

A-LEVEL POLITICS HANDBOOK



- **GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS IN THE UK**
- **GOVERNMENT AND POLITICS IN THE USA
AND COMPARATIVE POLITICS**
- **POLITICAL IDEAS**



Expectations in A-Level Politics



1. Your attendance at **ALL** lessons is **COMPULSORY**.
2. If you do miss any lessons you **MUST** copy the work up before the next lesson. Any points of confusion **YOU** need to follow up! (You can contact your teachers by email if you can't track them down!)
3. All deadlines should be adhered to. If there are extenuating circumstances then talk to your teacher **BEFORE** the deadline!
4. A level study is hard and different to GCSE – so you need to use your teacher as a resource and **ASK** for help if you need it. Don't just hope it will all make sense later!
5. Get involved in **ALL** lessons by asking and answering at least 3 questions each time.
6. Listen respectfully to the views of others, even if you don't agree with them.
7. Ensure that your folder is kept up-to-date and bring it to **ALL** lessons with the current topic/units' work.
8. If presenting work in a group ensure you have copies for your classmates and contact your group members if you are likely to be away on the day (and pass your work on so they can present in your absence).
9. Please ensure that you follow the Sixth Form rules, especially in relation to dress code (coats and hats off in lesson) and mobile phones.

Presentation in A-Level Politics

1. All work should be kept in a folder just for Politics and this must be clearly labelled.
2. This course handbook should be at the front of your folder.
3. All assessed work (essays, tests etc.) should be done in your Politics exercise book.
4. All topics should be sorted into sections using clearly labelled dividers.
5. **ALL** pieces of work should have a title and date.
6. **NO** graffiti or doodling on your work or folder.

Organising your folder

PAPER 1

You will need a big lever arch folder for Paper 1.

You should have dividers for each topic:

1. Democracy and participation
2. Elections and referendums
3. Political Parties
4. Pressure Groups
5. The European Union
6. UK Constitution
7. Devolution
8. Judiciary
9. Parliament
10. Prime Minister and cabinet

PAPER 2

You will need a big lever arch folder for Paper 2.

You should have dividers for each subsection in each topic:

1. The constitutional framework of US government
2. The legislative branch of government: Congress
3. The Electoral process and direct democracy
4. Pressure groups
5. Presidents
6. The judicial branch of government
7. Political parties
8. Civil Rights
9. Comparative politics

PAPER 3

You will need a big lever arch folder for Paper 2.

You should have dividers for each subsection in each topic:

1. Liberalism
2. Socialism
3. Conservatism
4. Feminism

Homework

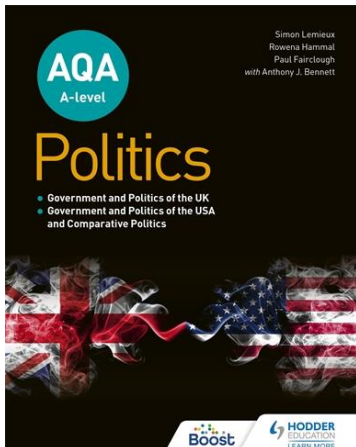
You are expected to spend at least 5 hours outside of your Politics lessons on homework. This will include a number of written pieces but in addition to this you have to also complete the following 'politics log' homework:

- Read a quality newspaper (e.g. The Guardian) each week.
- Watch the news every day.
- Watch at least one Politics TV programme each week e.g. Sunday Politics, The Andrew Marr Show.

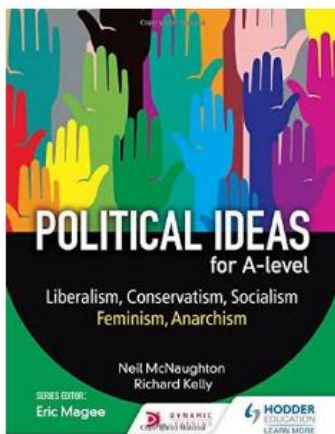
You will be asked by your teachers to complete specific homeworks related to the topics you are studying as well as be asked to complete revision activities and exam questions at home.

You will be expected to build up your revision portfolio as we go through (and not leave it all until the end of year 13)

Useful resources



The Main Politics textbook published in 2020 for UK and US Politics. This is the main source of information for your A level, but remember it won't include the most recent events.

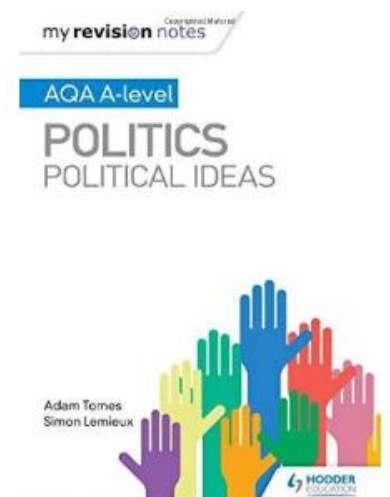


The Politics textbook we use for Political Ideas. This is the main source of information for your A level, but remember it won't include the most recent events. It is also not specific to our exam board so is best supplemented with the revision guides below.

My Revision Notes: AQA A-level Politics



A-Level Politics



The Redhill Academy

Paper 1

What's assessed

Government and politics of the UK

How it's assessed

- Written exam: 2 hours
- 77 marks
- 33½ % of A-level

Questions

A mixture of medium length 'explain' and essay style questions.

Paper 2

What's assessed

- The government and politics of the USA
- Comparative politics

How it's assessed

- Written exam: 2 hours
- 77 marks
- 33½ % of A-level

Questions

A mixture of medium length 'explain' and essay style questions.

Paper 3

What's assessed

Political ideas

How it's assessed

- Written exam: 2 hours
- 77 marks
- 33½ % of A-level

Questions

A mixture of medium length 'explain' and essay style questions.

WHAT YOU WILL STUDY:

Paper 1

Paper 2

Paper 3

YEAR 12 OVERVIEW

TERM	Teacher 1 – 3 lessons per week	Teacher 2 – 2 lessons per week
1	Introduction UK constitution UK and devolution UK and EU	Introduction UK democracy UK elections and referendums
2	UK Parliament UK Prime Minister / Cabinet	UK elections and referendums (continued) UK political parties
3	UK judiciary US constitution US Congress (To finish in year 13)	UK political parties (continued) UK pressure groups US electoral process (To finish in year 13)

YEAR 13 OVERVIEW

TERM	Teacher 1 – 3 lessons per week	Teacher 2 – 2 lessons per week
1	<p>US electoral process</p> <p>US pressure groups</p> <p>US political parties</p> <p>Liberalism</p>	<p>US Congress</p> <p>US Presidency</p>
2	<p>Socialism</p> <p>Conservatism</p> <p>Feminism</p>	<p>US judiciary</p> <p>US civil rights</p>
3	<p>Finishing content</p> <p>Revision (all papers)</p>	<p>Finishing content</p> <p>Revision (all papers)</p>

EXAMPLE POLITICS PAPER 1

A-Level POLITICS PAPER 1

Government and politics of the UK

Time allowed: 2 hours

Materials

For this paper you must have:

- an AQA 12-page answer book.

Instructions

- Use black ink or black ball-point pen.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book.
- Answer **all** questions from sections A and B.
- Answer **either** question 5 **or** question 6 from section C.
- Do all rough work in your answer book. Cross through any work that you do not want to be marked. Do **not** tear out any part of the book. All work must be handed in.
- If you use more than one book, check that you have written the information required on each book.

Information

- The marks for questions are shown in brackets.
- The maximum mark for this paper is 77.

Section A - Short Questions

Answer questions 1, 2 and 3

- 1** Explain and analyse the significance of three sources of the British constitution.
[9 marks]
- 2** Explain and analyse three ways in which pressure groups seek to influence government policy.
[9 marks]
- 3** Explain and analyse three factors that can influence voting behaviour.
[9 marks]

Turn over for the next question

Section B - Extract Question

Read the extract below and answer question 4 that follows.

Party funding: there is an alternative to murky donations from the super-rich

There are fundamental problems arising as the traditional two-party system collapses. Party memberships are crashing – the paid-up support the Conservatives had when Cameron became leader has declined by over half, which was itself barely one-fifth of the number when Margaret Thatcher took over the Tories. The average age of members is almost 70.

The 2011 Kelly review saw the solution as more state funding, yet this would only shore up organisations that are clearly failing. It feels often that the main parties think their history gives them an unquestionable right to survive. If so, it's a misguided belief, with the digital age disrupting politics as it does so many other areas of life. Public contempt would also be fuelled if voters saw more of their taxes going to political parties at a time of spending cuts.

Far more sensible would be to adopt the review's other key suggestion of a £10,000 cap on individual donations – then throw in a ban on funding from any other sources. For the reason most of these businesses, unions and wealthy people hand over huge sums is to buy influence, along with baubles and titles – all profoundly anti-democratic.

Extract taken from an article written by the journalist Ian Birrell in *The Guardian* newspaper (07 October 2016)

Turn over for the next question

Section C - Essay Question

Answer **either** question 5 **or** question 6

In your answer you should draw on material from across the whole range of your course of study in Politics.

Either

5

'There are many factors that can give the prime minister power over cabinet colleagues.'
Analyse and evaluate this statement.

[25 marks]

Or

6

'Despite their weaknesses select committees play an increasingly central role in British Politics.'
Analyse and evaluate this statement.

[25 marks]

END OF QUESTIONS

EXAMPLE

POLITICS

PAPER 2

A-Level POLITICS PAPER 2

Government and politics of the USA and comparative politics

Time allowed: 2 hours

Materials

For this paper you must have:

- an AQA 12-page answer book.

Instructions

- Use black ink or black ball-point pen.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book.
- Answer **all** questions from sections A and B.
- Answer **either** question 5 **or** question 6 from section C.
- Do all rough work in your answer book. Cross through any work that you do not want to be marked.
- Do **not** tear out any part of the book. All work must be handed in.
- If you use more than one book, check that you have written the information required on each book.

Information

- The marks for questions are shown in brackets.
- The maximum mark for this paper is 77

Section A – US Government

Answer questions 1, 2 and 3

- 1** Explain and analyse three ways in which independent candidates may be significant in US politics.
[9 marks]
- 2** Explain and analyse three ways that the concept of federalism influences US government.
[9 marks]
- 3** Explain and analyse three ways that structural theory could be used to study executive/legislative relations in the UK and US.
[9 marks]

Turn over for the next question

Section B - Extract Question

Read the extract below and answer question 4 that follows.

Selecting US Presidential Candidates

When it comes to nominating presidential candidates, it turns out the world's foremost democracy is not so purely democratic. For decades, both major parties have used a somewhat convoluted process for picking their nominees, one that involves ordinary voters in only an indirect way.

In Nashville, supporters of Donald J. Trump accused Republican leaders of trying to stack the state's delegate slate with people who were anti-Trump. The Trump campaign posted the cell phone number of the state party chairman on Twitter, leading him to be inundated with calls. Backers of Senator Bernie Sanders, bewildered at why he kept winning states but could not cut into Hillary Clinton's delegate count because of her overwhelming lead with "super delegates," used Reddit and Twitter to start an aggressive pressure campaign to flip votes.

However, the state-by-state primary still broadens the political conversation, rather than limiting it. Given the culture and demographics of each early state, several different candidates can compete. In years past, social conservatives relied on Iowa's evangelical voters to grab the national spotlight. New Hampshire then allowed more moderate Republicans to shape the conversation. Weeks later, Florida tends to put immigration front and centre, as that state's Cuban-American voters take to the polls. This gradual march to the nomination ensures that America hears from a variety of candidates, each with a week of extra attention heading into their most relevant primary. By the end of the primary season, we've had a chance to carefully consider a dozen different perspectives. For some candidates, just influencing the national conversation is a big win, and the current primary system encourages this dialogue.

Extract adapted from an article written by the journalist Jeremy W Peters for *The New York Times* newspaper in 2016 and 3 Reasons the Presidential Primary System Still Works By Ben Taylor on January 29, 2016 YouGov

4

Analyse, evaluate and compare the arguments in the above passage for and against the primary and caucus system used to select each party's presidential nominee.

[25 marks]

Turn over for the next question

Section C – Comparative Government and Politics Essay Questions

Answer **either** question 5 **or** question 6

In your answer you should draw on material from across the whole range of your course of study in Politics.

Either

- 5** The constitutional power of the Prime Minister exceeds the power of the President. Analyse and evaluate this statement.

[25 marks]

Or

- 6** 'Citizens' rights are better protected by the judiciary in the USA than in the UK' Analyse and evaluate this statement.

[25 marks]

END OF QUESTIONS

EXAMPLE

POLITICS

PAPER 3

A-Level

POLITICS PAPER 3

Political ideas

Time allowed: 2 hours

Materials

For this paper you must have:

- an AQA 12-page answer book.

Instructions

- Use black ink or black ball-point pen.
- Write the information required on the front of your answer book.
- Answer **all** questions from sections A and B.
- Answer **one question** from section C.
- Do all rough work in your answer book. Cross through any work that you do not want to be marked. Do not tear out any part of the book. All work must be handed in.
- If you use more than one book, check that you have written the information required on each book.

Information

- The marks for questions are shown in brackets.
- The maximum mark for this paper is 77.

Section A - Core Ideologies Short Questions

Answer questions 1, 2 and 3

0 1

Explain and analyse three ways that tradition is significant to conservative thinkers.

[9 marks]

0 2

Explain and analyse three ways that the concept of human nature is significant to socialist thinkers.

[9 marks]

0 3

Explain and analyse three ways that liberal thinkers have viewed state intervention.

[9 marks]

Section B - Core Ideologies Extract Question

Read the extract below and answer question 4 that follows.

The means of achieving Socialism

Most early socialists in the UK were firmly committed to parliamentary democracy which had rapidly expanded in the late 19th and early 20th century. Their short-term objectives for any majority Labour Government were to:

- Abolish poverty and create a social service state
- Achieve a greater degree of equalisation of wealth
- Undertake economic planning for full employment and stability

These ideas were expressed by Fabians such as Beatrice Webb.

This was a gradualist approach which aimed to change society incrementally by working through existing structures. However, many socialists, whilst accepting these aims in principle, thought that they were probably unattainable within the existing economic framework. Drawing on a predominantly Marxist analysis, influenced by political events elsewhere in Europe, they believed that capitalism itself must first be overthrown by force. Without this, it was argued, reform would be made impossible; either because the whole system was in process of decline or because of the entrenched power and reactionary attitudes of the capitalist ruling-class.

The influence of this Marxist analysis in the 1930s, reflected a debate without precedent in the history of the British Labour Movement; a movement which had traditionally been so aggressively anti-ideological.

Extract adapted from The Future of Socialism by Anthony Crosland, published in 1956

0 4

Analyse, evaluate and compare the arguments being made in the above extract over the means of achieving socialism. In your answer, you should refer to the thinkers you have studied.

[25 marks]

Section C - Other Ideologies Essay Question

Answer the question set on **one** of the following ideologies
In your answer you should draw on material from across the whole range of your course of study in
Politics.

Feminism

0 5

With reference to the feminist thinkers that you have studied, analyse and evaluate the changing nature of feminism.

[25 marks]

Nationalism

0 6

'Nationalism has an anti-character; it is defined by what it opposes.' Analyse and evaluate this statement with reference to the nationalist thinkers that you have studied.

[25 marks]

Multiculturalism

0 7

With reference to the multiculturalist thinkers that you have studied, analyse and evaluate the view that multiculturalism is doomed to fail.

[25 marks]

Ecologism

0 8

'Ecologism is incompatible with economic growth.' Analyse and evaluate this statement with reference to the ecologist thinkers that you have studied.

[25 marks]

Anarchism

0 9

'The term anarchism encompasses such a wide range of ideas that it can hardly be considered a single ideology.' Analyse and evaluate this statement with reference to the anarchist thinkers that you have studied.

[25 marks]

END OF QUESTIONS

Politics cross-curricular themes

Geography	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Industrialisation• Superpowers• UK economy
History	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Industrialisation• The welfare state• Revolution• Communism• Civil Rights• The Cold War
Media	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The impact of the media on politics
Philosophy	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Philosophers e.g. early liberal thinkers.
Sociology	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Marxism, socialism and communism• The UK's major and minor Politics Parties• Influences of the media on voting behaviour