

# A Level Politics Transition pack

## WHAT DOES THE COURSE AIM TO DO?



It aims to:

Provide you with a 'balanced education in politics', and 'understanding of the nature of politics, and an understanding in the context of the United Kingdom, including its local, national and European dimensions, and some aspects of comparative study of other political systems.'

**You will be assessed on your ability to organise and present information, ideas and arguments clearly and logically in continuous prose using good quality English.**

### THE SKILLS YOU WILL DEVELOP

- **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.**

## WHAT DOES THE COURSE INVOLVE?

### What will you study?

1. UK Politics (9PL0/01)
2. UK Government (9PL0/02)
3. US Government (9PL0/3A)

Term	Topic	Link to exam
<b>Autumn Term- Year 1</b>	<b>UK Politics:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Democracy and Participation</li> <li>• Political Parties</li> <li>• Electoral Systems</li> <li>• Voting behaviour and the Media</li> </ul>	Paper 1: UK Politics 2-hour exam at the end of Year 2.
<b>Spring Term- Year 1</b>	<b>UK Government:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The Constitution</li> <li>• Parliament</li> <li>• Prime Minister and the Executive</li> <li>• Relations between branches</li> </ul>	Paper 2: UK Government 2-hour exam at the end of year 2.
<b>Summer Term-Year 1</b>	<b>Core Political Ideologies:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Socialism</li> <li>• Liberalism</li> <li>• Conservatism</li> </ul>	Paper 1: UK Politics
<b>Autumn Term- Year 2</b>	<b>Non-Core Ideology:</b> ONE of the following: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Feminism</li> </ul> Anarchism	Paper 2: UK Government
<b>Autumn- Spring Term Year 2</b>	<b>US Politics and Government:</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• US Constitution and Federalism</li> <li>• US Congress</li> <li>• US Presidency</li> <li>• US Supreme Court and US civil rights</li> <li>• US Democracy and Participation</li> <li>• Comparative theories</li> </ul>	Paper 3A: US Politics and Government 2-hour exam at the end of Year 2.

## HOW WILL YOU BE SUCCESSFUL IN THIS COURSE?



YOU WILL NEED TO TAKE AN INTEREST  
IN CURRENT AFFAIRS AND POLITICAL  
ISSUES

This will involve:

Reading a QUALITY newspaper (such as The Times, Guardian, Telegraph, Independent or their Sunday equivalent)

## Magazines:

Such as the Politics Review-

- 'Politics review' (<https://www.hoddereducation.co.uk/politicsreview>) the school has a subscription to this and so will be able to provide you with articles.
- The Spectator (<http://www.spectator.co.uk/>)
- Private Eye (<http://www.private-eye.co.uk/>)
- New Statesman (<http://www.newstatesman.com/>)
- The Economist (<http://www.economist.com/>)
- The Week (<http://www.theweek.co.uk/>)

## Websites

- <https://www.studypolitics.co.uk/a-level-politics-blog/>
- <https://www.tutor2u.net/politics>
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/politics>
- <https://www.spectator.co.uk/category/politics>
- <https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/>
- <https://www.politics.co.uk/>
- <https://www.politicshome.com/>
- <https://www.politics.ox.ac.uk/departamental-news-1>
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## USA

- <https://www.politicususa.com/about-us> (liberal leaning)
- <https://www.politico.com/>
- <https://politicalwire.com/> (conservative leaning)

## Apps

- BBC news app (<https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/bbc-news/id377382255>)
- Apple news (<https://apps.apple.com/us/app/apple-news/id1066498020>)
- The Guardian app ([https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/the-guardian/id409128287?referrer=utm\\_source%3Dwww.theguardian.com%26utm\\_medium%3Dapp\\_page](https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/the-guardian/id409128287?referrer=utm_source%3Dwww.theguardian.com%26utm_medium%3Dapp_page))
- The Times (<https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/the-times-the-sunday-times/id436792321>)
- The Independent (<https://apps.apple.com/gb/app/the-independent/id499587380>)

## Twitter

Following a range of political commentators on Twitter can help keep you updated with the comings and goings in Westminster.

@bbcnickrobinson

@BBCBreaking

@gdnpoliticswire

@C4Politics

@bbclauark

@MayorofLondon

Each political party and politician will also have twitter accounts so you can follow these also.

## Newspapers

“The Times” (<http://www.thetimes.co.uk/tto/news/>) – leans to the right

- “The Daily Telegraph” (<http://www.telegraph.co.uk/>) – leans to the right
- “The Financial Times” (<http://www.ft.com/home/uk>) – primarily focused on economic issues but contains a significant number of relevant articles
- “The Independent” (<http://www.independent.co.uk/>) – serious news stories and articles
- “The Guardian” (<http://www.guardian.co.uk/>) – leans to the left.



## Podcasts

A-Level Politics Show (<https://open.spotify.com/show/0pdAY6egNBq0tFOLFjMk7O>)

The Rest is Politics (<https://open.spotify.com/show/1Ysx8g1lw42gESAtegrFaH>)

Private eye podcast (<https://www.private-eye.co.uk/podcast>)

Westminster Hour (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006s624>)

Political thinking with Nick Robinson

(<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p04z203l/episodes/downloads>)

Politics weekly (<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/series/politicsweekly>)

All out politics podcast (<https://news.sky.com/topic/all-out-politics-podcast-8927>)

Any questions? (<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qgvj/episodes/player>)

## Television

- Newsnight – current affairs programme. Weekday nights on BBC Two. 10:30-11:20

- Question Time – panel show. Thursday nights 10:35 on BBC1
- Peston – Wednesday nights, after the news, 10:45/11:00 on ITV
- The Andrew Marr Show – Sunday mornings, 9-10 on BBC1
- Watching current affairs programmes such as Panorama, Despatches etc. and specific politics programmes such as 'A Week in Politics'.

## Useful books:

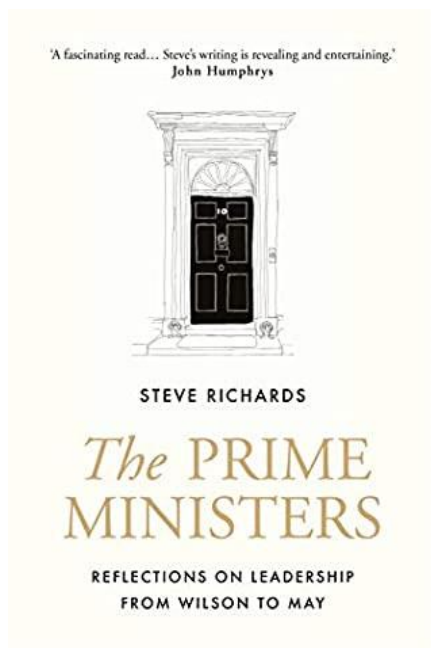
### Politics for Beginners

By Louie Stowell

With Brexit looming and constant political uncertainty in the UK, people are more confused by politics than ever before. *Politics for Beginners* answers the questions that people are afraid to ask, offering a no-nonsense guide to what politics is all about.

Topics covered include political systems, elections, voting and government and issues including feminism, human rights, freedom of speech and fake news, all explained with clear text and bright, infographics style illustrations.





## The Prime Ministers: Reflections on Leadership from Wilson to May

By Steve Richards

A landmark history of the men and women who have defined the UK's role in the modern world - and what makes them special - by a seasoned political journalist.

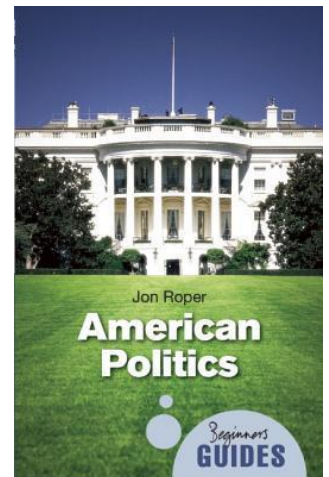
At a time of unprecedented political upheaval, this magisterial history explains who leads us and why. From Harold Wilson to Theresa May, it brilliantly brings to life all nine inhabitants of 10 Downing Street over the past fifty years, vividly outlining their successes and failures - and what made each of them special.

Based on unprecedented access and in-depth interviews, and inspired by the author's BBC Radio 4 and television series, Steve Richards expertly examines the men and women who have defined the UK's role in the modern world and sheds new light on the demands of the highest public office in the land.

## American Politics: A Beginner's Guide

By Jon Roper

To understand the world events today, you need to understand American politics. Exploring the principles enshrined in the Declaration of Independence and the Constitution, Jon Roper provides a sharp analysis of how history has shaped the way America governs itself. Examining the recent emergence of the right-wing Tea Party movement, President Obama's administration, American foreign policy, and the role of powerful lobbies, this is the perfect primer for anyone interested in the world's most powerful (and controversial) country.

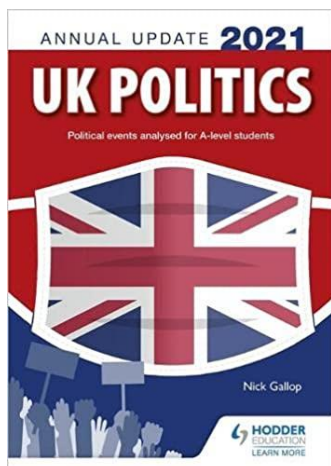


**Interest alone is not enough!**

You will have to read widely and work

hard to understand:





## UK/ US Politics Annual Update

By Nick Gallop

You can use this Annual Update for tasks throughout your course and for help with examination questions.

- Review all the developments relevant to A-level specifications in UK politics from the last year, with examples linked closely to specification points, strong links between topics and focused suggestions for further reading
- Develop your confidence with expert analysis you can draw on both throughout your course and in the exams
- Enhance your knowledge of the news to build a bank of up-to-date examples linked to the specifications, helping you to develop persuasive arguments for your essays
- Learn more about the government's response to the COVID-19 pandemic and other up-to-date political developments, and how to put them into context.

## Essentials of Political Ideas

By Andrew Heywood

This new textbook from best-selling politics author Andrew Heywood investigates the ideas that have dominated political thinking across the globe, and examines the different ways in which they have been interpreted and reinterpreted. Written in an accessible and engaging style, it covers the key ideological traditions, offering an exposition of their history and development, their core themes and internal divisions and their impact on contemporary political behaviour, movements, parties and governments.



## My Revision Notes: Politics: UK Politics

By Neil McNaughton and Nick de Souza

Coverage of key up-to-date content is combined with study and exam tips and effective revision strategies to create a guide you can rely on to build both knowledge and memory.





## TV Shows:

### The West Wing

Seven series drama set in the West Wing of the White House, following the Presidency of fictional president Josiah Bartlett. Useful for getting an insight into the workings of the US political system.



### The Thick of it

Satirical series about the British political system.

## Induction Tasks

**TASK 1:** complete the following activities. You will need to start with the booklet **'Parliament Find Your Way'**. Read the relevant pages in this booklet and then complete the following tasks.

## 1. The History of Parliament

- Read page 4-5 in the booklet.
- Visit [www.parliament.uk/housesofhistory](http://www.parliament.uk/housesofhistory)
- Create a timeline to illustrate the 'Journey to Democracy'.

## 2. Democracy

- Read page 6-7 in the booklet.
- Write a definition for the following words:
  - ❖ Democracy
  - ❖ Representative democracy
  - ❖ Direct Democracy
  - ❖ Politics
  - ❖ Dictatorship
  - ❖ Suffrage
  - ❖ Franchise
- Watch 'Democracy? You Decide': <http://www.parliament.uk/education/teaching-resources-lesson-plans/democracy-parliament-and-government-video/you-decide-video/>
- Answer the following question:
  - ❖ What would the UK be like if we didn't live in a democracy?
  - ❖ What are the strengths and weaknesses of the UK system of democracy?
  - ❖ What other options are there and where are they in place right now?

## 3. The Constitution

- Read page 8-9 in the booklet.
- Write a definition of the following words:
  - ❖ Constitution
  - ❖ Uncodified constitution
  - ❖ Codified constitution
  - ❖ Parliamentary sovereignty
  - ❖ Devolution
  - ❖ The Human Rights Act
  - ❖ The European Union
  - ❖ The UK Supreme Court

#### 4. Parliament

- Read page 12-17 in the booklet.
- Write a definition of the following words:
  - ❖ Bicameral legislature
  - ❖ House of Commons
  - ❖ House of Lords
  - ❖ Monarch
  - ❖ Legislation
  - ❖ Scrutiny
  - ❖ Representation
  - ❖ Two-House system
  - ❖ Bills
  - ❖ The Queen's Speech
  - ❖ Select Committees
  - ❖ General Committees
  - ❖ Public Bills Committee
  - ❖ Grand Committees
  - ❖ Liaison Committee
  - ❖ Prime Minister's Questions
  - ❖ Ministerial Questions
  - ❖ What role does the monarch have in our Parliament?
- What is the benefit of a two-House system?
- What is the key role of the committees?
- What is the main different between the House of Commons and the House of Lords?
- Who do MPs represent?

#### 5. Legislation: Making New Laws

- Read page 12-17 in the booklet.
- Write a definition of the following words:
  - ❖ Public Bills
  - ❖ Government Bills
  - ❖ Private Members Bills
  - ❖ Manifesto
  - ❖ Amendments
  - ❖ Division
  - ❖ Filibuster
  - ❖ Free Vote
  - ❖ Green Paper
  - ❖ Motion
  - ❖ Ping-Pong
  - ❖ Tellers
  - ❖ Wash-up
  - ❖ White Paper
  - ❖ Play the following game: [www.parliament.uk/myuk](http://www.parliament.uk/myuk)
- Answer the following questions:
  - ❖ What one law would you make and why?
  - ❖ How would you enforce the law?

## 6. Elections and Voting

- Read page 20-21 in the booklet.
- Write a definition for the following words:
  - ❖ General election
  - ❖ Devolved Assembly/ Parliament elections
  - ❖ European elections
  - ❖ Local elections
  - ❖ By-elections
  - ❖ Referendums
  - ❖ Read through the different types of voting systems on page 21. Which do you think would be the best system for the UK to adopt for General Elections and why?
- In 2011 there was a referendum on introducing AV. Research the outcome of this referendum. Why do you think this outcome occurred?

## 7. Elections and Voting: Trends and Types

- Read page 22-23 in the booklet.
- Write a definition for the following words:
  - ❖ Voter Turnout
  - ❖ Polling Day
  - ❖ Compulsory Voting
  - ❖ Separation of Powers
  - ❖ Proportional Representation
  - ❖ Why do you think voter turnout is low in Britain?
- Should the UK make voting compulsory? What are the arguments for and against?
- Should the voting age be lowered to 16? What are the arguments for and against?
- You will soon be old enough to vote – how do you register to vote?
- Go to [www.parliament.uk/referendums](http://www.parliament.uk/referendums) and research another referendum that has happened in the UK. (Do not select the AV Vote or the EU referendum)  
What was the topic of the referendum? What was the turnout? What was the outcome?

## 8. Political Parties

- Read page 24-25 in the booklet.
- Write a definition for the following words/topics:
  - ❖ Political Party
  - ❖ Coalition government
  - ❖ Majority
  - ❖ Functions of political parties
  - ❖ Party Whips
  - ❖ Party Rebels
  - ❖ 'withdrawing the whip'
- Which political party currently governs this country?
- How many seats (or MPs) do the three main parties each have in the House of Commons?
- Research the main political position of the three main political parties in the following areas:
  - ❖ Immigration
  - ❖ Taxes and the Economy
  - ❖ The NHS
  - ❖ Security, defence and foreign affairs
  - ❖ Jobs
  - ❖ Education
  - ❖ Law and Order
  - ❖ Benefits/ Poverty
- Who would you vote for and why>

## 10. Pressure Groups

- Read page 26-27 in the booklet.
- Write a definition for the following words/topics:
  - ❖ Pressure Group
  - ❖ Lobbying
  - ❖ Petitions
  - ❖ Popular protest
  - ❖ Celebrity endorsement
  - ❖ Direct Action.
  - ❖ How is a pressure group different from a political party?
- Research one pressure group – why is its aim? Who does it represent? What methods has it used to try to get its message across? How successful has it been?