

Government and Politics Exam Board: AQA (7152)

Summer Bridging Work



What You Need to Have Done by September

- Bring two Large A4 ring binders and a set of dividers
- Complete all four summer preparation tasks:
 - Task 1: What is Politics?
 - Task 2: Understanding the UK Constitution (3.1.1.1)
 - Task 3: Exploring Political Participation (3.1.2.1)
 - Task 4: Five-entry News Diary (UK and US politics)
- Read or explore at least one Politics resource from the reading suggestions
- (Optional) Try a stretch task to extend your thinking

Name: _____

WELCOME

Welcome to A-Level Politics. This subject is dynamic, challenging and deeply relevant. It helps you understand how power works, how decisions are made, and how people like you can influence politics locally, nationally and globally.

This pack will prepare you for a confident start in September. All tasks are designed to introduce you to the first two topics you'll study: the **UK Constitution** and **UK Democracy & Participation**.

HOW IS THE COURSE IS STRUCTURED?

In Year 12, you will study **UK Politics**, taught by two teachers:

- One teacher will cover the **Governing** strand (starting with the Constitution)
- The other will cover the **Participation** strand (starting with Democracy & Participation)

In Year 13, the course shifts to:

- **US Politics and Comparative Politics**
- **Political Ideologies** (Liberalism, Conservatism, Socialism, and Feminism)

AQA A-Level Politics Course Structure; Governing	AQA A-Level Politics Course Structure; Participation
<input type="checkbox"/> UK Constitution (3.1.1.1)	<input type="checkbox"/> UK Democracy & Participation (3.1.2.1)
<input type="checkbox"/> UK Devolution (3.1.1.5)	<input type="checkbox"/> UK Elections & Referendums (3.1.2.2)
<input type="checkbox"/> UK Parliament (3.1.1.2)	<input type="checkbox"/> UK Political Parties (3.1.2.3)
<input type="checkbox"/> UK Prime Minister & Executive (3.1.1.3)	<input type="checkbox"/> UK Pressure Groups & Other Influences (3.1.2.4)
<input type="checkbox"/> UK Supreme Court & Judiciary (3.1.1.4)	<input type="checkbox"/> European Union (3.1.1.6)
<input type="checkbox"/> US Constitution & Federalism (3.2.1.1)	<input type="checkbox"/> US Political Parties (3.2.1.6)
<input type="checkbox"/> US Congress (3.2.1.2)	<input type="checkbox"/> US Pressure Groups (3.2.1.7)
<input type="checkbox"/> US Executive (3.2.1.3)	<input type="checkbox"/> Core Ideologies - Liberalism (3.3.1.1)
<input type="checkbox"/> US Elections & Electoral Systems (3.2.1.5)	<input type="checkbox"/> Core Ideologies - Conservatism (3.3.1.2)
<input type="checkbox"/> US Supreme Court & Judiciary (3.2.1.4)	<input type="checkbox"/> Core Ideologies - Socialism (3.3.1.3)
<input type="checkbox"/> US Civil Rights (3.2.1.8)	<input type="checkbox"/> Non-Core Ideology - Feminism (3.3.2.2)

EXAM OVERVIEW - AQA A-LEVEL POLITICS (7152)

You will sit **three 2-hour exam papers** at the end of Year 13:

Paper 1: UK Politics and Government

- Democracy and Participation
- Political Parties
- Electoral Systems
- Voting Behaviour and the Media
- Constitution
- Parliament
- Prime Minister and Executive
- Relationships between the Branches

Paper 2: US Politics and Comparative Politics

- US Constitution and Federalism
- Congress
- Presidency
- US Supreme Court and Civil Rights
- Democracy and Participation in the USA
- Pressure Groups
- UK/US Comparative Politics

Paper 3: Political Ideas

- Conservatism
- Liberalism
- Socialism
- Feminism

There is no coursework.

ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES – WHAT ARE WE LOOKING FOR?

Every piece of work you do will be assessed using these three objectives:

AO1 – Knowledge and Understanding

- Use accurate knowledge of political institutions, processes, ideas and key terminology
- Support your points with specific, relevant examples
 - ¶ *Top tip:* Use real cases (e.g. elections, constitutional reforms, politicians) to illustrate your understanding.

AO2 – Analysis

- You need to explain how different parts of the political system work together and analyse political ideas and processes.
- This means showing cause and effect, comparing systems, or explaining the significance of an event or idea.
 - ¶ *Top tip:* Use connectives like *this shows*, *this means*, *as a result* to build clear analysis.

AO3 – Evaluation

- You must form reasoned arguments and make judgements.
- This means weighing up evidence, assessing different viewpoints, and coming to a clear, justified conclusion.
 - ¶ *Top tip:* Phrases like *on balance*, *however*, *a more convincing view is...* show evaluation in action.

Skill	How to show it
Knowledge (AO1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have I deployed highly accurate political terminology rather than everyday language?• Are my examples specific, contemporary, and directly linked to constitutional or institutional realities?
Understanding (AO1)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Do I explain why political processes function the way they do, rather than just describing what they are?• Have I demonstrated a clear grasp of systemic functions (e.g., distinguishing legal sovereignty from practical political autonomy)?
Analysis (AO2)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have I traced the structural consequences and broader institutional impacts of every point raised?• Does my counterargument genuinely challenge the core logic of the preceding point by introducing alternate political conditions?
Evaluation (AO3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have I avoided superficial middle-ground balances and maintained a consistent line of argument from the introduction to the conclusion?• Do I justify my judgements using objective criteria (e.g., empirical robustness, conceptual precision, structural consistency) rather than subjective opinion?
Comparison (AO3)	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Have I explicitly weighed competing arguments against each other within the body paragraphs to declare a clear, logical winner?• Do I explain under what specific political conditions an argument holds true, and with what wider political consequences?

ORGANISATION – WHAT TO BRING IN SEPTEMBER

Please bring the following to your first lesson:

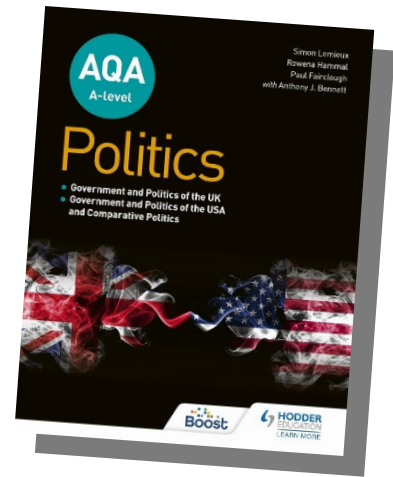
- Two **LARGE A4 ring binders**:
 - One for **UK Government**
 - One for **UK Politics / Participation**
- A set of **dividers** (at least 5 per folder)
- A4 lined paper
- Pens and highlighters

You'll be asked to add two more folders in Year 13.

OPTIONAL TEXTBOOK

It's strongly recommended that you purchase (2nd hand is a lot cheaper):

AQA A-level Politics: Government and Politics of the UK, Government and Politics of the USA and Comparative Politics
Simon Lemieux et al. (Hodder Education)



This is the main course textbook and will be used throughout both years.

You do not need to bring it to lessons, but it will be extremely useful for homework, revision, and independent study.

Copies are widely available online, including **second-hand editions on Amazon, eBay, and other textbook resale sites.**

Additional Recommended Books

These books are **not essential**, but many students find them helpful for clarifying content and preparing for assessments. They follow the AQA specification and are structured by paper.

Revision Guides

Available new or second-hand from Amazon, eBay and other retailers:

- **My Revision Notes: AQA A-level Politics – UK Politics (Second Edition)**
Rowena Hammal – Covers democracy, participation, political parties and electoral systems.
- **My Revision Notes: AQA A-level Politics – US and Comparative Politics (Second Edition)**
Rowena Hammal – Helpful for Year 13 content on the US political system.
- **My Revision Notes: AQA A-level Politics – Political Ideas (Second Edition)**
Adam Tomes – A concise review of the core and non-core ideologies covered in Paper 3.

Each guide includes clear summaries, key terms, exam-style questions and revision tips. These are especially useful for students who like to revise from concise, structured notes alongside their class materials.



WHAT TO EXPECT FROM A-LEVEL POLITICS



REGULAR READING

You'll need to keep up with UK and US political news throughout the course. This includes reading news articles, short opinion pieces, and real-world case studies. Developing the habit of regular reading will help you understand political developments as they happen – and apply them in essays and exam answers.

You'll be expected to refer to real political examples from current affairs in almost every topic.



NOTE-TAKING AND ORGANISATION

You'll be expected to take clear, well-organised notes in and out of lessons. Keeping on top of folders, readings and handouts will make revision and essay planning much easier later on.

Many students benefit from summarising key topics into revision sheets or mind maps as they go – your teachers will show you how.



ESSAY WRITING

Politics is assessed entirely by written exams, so building strong writing skills is essential. You'll practise:

- Planning and structuring arguments
- Writing paragraphs with clear analysis and evaluation
- Reaching balanced conclusions

Your teachers will give regular feedback to help you improve – and your writing will develop quickly with practice.



DISCUSSION AND DEBATE

You'll regularly take part in class discussions. This may involve group tasks, debates or simply responding to questions.

You don't need to be loud or have strong political views – just be willing to contribute, ask questions, and think critically. Listening carefully to others is just as important as speaking.



INDEPENDENT THINKING

Politics isn't just about memorising facts – it's about making judgements. You'll be asked to weigh up different arguments, question what you've read, and reach your own supported conclusions.

We'll expect you to think independently, challenge assumptions, and explore different perspectives – even those you might not agree with.

In short...

A-Level Politics rewards students who are curious, engaged with current events, and willing to build their knowledge and skills step by step. You don't need to know everything already – just bring an open mind and a willingness to learn.

TASK 3: EXPLORING PARTICIPATION IN THE UK (3.1.2.1)

Create a fact sheet or infographic that explains how people participate in UK politics and whether democracy in the UK is in decline.

You'll need to do some independent research to complete this task. Use reliable sources such as the BBC, the Electoral Commission, the Hansard Society, or Parliament's education pages.

Your work should include:

- Two ways people participate in politics
- The voter turnout percentage from the July 2024 UK General Election
- One argument for or against the idea that UK democracy is in decline

STRETCH YOURSELF FURTHER (OPTIONAL)

If you're keen to go a little deeper before September, try one or more of the tasks below. These are not compulsory, but they will give you a stronger start and help develop your political awareness.

Please complete these on separate paper and bring them with your main summer tasks to hand in at the start of term.

- **Choose five glossary terms** and explain them in your own words, using a political example for each
- **Explore a party manifesto** from the **2024 UK General Election**. Choose one key policy and write a short piece explaining whether you agree or disagree with it, providing clear political reasoning.
- **Listen to an episode of a political podcast** (e.g., *The Rest is Politics*, *The Constitution Unit Podcast*, or *Newscast*) released during 2026, and write a concise summary of the key arguments raised.

STARTER GLOSSARY: KEY POLITICAL TERMS

Term	Definition
Democracy	A system of government where power is held by the people, usually via elections.
Government	The group responsible for running the country – led by the Prime Minister and Cabinet.
Parliament	The UK's legislature, including the House of Commons and House of Lords.
Constitution	A set of rules that define how a state is governed.
Sovereignty	The highest legal authority – in the UK, this lies with Parliament.
Political Party	A group with shared views aiming to win and hold political power.
Electoral System	The method by which votes are translated into seats.
Turnout	The percentage of eligible voters who actually vote in an election.
Legislation	Laws made by Parliament.
Judiciary	The branch of government that interprets and applies the law.
Participation	The different ways people get involved in politics (e.g. voting, protesting).
Executive	The branch that implements laws and runs the country (PM and Cabinet).

POLITICS SUMMER READING SUGGESTIONS

You are not expected to read a full book before September, but dipping into any of the following will help build your understanding and curiosity about UK Politics and democracy.

If you do wish to get hold of a copy, look out for second-hand editions – they are usually inexpensive and just as useful.

General Introductions to Politics

- **Andrew Heywood – *Politics***
A foundational text that introduces the key ideas and debates in political theory. Chapters 1 and 2 are especially useful for A-Level students.
- **Simon Jenkins – *A Short History of Parliament***
An accessible history of the development of the UK's democratic institutions.

Current Affairs and Commentary

- **Steve Richards – *The Prime Ministers: Reflections on Leadership from Wilson to Johnson***
Offers insight into the personalities, priorities and decision-making of recent UK Prime Ministers.
- **Isabel Hardman – *Why We Get the Wrong Politicians***
A clear, readable and sometimes frustrating look at the inner workings of Westminster.

Analytical and Critical Works

- **Levitsky & Ziblatt – *How Democracies Die***
A widely respected study of how democratic systems weaken, using examples from across the world. Excellent context for the 'participation crisis' debate.
- **Owen Jones – *The Establishment: And How They Get Away With It***
A more opinionated take on how power operates in modern Britain.

Follow Online for Shorter Reading

- **Institute for Government** – www.instituteforgovernment.org.uk
Policy briefings and excellent explainers on political reforms and how the UK government functions.
- **Hansard Society** – www.hansardsociety.org.uk
Especially good on democratic accountability, constitutional reform and participation.

Podcasts for Easy Listening

- ***The Rest is Politics*** – Presented by Alastair Campbell and Rory Stewart. Thoughtful and well-informed discussion of UK and international politics.
- **BBC Radio 4 – *Any Questions?*** – A weekly political panel show with live audience questions and discussion.
- ***Pod Save the UK*** – A UK spin-off of the American political podcast network, with a progressive slant.

Websites

- **UK Parliament** – Official site with information about how Parliament works
- **Hansard Society** – Excellent for understanding constitutional reform and political participation
- **Institute for Government** – Independent, clear guides to government policy, power and accountability
- **BBC Politics** – Daily coverage and background analysis
- **CNN Politics** – For accessible US political news
- **NPR Politics** – US analysis and political commentary