

Politics Summer Transition Work

A Level Politics: '*Man is a political animal*' (Aristotle)

Just because you do not take an interest in politics, doesn't mean politics won't take an interest in you." – attributed to Pericles, 5th century BC

Politics will suit students who:

- have an interest in the world around them: who want to know more about the society they live in, how it works and how it could work.
- enjoy debate, discussion and argument: who are comfortable with the fact that in politics there are no simple 'rights' or 'wrongs'.
- like to think for themselves: who wants to develop their own views, rather than accept the views of others.
- Politics will be a new subject to the majority of you and therefore you may see it as an opportunity to do something fresh and new, an enriching experience in itself.
- It is particularly important that you have an enquiring mind, a desire to learn about how the political system works and its impact on you, the citizen.

The skills you will develop studying politics:

- Knowledge and understanding of basic political ideas, concepts, structures and processes, the relationship between them and how they work at different levels.
- An ability to interpret and analyse political information in various forms and from various sources, and to apply a range of political ideas concepts and theories.
- An ability to evaluate arguments, theories, values and ideologies to explain political behaviour and suggest solutions to controversial issues.
- The skills to organise and present an argument with relevance, clarity and coherence using good English.

Hot Topics: Have civil liberties been removed by the Coronavirus? Labour have a new leader, Keir Starmer, but what does this mean for the Labour party? How do we explain the rise of celebrity politicians like Donald Trump? Does 'hashtag feminism' make a difference? How politically powerful are the media? How will the government pay back covid debt? How left will Biden's presidency be?

Quick listening and watch activities

Watch current affairs programmes such as *Panorama*, *Despatches* and specific politics programmes such as '*A Week in Politics*' or *Andrew Marr on a Sunday*, 'Today' on Radio 4 is particularly good for summaries.

All help to enrich your knowledge base and keep you up to date.

Go Online to these links which provide short sharp information pieces for you.

SOS Politics on Instagram – good summaries provided each day

www.parliament.uk/democracyyoudecide (journalist Danny Wallace)

www.bbc.co.uk/democracylive (recorded lectures and interviews)

[www.parliamentlive.tv.Main/Archive.aspx](http://www.parliamentlive.tv/Main/Archive.aspx) (live coverage of parliament proceedings over the last 12 months)

www.parliament.uk/mpinterviews (short video clips on MPs reflections)

www.parliament.uk/business/commons/what-the-commons-does (House of Commons)

Politics live (BBC iplayer)

Interesting articles/journals/magazines:

Reading a QUALITY newspaper (such as The Times, Guardian, Telegraph or their Sunday equivalent); magazines and specific politics journals such as Politics Review or the Economist.

Podcasts:

The A Level Politics show by Nick de souza available on *spotify, anchor fm, apple podcasts*

<https://www.talkingpoliticspodcast.com/>

<https://slate.com/podcasts/trumpcast>

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/podcasts/category/factual-politics>

<https://player.fm/featured/uk-politics> (this features a link to most UK ones from the guardian to coronavirus newscast on the BBC)

Books worth a read

For beginners: The Politics Book: Big Ideas Simply Explained by [DK](#) (Author)

Russell Brand: Comedy, Celebrity, Politics, **Authors: Arthurs, Jane, Little, Ben**

Kenneth Minogue – Politics: A very short introduction (Oxford University Press, 2000)

Andrew Heywood – Politics (Palgrave, 2013)

David Runciman – How Democracy Ends (Profile Books, 2018)

Live From Downing Street Paperback – 7 Nov 2013

The Downing Street Years - Margaret Thatcher

The Journey - Tony Blair

The Communist Manifesto

George Orwell's 1984 or Animal Farm

William Golding's Lord of the Flies

China Mieville's The City & The City

Dave Eggers' The Circle

Chris Cleave's The Other Hand

Robert Tressell's Ragged Trousered Philanthropists

Relevant films or docudramas to help put politics into perspective:

Made in Dagenham, Pride, Passport to Pimlico, The Rise and Fall of Michael Rimmer, Thatcher, Scandal, The Queen, In the Loop, The Crown, The Andrew Marr Collection, Frost/Nixon, The Thick of It, The West Wing, Veep

Summer Activities in Preparation for A level Politics:

You will need to download the following booklet: <https://assets-learning.parliament.uk/uploads/2019/12/How-it-Works-booklet.pdf>

Read through the booklet and complete the following activities:

Task 1: In your own words write a short definition for each of these keywords/ phrases:

Politics

Suffrage

Political Participation

Democracy

Direct Democracy

Representative Democracy

Member of Parliament (MP)

General Election

Devolution

Devolved Assemblies

Parliament

By-election

Referendum

Manifesto

First-Past-The-Post (FPTP)

Constitution

Uncodified Constitution

Parliamentary sovereignty

Legislature Executive

Parliamentary Reform Acts 1911 and 1949

1998 Human Rights Act

2005 Constitutional Reform Act

Fixed Term Parliament Act 2011

Bicameral legislature

House of Commons

Constituency

Frontbencher
Backbench MP
The Speaker
The Opposition
House of Lords
Crossbencher
Life Peer
Hereditary Peer
Select Committee
Legislative Committee
Government Bills
Private Members Bills
Political Party
Party Whips
Party Rebel
Coalition government
Partisan
Partisan Dealignment
Pressure Group
Sectional Pressure Group
Causal Pressure Group
Insider Pressure Group
Outsider Pressure Group
Lobbying Petition

Task 2: Investigate the role of an MP

- a.) research your local MP, who is he/she; which party do they represent; which constituency do they represent; what have they recently shown an interest in? Research their voting history to see where they stand on key issues; <https://members.parliament.uk/>
- b.) b.) investigate the role of an MP by playing the game in the link below.
<https://learning.parliament.uk/resources/mp-for-a-week/#cta-target>

Task 3: Research one pressure group that currently exists in the UK. Who are they? What type of group are they? (causal, sectional, insider, outsider) What are they campaigning for and why? What methods have they used to campaign? Do you think they have been successful so far?

I look forward to seeing you in September.

Mr Hood

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