

Post-16 Curriculum - Government and Politics

Subject Curriculum Overview

Subject	Government and Politics
Qualification / Specification	A Level
Awarding Body	AQA
Level	3
Curriculum Lead	Nick Binfield
Teaching Staff	Phil Stott / Ian Harrison
Guided Learning Hours	10 hours a fortnight
Year(s) Delivered	12 & 13
Last Review Date	June 2026
Next Review Date	June 2027

1. Curriculum Intent

A Level Government and Politics develops students' understanding of how political systems operate, how power is exercised, and how citizens can participate in democratic processes. The subject encourages learners to engage critically with contemporary political issues, evaluate competing viewpoints, and make evidence-based judgements. Through the study of UK, US, comparative politics, and political ideas students gain a deeper understanding of democracy, rights, representation, accountability, and the role of institutions in shaping society. The course equips students with the knowledge and analytical skills needed to become informed, active, and responsible citizens.

Universities and employers value students who can analyse complex information, evaluate different viewpoints, communicate clearly, and make well-reasoned judgements. A Level Government and Politics develops these skills through the study of real-world political issues, debates, and case studies.

Students learn to:

- Construct coherent written and verbal arguments.
- Assess competing perspectives and reach substantiated conclusions.

- Engage with current affairs and contemporary developments.

These skills are highly relevant to careers in law, public administration, politics, journalism, civil service, education, business, public relations, policy analysis, and the wider public sector.

Employers and universities increasingly value individuals who can think critically, communicate effectively and make informed judgements based on evidence. Government and Politics develops these attributes through the study of real-world political issues and contemporary developments.

The curriculum meets employer and university needs by developing:

- Strong analytical skills.
- The ability to evaluate complex information and competing arguments.
- Excellent written and verbal communication.
- Awareness of national and international political developments.
- Understanding of democratic processes, governance and decision-making.

Students learn to present balanced arguments, justify conclusions and engage with complex contemporary issues, mirroring the expectations of higher education and many professional environments

Successful learners develop a holistic understanding of government and politics through a secure knowledge of political institutions, processes, ideologies and debates. They can confidently analyse political developments, evaluate different viewpoints and apply their knowledge to contemporary examples.

Students will:

- Demonstrate strong knowledge of UK and comparative political systems.
- Apply political concepts accurately and effectively.
- Construct well-supported arguments and judgements.
- Engage critically with current political issues and debates.
- Achieve strong examination outcomes and be well prepared for further study in a variety of social science and other fields or employment.

Ultimately, success is reflected in learners becoming informed, thoughtful and engaged citizens who possess the knowledge, skills and confidence to participate effectively in democratic society and succeed in higher education and future careers.

2. Foundational Knowledge

Area	Essential Knowledge / Skills	Why It Matters
Constitutions	Features and functions of US/UK Constitutions	Structural foundations for both political systems upon which everything else is overlaid.
Legislatures	Features and functions of UK/US Legislatures and Committee systems	Primary legislature (functional) and representative (democratic) bodies of each system.
Executives	Features and functions of UK/US Executives	Primary tools through which legislative and political power are exercised in each system.
Judiciaries	Features and functions of UK/US Judicial systems	Primary means through which constitutions are maintained and executives/legislatures are restrained.
Electoral Systems	Features and functions of UK/US Electoral systems and direct democracy	Primary means through which the public interacts with political systems. Allow the exercise of political power at all levels of society.
Democracy and Participation	Nature of democratic participation in the UK/US	Measure of democratic legitimacy within a political system.
Pressure Groups and Political Parties	Features and functions of UK/US Pressure Groups Features and functions of UK/US Political Parties	Alternative means of popular engagement with the political system and measure of democratic legitimacy
Civil Rights	Systems used to protect civil rights in the US/UK	Central feature of a liberal democracy.
Political Ideologies	Features of varying political ideologies over a historical period and as they manifest in the C21st.	Central ideas of politics upon which practical politics is built.

3. Powerful Knowledge

Powerful Knowledge Area	Why It Matters	Evidence of Understanding
Constitutions	How well do codified/uncodified constitutions function? How well suited to the C21st are the UK/US Constitutions?	Short 9 mark questions to test knowledge. Extract questions to test understanding of theories and arguments. Essay questions to test analytical skills and ability to compare US/UK systems.
Legislatures	How well do legislatures legislate and represent the public?	Short 9 mark questions to test knowledge. Extract questions to test understanding of theories and arguments. Essay questions to test analytical skills and ability to compare US/UK systems.
Executives	How do Executives exercise their power? Are Executives overly powerful or lacking power?	Short 9 mark questions to test knowledge. Extract questions to test understanding of theories and arguments. Essay questions to test analytical skills and ability to compare US/UK systems.
Judiciaries	How effective are judiciaries at restraining other elements of the political system? Are they powerful enough/not powerful enough?	Short 9 mark questions to test knowledge. Extract questions to test understanding of theories and arguments. Essay questions to test analytical skills and ability to compare US/UK systems.

Electoral Systems	Do electoral systems effectively represent the wishes of the electorate?	Short 9 mark questions to test knowledge. Extract questions to test understanding of theories and arguments. Essay questions to test analytical skills and ability to compare US/UK systems.
Democracy and Participation	Do participation labels demonstrate popular support for political systems?	Short 9 mark questions to test knowledge. Extract questions to test understanding of theories and arguments. Essay questions to test analytical skills and ability to compare US/UK systems.
Parties and Pressure Groups	How do pressure groups interact with more formal aspects of political systems? Are pressure groups democratic? What role do political parties play within political systems? Are political parties democratic?	Short 9 mark questions to test knowledge. Extract questions to test understanding of theories and arguments. Essay questions to test analytical skills and ability to compare US/UK systems.
Civil Rights	How well are civil rights protected in political systems? How are they protected?	Short 9 mark questions to test knowledge. Extract questions to test understanding of theories and arguments. Essay questions to test analytical skills and ability to compare US/UK systems.
Political Ideologies	How have differing political ideologies impacted upon British/US/Global history?	Short 9 mark questions to test knowledge. Extract questions to test understanding of theories and arguments. Essay questions to test analytical skills and overarching understanding of key ideological beliefs.

4. Curriculum Implementation

Term / Unit	Key Content	Foundational Knowledge	Powerful Knowledge	Assessment Opportunities
Yr 12 - Autumn 1	US/UK Constitutions and UK Devolution	Features and functions of US/UK Constitutions	How well do codified/uncodified constitutions function? How well suited to the C21st are the UK/US Constitutions?	On-going 9 mark questions to assess foundational knowledge. End of Unit assessments to focus upon Extract/Essay writing skills linked to powerful knowledge.
Yr 12 - Autumn 2	UK/US Legislatures	Features and functions of UK/US Legislatures and Committee systems	How well do legislatures legislate and represent the public?	On-going 9 mark questions to assess foundational knowledge. End of Unit assessments to focus upon Extract/Essay writing skills linked to powerful knowledge.
Yr 12 - Spring 1	UK/US Executives	Features and functions of UK/US Executives	How do Executives exercise their power? Are Executives overly powerful or lacking power?	On-going 9 mark questions to assess foundational knowledge.

				End of Unit assessments to focus upon Extract/Essay writing skills linked to powerful knowledge.
Yr 12 - Spring 2	UK/US Judiciaries	Features and functions of UK/US Judicial systems	How effective are judiciaries at restraining other elements of the political system? Are they powerful enough/not powerful enough?	On-going 9 mark questions to assess foundational knowledge. End of Unit assessments to focus upon Extract/Essay writing skills linked to powerful knowledge.
Yr 12 - Summer 1	UK/US Electoral Systems	Features and functions of UK/US Electoral systems and direct democracy	Do electoral systems effectively represent the wishes of the electorate?	On-going 9 mark questions to assess foundational knowledge. End of Unit assessments to focus upon Extract/Essay writing skills linked to powerful knowledge.
Yr 12 - Summer 2	Democracy and Participation Civil Rights	Nature of democratic participation in the UK/US Systems used to protect civil rights in the US/UK How well are civil rights protected in political systems? How are they protected?	Do participation labels demonstrate popular support for political systems?	On-going 9 mark questions to assess foundational knowledge. End of Unit assessments to focus upon Extract/Essay writing skills linked to powerful knowledge. Yr12 Mock Examinations to assess all examination style questions and knowledge types.
Yr 13 - Autumn 1	US/UK Parties and Pressure Groups	Features and functions of UK/US Pressure Groups Features and functions of UK/US Political Parties	How do pressure groups interact with more formal aspects of political systems? Are pressure groups democratic? What role do political parties play within political systems? Are political parties democratic?	On-going 9 mark questions to assess foundational knowledge. End of Unit assessments to focus upon Extract/Essay writing skills linked to powerful knowledge. Yr13 Mock Examinations to assess all examination style questions and knowledge types.
Yr 13 - Autumn 2	Political Ideologies - Liberalism and Conservatism	History of ideologies. Key Thinkers Relationship between ideology and key themes.	How have differing political ideologies impacted upon British/US/Global history?	On-going 9 mark questions to assess foundational knowledge. End of Unit assessments to focus upon Extract/Essay writing skills linked to powerful knowledge. Yr13 Mock Examinations to assess all examination style questions and knowledge types.
Yr 13 - Spring 1	Political Ideologies -	History of ideologies. Key Thinkers	How have differing political ideologies impacted upon British/US/Global history?	On-going 9 mark questions to assess foundational knowledge.

	Socialism and Nationalism	Relationship between ideology and key themes.		End of Unit assessments to focus upon Extract/Essay writing skills linked to powerful knowledge.
Yr 13 - Spring 2	Revision	N/A	N/A	Practice examination style questions

5. Assessment Strategy

Assessment Type	Purpose	Frequency
Diagnostic	To assess baseline understanding of broad topics and key factual points within those topics.	Every lesson
Formative	To assess aspects of foundational knowledge against examination style questions. (9 marks)	Weekly
Summative	To assess powerful knowledge/key themes within the context of examination style extract and essay questions.	Termly
Synoptic	To assess overall understanding of knowledge, themes and ability to synoptically lion these in a full examination scenario.	Three identified examination periods throughout the course.