

Flying Start 2019

Government and Politics

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PART 1: Introduction to the course:

Welcome to Government and Politics, one of the most interesting and engaging A levels you can choose. Covering news and current affairs from the UK and US, it will help you understand how these countries are run and develops research, written communication and debate skills.

It is an ideal choice of A level if you're considering studying politics, sociology, ethics, advertising or journalism at university and is highly regarded by employers in industries including politics, international organisations, the media, government and the civil service.

We will be following the new AQA specification over the 2 years which include the following subject areas:

- Government and politics of the UK
- Government and politics of the USA and comparative politics
- Political ideas

You will

- Develop a wide range of skills including the ability to comprehend, synthesise and interpret political information
- Analyse and evaluate political knowledge
- Select relevant material and construct and communicate arguments clearly and coherently
- Develop a broad knowledge and understanding of the political system of the UK and USA

Over the two years we will be looking at the following topics:

Paper 1: The government and Politics of the UK

- The nature and sources of the British Constitution
- The structure and role of Parliament
- The Prime Minister and cabinet
- The judiciary
- Devolution
- The politics of the UK
- Democracy and participation
- Elections and referendums
- Political parties
- Pressure groups
- The European Union

Paper 2: Government and politics of the USA and comparative politics

- 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 (USA)

- Comparative politics
- Constitutional arrangements in the UK
- The executives (UK)
- The judiciaries (UK)
- Electoral and party systems in the UK
- Pressure groups (UK)
- Civil Rights (UK)

Paper 3: Political ideas

Core ideologies:

- Liberalism
- Conservatism
- Socialism
- Other ideologies

Students will also study one of the following five ideologies:

- Nationalism
- Feminism
- Multiculturalism
- Anarchism
- Ecologism

PART 2: Holiday work

To prepare you for the start of the course you will need to familiarise yourself with political news. Below are a number of resources that you could use to research. Create a journal of case studies by making notes from these stories. Bring these to your first lesson to share with the class.

Task: Using newspapers and websites – explore the nature of politics in the media:

What are your learning points from individual articles/stories?

- What stories and issues dominate the media?
- How are stories presented?
- How are political figures presented?

Articles	Details	What did I learn? Analytical points/ideas

Newspapers

It is very important that politics students are up to date with issues in British and US Politics and over the summer you should read a broadsheet newspaper at least once a week, either a paper copy or via the website. Keep cuttings or add to your favourite articles and stories that you find politically interesting. There are excellent newspaper websites, probably the most comprehensive are; telegraph.co.uk (Daily Telegraph), theguardian.com (The Guardian) and independent.co.uk (The Independent).

Websites

- The BBC has an excellent politics section that includes UK and US politics
- ukpollingreport.co.uk is an excellent site that shows the most current opinion polls for the main political parties.
- Politics.co.uk is a good new site on political issues.
- politico.com is a good site for US politics
- thehill.com another excellent site for US politics

TV Programmes

- Question Time most Thursdays BBC1 at 10.35pm.
- The Daily Politics (BBC2 and BBC Parliament),
- Sunday Politics (BBC1 and BBC Parliament),
- This Week (most Thursdays BBC1 after Question Time)