

Politics A Level

Preparation work: Pre-course Reading, Research and Tasks

Pre-reading and research will help you to become more familiar with the topics you are going to study on your A Level Politics course. If you complete the tasks below they will also help you to become more confident when you start your course.

Specification :

A good place to start to look at the A level specification and familiarise yourself with what you will be studying on the course:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-a-levels/politics-2017.html>

There are 3 parts to the Politics A Level:

Component 1: Democracy, Political Parties, Voting Behaviour & Media, Electoral Systems, Liberalism, Socialism and Conservatism

Component 2: The Constitution, Parliament, the Executive, Relations between the branches, Feminism.

Component 3: Global Politics OR American Politics

Task 1:

Produce a 1 side (A4) summary of at least 2 of the following topics that you will be studying as part of your course:

Democracy / Elections & voting / Referendums / The Constitution of the UK / The House of Commons / The House of Lords / How laws are made / Political Parties / Campaigning.

Use this booklet produced by Parliament to help you

<https://assets-learning.parliament.uk/uploads/2019/12/How-it-Works-booklet.pdf> and
<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zgqj6sg>

There are also plenty of short videos here <https://learning.parliament.uk/resources> to help you understand how it works too.

Case Studies:

Scottish Independence Referendum 2014

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/live/uk-scotland-scotland-politics-39255256>

<https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics/scottish-independence-referendum-nicola-sturgeon-snp-msp-a9308756.html>

Brexit Referendum 2016

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/sep/17/eu-referendum-constitution-brexit-democracy>

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2016/aug/07/north-poor-brexit-myths>

Task 2:

Research one of the two referendum case studies above and make notes on the following:

1. The result of the Referendum (turnout and percentage of vote on either side)
2. The impact of the result on British politics at the time
3. The impact of the referendum you picked in 2020

Websites for Further Research and Reading:

All national newspapers have good Politics sections, alongside BBC/Channel 4/Sky news/Politics Home/UK Parliament/Huffington Post.

Books/Magazines to Read:

- **Quality broadsheet newspapers** – The Telegraph, The Guardian, The Times, The Financial Times (or their apps!)
- **Weekly political** magazines – The Economist, The New Statesman, Private Eye, Prospect, Total Politics (or their apps!)
- **Why we get the Wrong Politicians?** by Isobel Hardman
- **The Full Story of Brexit** by Tim Shipman
- **Who runs Britain and who's to blame?** by Robert Peston
- **Road to Somewhere: New Tribes Shaping British Politics** by David Goodhart
- **Prisoners of Geography: Ten Maps That Tell You Everything You Need to Know About Global Politics** (Global Politics) by Tim Marshall
- **If Only They Didn't Speak English: Notes from Trump's America** (US Politics) by Jon Sopel

Podcasts:

UK Podcasts: Best of Today; Times Red Box; Guardian daily podcast; Pienaar's Politics; The Week in Westminster; Coffee House Shots; BBC Beyond Today; Talking Politics

Global Politics Podcasts: The Economist – The Intelligence; BBC World Service – The Inquiry; Deconstructed – The Intercept

USA Podcasts: Pod Save America; Americast; Washington Week; Anderson Cooper 360

Task 3:

Research your local MP using <https://www.theyworkforyou.com> and the internet to make notes on the following:

1. When they were elected
2. What party they represent
3. Issues they care about
4. What did they last speak about in parliament?



Films/documentaries to Watch:

- **The News!** Channel 4 news at 7 is particularly good, as well as BBC at 10 O Clock, Newsnight on BBC2 at 10.30pm.
- **Brexit: The Uncivil War** – Docudrama on the Brexit campaign, starring Benedict Cumberbatch as Dominic Cummings. (Channel 4 On Demand)
- **Question Time** – Every Thursday at 10.35. See politicians quizzed by the public
- **Trump vs Clinton: Divided America** – An overview of the build up to the 2016 US election, offering an insight into the divide in America (available on Youtube)
- **Bitter Lake – Adam Curtis** – an interesting, if slanted, view on the reason for international instability around the Middle East (available on YouTube)
- **Thatcher – A Very British Revolution** series on iplayer.
- **The Great Hack** – an excellent insight into the use of our personal data in political campaigning (on Netflix)
- **Knock Down the House** – an insight into women campaigning to get into the US Congress. (Netflix).

Progression Opportunities

Why choose Politics A Level:

Politics is taken by students doing a wide range of other subjects, in both the Arts and Sciences, therefore it can be a truly complementary subject, extending and balancing a programme of study drawn from any part of the College curriculum. Our students go on to a wide range of courses (including Politics & International Relations, History, English, Law, Economics, Philosophy, or Theology) and a broad range of careers.

Students trained in Politics have developed skills of critical analysis and judgement; these are highly valued in many professions, including Law, Management, Finance, Diplomacy, Journalism and, of course, Politics.

Click [here](#) for the reasons to study Politics (The Times Higher Education).

We hope you enjoy completing these tasks and look forward to you joining the course.

