



# Government & Politics

**Curriculum review**



## Our vision

The Politics Department offers its students an engaging, topical and dynamic curriculum. Students are encouraged to relate what they study in the classroom to the wider world. They will be encouraged to question the ideas, policies and speeches of our political leaders. They will be expected to read and research widely, using texts, journals and newspapers as well as online media platforms, to better understand the context to current affairs as they unfold. Studying politics and how we are affected by governments and politicians around the world has never been more relevant than it is today.

## Skills

Politics students develop a range of skills during their A-level course. They learn how to question and challenge the information they receive and how to marshal their ideas into cogent, analytical pieces of writing. Debate and discussion are central to the way the course is taught, and we believe passionately in developing students' abilities to communicate their ideas verbally in a confident and persuasive manner.

## Knowledge

We have put together a varied and engaging curriculum, that explores key political institutions and processes, from the powers of the PM to the different factors affecting voting behaviour. Students will compare the relative powers of political institutions and individuals in the UK with their European and US counterparts. They will also study some of the most popular ideologies that have influenced parties and politicians over time, such as socialism and liberalism. In addition they will look at modern ideologies, such as feminism and the impact these have on recent events such as the #MeToo movement. Teachers accompany students on their learning journey, and bring their expertise to bear, shaping lessons and learning opportunities so that they are not only thoroughly prepared for their exams but also have the skills and knowledge necessary for university studies or careers in the wider world such as journalism or the media.

## Enrichment

The department prides itself on the varied and exciting extra-curricular programme it offers. This ranges from lunchtime study support, helping students to develop exam skills and knowledge, to after-school and weekend activities and trips. In previous years students have been visited by members of the Houses of Commons and Lords and educational officers associated with pressure groups, such as Amnesty International. They have visited Parliament, the Parliamentary Archives and museums and galleries associated with political history, such as the National Portrait Gallery in London. Every other year, there is the opportunity to visit Washington DC, and see at first hand the key pillars of the US political system such as the White House and Congress. The Department runs a popular weekly Debating Society with an up-to-the minute programme of topical and ethical debates. In addition, students are encouraged to take part in debating and public speaking competitions, such as Mock Bar and Youth Speaks.

**“We did not come to fear the future. We came to shape it.” Barack Obama**



By studying Politics at A-level, you'll be shaping not just your own future but that of our society as well.

## Politics curriculum

The tables below provide an outline of the curriculum provided over each year. There may be some movement in the teaching of certain topics depending on where holidays, mock exams and other school events fall.

### Politics, Y12 – UK Politics – overview

**Teacher 1:** UK Constitution; British democracy; Parliament – House of Commons & Lords ; Devolution; European Union; Judiciary & UK Civil Rights

**Teacher 2:** Electoral Systems & Voting behaviour; Political Parties & PGs; 3 UK general elections; PM and Executive

<b>TEACHER 1</b> <b>Term 1</b>	1. Introduction to the course	2. Origins of the UK Constitution – research	3. Origins of the UK Constitution - presentations	4. What are the characteristics of UK Politics?	5. What are the main features of the Westminster model?	6. What are the relationships between the different branches?	7. How have politics changed in Britain over time?	8. Is British democracy alive and well?	9. What is a constitution and what are the chief sources in the UK?	10. Arguments for & against codified constitution	11. What key principles underpin our constitution?	12. What are the strengths and weaknesses of the UK Constitution?
<b>TEACHER 1</b> <b>Term 2</b>	How far has the constitution been reformed since 1997?	Should the UK adopt a codified constitution?	House of Commons, structure & members	House of Lords, structure & members	Comparing the powers and functions of the Commons and Lords	How well Parliament hold the executive to account?	What is devolution?	Devolution in Scotland	Devolution in Wales	Devolution in Northern Ireland	How should England be governed?	The impact of devolution on the UK
<b>TEACHER 1</b> <b>Term 3</b>	Evolution of European project	Aims of the European Union	Powers & functions of institutions of Europe	European political system	Impact of Europe on British politics & Brexit referendum	How is the Supreme Court organised?	Membership of the Supreme Court – research task	What are the key principles that underpin the SC?	What powers does the SC have?	What impact has the SC had on UK politics?	What impact will Brexit have on the SC?	Does the SC protect civil rights effectively?
<b>TEACHER 2</b> <b>Term 1</b>	What is democracy in the UK context?	Different forms of democracy	How effectively does democracy operate in the UK?	Extending the franchise - different forms of participation	How can people participate in politics in the UK?	How do PGs and other organisations enhance democracy in the UK?	Pressure groups – research task	Pressure groups - presentations	Do pressure groups promote democracy?	How are rights protected in a democracy?	What can be done to protect and improve democracy?	Elections and democracy
<b>TEACHER 2</b> <b>Term 2</b>	FPTP	Advantages & disadvantages of FPTP	Other electoral systems used in the UK	Impact of electoral systems used in the UK	Nature & use of referendums in UK	Referendums – research task	Referendums – presentations	How do different regions vote in the UK?	How do class, gender, age etc affect voting?	Changes in voter trends (3 case studies)	Voter choice	Role of the party leader
<b>TEACHER 2</b> <b>Term 3</b>	Role of the media & social platforms	What is a political party & what types exist in the UK?	3 main parties in the UK – history and ideas	Structures and functions	Issues and debates surrounding party funding	Minor parties & their impact	What are the functions and powers of the PM	Role of Cabinet & its relationship to PM	What is the difference between individual and collective responsibility	What are the relative powers of PM and cabinet?	What are the relative powers of PM and cabinet, Pt II?	Review with cases studies of recent PM styles

# Politics, Y12 – US Politics – overview

Teacher 1: US Constitution; Congress; Judiciary; Civil Rights

Teacher 2: President; Elections; Political parties; Pressure groups

<b>TEACHER 1</b> <b>Term 4</b>	Introduction to US politics	Student-led Presentations	Student-led Presentations	What are the key features of the US Constitution?	How are constitutional amendments made?	What are the key principles of the US Constitution?	What are 'separation of powers' and 'checks and balances'?	What is federalism and how has it changed?	What are the similarities and differences between the US and UK constitutions?	How did Congress evolve over time?	How is Congress organised?	What are the powers of Congress?
<b>TEACHER 1</b> <b>Term 5</b>	Who has more power – House or Senate?	How representative is Congress?	Is the work of Congress conducted in the Committees?	How are laws passed?	How much oversight does Congress provide?	How are the courts organised in the US?	Student-led presentations on current Supreme Court members.	What is the judicial philosophy of justices?	How does the appointment process work?	What is the power of judicial review?	What is judicial activism?	To what extent is the SC the protector of citizens' rights?
<b>TEACHER 1</b> <b>Term 6</b>	What role has the SC played in shaping public policy?	How far has the SC acted as a check on Congress & the Executive?	How similar/different are the judiciaries of the US and the UK?	Introduction to civil rights in the US	How have far voting rights been advanced?	How far has representation improved?	How have attitudes to immigration rights changed over time?	Comparing the protection of rights in the US and the UK	Student-led project on civil rights	Student-led project on civil rights	Revision	End of unit assessment
<b>TEACHER 2</b> <b>Term 4</b>	Introduction to the role of the president in US history	What kind of presidency did the Founding Fathers plan?	What are the formal powers of the president?	What are the formal powers of the vice president?	How important is the cabinet?	What is the role of EXOP?	How well can the president influence Congress?	How effective is the president's power to persuade?	What forms of direct authority does the president have?	How true are the theories of presidential power?	What is the president's role in foreign policy?	What factors affect presidential success?
<b>TEACHER 2</b> <b>Term 5</b>	Student-led presentations – which president changed America the most?	How do the offices of the US president and UK PM compare?	Why are elections so important to Americans?	What are requirements for presidential elections?	What are requirements for congressional elections?	What are propositions, referendums and recall elections?	What are principal similarities & differences between US and UK electoral systems?	How are parties organised?	How do ideologies and policies differ between parties?	What are some of the key policies that shape US parties?	Coalitions of supporters	Are parties becoming more polarised?
<b>TEACHER 2</b> <b>Term 6</b>	Does the US still have a two-party system?	How important are third parties?	Student-led presentations on Third Parties.	Are US parties in a period of decline or renewal?	How similar/different are parties in the US and UK?	What are the different types of pressure groups?	What are the different functions of pressure groups?	What are the different methods used?	How effective are PGs?	In what ways do PGs affect different branches of gov't?	What are the arguments for and against PGs?	Comparing PGs in the UK and the US

# Politics, Y13 – Ideologies – overview

Teacher 1: Liberalism; Feminism

Teacher 2: Socialism; Conservatism

<b>TEACHER 1</b> <b>Term 1</b>	1. Introduction to the course	2. Liberalism – a pervasive ideology	3. Origins of liberalism	4. Core ideas of liberalism	5. Different types of liberalism	6. Tensions within liberalism	7. Liberalism today	8. Case study – John Locke	9. Case study – J.S. Mill	10. Case Study – Mary Wollstonecraft	11. Case study – Thomas Hill Green	12. Case study – John Rawls & Betty Friedan
<b>TEACHER 1</b> <b>Term 2</b>	Revision & preparation for mocks	Revision & preparation for mocks	Revision & preparation for mocks	Revision & preparation for mocks	Revision & preparation for mocks	Revision & preparation for mocks	Revision & preparation for mocks	Revision & preparation for mocks	Revision & preparation for mocks	Revision & preparation for mocks	Revision & preparation for mocks	Revision & preparation for mock
<b>TEACHER 1</b> <b>Term 3</b>	Feminism - introduction	Origins of feminism	Core ideas of feminism	Different types of feminism	Tensions within feminism	Feminism today	Case study – Charlotte Perkins Gilman	Case study – Simone de Beauvoir	Case study – Kate Millett	Case study – Kate Millett	Case study – Sheila Rowbotham	Case study - bell hooks
<b>TEACHER 2</b> <b>Term 1</b>	Socialism - introduction	Origins of socialism	Core ideas of socialism	Different types of socialism	Tensions within socialism	Socialism today	Case study – Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels	Case study – Rosa Luxemburg	Case study – Beatrice Webb	Case study – Anthony Crosland	Case study – Anthony Giddens	Consolidation
<b>TEACHER 2</b> <b>Term 2</b>	Revision & preparation for mocks	Revision & preparation for mocks	Revision & preparation for mocks	Revision & preparation for mocks	Revision & preparation for mocks	Revision & preparation for mocks	Revision & preparation for mocks	Revision & preparation for mocks	Revision & preparation for mocks	Revision & preparation for mocks	Revision & preparation for mocks	Revision & preparation for mock
<b>TEACHER 2</b> <b>Term 3</b>	Introduction to conservatism – the 'politics of maintenance'	Origins of conservatism	Core ideas of conservatism	Different types of conservatism	Tensions within conservatism	Conservatism today	Case study – Thomas Hobbes	Case study – Edmund Burke	Case study – Michael Oakeshott	Case study – Ayn Rand	Case study – Robert Nozick	Consolidation