

St Bede's Catholic College

Year 11 into 12 Transition Work

Politics



A Level Politics

Exam board: Edexcel

Course length: 2 Years

Specification:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/A%20Level/Politics/2017/Specification%20and%20sample%20assessments/A-level-Politics-Specification.pdf>

Exam structure: The course is comprised of three major sections, or components. Each one has a corresponding 2 hour, 84 mark exam paper and is worth 1/3 of the overall final grade awarded. Please note, in Component 2, from the 'non-core political ideologies' options students at St. Bede's will be studying anarchism. In Component 3, Comparative Politics, students will be studying the USA syllabus.

Component 1: UK Politics (*Component code: 9PL0/01)

Written examination: 2 hours

33%% of the qualification

84 marks

Content overview

1. Political Participation, students will study:

- democracy and participation, political parties, electoral systems, voting behaviour and the media.

2. Core Political Ideas, students will study:

- conservatism, liberalism, socialism.

Assessment overview

Section A: Political Participation

One 30-mark question from a choice of two (each question uses a source) – students must complete one of these. Plus one 30-mark question from a choice of two – students must complete one of these.

All questions assess AO1, AO2 and AO3.

Section B: Core Political Ideas

One 24-mark question from a choice of two, which assesses AO1, AO2 and AO3.

Component 2: UK Government (*Component code: 9PL0/02)

Written examination: 2 hours

33% of the qualification

84 marks

Content overview

1. UK Government, students will study:

- the constitution, parliament, Prime Minister and executive, relationships between the branches.

2. Non-core political ideas, students will study:

- one idea from the following: anarchism, ecologism, feminism, multiculturalism, nationalism.

Assessment overview**Section A: UK Government**

- One 30-mark question from a choice of two (each question uses a source) – students must complete one of these. Plus one 30-mark question from a choice of two – students must complete one of these.
- All questions assess AO1, AO2 and AO3.

Section B: Non-core Political Ideas

- One 24-mark question from a choice of two, which assesses AO1, AO2 and AO3.

Component 3: Comparative Politics (*Component code: 9PL0/3A or 3B)

Written examination: 2 hours

33% of the qualification

84 marks

Students study either USA (9PL0/3A) or Global (9PL0/3B)

Content overview

For USA (3A), students will study:

- the US Constitution and federalism, US Congress, US presidency, US Supreme Court and civil rights, democracy and participation, comparative theories.

OR

For Global (3B) students will study:

- sovereignty and globalisation, global governance: political and economic, global governance: human rights and environmental, power and developments, regionalism and the European Union, comparative theories.

Assessment overview for 3A and 3B**Section A**

- One 12-mark question from a choice of two, which assesses AO1 and AO2.

Section B

- One compulsory 12-mark question focused on comparative theories, which assesses AO1 and AO2.

Section C

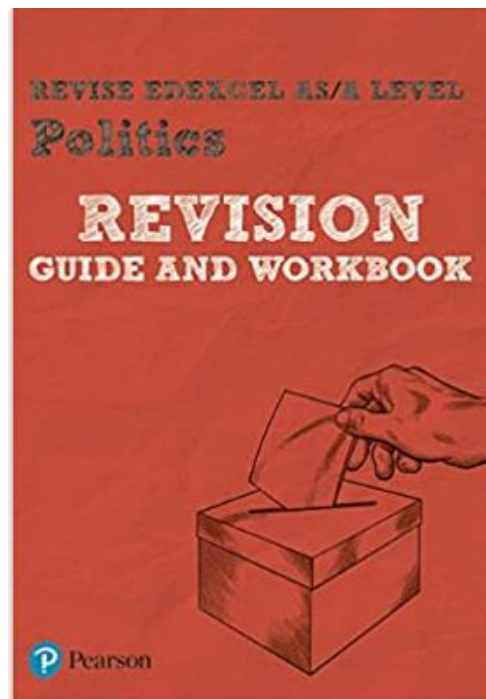
- Two 30-mark questions from a choice of three, which assess AO1, AO2 and AO3.

Sample/past papers:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/A%20Level/Politics/2017/Specification%20and%20sample%20assessments/A-level-Politics-Sample-Assessment-Materials.pdf>

Useful textbooks students can buy if they wish:

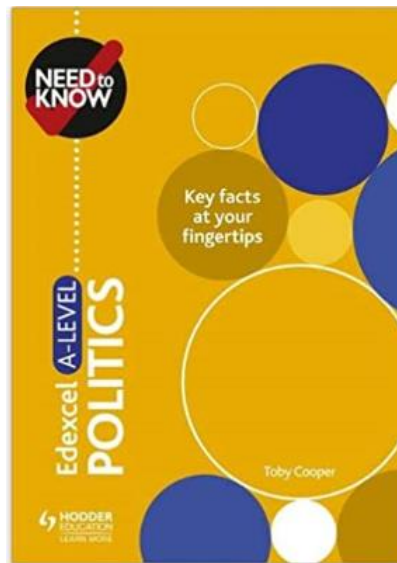
Edexcel Revision Guide and Workbook, Pearson



Aiming for an A in Politics by Sarra Jenkins



Need to Know: Edexcel A-level Politics by Toby Cooper



Useful websites: https://www.amazon.co.uk/REVISE-Edexcel-Politics-Revision-Workbook/dp/1292221569/ref=pd_bxgy_img_3/257-0127904-0805848?_encoding=UTF8&pd_rd_i=1292221569&pd_rd_r=7ad456d3-712a-483f-a7ed-debe12d312c4&pd_rd_w=KHhwJ&pd_rd_wg=dIVFd&pf_rd_p=106f838b-b7d1-46e9-83e0-f70facc857bf&pf_rd_r=ZSD3MV4ZSE8PC9QBZ1DY&psc=1&refRID=ZSD3MV4ZSE8PC9QBZ1DY

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/politics>

<https://twitter.com/bbclaurak>

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics>

Preparatory podcasts/lectures:

Use your favourite podcast app (e.g. Spotify) and search for:

'The Daily', *New York Times*

'Politics Podcast', *NPR*

'Up First', *NPR*

'Civics 101', *NPR*

'Political Gabfest'

'FT UK Politics Podcast'

'Today in Parliament', *BBC Radio 4*

'Political Thinking with Nick Robinson', *BBC Radio 4*

Transition work:

Task 1: <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-52606980>

Read the article in the link above about 'The Opposition' in the UK's Westminster political system. Answer the following questions.

1. Which political party and leader currently make up the current official opposition?
2. What does the opposition traditionally do? What would you say they are doing now and how does it compare with the past? Do you think there should be a government of national unity at this moment in time? Why/why not?
3. Is the role of the opposition written into the UK Constitution? Why do you think this is/isn't the case?
4. How does the opposition and its role differ in US politics? Why do you think this is the case?

Task 2: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2012/jan/17/what-is-west-lothian-question>

Read the article above about the 'West Lothian Question' and answer the following questions.

1. What is the 'West Lothian Question', who proposed it and why?
2. What is your opinion on the West Lothian Question? Why might someone disagree with you? Why is your view more convincing?

Task 3: Almost 10 years ago, the way we elect our MPs in the UK could have changed dramatically in what would have been the most important referendum in early 21st Century history if it wasn't for Brexit. The result of the electoral reform referendum however kept the status quo.

The binary option available on the ballot in that referendum was between the 'first past the post' system, used in the UK (and many countries around the world including USA elections for congressional representatives) and the AV or Alternative Vote system which David Cameron quipped, "It's a system so obscure that it is only used by three countries in the whole world - Australia, Fiji and Papua New Guinea." It's also used for Mayoral elections in many US cities and for Best Picture at the Oscars but that's probably beside the point.

Watch the video at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/av/uk-politics-12893284/main-differences-in-the-voting-systems-explained>

And read the articles at <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-11243595> and <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-13318667>

Answer the following questions:

1. Explain what 'first past the post' means and how it works. What kind of results does it generally produce?
2. Why might someone argue it is a good way to vote? What are the criticisms?
3. How does Alternative Voting work? What are its benefits and weaknesses?

4. Which politicians supported AV and who supported First Past the Post why do think this was the case? Why do you think the referendum went the way it did? Are you happy with the result? Why/Why not?

Task 4: Use the following resources to answer the questions below on pressure groups.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/guides/zqhmjty/revision/2>

<https://www.theguardian.com/world/ng-interactive/2015/sep/16/occupy-wall-street-four-years-later-timeline>

<https://rebellion.earth/the-truth/about-us/>

<https://www.independent.co.uk/voices/extinction-rebellion-london-protests-climate-change-green-conservatives-a9146146.html>

<https://www.theguardian.com/commentisfree/2017/aug/29/why-are-our-protests-failing-and-how-can-we-achieve-social-change-today>

<https://www.newstatesman.com/world/2016/09/occupy-wall-street-five-years-fire-dustbin-history>

<https://www.economist.com/britain/2019/04/17/could-extinction-rebellion-be-the-next-occupy-movement>

1. What is a pressure group? Do you think they have a legitimate role in healthy democracies? Why/why not?
2. What was the Occupy Movement? (When, what, who, why etc.) Why do you think the Occupy Movement was largely unsuccessful?
3. What is the Extinction Rebellion? How is it similar/dissimilar to the Occupy Movement? Do you think it will be more or less successful and why?

Task 5: This one's fun. Watch School House Rock's video on how a bill becomes federal (national) law in the US at <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FBpdxEMeIR0>

Answer the questions:

1. **What is the difference between a bill and a law?**
2. **What are the stages a bill goes through as it becomes law? Who are the various governmental groups involved?**
3. **How is the system 'fair'?**

Watch https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T_foQoCHQq8 and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0bf3CwYCxXw> and <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HuFR5XBYLfU>

1. Name each branch of US government, who is involved and what it does.
2. Which branch of US government do you think is most powerful?
3. How do the roles of US president and UK prime minister differ? In what ways are they the same?

Task 6: Find out who your MP is. <https://members.parliament.uk/FindYourMP>

1. What constituency does he/she represent?
2. What political party are they a member of? Do they have any additional roles of responsibility?
3. How long have they been an MP?
4. Can you name 3 votes in their voting record? What were the issues and how did they vote?
5. Write a letter to your MP explaining who you are and an issue that is important to you. Explain your position on the issue to them. Ask them about where they stand on the issue and what they will do about it.
6. Wait for their response to come through the post. What did they say? How does it make you feel?

Dr Marra teaches A Level Politics. Please email him on a.marra@stbcc.org with any queries.