

Introduction to Politics for Year 11 students

Politics is the study of how power is exercised, who exercises power, and the relationships between political institutions in both the UK and the USA.



Wider reading

It is very important that if you want to study politics, that you keep up to date with what is happening in the political world. Make sure you are reading good quality pieces on politics from sources like the BBC, the Guardian, the Independent and the Washington Post.

The following websites will also be useful, for the tasks below, as well as being useful when you are studying for your politics A Level.

<https://www.hoddereducation.co.uk/politicsreview>
www.tutor2u.net

You can also follow the Politics department on Twitter, where we post articles that are relevant to the A Level, as well as the current political climate. You can find us at @PoliticsAaa

The Constitution

This is the basis of our political system, and sets out where power resides, who can wield it, and checks and balances on power. The British constitution is made up of many documents and has developed over hundreds of years.

Create a timeline using the events below. On your timeline, explain why each event was important in creating the political system of the UK.

1215: The Magna Carta	1430: The 40 shilling franchise	1689: The Bill of Rights	1707: Acts of Union
1911 & 1949: The Parliament Acts	1832: The Great Reform Act	1918: Representation of the People's Act	1998: The Human Rights Act

Use these websites to help you:

<https://www.bl.uk/magna-carta/articles/britains-unwritten-constitution>
<https://www.britpolitics.co.uk/uk-constitution-key-source-a-level-uk-politics/>

In 1997 the process of devolution began.

Find out what the term devolution means, and then find out what powers the devolved bodies of the Scottish Parliament, Northern Irish Assembly and the Welsh Assembly have.

Explain why you think these three bodies have different powers.



Representation

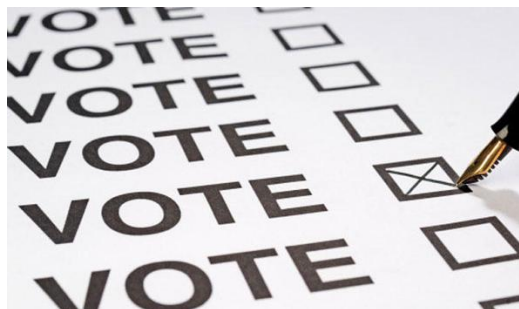
One of the most important aspects of politics for many citizens is feeling that they are represented by the people in power.

1. Conduct some research to find out who your MP is, which party they represent, and a notable contribution they have made in parliament (HINT- look at speeches they have made, committees they have served on, laws they may have sponsored).

2. Political parties try to represent the views of the people in parliament, but what is the difference between them? Can you find 5 differences between the policies of the Conservative and Labour parties? It may help you to look at the manifestoes for the 2019 general election.
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/election-2019-50291676>
3. Not everyone feels that political parties represent them, and instead choose to be heard through a pressure group or direct action. Find out about ONE of the following and how they have participated in politics – Snowdrop Campaign; Occupy Movement; Climate Strikes, Fathers4Justice

Elections and voting systems

Elections are held in the UK for local councils and the UK parliament, based in Westminster.



Watch the video to find out how the electoral system in the UK works and write your own explanation.

Do you think that this is a fair system? Can you think of any reasons why there are calls from some of the larger political parties to change the way people in the UK vote?

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Bc78rgUfsFw>

The Prime Minister and the Executive



The Prime Minister is the head of the government, and he runs the country alongside the Cabinet.

Use the website below to find out what the Prime Minister can (and maybe cannot do).

<https://publications.parliament.uk/pa/cm201012/cmselect/cmpolcon/writev/842/m6.htm>

Make a list of, in your opinion, the five most important members of the Cabinet, and what their role is.