

A Level Politics:

‘Man is a political animal’ (Aristotle)

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.



“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

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.**

Course Outline:

Year 12	Year 13
<p><u>UK Politics:</u> Democracy & participation, political parties, electoral systems, voting behaviour, the media.</p> <p><u>Core Politics Ideas:</u> Liberalism, Conservatism, Socialism.</p> <p><u>UK Government:</u> The Constitution, Prime Minister & the Executive, relationships between the branches of government.</p>	<p><u>Non-core Political Ideas: (One only of the following)</u> Multiculturalism, Nationalism, Feminism, Ecologism, Anarchism</p> <p><u>Government and Politics of the USA:</u> The US constitution, federalism, US congress, US presidency, US Supreme Court, civil rights, US democracy & participation, comparative theories.</p>
<p><u>Exam:</u> Paper 1: UK Politics & Core Political Ideas Paper 2: UK Government & Non-Core Political Ideas Paper 3: Comparative Politics (USA)</p>	

How will you be successful on 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 or their Sunday equivalent; magazines and specific politics journals such as **Politics Review** as well as the set textbooks.
- Watching current affairs programmes such as Panorama, Despatches etc. and specific politics programmes such as 'A Week in Politics'.
- Watching the news or listening to 'Today' on Radio 4.
- Discussing and debating political issues with both fellow politics students and others

You will be given a variety of tasks:

- Reading
- Research
- Stimulus response questions
- Essays

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:

Keyword/ phrase	Definition
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	
Judiciary	

Role of Parliament	
Parliamentary Reform Acts 1911 and 1949	
Human Rights Act 1998	
Constitutional Reform Act 2005	
Fixed Term Parliament Act 2011	
Bicameral legislature	
House of Commons	
Constituency	
Frontbencher minister	
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.) 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>

Findings:

a.) My local MP

b.) The role of an MP

