

■ A-Level Politics Summer Preparation Pack

🔑 Aims:

- Build foundational knowledge of UK Politics and Government
 - Explore the core political ideologies that shape society
 - Engage with real-world politics through media, reading and research
 - Develop political vocabulary and confidence in using it
 - Stimulate interest and critical thinking
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🌐 SECTION 1: Introduction to UK Politics

1. What is Politics? (30 mins)

Task: Watch one of the following:

- BBC Bitesize: What is Politics?
- CrashCourse: Politics & Government on YouTube (search for "CrashCourse Politics")

Write a paragraph:

What is politics, and why is it important for everyone?

2. Democracy & Participation (1 hour)

Task: Research the following:

- What is democracy?
- What's the difference between direct and representative democracy?
- What are the key features of UK democracy?

Extension: Compare the UK with one other democracy (e.g. USA, France, Sweden).

Write: A bullet-pointed list of the strengths and weaknesses of democracy in the UK today.

3. Parties & Elections (1-1.5 hours)

Task 1: Pick **three major political parties** in the UK (e.g. Conservative, Labour, Liberal Democrats). Research:

- Their origin and history
- Their current leader
- Their main beliefs and values

Task 2: Choose one recent UK general election (e.g. 2019 or 2017).

- What was the result?

- What issues dominated the campaign?
- What voting system was used?

Present your research in one of the following formats:

- A mind map
 - A short slide deck
 - A two-page "Election Explainer"
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4. Pressure Groups & Civil Liberties (45 mins)

Task: Find two examples of UK pressure groups (e.g. Greenpeace, Liberty, Stonewall, the RSPB, the TaxPayers' Alliance). Research:

- What are their aims?
- What methods do they use?
- How successful have they been?

Answer: Why might pressure groups be both helpful *and* harmful to democracy?

5. The Media in Politics (45 mins)

Task:

- Follow a political story in the news (BBC News Politics, The Guardian, Sky News, etc.)
- Track how **two different media outlets** report on the same story.

Write: A short reflection: How does the media shape public opinion?

SECTION 2: Understanding UK Government

6. The UK Constitution (45 mins)

Task: Research and summarise:

- What is a constitution?
- What is meant by an "uncodified constitution"?
- What are the key sources of the UK constitution?

Write: A paragraph explaining how the UK system differs from countries with codified constitutions (e.g. the USA).

7. How Laws Are Made (45 mins)

Task: Research the **Legislative Process**:

- Stages of a Bill in Parliament
- The difference between the House of Commons and the House of Lords
- What is Royal Assent?

Create a **diagram or cartoon strip** that shows the journey of a law from idea to implementation.

8. Power & Devolution (1 hour)

Task: Research:

- What is devolution?
- What powers do the Scottish Parliament, Welsh Senedd and Northern Ireland Assembly have?
- What tensions exist between devolved and central government?

Extension Challenge: Research what is meant by “West Lothian Question” and “English Votes for English Laws.”

9. The Prime Minister and Cabinet (45 mins)

Task: Research:

- The current Prime Minister - background, party, priorities
- What is the Cabinet? How is it chosen?
- What is the role of the Executive?

Create a **profile of the Prime Minister** including powers, limits, and challenges.

10. The UK Supreme Court (45 mins)

Task: Research:

- What is the role of the UK Supreme Court?
- How independent is it from the Government?
- What is Parliamentary Sovereignty?

Challenge: Find one case the UK Supreme Court has ruled on and explain what happened and why it mattered.

💡 SECTION 3: Political Ideologies

11. What is an Ideology? (15 mins)

Task: Write your own definition of *ideology*.
Then research definitions of:

- Liberalism
- Conservatism
- Socialism
- Anarchism

Write: One sentence for each ideology explaining what it believes about:

- a) Human nature
 - b) The role of the state
 - c) Freedom and equality
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12. Ideology Case Study Tasks (1-2 hours total)

Pick **two** of the **four** ideologies and complete the following:

- Research 1 major historical thinker linked to that ideology (e.g. John Locke, Karl Marx)
 - Find 1 example of a modern political figure or movement that reflects this ideology
 - Summarise the key beliefs in 5 bullet points
 - Create a one-page “Ideology Profile” including images, quotes, and your own thoughts
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OPTIONAL: Wider Reading & Media (Any Time!)

Recommended Reading:

- *Politics: A Very Short Introduction* by Kenneth Minogue
- *How to Be Right* by James O’Brien (for media & debate)
- *The Establishment* by Owen Jones (more critical perspective)
- *Why We Get the Wrong Politicians* by Isabel Hardman

Podcasts:

- *The Rest is Politics* (Alastair Campbell & Rory Stewart)
- *Talking Politics* archive
- *Pod Save the UK*

Websites to Explore:

- BBC Politics
 - [Parliament.uk](https://www.parliament.uk)
 - [Electoral Commission](https://www.electoralcommission.gov.uk)
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Final Task: Politics Scrapbook

Keep a **Politics Scrapbook or Journal** over the summer. Include:

- Articles or headlines you find interesting
- Notes on political issues in the news
- Reflections on what you've learned or found surprising
- Any opinions, ideas or questions that arise

Bring this with you in September – we'll use it as a conversation starter.