

Name _____

AQA A-Level Politics 2021-2023

A-Level Course guidance

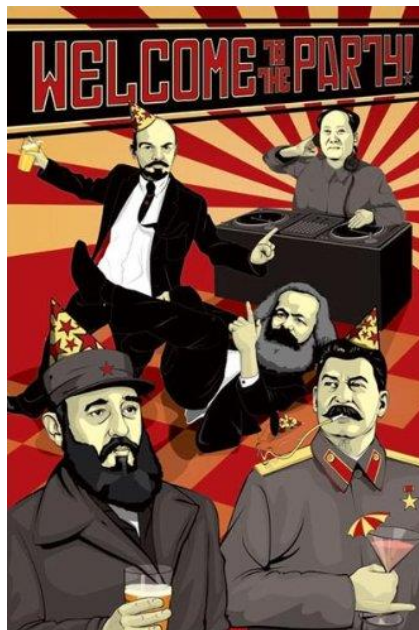
Unit 1: Government and Politics of the UK



Unit 2: The Government and Politics of the USA



Unit 3: Political Ideas



Welcome to A-Level Politics!

We look forward to teaching you over the next two years and you can rest assured that we enjoy teaching Politics as much as you will enjoy studying it.

The course is split into three units both worth 33.3% of the final grade.

If you have any further questions, then just let us know.

What do we study?

You study three units over the two-year course that cover the UK and US Political System and the Political Ideologies that underpin them. Each unit is taught over your two years with one exam paper taken for each at the end. Below is a short run down of what you will study in each unit.

Unit 1 – Government and Politics of the UK

The Government of the UK

- The British Constitution
- Structure and role of Parliament
- The Prime Minister and Cabinet
- The Judiciary
- Devolution

The Politics of the UK

- Democracy and Participation
- Elections and Referendums
- Political Parties
- Pressure Groups
- The European Union

Unit 2 – The Government and Politics of the USA: a comparative study

- The Constitutional framework of the USA
- The Legislative Branch: Congress
- The Executive Branch: President
- The Judicial Branch
- The Electoral Process
- Political Parties
- Pressure Groups
- Civil Rights

Unit 3 – Political ideas

- Liberalism
- Conservatism
- Socialism
- Feminism

How do the exams work?

You will sit three, 2-hour exams at the end of the year 13, one for each unit. Each is worth 77 marks and 33.3% of the final grade.

Each paper has the same style of questions:

- Three [9] mark explain questions on key ideas, theories and debates.
- One [25] mark essay question with an extract. This expects longer more evaluative discussions of an idea using both own knowledge, case studies and the extract.
- One [25] mark essay question on a key debate.

What is expected of you?

A-Levels can be a daunting and difficult challenge if you do not approach them in the correct way. You need to be focused and driven to succeed. The key to success is to work regularly throughout the year both in and outside of lessons and set homework. The standard expectation is to see all of you in all lessons, working hard, getting involved and thinking critically about the information. You must also be organised, with a well-kept folder of work. We also expect you to re-read or read around areas of weaker understanding; lessons can move quickly so you must be ready to spend your study time checking your understanding of each topic. If you work hard throughout the year and plan ahead to the exams with revision as you progress you will find yourself much happier and more comfortable as time goes on.

Most importantly you will also be expected to collect relevant real-world examples of the theoretical content we discuss. This will be explained fully in the early lessons, but you will quickly learn the importance of **SRL** when searching for them.

Specific – Recent – Layered

Your reports

During the year you will receive 6th form reports as to your progress. Our commitment grades in Politics are based on the following guidelines.

Outstanding (O) – You show consistent effort and engagement both in and outside the classroom. You complete all work required to a high standard and ensure that you are doing a wide range of independent tasks without prompting.

Good (G) – You show consistent effort and engagement both in the and outside the classroom. Your work shows detail and care. You also complete the expected amount of independent work though not as proactively as you could.

Requires Improvement (R) – You show some effort in and outside the classroom and are able to complete homework set. However, there is little evidence of further independent work being completed. You may also have had to have been chased for any missing work or shown poor attendance.

Inadequate (I) – You are showing little to no effort both in and outside the classroom. Homework is often incomplete or of poor quality. No independent work is being completed and you will have unexplained absences.

Homework

At times throughout each topic we will set essays and questions to be completed and marked. There will also be regular knowledge based tests due to the need to have a confident and complete understanding of the course content.

There will also be fortnightly checks of your examples booklets for the UK and US examples and also your key thinker booklet for ideologies.

Independent work

As independent students you will always be reading and collecting examples as part of your normal study. Beyond this there are many things you should be doing weekly. Below is a list of some ideas, though it is not exhaustive:

- Re-reading/re-writing any notes you feel are inadequate or topics you felt unsure of at the end of the lesson.
- Creating revision notes/flashcards/mind-maps of each topic as we finish them (this saves you trying to complete all of these at the end of each year)
- Completing wider reading. There are many books in the library or in the classrooms. There are also many fantastic documentaries to be found on YouTube, the BBC or Netflix. There are also plenty of satirical political programmes which are excellent for understanding, and enjoyment. There are also many podcasts discussing a wide range of political matters.
- Planning or writing essay questions. Or re-writing any marked work to focus on areas for improvement.
- Searching for Specific Recent and Relevant examples of theory discussed in class.
- Completing and adding to your example or key thinkers booklets.

UK Politics

Recommended revision book

- My Revision Notes: AQA AS/A-Level Politics: UK Politics by Simon Lemieux (2019 edition)

Best textbook for UK and USA (not essential but may be useful)

- AQA A-Level Politics: Government and Politics of the UK, Government and Politics of the USA and comparative Politics by Simon Lemieux et al. – 25th June 2021

Further reading

- Essentials of UK Politics 4th edition by Andrew Heywood
- UK Government and Politics for AS/A-Level 5th edition by Philip Lynch, Paul Fairclough & Toby Cooper
- The Economist
- British Politics: A very short introduction by Tony Wright
- Politics: A very short introduction by Kenneth Minogue

US Politics

Recommended revision book

- My Revision Notes: AQA AS/A-Level Politics: US and comparative Politics by Simon Lemieux (2019 edition)

Further reading

- US Government and Politics for A-Level 5th edition by Anthony J Bennett
 - The Economist
 - American Politics: A very short introduction by Richard M. Valelly
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Political Ideologies

Recommended revision and textbook

- My Revision Notes: AQA A-Level Politics: Political Ideas by Adam Tomes & Simon Lemieux (2019 edition)
- Political Ideas for A-Level: Liberalism, Conservatism, Socialism, Feminism & Anarchism by Neil McNaughton & Richard Kelly

Further reading

- AQA Politics: Political ideas student guide (A-Level Edition) by Simon Lemieux
- Political Ideologies: An introduction by Andrew Heywood
- An Introduction to Political Philosophy by Jonathan Wolff
- Political Philosophy: A very short introduction by David Miller

What should my folder look like?

Organisation is king in sixth form. If you are not organised you will struggle to bring everything together properly at the end of the year for your exams. To this end your folder should always contain the following:

- Minimum of the handouts and notes from the current topic
- Booklets – Both Ideologies and UK/US Politics
- Key words lists
- Mark Schemes and example planning sheets
- *Last two* pieces of marked work – Targets are then used in following pieces of work guide self-improvement.

Laptop users

- You will need to set up a well organised OneDrive folder that will be shared with us so we can easily access your on-going work

Resources

- OneDrive and other 365 programmes - Student shared drive – Lessons and useful items will continually be added to the Politics folder
- Google news search – Excellent for finding SRR examples
- BBC website
- Twitter – Very good for political opinions
- Any other reputable newspaper or newspaper website

Contact

We will contact you by email. Please read them regularly – we can send PowerPoints or notes of lessons you have missed, let you know if we will be absent and are setting work, and to remind you of homework. We also use OneDrive to share important documents regularly so become familiar with its use.

Please remember that we are here to answer any questions.

We look forward to seeing you in September,

Mr Comben

Mr Strong