

A Level Politics Exam Board: AQA

Exam Overview:

- **Paper 1: Government and politics of the UK**
 - Written exam: 2 hours
 - 77 marks
 - 33⅓ % of A-level
 - **Questions** - A mixture of medium length 'explain' and essay style questions.
- **Paper 2: The government and politics of the USA & Comparative politics**
 - Written exam: 2 hours
 - 77 marks
 - 33⅓ % of A-level
 - **Questions** - A mixture of medium length 'explain' and essay style questions.
- **Paper 2: Political Ideas**
 - Written exam: 2 hours
 - 77 marks
 - 33⅓ % of A-level
 - **Questions** - A mixture of medium length 'explain' and essay style questions.

Guide to Exam Papers:

There are three broad areas of study in this specification:

- the government and politics of the UK
- the government and politics of the USA, and comparative politics
- political ideas.
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The specification requires in depth study of UK and US government and politics. Comparisons across the two political systems are required in the topic entitled Comparative politics. Students will be required to identify parallels, connections, similarities and differences between aspects of politics. This will ensure that students develop a critical awareness of the changing nature of politics and the relationships between political ideas, political institutions and political processes.

The political ideas to be studied have relevance to both of the systems of government and politics. The study of the four ideologies will enhance the students' knowledge and understanding of politics, political debate and political issues in both the UK and the USA.

Skills

In all components of this subject students must demonstrate the following skills:

- to comprehend and interpret political information
- to critically analyse and evaluate the areas of politics studied
- to construct arguments and explanations leading to reasoned conclusions
- to identify parallels, connections, similarities and differences between aspects of the areas of politics studied

- to construct and communicate arguments and explanations with relevance, clarity and coherence
- to use appropriate political vocabulary
- to make connections between the different areas of politics studied
- to make comparisons across two political systems.

Synopticity

An essential element of the assessment of students' work in A-level politics is the extent to which they display a synoptic or holistic understanding of the subject. To demonstrate this students will be expected to inter-relate areas of content within each module and, when appropriate, across modules, to address the requirements of the exam papers. They must use appropriate concepts and knowledge as well as the skills listed above in developing their answers.

Politics, as a subject, is inherently synoptic. The political knowledge, concepts, behaviours and institutions studied in any particular module can often be used and applied to new contexts in other parts of the course. The essay questions are particularly synoptic, giving students the opportunity to draw on and synthesise the knowledge, understanding and skills gained throughout the course.

Paper 1

Government and Politics of The UK

Government and Politics of the UK is divided into ten sections. Each has a particular focus but their interrelationships must be understood to appreciate the complexities of the system. Students will study each of the prescribed sections below.

- The Nature and Sources of the British Constitution
- The Structure and Role of Parliament
- The Prime Minister and Cabinet
- The Judiciary
- Devolution
- Democracy and Participation
- Elections and Referendums
- Political Parties
- Pressure Groups
- The European Union

Paper 2

Government and politics of the USA is divided into eight sections. Each has a particular focus but their interrelationships must be understood to appreciate the complexities of the system. Students will study each of the prescribed sections below.

- The constitutional framework of US government
- The legislative branch of government: Congress
- The executive branch of government: President
- The judicial branch of government
- The electoral process and direct democracy
- Political parties

- Pressure groups
- Civil rights
- Comparative Politics
 - Constitutional arrangements
 - The executives
 - The judiciaries
 - Electoral and party systems
 - Pressure groups
 - Civil Rights

Paper 3

Political Ideas

Core Ideologies

- Liberalism
- Conservatism
- Socialism
- Feminism

Our A-level exams in Politics include questions that allow students to demonstrate their ability to:

- recall information
- draw together information from different areas of the specification
- apply their knowledge and understanding in practical and theoretical contexts.

Our A-level exams in politics include three broad question types.

- 9 mark questions require students to explain and analyse different political institutions, processes, concepts, theories and issues prescribed in the specification. Students are required to develop and substantiate at least three points in a structured, analytical answer, making use of appropriate political vocabulary and examples to substantiate their answer.
- 25 mark extract based questions require students to comprehend and interpret the argument(s) contained in political information, using their knowledge and understanding of the issue to analyse and evaluate the argument(s) put forward. The answer should be balanced, maintain a sustained line of reasoning and lead to a reasoned conclusion, communicated with relevance, clarity and coherence. The political information used in exams may take the form of political publications, government publications, newspaper extracts, manifestos, visual material and data.
- 25 mark essay questions require students to analyse and evaluate a given statement using their knowledge and understanding of the issue under discussion. The question may draw from different sections of the specification, requiring students to identify and substantiate parallels, connections, similarities and differences between aspects of politics studied. The answer should take the form of a structured and balanced argument, maintaining a sustained line of reasoning, communicated with relevance, clarity and coherence and leading to a reasoned conclusion. The 25 mark essay questions for comparative politics

(component 2, section C), will require students to make explicit comparisons between UK and US government and politics.

Assessment objectives (AOs) are set by Ofqual and are the same across all A-level Politics specifications and all exam boards.

The exams will measure how students have achieved the following assessment objectives.

- AO1: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of political institutions, processes, concepts, theories and issues.
- AO2: Analyse aspects of politics and political information, including in relation to parallels, connections, similarities and differences.
- AO3: Evaluate aspects of politics and political information, including to construct arguments, make substantiated judgements and draw conclusions.

Examination Y12 Summer 2021 Key Topics:

- **The Government and Politics of the UK**
 - Judiciary
 - Structure and Role of Parliament
 - Elections and Referendums
 - Pressure Groups
 - Political Parties

Useful Websites:

- [A Level Politics Resources and Revision - Study Politics](#)
- [Edexcel A Level Politics Resources \(All\) | Politics | tutor2u](#)
- [A Level Politics](#)

Useful resources:

- **Google Classroom** – All resources from lessons have been put into Google Classroom
- Departmental revision booklets
- Departmental example exam questions
- UK Government and Politics for AS/A-level (Fifth Edition) Philip Lynch, Paul Fairclough, Toby Cooper
- Political ideas for A Level: Liberalism, Conservatism, Socialism, Feminism, Anarchism Neil McNaughton, Richard Kelly
- US Government and Politics for A-level Fifth Edition by Anthony J. Bennett

Useful revision tips and specific revision and preparation guidance:

- **Google Classroom** – All resources have been placed on Google Classroom for you to use
- Create 'Flash cards' focusing on the subject knowledge of your topic to ensure you can answer all exam question.
- Complete as many past paper exam questions as possible focusing on planning, rather than answering to break them down more clearly
- Spend time analysing mark schemes and get familiar with exam technique
- Use of quick quizzes to help to recall key points of information