



St Mary Redcliffe  
and Temple School

# **Government & Politics**



# Government and Politics

Exam board: EDEXCEL

Specification no.: 8PL0 (AS) / 9PLP0 (A LEVEL)

**This is a two year linear A level course** - The AS content forms the first half of the A level content and can be assessed at the end of Year 12 to provide an AS Level qualification if the student is dropping the subject and believes they can get a strong grade. Otherwise the two years of content are assessed at the end of Year 13 to give the A level grade.

## AS level

Component	Code	Assessment	AS%
1.UK Politics	8PL0/01	1 hour 30 minute written exam – one ten mark question from a choice of 2; 2 ten mark questions based on a source and one 30 mark question	50%
2.UK Government	8PL0/02	1 hour 30 minute written exam – one ten mark question from a choice of 2; 2 ten mark questions based on a source and one 30 mark question	50%

## A Level (Topic A)

Component	Code	Assessment	A Level%
1. UK Politics	9PL0/01	Section A: Two 30-mark questions. Section B: One 24-mark question from a choice of two.	33.3%
2. UK Government	9PL0/02	Section A: Two 30-mark questions. Section B: One 24-mark question from a choice of two.	33.3%
3. Comparative Politics	9PL0/3B	One 12-mark question from a choice of two. One compulsory 12-mark question based on a source. Two 30-mark questions from a choice of three.	33.3%

## Course Delivery:

Although there is a lot of course content to cover, particularly at AS, students will be encouraged to participate fully in class activities. Moreover, progress and enjoyment will very much depend on the degree to which the core concepts of the course can be related to current affairs. At times, therefore, students will lead the discussion on the perceived 'big story' of the day.

## Course Content:



### **Component 1: UK Politics**

In the first year of the course students study the core topics of democracy and participation, political parties, electoral systems and voting behaviour and the media. Key debates include how democratic is the UK? Should we change the electoral system for Westminster elections? How important is the media in influencing how people vote? How socialist is the modern Labour Party?

In addition to these topics, students will also study the core political ideas of conservatism, liberalism and socialism. Each one will involve learning about the core ideas and principles of the idea and the views of five 'key thinkers' in relation to the key themes of the state, society, economy and human nature. Students will examine the extent to which there is agreement or disagreement within each political idea, for example, "To what extent do conservatives differ over the role of the state?"

### **Component 2: UK Government**

Students will examine the sources of the UK constitution and be encouraged to analyse the relative power of Parliament, the prime minister and the executive. This unit includes detailed case study investigations on three prime ministers: Margaret Thatcher, Tony Blair and David Cameron and involves in-depth analysis of the powers of the prime minister and the ways in which they are constrained. Students will also examine the relationships between the various branches of government (parliament, the executive and the judiciary) and consider questions such as does it matter that the House of Lords is unelected and is the prime minister overly powerful?

Students will also have the opportunity to study the additional political idea of anarchism. Key questions include is anarchism a single movement? Is anarchism nothing more than an extreme form of liberalism?

### **Component 3: Comparative Politics**

At A Level, global politics gives students an opportunity to develop an understanding of the local, national, international and global dimensions of political activity. It also gives them the opportunity to explore the political issues that affect all of us. Students will gain an understanding of abstract political concepts through grounding them in contemporary real world examples and case studies that will develop an international awareness and knowledge of multiple perspectives.

Students will learn about the key international political and economic institutions, such as the United Nations, IMF and World Bank. They will seek to understand the reasons why these institutions were established and how effectively they fulfil their roles and help to solve a range of complex global problems. Students will also examine how effectively the international community upholds human rights and protects the environment. What happens when one state 'breaks the rules'? Are all states just seeking to maximise their own power at the expense of everyone else? Have international efforts failed to achieve sufficient progress over climate change? How effectively is international human rights-based law enforced?

The main content areas for global politics are: The state and globalisation; Global governance: political and economic; Global governance: human rights and environmental; Power and developments; Regionalism and the European Union; Comparative theories of international relations.



### Recommended reading / websites:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-a-levels/politics-2017.html>

- Quality newspapers - The Guardian, The Times, The Telegraph, The Independent, The Washington Post, The New York Times (all available online)
- Television/internet - BBC News, Channel 4 News, CNN
- Radio – The Today Programme (Radio 4)
- Quality weeklies – The Economist, New Statesman, Time Magazine, The Spectator

Politics podcasts are a great way to learn more:



The Political Studies Association have published a really great guide to studying Politics at university in the UK

Here is the link:

[https://www.psa.ac.uk/sites/default/files/12552\\_PSA\\_SP\\_20pp%20v3.pdf](https://www.psa.ac.uk/sites/default/files/12552_PSA_SP_20pp%20v3.pdf)



## **Frequently asked questions:**

### **I don't know anything about Politics, does that matter?**

No. No prior knowledge is needed. It helps if you are interested in current affairs. It is an essay-based subject so you will be expected to read around the subject and write extended pieces. You will be taught how to write Politics essays.

### **What are the lessons like?**

There is lots of discussion, debate and group work.

### **What does this subject go well with?**

Popular combinations are Politics with History (very popular) plus other humanities/social sciences. However, some students choose Politics in addition to science and maths. There is no 'right' combination.

### **How big are the classes in Year 12?**

Typically 20-24 (which is the same for most post-16 subjects).

### **Entry requirements:**

At least one English/Humanities/Social Science subject should be passed with a 6.

### **Skills & personal qualities required / developed by course:**

Students will need to have an active interest in social and political issues and be willing to consider those issues from a range of viewpoints. They will need to be able to learn factual information, analyse sources to uncover their bias and implicit values, and be open-minded in forming a judgement.

### **Visits and opportunities:**

There will be an opportunity to visit Parliament and the UK Supreme Court. In addition, local politicians, such as the MP for Bristol West, will be invited to address the group.

For further information: Contact Ms A Gabb

## **What do students who have studied the subject say?**

*"I chose Politics initially to expand my knowledge of the contemporary political world as I felt out of touch with current events because I couldn't understand them. Politics teaches at an easy level to understand yet also in depth which is why I really enjoyed it. I'd recommend politics to any A level student because it's one of very few subjects to give you a well-rounded knowledge on things that really matter and the skills you gain from the academic writing are unmatched from other subjects. As a result of studying Politics and becoming increasingly interested in global affairs, I am now in my first year at the University of Leeds studying International Relations"* Jade - class of 2020

*"Studying Politics was a consistently engaging and informative experience. I'm glad I chose it because especially at times like these it is so important to have a political education, and to understand the world that we are in and how it is governed. The critical thinking skills which the subject will encourage you to develop are also invaluable, whatever you go on to do after A-levels"* Finlay, Class of 2020

*"Politics was by far my favourite subject at A level. I enjoyed every aspect of it, from the teaching, to the extremely fascinating and relevant content, to the very interesting, and sometimes questionable, debates we would have in class. I learned so much from taking Politics, not just about the technical intricacies of British and global politics (and how flawed these are!), but also about how to effectively articulate my opinion into a coherent argument, which was good for me as I debated a lot! I am now going to studying Politics and International Relations at Uni. If you care about the political state of the world and you want to make a change for the better, I cannot recommend Politics enough!"* Ruby, Class of 2020

*"I chose Politics as an A-level because I found current events interesting and I wanted to understand the world of politics more. My favourite things about studying Politics are that it's constantly changing (in 2014, who would've thought that Trump would be president of the USA?) and it has developed my own political beliefs...Politics is a useful subject to take because it helps you make sense of the world around you, improves your ability to form arguments and makes you evaluate your beliefs. These are important life skills and will make you an informed voter. I'm now studying politics as part of my degree and I'm so glad that I took it as an A-level." Yovieta, Class of 2020*

*"I chose Politics because I had always had a strong interest in current affairs which particularly developed after the Brexit referendum (when I was choosing my options!). I decided to move schools to take this A-level because it wasn't offered and I wasn't interested in applying for a degree without some kind of taster - what if I hated it?? Luckily for me I loved A-level Politics and in particular the topics focusing on UK government and political structures provided such useful foundation knowledge about how the UK system works - I didn't even know what the House of Lords did. Politics allowed me to be so much more informed about the world around me - something that seems more and more important these days! I liked how discussion based this A-level was, and how much you could learn from your classmates as well as simply the textbook, as they have a very wide range of views (and are often very funny too!). I am currently on a gap year before studying Politics & International Relations at the University of Bristol" Lily, Class of 2020*

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