



St Mary Redcliffe and Temple School Sixth Form

Year 11 Into Year 12 Transition Task

Subject: Politics

SMRT Sixth Form takes students from a wide range of schools who have studied a variety of GCSE syllabuses. We want to ensure that everybody is equally able to access the content of the A Level and so the following tasks give you a chance to ensure you are fully prepared.

Studying Politics can be very exciting and there are lots of quality resources available, from newspapers (The Guardian, The Times, The Telegraph, The Washington Post and The New York Times), television (BBC News, Channel 4 News, and CNN), radio programmes/podcasts and quality weeklies such as The Economist and New Statesman magazines. In the first few weeks of the course, you will study a range of topics, from democracy and political parties to the UK parliament and how it works. In order to have some interesting discussions in class straight away and enable you to do some independent reading and research we have set you a few simple tasks to complete, which you should bring with you to your first lessons. They shouldn't take you too long, but there are more resources suggested that you could look at if you want to get deeper into the subject before you start.

To ensure you are ready to fully access the A Level Syllabus you should attempt these tasks:

- 1. Research who's who in the current government and opposition. Who are they and what are their core beliefs? Are there any scandals or controversies surrounding them?**

In government...	
The Prime Minister	
Key members of the cabinet (e.g. Chancellor, Home Secretary etc.)	

In opposition...	
The Leader of the Opposition	
Key members of the shadow cabinet (e.g. Chancellor, Home Secretary etc.)	

2. Research the key policies of the parties in government. This can be done using the manifestos on their websites.

What are the key policies of...	
The Labour Party	
The Conservative Party	
The Liberal Democrats	
The SNP	

The Green Party	
Reform UK	

3. Research what the role of each part of the government is. What does it do and how does it work? How are the people who work there chosen?

What is the main role of the following part of UK government?	
The Prime Minister	
The Executive Branch	
The House of Commons	
The House of Lords	
The Supreme Court	

Extension

You may find the following books/podcasts/films interesting. Read/listen/watch and provide a summary. What are the key ideas? What are the key arguments that support them? Can you make any interesting connections with current events?

I appreciate some of you might get your news through social media, so make sure you follow/subscribe to Channel 4 news, BBC news, BBC Question Time and other media outlets.

Books

Any political biography or:

How Westminster Works... and Why It Doesn't by Ian Dunt

Why We Get the Wrong Politicians — Isabel Hardman

Get In The Inside Story of Labour Under Starmer by Patrick Maguire and Gabriel Pogrud

The People by Selina Todd

National Populism by Eatwell and Goodwin

The Impossible Office? The History of the British Prime Minister by Anthony Seldon

1984 by George Orwell

Hearts and Minds: The Battle for the Conservative Party from Thatcher to the present by Oliver Letwin

The British Labour Party in Opposition and Power 1979-2019 by Patrick Diamond

Podcasts and Radio Programmes

You should also be listening to the BBC politics output (Today Programme, Any Questions etc.)

The Private Eye podcast

The News Agents- daily podcast

The New Statesman

The Rest is Politics

The Economist Radio

Politico's Westminster Insider

Any relevant In Our Time with Melvin Bragg e.g. 'Politics in the 20th Century'; 'Democracy'; 'Marx'; 'Capitalism'; 'Suffragism'

The Other Black Door by Jack Fenwick

British Socialism: The Grand Tour with Anne McElvoy

Films

The Great Hack – tells the story of Cambridge Analytica and Facebook involvement in elections

The Thick of It- BBC I Player mini- series. (In The Loop is the movie following on from the The Thick of It)

Pride (2014) Explores the alliance between striking miners and LGBT activists during the 1980s.

A Very British Coup. Technically a TV miniseries rather than a film. A left-wing Prime Minister faces resistance from the establishment.

Official Secrets (2019)- Based on the true story of whistleblower Katharine Gun and the Iraq War.

The Spirit of '45 by Ken Loach – contextualises the hopes and intentions of the 1945 Atlee administration and explores the demise of UK socialism

The Iron Lady (2011) – A nostalgic Maggie Thatcher looks back on her political journey

The Deal (2003) – Explores the relationship between Brown and Blair

The Loop (2009) – Satirical film about the invasion of Iraq

You should also be watching the political debate and analysis on the BBC (Question Time, Newsnight) and Channel 4 as well as keeping up with current events.