elections. Suffragettes were women campaigning for the right to vote on the same terms as men.
Think tanks	A body of experts brought together to collectively focus on a certain topic(s) – to investigate and offer solutions to often complicated and seemingly intractable economic, social or political issues.
Lobbyists	A lobbyist is paid by clients to try to influence the government and/or MPs and members of the House of Lords to act in their clients' interests, particularly when legislation is under consideration.

2. Political parties

Key term	Definition
Old Labour (social democracy)	Key Labour principles embodying nationalisation, redistribution of wealth from rich to poor and the provision of continually improving welfare and state services, which largely rejected Thatcherite/ free-market reforms or a Blairite approach.
New Labour (Third Way)	A revision of the traditional Labour values and ideals represented by Old Labour. Influenced by Anthony Giddens, the 'Third Way' saw Labour shift in emphasis from a heavy focus on the working class to a wider class base, and a less robust alliance with the trade unions.
One Nation	A paternalistic approach adopted by Conservatives under the leadership of Benjamin Disraeli in the 19th century and continued by David Cameron and Theresa May in the 21st century, that the rich have an obligation to help the poor.
New Right	There are two elements – (i) the neo (or new) Conservatives who want the state to take a more authoritarian approach to morality and law and order and (ii) the neo-liberals who endorsed the free-market approach and the rolling back of the state in people's lives and businesses.
Classical liberals	Classical liberalism is a philosophy developed by early liberals who believed that individual freedom would best be achieved with the state playing a minimal role.
Modern liberals	Modern liberalism emerged as a reaction against free-market capitalism, believing this had led to many individuals not being free. Freedom could no longer simply be defined as 'being left alone'.
Party systems	The way or manner in which the political parties in a political system are grouped and structured. There are several variants that could apply to the UK, these include one-party dominant, two-party, two-and-a-half party and multi-party systems.
Left wing	A widely-used term for those who desire change, reform and alteration to the way in which society operates. Often this involves radical criticisms of the capitalism made by liberal and socialist parties.
Right wing	This term reflects support for the status quo, little or no change, stressing the need for order, stability and hierarchy – generally relates to Conservative parties.

3. Electoral systems

Key term	Definition
First-past-the-post (FPTP)	An electoral system where the person with the most number of votes is elected. Victory is achieved by having one more vote than other contenders – it is also called a plurality system.
Additional Member System (AMS)	A hybrid electoral system that has two components or elements. The voter makes two choices. Firstly, the voter selects a representative on a simple plurality (FPTP) system then a second vote is apportioned to a party list for a second or 'additional' representative.
Single Transferable Vote (STV)	This system allows voters to rank their voting preferences in numerical order rather than simply having one voting choice. In order to obtain a seat, a candidate must obtain a quota. After the votes are cast, those with the least votes are eliminated and their votes transferred and those candidates with excess votes above the quota also have their votes transferred.
Supplementary Vote (SV)	This is a majoritarian system. The voter makes two choices (hence the term 'supplementary'). If one candidate obtains over 50% on the first vote then the contest is complete, if no candidate attains this level, all but the top two candidates remain. Then the supplementary choices are re-distributed and whoever gets most votes from the remaining two, wins the seat.
Safe seat	A seat in which the incumbent has a considerable majority over the closest rival and which is largely immune from swings in voting choice. The same political party retains the seat from election to election. A majority of seats in UK Westminster constituencies are safe seats.
Marginal seat	A seat held by the incumbent with a small majority. There is no precise percentage or winning margin to which this aligns but a 10% margin would need only a swing of 5% to the rival party to take it. Marginal seats are important as they are where the outcomes of elections are decided. Only a minority of seats in UK Westminster constituencies are marginal.
Minority government	A government that enters office but which does not have a majority of seats in the legislature (Parliament). This makes passing legislation very difficult.
Coalition government	A government that is formed of more than one political party. It is normally accompanied by an agreement over policy options and office of state, as was the Conservative-Liberal-Democrat coalition from 2010–2015

4. Voting behaviour and the media

Key term	Definition
Class dealignment	The process where individuals no longer identify themselves as belonging to a certain class and for political purposes fail to make a class connection with their voting pattern.
Partisan dealignment	The process where individuals no longer identify themselves on a long-term basis by being associated with a certain political party.
Governing competency	The perceived ability of the governing party in office to manage the affairs of the state well and effectively. It can also be a potential view of opposition parties and their perceived governing competency if they were to secure office.
Disillusion and apathy	A process of disengagement with politics and political activity. Having no confidence in politics and politicians as being able to solve issues and make a difference. Manifested in low turnout at elections and poor awareness of contemporary events.
Manifesto	In its manifesto, a political party will spell out in detail what actions and programmes it would like to put in place if it is successful in the next election – a set of promises for future action.
Mandate	The successful party following an election claims it has the authority (mandate) to implement its manifesto promises and also a general permission to govern as new issues arise.

Core Political Ideas

Conservatism	
1. Core ideas and principle	
Key term	Definition
Hierarchy	The Conservative belief that society is naturally organised in fixed tiers, where one's position is not based on individual ability.
Authority	For Conservatives, this is the idea that people in higher positions in society are best able to make decisions in the interests of the whole society; authority thus comes from above.
Change to conserve	That society should adapt to changing circumstances rather than reject change outright and risk rebellion and/or revolution.
Atomism	That society is made up of self-interested and self-sufficient individuals (also known as egoistical individualism).

2. Differing views and tensions within conservatism	
Key term	Definition
Noblesse oblige	The duty of the wealthy and privileged to look after those less fortunate.
Anti-permissiveness	A rejection of permissiveness, which is the belief that people should make their own moral choices, suggesting there is no objective right and wrong.
Radical	Belief whose ideas favour drastic political, economic and social change.
Human imperfection	The traditional conservative belief that humans are flawed in a number of ways which makes them incapable of making good decisions for themselves.

3. Conservative thinkers and their ideas	
Key term	Definition
Laissez-faire	A preference towards minimal government intervention in business and the state.
Empiricism	The idea that knowledge comes from real experience and not from abstract theories.

Liberalism	
1. Core ideas and principles	
Key term	Definition
Foundational equality	Rights that all humans have by virtue of being born which cannot be taken away (also known as natural rights and inalienable rights).
Formal equality	The idea that all individuals have the same legal and political rights in society.
Equality of opportunity	The idea that all individuals should have equal chances in life to rise and fall.
Social contract	The idea that the state/society is set up with agreement from the people to respect its laws which serve to protect them.
Meritocracy	A society organised on the basis that success is based on ability and hard work.
Mechanistic theory	The idea that the state was created by 'man' to serve the people and act in their interests.
Tolerance	A willingness to respect values, customs and beliefs with which one disagrees.
Limited government	The role of government is limited by checks and balances, and a separation of powers because of the corrupting nature of power.

2. Differing views and tensions within liberalism	
Key term	Definition
Egoistical individualism	The idea that individual freedom is associated with self-interest and self-reliance (see also atomism).
Developmental individualism	The idea that individual freedom is linked to human flourishing.
Negative freedom	The absence of external constraints in society as well as no interference in the private sphere.
Positive freedom	The idea that freedom is about personal fulfilment and realisation of potential.
Laissez-faire capitalism	An economic system, organised by the market, where goods are produced for exchange and profit, and wealth is privately owned.
Keynesianism	An economic system that requires government involvement to stimulate the economy to achieve full employment and price stability.

3. Liberal thinkers and their ideas	
Key term	Definition
Harm principle	The idea that individuals should be free to do anything except harm other individuals.
Minimal state	The idea that the role of the state must be restricted in order to preserve individual liberty.
Enabling state	A larger state that helps individuals to achieve their potential and be free.

Socialism	
1. Core ideas and principles	
Key term	Definition
Fraternity	The bonds of comradeship between human beings.
Co-operation	Working collectively to achieve mutual benefits.
Capitalism	An economic system, organised by the market, where goods are produced for profit and wealth is privately owned.
Common ownership	Is the common ownership of the means of production so that all are able to benefit from the wealth of society and to participate in its running.
Communism	The communal organisation of social existence based on the common ownership of wealth.

2. Differing views and tensions within socialism	
Key term	Definition
Evolutionary socialism	A parliamentary route, which would deliver a long-term, radical transformation in a gradual, piecemeal way through legal and peaceful means, via the state.
Marxism	An ideological system, within socialism, that drew on the writings of Marx and Engels and has at its core a philosophy of history that explains why it is inevitable that capitalism will be replaced by communism.
Revisionism	A move to re-define socialism that involves a less radical view of capitalism and a reformed view of socialism.
Social justice	A distribution of wealth that is morally justifiable and implies a desire to limit inequality.

3. Socialist thinkers and their ideas

Key term	Definition
Class consciousness	The self-understanding of social class that is a historical phenomenon, created out of collective struggle.
Historical materialism	Marxist theory that the economic base (the economic system) forms the superstructure (culture, politics, law, ideology, religion, art and social consciousness).
Dialectic	A process of development that occurs through the conflict between two opposing forces. In Marxism, class conflict creates internal contradictions within society, which drives historical change.
Keynesian economics	Government intervention – can stabilise the economy and aims to deliver full employment and price stability.

UK Government

1. The Constitution	
Key term	Definition
Constitution	A set of rules determining where sovereignty lies in a political system, and establishing the relationship between the government and the governed.
Unentrenched (entrenched)	A constitution with no special procedure for amendment.
Uncodified (codified)	A constitution not contained in a single written document.
Unitary (federal)	A political system where all legal sovereignty is contained in a single place.
Parliamentary sovereignty	The principle that Parliament can make, amend or unmake any law, and cannot bind its successors or be bound by its predecessors.
The rule of law	The principle that all people and bodies, including government, must follow the law and can be held to account if they do not.
Statute law	Laws passed by Parliament.
Common law	Laws made by judges where the law does not cover the issue or is unclear.
Conventions	Traditions not contained in law but influential in the operation of a political system.
Authoritative works	Works written by experts describing how a political system is run, they are not legally binding but are taken as significant guides.
Treaties	Formal agreements with other countries, usually ratified by Parliament.
Devolution	The dispersal of power, but not sovereignty, within a political system.

2. Parliament

Key term	Definition
Parliament	The British legislature made up of the House of Commons, the House of Lords and the monarch.
House of Commons	The primary chamber of the UK legislature, directly elected by voters.
House of Lords	The second chamber of the UK legislature, not directly elected by voters.
Confidence and supply	The rights to remove the government and to grant or withhold funding. Also used to describe a type of informal coalition agreement where the minority partner agrees to provide these things in exchange for policy concessions.
Salisbury Convention	The convention whereby the House of Lords does not delay or block legislation that was included in a government's manifesto.
Parliamentary privilege	The right of MPs or Lords to make certain statements within Parliament without being subject to outside influence, including law.
Legislative bills	Proposed laws passing through Parliament.
Public bill committees	Committees responsible for looking at bills in detail.
Backbenchers	MPs or Lords who do not hold any government office.
Select committees	Committee responsible for scrutinising the work of government, particularly of individual government departments.
Opposition	The MPs and Lords who are not member of the governing party or parties.

3. Prime Minister and the government

Key term	Definition
Executive	The collective group of Prime Minister, Cabinet and junior ministers, sometimes known as 'The Government'.
Cabinet	The Prime Minister and senior ministers, most of whom lead a particular government department.
Minister	An MP or member of the House of Lords appointed to a position in the government, usually exercising specific responsibilities in a department.
Government department	A part of the executive, usually with specific responsibility over an area such as education, health or defence.
Royal prerogative	A set of powers and privileges belonging to the monarch but normally exercised by the Prime Minister or Cabinet, such as the granting of honours or of legal pardons.
Secondary legislation	Powers given to the Executive by Parliament to make changes to the law within certain specific rules.
Individual responsibility	The principle by which ministers are responsible for their personal conduct and for their departments.
Collective responsibility	Principle by which ministers must support Cabinet decisions or leave the Executive.
Presidential government	An executive dominated by one individual, this may be a President but is also used to describe a strong, dominant Prime Minister.

4. Relations between branches	
Key term	Definition
Supreme Court	The highest court in the UK political system.
Judicial neutrality	The principle that judges should not be influenced by their personal political opinions and should remain outside of party politics.
Judicial independence	The principle that judges should not be influenced by other branches of government, particularly the Executive.
Judicial review	The power of the judiciary to review, and sometimes reverse, actions by other branches of government that breach the law or that are incompatible with the Human Rights Act.
Elective dictatorship	A government that dominates Parliament, usually due to a large majority, and therefore has few limits on its power.
European Union (EU)	A political and economic union of a group of European countries.
Four freedoms (EU)	The principle of free movement of goods, services, capital and people within the EU's single market.
Legal sovereignty	The legal right to exercise sovereignty – i.e. sovereignty in theory.
Political sovereignty	The political ability to exercise sovereignty – i.e. sovereignty in practice.
Ultra vires	Literally 'beyond the powers'. An action that is taken without legal authority when it requires it.

Non-core Political Ideas

Anarchism	
1. Core ideas and principles	
Key term	Definition
Power	From the anarchist viewpoint, power is the means or instruments such as the law, the police and the use of ideology, by which the state and other social institutions secure their authority.
Authority	From the anarchist perspective, authority is the right of one person or institution to influence the behaviour of others and is seen as commanding, controlling and corrupting.
Government	From an anarchist perspective, government is a particular system of rule, from monarchism to dictatorship to liberal democracy, based on deceit and violence.
State	From an anarchist perspective, the state is seen as a sovereign body that exerts total authority over all individuals and groups living within its defined geographical limits.
Altruism	Concern for the interest and welfare of others based on rational self-interest or a belief that humans are social beings with a capacity for social solidarity.
Autonomy	A form of self-government or legislation, a combination of freedom and responsibility, in which the individual is not subject to the will of the state or any other person.
Direct action	A whole range of political actions from non-violent to violent actions taken outside of the legal and constitutional framework.

2. Different types of anarchism	
Key term	Definition
Syndicalism	Revolutionary trade unionism that uses direct action and the mass strike as an expression of working-class power to inspire popular revolt.
Direct democracy	From an anarchist perspective, citizens making law and policy decisions in person rather than through elected representatives in a form of popular, self-government.
Solidarity	From an anarchist perspective, a relationship of sympathy, co-operation and harmony between people, which means that they have no need to be regulated by the state and any regulation makes solidarity impossible.
Mutualism	A system of equitable exchange between self-governing producers, organised individually or in association and small-scale private property based on use or possession.

3. Anarchist thinkers and their ideas	
Key term	Definition
Collectivisation	The abolition of private property and its replacement by a system of common ownership.
Mutual aid	The most successful species are those that employ solidarity and co-operation rather than individualistic competition.
Insurrection	Is not synonymous with revolution but is rather egoistic, not a political or social act, that allows individuals to elevate themselves above the established institutions, leaving the establishment to decay and die.

Ecologism	
1. Core ideas and principles	
Key term	Definition
Industrialism	Based on large-scale production, a faith in science and technology, and the accumulation of capital and continuous growth to satisfy material needs, which is the super ideology of the complete left-right political spectrum.
Consumerism	A psychological and cultural view that focuses on consuming goods and services as a means to feel good about ourselves and drive economic growth.
Sustainability	The capacity of the ecological system to maintain its health over time, one of the most contested ideas in ecologism.
Environmental consciousness	A state of being where your sense of self is fully realised by a deep identification with the non-human world; this is the basis for a new form of ethics and social organisation.
Green capitalism	The market will deliver environmental solutions based on a strong faith in technology solutions and capitalism's response to ecologically-aware consumers.
Mechanistic world view	Post-Enlightenment science sees nature exist for the convenience of humankind and nature as a machine where the parts can be understood, fixed or replaced in isolation from the whole.

2. Different types of ecologism	
Key term	Definition
Limits to growth	The finite earth, with the scarcity it implies, places limits on industrial growth.
Decentralisation	Decentralised societies based around communes, villages or bioregions that can achieve sustainability through a high level of self-sufficiency, making them dependent on their natural environment.
Ecocentric	A nature-centred rather than a human-centred system of values that gives priority to ecological balance.
Anthropocentric	The non-human world is there purely as a means to human ends and non-human nature has only human instrumental value.

3. Ecologist thinkers and their ideas	
Key term	Definition
Biodiversity	The diversity of species within a biotic community, which brings the benefits of health and stability to the community.
Buddhist economics	The idea that economics should be built on the principles of 'right livelihood', which is an economics as if people mattered.
Biocentric equality	The radical idea that all beings within the biotic community have equal intrinsic value.

Feminism	
1 Core ideas and principles	
Key term	Definition
Public sphere	The area in society where relationships are public, specifically life outside the home, particularly society and work.
Private sphere	The area in society where relationships are seen as private, specifically home and domestic life.
Essentialism	The belief that biological factors are significant in the different character and behaviour of men and women.
Gender stereotypes	The different way society expects men and women to behave according to gender roles.

2. Different types of feminism	
Key term	Definition
Discrimination	Less-favourable treatment of one group of people compared to other groups.
Equality of opportunity	All humans, irrespective of sex, should have an equal chance in society to rise and fall.
Political equality	Equal right to vote, one person one vote, equal right to protest.
Legal equality	That the law applies equally to all and that no one is above the law.
Reserve army of labour	The idea that women constitute a spare workforce that can be called on as and when needed.
Gender equality	The idea that society should treat everyone the same, irrespective of their gender.
Cultural feminism	A form of difference feminism that seeks to challenge the dominance of male culture in society, instead seeking to promote 'women's values'.
Reformist	Seeking to change society gradually and peacefully.

3. Feminist thinkers and their ideas	
Key term	Definition
Otherness	The idea that women were considered to be fundamentally different from men, who were seen as the 'norm' and women, deviants from this norm.
Equality and difference feminism	Feminists who argue that men and women are fundamentally different from one another.
Intersectionality	An idea that challenged the notion that 'gender' was the singular factor in determining a woman's fate, arguing that black and working class women's experiences of patriarchy are different from that of white, middle-class women.

Multiculturalism	
1. Core ideas and principles	
Key term	Definition
Culture	Involves values, customs and beliefs that are passed on through the generations via learning.
Formal equality	Based on the individual's status in society, all have the same legal and political rights.
Diversity	Different races and cultures within a state are possible, is positive and should be celebrated, although the extent to which diversity should extend is contentious.
Identity politics	Advances a critique of liberal universalism as cultural oppression, where minorities are marginalised and the claiming of an authentic sense of identity by groups is an act of political liberation.
Tolerance	From a multiculturalist view, tolerance is a willingness to accept values, customs and beliefs with which one disagrees.

2. Different types of multiculturalism	
Key term	Definition
Individualist integration	Institutional adjustments for migrants or minorities as those of individual claimants and bearers of rights as equal citizens.
Multicultural integration	The processes of integration are seen as two way, different for different groups and individuals, to create a new national identity, where all citizens have not just rights but a sense of belonging to the whole, as well as to their own group identity/identities.
Assimilation	The processes affecting change and the relationship between social groups are one way, with minorities adopting the values, customs and beliefs of the majority.
Segregation	The belief that humans can be divided along racial and ethnic lines.
Cosmopolitan integration	The maximum freedom for minority, as well as majority, individuals, to mix with, borrow and learn from all cultures.

3. Multiculturalist thinkers and their ideas	
Key term	Definition
Positive discrimination	Preferential treatment for groups in society to correct structural inequality or compensate for historical wrongs.
Value pluralism	There is no one absolute conception of the 'good life' but rather multiple, competing and equally legitimate conceptions.
Group differentiated rights	Rights that belong to a group, in contrast to a right held by individuals, includes self-government rights, polyethnic rights and representation rights.
Universalism	From a multiculturalist view, universalism is where certain values are applicable to all individuals and all societies, regardless of culture, history, geography or any other differences.

Nationalism	
1. Core ideas and principles	
Key term	Definition
Civic nationalism	A form of nationalism based on the active participation of its citizens and a shared vision of equal citizens.
Liberal internationalism	The idea that sovereign nations should cooperate and create a level of interdependency to avoid international conflict.
Socialist internationalism	The idea that class solidarity is more powerful and politically significant than national identity. As Marx said: 'Working men of all countries, unite!'.
Ethnicity	The sense of belonging to social group that shares a common and distinctive culture, religion, language, or the like.

2. Different types of nationalism	
Key term	Definition
Rational	The idea that humans are capable of reasoned thought and are able to make logical decisions for themselves.
Progressive	Ideas that move towards improving society.
Regressive	Ideas that seek to revert society to a former or less advanced state.
Inclusive nationalism	A form of nationalism that believes that joining a nation is straightforward and quick, as it is not based on shared previous experiences.
Exclusive nationalism	A form of nationalism that believes that it takes time to be a part of the nation, as membership is based on shared history and language.
Chauvinistic nationalism	A form of nationalism that believes its nation is superior to others, seeing them as a threat to their survival.
Imperialism/ colonialism	The extension of control by one country over another by settlement or economic domination.

3. Nationalist thinkers and their ideas	
Key term	Definition
<i>Volksgeist</i>	The 'spirit' of a nation, the unique identity of a people based on their culture.
Integral nationalism	An intense, hysterical form of patriotism in which the individual is absorbed into the nation.
Black nationalism	A reaction to white oppression originating in the mid-20th century.

USA

1. US Constitution	
Key term	Definition
Bipartisanship	Attempts within the structure of the US Congress to try and ensure that the two main parties must work together in order to fulfil Congressional functions.
Checks and balances	The division of power between the three branches of government where each branch has a direct ability to prevent action from another branch.
Codification	A constitution that is written down in one document.
Constitution	A set of rules determining where sovereignty lies in a political system, and establishing the precise relationship between the government and the governed.
Entrenchment	A system by which the US Constitution is protected from change by law; in this case, by the Amendment Process of Article V.
Enumerated powers	Such powers are stated explicitly in the US Constitution – for example Article 1, Section 8 provides a list of Congressional powers.
Federalism	The US system in which sovereignty is shared between a central government (federal government) and the individual states, with each having their own specific rights.
Limited government	The power of the US federal government over its states and citizens is subjects to limitations as laid out in the Constitution.
'Principle'	A fundamental and 'organising' idea that runs throughout the US Constitution, e.g. democracy or accountability.
Separation of powers	The three key bodies of government, legislature, executive and judiciary each have their own powers, personnel and buildings.

2. US Congress	
Key term	Definition
Congressional caucuses	These are groups of legislators who share special interests and meet to pursue common legislative objectives, e.g. black caucus, women's caucus, Hispanic caucus
Divided government	When the House of Representatives, Senate and presidency are not all controlled by one party.
Filibuster	When a senator gives a prolonged speech on the floor of the Senate in order to obstruct legislative progress of a bill or confirmation of appointments to the Executive or judiciary.
Gridlock	A situation in US politics where the president and Congress are equally powerful, constantly preventing each other from acting, resulting in difficulty passing legislation.
Incumbency	The current holder of a political office re House or Senate seat or presidency.
Mid-term elections	Congressional elections held mid-way through a President's four-year term.
Oversight	The ability of one branch of government to supervise the work of another.
Partisanship	A situation in which Congressmen/women are incredibly loyal to their party, even when it means that the result is gridlock.
Unanimous consent	A senator or Congressman/woman may request unanimous consent on the floor to set aside a specified rule of procedure so as to expedite proceedings.

3. US presidency	
Key term	Definition
Domestic politics	Issues within the USA that directly concern citizens, e.g. healthcare, gun control, racial issues.
Electoral mandate	An electoral mandate is the permission granted to a political leader or winning party to govern and act on their behalf, e.g. to President Obama in 2008 and 2012. The mandate is more or less in effect for as long as the government is in power.
Executive branch	The executive branch, headed by the president, is one of the three branches of government; the other two are the legislative branch (headed by Congress) and the judiciary (headed by the Supreme Court).
Executive orders	A direction to the federal bureaucracy on how the president would like a piece of legislation to be implemented.
Imperial presidency	A dominant presidency with ineffective checks and balances from the other branches.
Imperilled presidency	This is the contrasting theory to that of an imperial presidency – it is claimed that the president does not have enough power to be effective.
Informal powers	Powers of the president not listed in the Constitution but taken anyway.
Powers of persuasion	This is an informal power of the president in which they can use the prestige of their job, and other bargaining methods in order to get people to do as they wish.
Unified government	Where both Houses of Congress and the presidency are controlled by people from the same political party.

4. US Supreme Court and civil rights

Key term	Definition
Conservative justice	A Justice with a strong belief in <i>stare decisis</i> , with a more narrow view of the Constitution, more likely to believe in a literal interpretation of the wording and believing in a generally smaller government.
Imperial judiciary	A judiciary that is all powerful and on which checks and balances are weak and ineffective.
Judicial activism	An approach to judicial decision making that holds that a Justice should use their position to promote desirable social ends.
Judicial restraint	An approach to judicial decision making that holds that a Justice should defer to the executive and legislative branches, which are politically accountable to the people, and should put great stress on the principle established in previous court decisions.
Judicial review	The ability of the Supreme Court to declare acts of Congress, and acts or actions of the presidency, unconstitutional and therefore null and void.
Liberal Justice	A Justice who interprets the Constitution more broadly in order to give the people more freedom and bring about social change.
Living Constitution	The idea that the Constitution is an evolutionary document that can change over time through re-interpretation by the Supreme Court (linked to loose constructionism).
Originalism	The idea that the meaning of the US Constitution is fixed and should not be subject to interpretation.
Public policy	Legislation and judicial decisions made on any policy that affect the whole of the US population.
Stare decisis	This doctrine is built on the idea of standing by decided cases, upholding precedents and maintaining former adjudications – thus tends to favour status quo – this is the opposite of the 'living Constitution' approach.
Strict/loose constructionist	'Loose construction' is a legal philosophy that favours a broad interpretation of a document's language. This term is often used to contrast with strict construction, a philosophy that favours looking solely at the written text of the law.
Swing Justice	An informal name for the Justice on the Supreme Court who falls ideologically in the centre of the nine current Justices.
Constitutional rights	The rights specifically outlined for citizens within the US Constitution, Bill of Rights and subsequent Amendments.
Racial equality	Racial equality is an equal regard to all races. It can refer to a belief in biological equality of all human races and to social equality for people of different races. In the USA, there remain calls for desegregation and voter registration in the south, and better jobs, housing and school integration in the north.
Affirmative action	A policy of favouring historically disadvantaged members of a community.

5. US democracy and participation	
Key term	Definition
Campaign finance	Campaign finance refers to all funds raised to promote candidates, political parties or policy initiatives and their agendas during an election.
Factions	The groups (factions) that make up political parties – ideological wings, particular age and occupation groups, citizens concerned about particular issues – are now a feature of modern politics.
Invisible primary	This is the period between when a candidate announces their bid for public office and when the actual primaries take place. It is also sometimes called the 'money primary' since candidates spend most of their time during this period raising money in an effort to show political strength.
Political Action Committee (PACs)	This raises and spends money in order to elect/defeat electoral candidates, with a donation limit of \$5,000 per candidate per election.
Party system	The number of parties that have a realistic chance of forming government within a political system.
Policy group	A group that attempts to influence a whole policy area, e.g. American Israeli PAC (AIPAC).
Professional group	A group that represents the economic interests of its members, e.g. American Medical Association (AMA), American Bar Association (ABA).
Single interest group	A group that advocates policy surrounding a small specific issue, e.g. National Rifle Association (NRA).
Soft/hard money	When cash is contributed directly to a political candidate, it is 'hard money', which may come only from an individual or a political action committee. When cash is contributed to a political party with no limits attached to the amount that can be received, this is a 'soft money' contribution.
Super PACs	A Super-Political Action Committee (Super PAC) raises and spends unlimited amounts of money to support or oppose political candidates but without directly donating or co-ordinating with these candidates (a result of <i>Citizens United vs FEC 2010</i>).
Religious right	The movement, which generally gives support to the Republican Party, is an ultraconservative religious response to the sexual revolution and an attempt to translate this into public policy, promoting family values, opposing abortion and the 1973 <i>Roe v Wade</i> judgment, opposing same-sex marriage, civil partnerships and non-discrimination laws.