



TRANSITION WORK

GOVERNMENT & POLITICS

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Section 1: UK & US Politics

Task 1: Research and define the following key terms

Task 2: Read through the attached article and answer the questions. (UK)

Task 3: Constitution research (UK and US)

Section 2: Political Ideologies

Task 1: Research and define key words

Task 2: What are Political Ideologies? - Reading

Task 3: What ideology might you be? - Questionnaire

Task 4: So, what does that ideology value? - Reflection

Politics is going to be a new subject for you. Some of you may have a bit of an understanding but we will teach this whole course knowing there will be almost zero knowledge.

However, you have now picked to do Politics and we could not be happier. It is awesome!

So, your first job is to go through all the transition work and get a good background understanding to help your progress through the course.

You will also want to be getting used to keeping up to date with current political events. Watch the news, read the papers, use the BBC or the Guardian or other reputable news sources and get stuck into the world of politics (even if you do not understand it all yet).

If you have any questions, then just get in touch with either of us. Good luck!

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Section 1: UK & US Politics

Task 1: Research and define the following key terms

- Legislature
- Executive
- Judiciary
- Constitution
- Devolution
- Participation
- Electorate
- Turnout
- First past the post
- Parliamentary sovereignty

Task 2: Read through the attached article and answer the questions. (UK)

U.K.'s Labour Party Reels After Panicked Response to Election Loss

The party leader, Keir Starmer, was seen as scapegoating a key aide, causing more turmoil in an already divided party after a disappointing performance in local elections.



By Stephen Castle and Mark Landler
May 10, 2021

LONDON — Sober, cerebral and with the poise of the top-shelf lawyer he once was, Keir Starmer promised competence rather than charisma when he became leader of Britain's opposition Labour Party last year, following its crushing general election defeat in 2019. But his panicky response to last week's poor local election results and a clumsy reshuffle of his top team have left his party in turmoil, diminishing his authority and raising doubts about whether Labour has a credible path back to power.

Mr. Starmer found himself embroiled in fierce recriminations over local election results that, with smoother communication, could have been explained away as disappointing, but instead pointed to a deeper crisis.

"The one thing Keir Starmer was supposed to be was competent," said Steven Fielding, a professor of political history at the University of Nottingham. "The election results were not good, but they weren't as bad as some people liked to present them. He completely messed up his reaction, and that highlights concerns about his ability to communicate."

Behind the latest setback lie profound structural changes in British politics, with Prime Minister Boris Johnson making deep inroads into former Labour heartlands in working-class districts with a mixture of populist pro-Brexit politics and promises to bring jobs and prosperity.

Jonathan Powell, who served as chief of staff to Tony Blair, Labour's last election-winning prime minister, believes that critics are "massively over-interpreting" the local election results, adding: "The number of times I've read about the end of the Labour Party is legion."

However, he said, the Conservatives, under Mr. Johnson, have effectively fused left-wing economic policy with a right-wing appeal on cultural issues. The Labour Party, deprived of its traditional appeal to so-called "red wall" voters in the north and middle of the country on economic issues, now relies on liberals in ethnically diverse metropolitan areas, like London and Manchester.

That is too small a base to win a national election, he said, and squaring those voters with Labour's vanishing "red wall" constituency will be difficult.

"Labour is trying to hold together university-educated liberal voters with the old Labour party voters that they've lost to the Tories," Mr. Powell said. "They can't stand on two horses going in different directions at the same time."

The scale of the challenge became clear last Friday when Labour lost a parliamentary by-election in Hartlepool, an economically struggling port town in the northeast of England. Labour had expected a defeat in this staunchly pro-Brexit region, because the seat would have been lost in the 2019 election had the Brexit Party not contested it and taken votes away from Mr. Johnson's Tories.

But Labour recorded a lower vote than in 2019 and, grim faced, Mr. Starmer refused to comment as he left his London home on Friday morning. When he did surface later he gave an unconvincing, at times almost robotic, interview that took responsibility for the result but provided no detail on changes.

The following day, just as a set of better results for Labour were being announced, news leaked out that Mr. Starmer was stripping his deputy, Angela Rayner, of key responsibilities.

With an impressive personal story of succeeding against the odds, Ms. Rayner, who has said she left school at 16 while pregnant and with no qualifications, is not only a popular figure in the Labour Party but comes from the sort of community with which the party is trying to reconnect. So the backlash was swift and ferocious.

"The scapegoat sacking of Angie Rayner contradicted everything Keir Starmer said only 48 hours ago about taking personal responsibility for election defeats and his promise a year ago that he would unite the party," John McDonnell, the party's former spokesman on the economy under its last leader, Jeremy Corbyn, said on Twitter.

Some on the center and right of the Labour Party were unimpressed, too, including the newly re-elected mayor of Manchester, Andy Burnham. By late Sunday, Mr. Starmer had to beat an embarrassing retreat, ending up giving Ms. Rayner even more responsibilities, albeit away from campaigning.

The humiliation seemed to encapsulate the disorientation of a Labour Party struggling to adapt to a world in which Mr. Johnson has stolen not only many of its traditional voters, but also some of its redistributive, high-spending, political agenda.

Unlike predecessors who presided over austerity, Mr. Johnson is promising to "level up" and bring jobs and prosperity to voters who feel ignored in the "red wall" area that was once Labour's electoral citadel.

To many that may have sounded all the more attractive in the absence of a compelling message from Mr. Starmer, a former director of public prosecutions who often sounds as if he would be more at home in a courtroom than on a political stage.

Following the 2019 general election defeat — Labour's worst since 1935 — Mr. Starmer's short-term strategy was to concentrate less on policy and more on detoxifying the party brand after its electoral disaster under his left-wing predecessor, Mr. Corbyn.

Mr. Starmer has embraced the Jewish community, in contrast to Mr. Corbyn, whose leadership was dogged by allegations of anti-Semitism. Though he presents himself as a patriot, Mr. Starmer studiously avoids the culture-war issues that Mr. Johnson exploits, such as what to do with statues commemorating contested chapters in Britain's history.

Given that voters rarely care much about the policy platform of opposition parties until a general election is close, that looked like a sensible approach.

Yet while he should not have been expected to roll out a detailed policy agenda just 16 months after a general election, Mr. Powell said, Mr. Starmer "has to convince people he has a cause." Mr. Blair did that effectively in the 1990s when he rebranded the party "New Labour," embracing the free market and the European Union.

Perhaps that did not seem urgent for Mr. Starmer, because voters normally use local elections and by-elections like those held last week to punish governments. His main campaign theme was to highlight claims that Mr. Johnson broke electoral rules over the financing of a pricey refurbishment of his apartment.

But Britons apparently ignored those goings on in Westminster, and with the country now emerging from Covid-19 restrictions seemed to reward politicians who controlled health policies. The ruling Scottish National Party in Scotland performed strongly, as did the governing Labour Party in Wales.

In England, Mr. Johnson was forgiven for his chaotic early handling of the pandemic and rewarded for the country's highly successful vaccination roll out.

Not all is lost for Mr. Starmer, particularly when the entirety of last week's results are taken into account. According to a BBC analysis projecting the local voting into a national vote share, Labour was seven points behind the Conservatives, hardly a good result but progress on the 12-point deficit recorded in the 2019 general election.

With no credible challenger waiting in the wings, Mr. Starmer is unlikely to face any immediate threat to his leadership. Nonetheless, the speed with which critics attacked his reshuffle raises pressure on Mr. Starmer to at least identify a message that can appeal to two very different groups of Britons — the old working-class stalwarts and the more youthful, liberal and better educated city dwellers.

"Under Starmer it has been two steps forward and one step back," said Mr. Fielding, "and he hasn't addressed the problem of how you win back the 'red wall' without losing metropolitan liberal voters."

Article questions:

1. What impression does the article give of Keir Starmer's leadership of the Labour Party so far?

2. According to the article, what are the main challenges facing the Labour Party?

Task 3: Constitution research (UK and US)

What is a constitution?

In politics, the constitution is the set of rules governing how laws are made and executed.

A country's constitution will normally include rules about:

- the powers of different branches of government (legislature, executive and judiciary)
- the rights of citizens
- the relationship between the branches of government
- the relationship between government and citizens

Constitutions act as a basic or fundamental set of laws.

Differences between constitutions

Constitutions come in all different shapes and sizes (different characteristics) and they are all beautiful in their own unique way.

The different classifications of constitutions are:

- **Codified/ uncodified**
- **Entrenched/ flexible**
- **Unitary/ federal**
- **Monarchical/ republican**
- **Parliamentary/ presidential**
- **Separate powers/ fused powers**

These characteristics are explained further on.

Use the additional information below and your own research to complete the table on the next page:

	Codified or Uncodified?	Entrenched or Flexible?	Unitary or Federal?	Monarchy or Republic?	Parliamentary or Presidential?	Separate or Fused?
The US					Presidential	
The UK	Uncodified					

Constitution research task – additional information:

Codified	Uncodified
-Contained in a single, legal document -Most countries in the world have one -Usually seen as a supreme or fundamental law which cannot be easily changed	-Contained in numerous documents, and some parts may even be <i>unwritten</i> -Seen as organic, evolving over time -On top of this, there are many other conventions, precedents and customs which make up this type of constitution
Entrenched	Flexible
-Constitution cannot be amended easily -Process is different to way normal laws are passed	-Constitution is not seen to be special -Not given any status above normal laws passed by the legislature
Unitary	Federal
-Power is ultimately held by one central body	-Power is divided between a central (federal) government and regional governments (states or provinces)
Monarchical	Republican
-There is a monarch who is a non-political Head of State	-A country that doesn't have a monarch, certainly not one having any formal role
Parliamentary	Presidential
-The Executive is usually chosen by the Legislature	-The Executive is usually chosen directly by people
Separate powers	Fused powers
-Where the powers and operation of the Executive, Legislature and Judiciary are clearly defined, and individuals can only serve in one branch	-Where the Legislature and Executive are intermingled, with members of the Executive being appointed from within the Legislature and members of the Judiciary being in both

Political Ideologies

Task 1 - Key words

Look up and define the following key words. (*Try to make sure you find a definition that would fit with them being used in politics*)

- Liberty
- Individualism
- Pragmatic
- Principle
- Doctrines
- Welfare
- Capitalism

Task 2 – What are Political Ideologies?

Read 'Ideas and Ideologies – An introduction'. (located below)

- In your own words – What do you think the study of Political Ideologies is?
- Add to your definitions list with any other words you have looked up

Task 3 – What ideology might you be?

Complete the questionnaire on your political thoughts (you may remember this from the taster session).

We will use it to have a discussion in one of our first lessons.

You may also want to get other people in your house to have a go. But be warned, some people may get annoyed if you tell them they are an ideology they did not expect. Could lead to an interesting discussion or a massive argument so the risk is yours to take.

Task 4 – So what does that ideology value?

Now you have completed the questionnaire you can try to summarise what you think one ideology's values are.

Pick **one** of the five:

- How would you define their view of people?
 - Are they positive or negative about them? Do they trust them? Are some people better than others?
- What do you think they value the most?
 - Equality? The economy and money? Order and security?
- Can you think of any countries now or from history that they sound like?
- What do you think it would be like living in a country with that ideology?
- Summarise that ideology in **one sentence**.

Bring these to the first lessons and we will discuss and then they will be taken in to be marked.

Ideas and ideologies

We are used to discussing specific political policies but these refer largely to short-term, pragmatic decisions made by politicians, parties and pressure groups. Policies are developed to deal with particular problems which arise from time to time. Ideas and ideologies, meanwhile, look at longer-term issues and consider fundamental solutions to such questions. Furthermore, they are based on strongly held principles rather than pragmatic responses to short-term issues. Two examples can help here.

Let us consider the levels of taxation in a society. A policy to reduce income tax may be a short-term method of pumping more money into the economy, increasing spending and boosting economic growth. It cannot be undertaken permanently but it solves a problem in the meantime. Meanwhile, a party or group of politicians might believe that tax levels are generally too high, are a threat to people's economic liberty and individualism, and are a disincentive to work and enterprise, so they should be kept to as low a level as possible in the long term. A low-tax society is therefore a political idea.

Political ideologies are a stronger phenomenon altogether. Ideologies are sets of related political ideas which come together to create a vision of some kind of idealised society. Ideologies are based on strongly held, permanent principles and interlocking doctrines. In our example, the idea of a low-tax society connects with related doctrines such as opposition to high levels of welfare which, like high taxes, may be a disincentive to hard work, and free, unregulated markets which foster business enterprise. Put these three aims together — low taxation, low welfare and free markets — and we have an ideology, usually known as neo-liberalism.

We can now apply the same analysis to another set of ideas. These concern dealing with poverty and inequality:

- Raising the minimum wage is a short-term policy to reduce poverty.
- Reducing the gap in living standards between the rich and poor in the long term is a political idea.
- Creating a more generally equal society with equal rights, empowerment for the working classes, intervention by the state to avoid the 'excesses' of capitalism and public ownership of major industries to spread the fruits of their production more evenly are interlocking ideas, forming an ideology, which we know as socialism.

Put another way, policies come and go, while political ideas and ideologies have more staying power. This book deals with political ideas and political ideologies but not with policies. There are three 'core' ideologies and five 'optional' ideologies. Apart from the fact that students must study all three core ideologies to be able to tackle the examination questions but have

civilisation for more than 200 years. Political discourse and conflict therefore have largely been based on these three. However, they are largely based on western civilisation. Today we must look further afield in our study of political ideas, taking a world view and also considering those ideas that shape the relationships between minorities and the perspectives of alienated sections of society.

- The optional ideologies — nationalism, feminism, anarchism, ecologism and multiculturalism — have generally shorter histories than the core ideologies but often take their inspiration from different forms of consciousness of the world, ranging from eastern mysticism to gender awareness to modern scientism. Some aspects of the optional ideas have also challenged the traditional ideas associated with liberalism, conservatism and socialism and as such can also be described as post-modern.

Four themes

These are guides as to how we can analyse and compare political ideas and the beliefs of the many key thinkers presented in this book. You do not have to apply them but you are advised to do so where you can. As a starting point they should be considered in the following ways:

- **Human nature.** This concerns beliefs about the fundamental nature of mankind's relationship with other people and with the world. In the political ideas presented here we will see that various thinkers have described human nature in enormously varied ways, from egocentric to social, from fundamentally good to fundamentally competitive, from gender obsessed to androgynous (having no gender identity), or from dominant over the natural world (anthropomorphic) to claiming to be only an equal part of nature.
- **State.** Nearly all people live under the jurisdiction of one state or another. Political ideas and ideologies therefore have adopted principles about the nature of the state, what part (if any) it should play in society, how it should be controlled and whether it is a force for good or evil.
- **Society.** All societies have a particular structure which has either evolved naturally or been imposed by the state and those who govern the state. Most ideologies therefore have developed some kind of vision of what their ideal society would look like. Sometimes this is very specific, as is the case with socialism, some multiculturalists and certain types of collectivist anarchism; sometimes it is more vague, as is the case with conservatism.
- **Economy.** Not all political ideas and ideologies contain a strong economic perspective.

Key thinkers

There are usually five key thinkers specified for each of the political ideologies in the specification. This book describes their main work, beliefs and importance in the development of political ideas. They are not exhaustive and you should also have knowledge of other key thinkers, but you are certainly advised to refer to them in your examination answers. Directly quoting them is not necessary, though you should do so if you can and if it helps to illustrate your analysis.

Every ideology comprises different themes and variations. Often the different thinkers in the text illustrate these variations most effectively. Thus the distinction between, for example, the liberals John Stuart Mill and John Rawls tells us a great deal about how liberalism evolved between the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Similarly, Marx's fundamental version of socialism tells us much of how dramatically the ideology has been transformed by more recent left-wing thinkers such as Anthony Crosland and Anthony Giddens.

Political vocabulary

As we have said, you should use accurate and appropriate political vocabulary wherever possible. Fortunately, both this book and the examination specification contain key terms with their meanings. You should take time to understand these and practise using them wherever you can. They can also save you time in your writing as they have specific meanings, which will reduce the need for lengthy explanations.

You are strongly advised to learn those aspects of vocabulary with which you are not already familiar and to ensure that you are able to use them in the correct context.

Which Ideology am I questionnaire?

Please tick the box for the response that best fits how you think. If you genuinely think your answer is a mixture of two then feel free to tick 2 answers.

If you are not sure on certain words, then look them up. Not knowing and doing research is an important part of any learning and studying.

1. Human Nature: This is what we are like naturally as a species. So, do you think that Human Nature is...

A	That we are innately self-interested and self-reliant, but also reasoned and improvable through education.	
B	That we seek security and the familiar. People are not really rational, and everyone can be morally corrupt at times.	
C	That we are very social creatures and only truly exist through nurturing a cooperative spirit in us.	
D	That we are very intelligent and morally good so that we will seek a fair way to live together socially and fairly.	
E	That we are driven by passion and desire to belong based on our nation or race. Some people are also better suited to rule and some to serve.	

2. Equality: What do you think about the idea of equality?

A	We are born equal and no one has a 'natural right' over another. However, we must be careful not to restrict people's freedom in achieving equality.	
B	We are naturally hierarchical and true equality is unachievable.	
C	Is a fundamental value and is the only way to keep society working and justly.	
D	About everyone being completely autonomous and collective ownership of wealth	
E	Humankind is about inequality, between leaders and followers and nations and races of the world. Though equality exists within a social group.	

3. Individual Freedom: Do you think the freedom of the individual is...

A	An important part of our lives as it allows us to flourish as people.	
B	Important but we all have responsibilities and duties to society.	
C	Achieved through working together as a society.	
D	An absolute must. We should be completely free in life.	
E	Nonsense. We must all work for the nation	

4. The State: What role do you think government should have?

A	As a natural go-between amongst competing interests and individuals and provides some guarantee of social order.	
B	Necessary to provide order and protect society from chaos, so must be strong.	
C	Is about the common good and should be for and of the people, not about rule over others.	
D	Unnecessary. It only oppresses the individual.	
E	The supreme ideal of life and one that serves to support and guide the race or nation.	

5. Democracy: Do you think having democracy and the right to vote is...

A	Crucial as a way to individually give your consent to those in power.	
B	Important, but we must protect against the will of the many and preserve our traditions.	
C	Not necessary as we all show our consent by being the government in our contributions to society.	
D	Wrong if you are voting for an MP. We should all vote on every decision that matters.	
E	Unnecessary. We just need strong leaders.	

6. Authority: Do you think people with power over others...

A	Comes from the people and must be consented to, rational and limited in power.	
B	Are a necessity. Those who are naturally wise, experienced or in a strong social position should guide society and get respect and loyalty.	
C	Should be seen suspiciously as it can oppress people and protect an elite.	
D	Are unnecessary. Authority only leads to oppression and it is impossible to put checks in place to control this.	
E	Comes from a manifestation of personal leadership or charisma. Those gifted leaders' authority should be absolute and unquestioned.	

7. Society: Do you think human society...

A	Is just a collection of individuals who want what's best for themselves, so they work together to achieve it.	
B	Is a living organism and we are held together by tradition, authority and a shared morality.	
C	Can only exist when it is classless, otherwise it will become unequal.	
D	Should be unregulated and we will naturally create social harmony because we value cooperation.	
E	About shared values and beliefs, rooted in a common national identity.	

8. Gender: What do you think the idea of gender?

A	That it is only important privately or on a personal level. In public and political life, it is irrelevant.	
B	There are gender divisions and organically this creates a hierarchy and division of labour that is natural and inevitable.	
C	Is politically insignificant and is just a sign of deeper inequalities of life.	
D	Completely irrelevant.	
E	A fundamental division in humankind. Men dominate leadership and women are more suited to supportive and subordinate roles.	

Results

Add up your letters.

If you mostly answered [Insert letter] then you most closely agree with the principles of...

A = Liberalism

B = Conservatism

C = Socialism

D = Anarchism

E = Fascism

If you are a mixture then that is very common so just make a note of it.