Beths Grammar School

Politics A Level

Induction Pack

and

Handbook

2020—2022



**Politics A Level 2019-2021**

**Introduction:**

Welcome to Politics at Beths. Over the summer you will need to complete the activities on the following pages and bring them to your first Politics lesson in September. If you are unable to print this document please just handwrite your answers on paper.

You should also use the supra-curricular guide to deepen your understanding of the discipline of politics.

**Exam Information**

Please be aware that you need ensure that you familiarise yourselves with the exam board website.

*Exam Board:* Pearson Edexcel

*Course:* Politics 2017

*Website:* https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-a-levels/politics-2017.html

Getting ahead in Politics…

Good and outstanding Politics students need to be up to date with current affairs. What are the politicians up to? What have they said in Parliament or on Twitter? Why are they doing and saying it?



  

There are many sources of information you can use to keep up to date with what is going on. As you work through the course you need to be keeping a log of events. It doesn’t need a lot of time or detail but you should be aware examiners are looking for knowledge and application of evidence of recent political events / examples – these won’t always be in the textbook. REMEMBER – as you put this together you need to think how it can link to the course. When you start studying Politics at Beths you will be given PLCs, Knowledge Organisers and a course outline to help you.

You could set it out like this:

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Source (paper, website, social media, TV / Radio news):    Date:    Event:    Politicians / people involved:    Brief details of what happened: | Link to course?    Component    Topic      How could you use it in your work? |

Key Terms in British Politics

 TASK 1: Learning key terms LINK: <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/hi/uk_politics/vote_2005/basics/4346975.stm>

Use the website (and other sources of information) to write definitions and give examples of the following key terms:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Key term | Definition | Example |
| Budget: |  |  |
| By- election: |  |  |
| Cabinet: |  |  |
| Coalition (you will need to update the definition given on the website): |  |  |
| Constituency: |  |  |
| Deposit: |  |  |
| Devolution: |  |  |
| First-by-the-post: |  |  |
| Hung Parliament: |  |  |
| Landslide: |  |  |
| Manifesto: |  |  |
| MP Member of Parliament: |  |  |
| Opposition: |  |  |
| Proportional representation: |  |  |
| Queens speech: |  |  |
| Referendum: |  |  |
| Speaker: |  |  |
| West Lothian Question: |  |  |
| Westminster |  |  |

Some British Politics essentials...

**It is important that you have some key facts and figures about British Politics. It is a vital foundation for A level, especially in year 12.**

2019 General Election results: Find out the % of the vote each party received.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| Labour |  | SNP |  |
| Conservative |  | Plaid Cymru |  |
| Lib Dem |  | Green |  |
| UKIP |  | DUP |  |

Current number of seats in the House of Commons

When we study election systems we will consider the questions below in relation to the data you have found on this page. Think about them now.

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| Party | No. Seats | % Seats |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |
|  |  |  |

|  |
| --- |
| What do you notice about the % of the vote received at the General Election compared with the proportion of seats parties got in Parliament? |

Some British Politics essentials...

Comparing election results in the UK

Elections in the UK can produce some interesting and unusual information when you start looking at the data. This can often lead to discussions about the system that we use in the UK to elect our Parliament.

Task:

Using the internet you are going to research statistics from different elections. You already have the data for 2019 on the previous page, you need to look at data for the three elections prior to the last one.

For each election, complete the relevant columns, to highlight the % of votes received; the % of seats each party received and the number of seats. Use the links below to help:

2017— <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/election/2017/results/england>

2015— <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/election/2015/results>

2010— <http://news.bbc.co.uk/1/shared/election2010/results/>

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
| 2017 Election | 2015 Election | 2010 Election |

|  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | % of Vote | No. seats | % of Seats | % of Vote | No. seats | % of Seats | % of Vote | No. seats | % of Seats |
| Con |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Lab |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Lib Dem |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Green |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| SNP |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| Plaid Cymru |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| DUP |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| SF |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| UUP |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |
| SDLP |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |  |

|  |
| --- |
| **Task:**  Using the data compare the seats % of seats won and the % of votes received by parties in the general elections. What conclusions can you draw from this about the way the House of Commons is chosen and how governments are formed in this country? |

Who’s who in Boris Johnson’s Cabinet?

In the British electoral system the Queen invites the leader of the winning party in a general election to form a government (to run the country day to day from 10 Downing Street). The new Prime Minister’s first job is to then select between 21—27 MPs to form his cabinet. A cabinet can be re-shuffled (changed) at any point. The cabinet meets weekly in Downing Street to decide together how the country should be run. Each cabinet minister is given a specific policy area of expertise. They must run their department – eg. health – day to day, but also create new laws for Parliament to pass in their policy area.

For your A-Level exam you need to have strong knowledge of politics over the past 5 years.

Prime Minister:

Defence Secretary:



Foreign Secretary

Justice Secretary:

Health Secretary

Home Secretary:

Education Secretary

Chancellor of the Exchequer

International Trade:

Transport Secretary

Task

Using this link, read the article by the London School of Economics website about the Cabinet (it was written in July 2019 so some of the data may be inaccurate now). For up to date data find alternative websites for the information.

<https://blogs.lse.ac.uk/politicsandpolicy/the-educational-background-of-boris-johnsons-cabinet/>

**Using this article and the data explain why this issue might be important ….**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| The number in cabinet of.. |  |
| Women |  |
| Ethnic minority background |  |
| Went to private schools |  |
| Went to comprehensives |  |
| Went to grammar schools |  |

What do the main parties stand for?

Use the political party websites and summarise their main ideas on at least 3 issues. The focus here is on UK wide parties as opposed to regional ones in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland where there are different arrangements for some of these issues.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|  | Health | Education | Environment |
| Conservative |  |  |  |
| Labour |  |  |  |
| Liberal Democrat |  |  |  |
| Green |  |  |  |

Look at these policies what do they tell you about each of the parties views about the role of government / the state in people’s lives?

Thinking about Referendums...

The original proposal for the EU referendum question was:

*Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union?*

*YES*

*NO*

After consultation, it was changed to:

*Should the United Kingdom remain a member of the European Union or leave the European Union?*

*Remain a member of the European Union*

*Leave the European Union*

|  |
| --- |
| **Why do you think the wording of the question and options were? Why do you think the wording is so important?** |

**Some research about the referendum:**

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
| Who were the main campaigners for Brexit? | Who were the main campaigners to Remain? |

The result– Complete this information:

Remain % of the vote Leave % of the vote

Voter turnout % Why do you think turnout percentage is so significant?

Thinking about protests ...

**Manchester Extinction Rebellion activists glue themselves to banks.**

**Barclays and HSBC targeted on final day of protests against fossil fuel investments**

Environmental protesters have glued themselves to banks in Manchester to protest against fossil fuel investments on the final day of Extinction Rebellion’s action in the city.

Nine activists stuck themselves to the pavement outside Barclays in Piccadilly Square, with a further two following suit at HSBC in St Ann’s Square on Monday.

No arrests were made. About 100 protesters also staged “die-ins” across the city, blocking the road outside the fish market in the Arndale shopping centre “to highlight the damage animal agriculture does to the environment”.

They then lay on the site of the former Central Retail Park, which the council wants to turn into a car park. Extinction Rebellion has donated all plants from its pop-up park to the site, which local residents have occupied and declared a “people’s park”.

Lizzy Haughton had glued one hand to another protester and the other to the paving stone outside Barclays. A sabbatical officer at Manchester University, she has already been arrested twice at Extinction Rebellion protests, receiving a conditional discharge for spray painting the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs building and awaiting trial for another action in Manchester last year.

She said she was not worried about being arrested for a third time. “I have given up my career prospects because there will be no planet to do anything in if we don’t act soon,” she said.

By lunchtime she was released by Greater Manchester police after officers made it clear they had no plans to arrest the group. “[Arrests] would have been good,” she said, “but we have got into the media already and the point was to bring attention to Barclays.”

A recent report from the Rainforest Action Network and the BankTrack group, which tracks and analyses the investments of banks around the world, found Barclays had invested $24bn (£20bn) in fossil fuels last year. The bank said that was less than the £27.3bn it had facilitated in green bonds and renewable financing in the same period. It said it was determined to “do all we can to support the transition to a low carbon economy, while also ensuring that global energy needs continue to be met”.

What are the positives and negatives of protest groups like Extinction Rebellion pulling off attention grabbing stunts in order to get their message across?

**The Politics A Level Supra-Curriculum**

Whether you are already thinking about studying politics beyond A level or not, remember Politics is everywhere! You will use it in a range of courses as well as find it useful in all sorts of jobs. You will enjoy this course even more if you engage with it beyond simply what the textbook and exam board say you need to know.

It is important you keep up with current affairs and we have already seen how you can do that. Remember Radio 4—the Today or PM Programmes are very good, Channel 4 News, BBC and Sky News on TV. In terms of reading The Economist has excellent summaries and there are other journals like the Spectator and The New Statesman. The last two have a clear political bias as do the main the broadsheet papers so take this into account when reading them. Private Eye is excellent for a satirical look at the news every two weeks (and is also reasonably priced) but also for its investigative journalism.

You could also consider investigating the possibility of applying for internship with an MP, the Houses of Parliament, local council as well.

Don’t forget to use social media like Twitter to find out what your local MP is doing etc. You can also follow the feeds of various writers, journalists and politicians as well.

There are a wealth of resources online with many courses from universities available on forums such as FutureLearn, but also directly with some universities as well as the Open University’s Open Learn facility as well.

The following few pages are guide to what you can do to engage with the subject and broaden your understanding. It is not exhaustive and if you find anything let myself or Ms Palmer know.

Politics Supra Curriculum

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| General   |  | | --- | | **Newspapers:**  <https://www.theguardian.com/politics>  The Observer  The Times / Sunday Times  The Independent  The Daily Telegraph / The Sunday Telegraph    **TV news:**  <https://www.channel4.com/news/>  <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news>  <https://news.sky.com/uk>  Newsnight  Panorama  Dispatches    **Radio:**  <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00tl965>  LBC  Today Programme  World at One  PM  The World Tonight |   Politics Supra Curriculum  Component 1: British Politics and Core Political Ideas     |  | | --- | | In Our Time:  Democracy: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00547jm>  TV / Film:    Yes Minister  Yes Prime Minister  The Thick of It  In the Loop  The Iron Lady    Books:    British Politics: A very short Introduction  Gauge, S (2018) The Little Book of Politics: A Pocket Guide to Parties, Power and Participation  Very Short Introductions Series    Podcasts:    <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p04z203l/episodes/player?page=2>  <https://soundcloud.com/user-957591628>  <https://anxiousandinsecure.com/>  <https://www.talkingpoliticspodcast.com/>  Online courses:    <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/peterloo-to-the-pankhursts-radicalism-and-reform-in-the-nineteenth-century> |  |  | | --- | | Core Political Ideas | | <https://www.tutor2u.net/politics/collections/profiles-of-key-political-thinkers>  <https://www.amazon.com/Political-Ideas-Really-Need-Know/dp/1848660839>    <https://www.amazon.com/Politics-Book-Ideas-Simply-Explained/dp/1465402144>  Sandel, M. (2010) Justice: What's the Right Thing to Do?  Sandel M (2013) What Money Can’t Buy: The Moral Limits of the Markets  Political Thought-from Plato to NATO    In Our Time (Radio 4 Series – Philosophy Section): <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p01f0vzr?page=2>  <https://player.fm/podcasts/political-philosophy>    Online courses:  <http://www.openculture.com/introduction-to-political-philosophy-a-free-yale-course>  <http://justiceharvard.org/>  <https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/propaganda> | |
| Component 2: British Government and Non-Core Political ideas  Many of the resources identified for British Politics will be useful for Component 2. The focus in this unit is mainly on institutions and how they work so access the websites of those institutions will be useful:  The UK Supreme Court  Parliament UK  European Union  Books:  Autobiographies / biographies of significant politicians:  Margaret Thatcher  Tony Blair  Gordon Brown  Books on government and political issues:  Will Hutton: the State We’re in  V Bognador: Beyond Brexit  S Abell: How Britain Really Works  P Riddell: 15 Minutes of Power    To watch:  Highest Court in the Land (Supreme Court):  <https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=uk+supreme+court&&view=detail&mid=85C4D8FD4FEAFE9B6EE885C4D8FD4FEAFE9B6EE8&&FORM=VRDGAR>  Cabinet Confidential (about Cabinet in government):  <https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=documentaries+on+uk+government&&view=detail&mid=3250FFC14496A3C589953250FFC14496A3C58995&&FORM=VDRVRV>  Inside the Commons (documentary series n the workings of Parliament)  <https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=documentaries+on+UK+parliament&&view=detail&mid=1E906007C916827B30621E906007C916827B3062&&FORM=VRDGAR>  Meet the Lords (documentary of House of Lords)  <https://www.bing.com/videos/search?q=documentaries+on+house+of+lords&&view=detail&mid=449A42FEFBA507F8ECC7449A42FEFBA507F8ECC7&&FORM=VRDGAR> |

Component 3: Government and Politics of the USA

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| --- |
| <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=j_k_k-bHigM>  Newspapers / magazines:    <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/us-politics>  <https://slate.com/>  <https://www.theatlantic.com/world/>  <https://www.thedailybeast.com/>  <https://www.politico.com/>  TV / Radio News:    <https://edition.cnn.com/>  <https://www.npr.org/podcasts/510310/npr-politics-podcast?t=1558602448296>  <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-us-canada-48726642>  TV / Film:    Dramas –    The West Wing  VEEP  John Adams  The Contender  All the Presidents Men  The Candidate  Wag the Dog  Fahrenheit 9/11  Sicko  Advise and Consent  Vice    Books:    Freedland , J (1998): BRING HOME THE REVOLUTION: The Case for a British Republic  Valelly, R (2013) American Politics: A Very Short Introduction (Very Short Introductions)  Sinclair Lewis: It Couldn’t Happen Here  Moore, M: Stupid White Men  Biographies / Autobiographies of US Presidents |
| In Our Time Radio 4 Series:  <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b09vyw0x>  <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b07c2w5j>  <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p004y28v> |