

Transition work for Politics A Level 2021

Welcome to Politics!

You have chosen a brilliant new subject to study at A Level. We're looking forward to teaching you politics in the coming years. Politics will help you to make sense of the world. It explains how power is acquired and used in Britain and the United States. Politics is a fast-changing subject, so we are always discussing current issues, events and developments. We hope to make sense of the news. Our aim is to bring politics alive. Politics is also fun. If you engage with the subject, we hope you will learn to enjoy it as much as we do.

What is the transition work?

The aim of this work is to give you a head start for September. Because Politics is a new subject (for everyone), getting started can sometimes seem a bit daunting. A key reason for this is because you are learning a number of new words and concepts. The more quickly you understand them, the sooner you will access the course. We want to help you grow in confidence and understanding.

We have put together a series of tasks that we hope will enable you to get started. We suggest that you print off all of the sheets and complete most of the work (about 20 hours work).

We will collect the work in at the start of Y12 and grade it on a 5-1 scale:

5 = Outstanding

4 = Very good

3 = Good

2 = Some concerns

1 = Serious concerns

Tasks

Complete the following sheets about the UK and US political systems using either the information provided or websites such as www.bbc.co.uk and www.politics.co.uk. The worksheets will help to structure your work. Do your best. Good luck.

1. Who are the main political leaders of the post-war era?

United Kingdom		
Prime Minister	Party	Term
<i>Clement Attlee</i>	<i>Labour</i>	1945-51
		1951-55
		1955-57
		1957-63
		1963-64
		1964-70
		1970-74
		1974-76
		1976-79
		1979-90
		1990-97
		1997-2007
		2007-10
		2010-16
		2016-19
		2019-

United States		
President	Party	Term
<i>F D Roosevelt</i>	<i>Democrat</i>	1945
		1945-53
		1953-61
		1961-63
		1963-69
		1969-74
		1974-77
		1977-81
		1981-89
		1989-93
		1993-2001
		2001-09
		2009-17
		2017-21
		2021-

2. Who's who in UK politics today?

Person	Party	Position / Role / Title	Main aims
Arlene Foster			
Caroline Lucas			
Dominic Raab			
Jonathan Bartley			
Kier Starmer			
Michelle O'Neill			
Nicola Sturgeon			
Nigel Farage			
Priti Patel			
Rishi Sunak			
Sadiq Khan			
Andy Burnham			

3. How is political power devolved across the UK?



Task

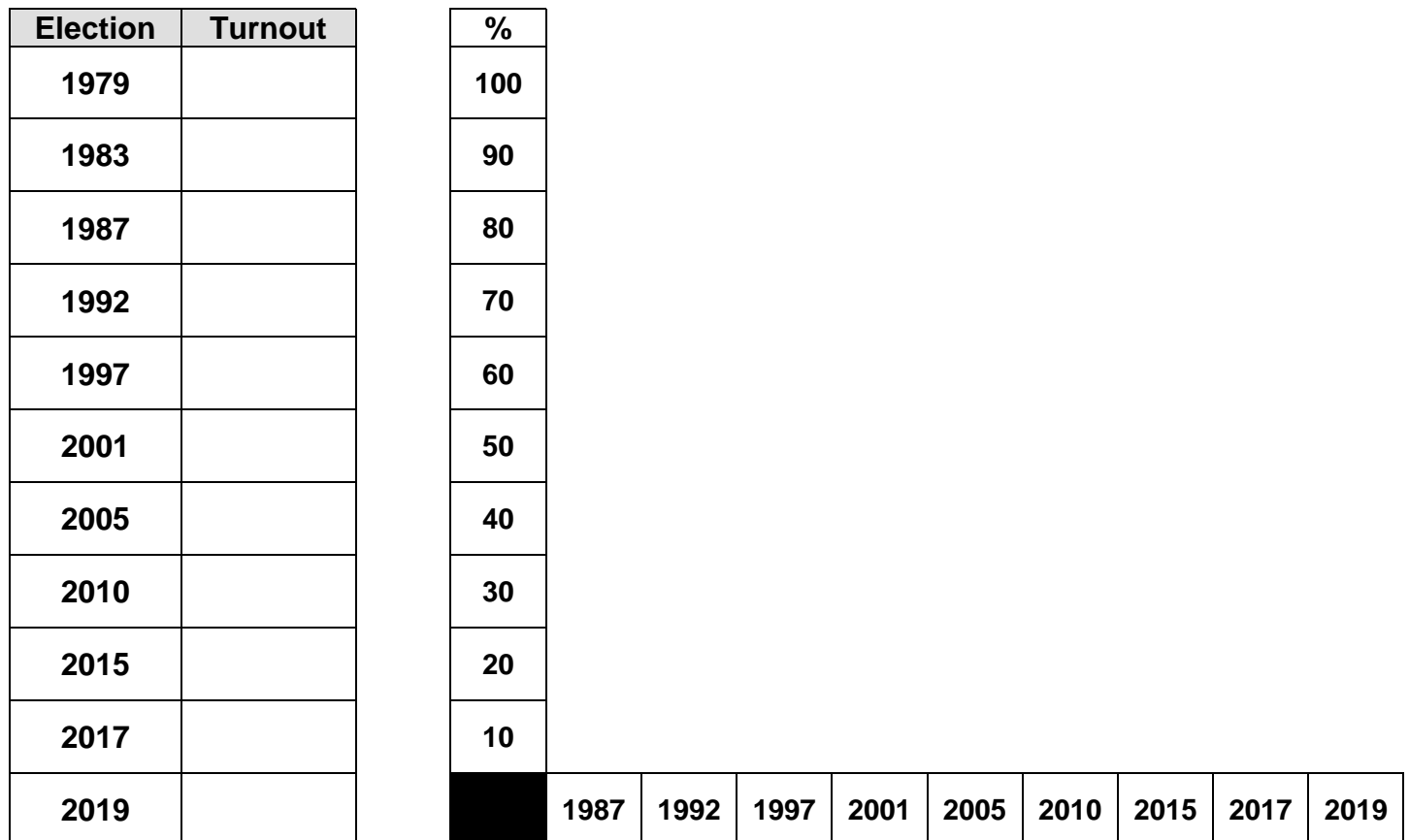
Use this information (jumbled) to label the map showing the UK's four main political centres	Location	Institution	Voting system	Title	Nos of Reps
	Belfast	Holyrood	FPTP	MSP	129
	Cardiff	Stormont	STV	MP	60
	Edinburgh	Westminster	AMS	MA	650
	London	Senedd	AMS	MLA	90

4. Some Key Democratic Facts about the UK

[A] How did the parties fare in the 2019 election?

Party	Seats	% of vote
Conservative		
Labour		
SNP		
Liberal Democrat		
DUP		
Sinn Fein		
Plaid Cymru		
SDLP		
Green		
Alliance		

[B] How has turnout changed over time? Plot turnout on the graph:



[C] What kinds of governments have we had in recent years?

Dates	Type of government	Prime Minister	Share of Vote	Share of Seats	Majority
2001-05	Labour majority	Tony Blair	40.7%	62.7%	167
2005-10					
2010-15					
2015-17					
2017-19					
2019-					

[D] How well do our MPs reflect UK society?

		2010	2015	2017	2019	% of UK population in 2019
	Women					52%
	Ethnic minority					14%
	LGBT					6%
Education	Private					10%
	State					90%
	University					20%

[E] What results of some recent referendums?

Date	Issue	Turnout	Result	
			For	Against
2011	Change to AV for general elections			
2014	Scottish independence			
2016	Remain or leave the EU			

[F] How else can people participate in politics?

Find out about these organisations (pressure groups)?

Group	Campaigns on what?	What methods does it use?	Examples of successes?
Age UK			
Extinction Rebellion			
Stonewall			

Extension

If you would like to do more work in on UK Politics, then it would be useful to do some research into one or more of our recent Prime Ministers. This task, however, is optional.

Task

1. Decide which Prime Minister you would like to research:
 - a. Margaret Thatcher
 - b. John Major
 - c. Tony Blair
 - d. Gordon Brown
 - e. David Cameron
 - f. Theresa May
 - g. Boris Johnson

2. Find out about their main policies in the following areas:
 - a. Economy
 - b. Welfare
 - c. Law and Order
 - d. Environment
 - e. Foreign Policy

3. What were their main achievements / successes? What were their main failures?

4. Decide how best to present your information:
 - a. A double-sided A4 Information Sheet
 - b. Single A3 sheet
 - c. A summary poster

5. Alternatively you could produce a time-line of our PMs from Thatcher to Johnson including a summary some of the information above. The more you can do at this stage, the better placed you will be when you start the course.

USA Transition Work (2021)

(1) Fact-file on the USA

	Total Population	
	Number of states	
	Most recently added states	
	POTUS	
	FLOTUS	
	SCOTUS	
	Capital	
	Official language	
	Name of flag	
	Share of world's energy consumption	
	Share of world's GDP	
	National animal	
Presidents on currency	\$1	
	\$5	
	\$10	
	\$20	
	\$50	
	\$100	
	First president	
	Youngest ever president	
	Youngest elected president	
	Oldest ever president	
	Oldest elected president	
	Longest-serving president	
	Shortest-serving president	
	Richest president	
	Poorest president	
	Number of assassinated presidents	
	Number of presidents who've resigned	
	Presidents who've been impeached	
Constitution	2 nd amendment	
	13 th amendment	
	15 th amendment	
	19 th amendment	
	22 nd amendment	

(2) US Elections

How do they work?

Watch:

1. https://youtu.be/uRu_JcarCDY

2. <https://ed.ted.com/lessons/why-do-americans-vote-on-tuesdays>

Due to their system of government, Americans vote a lot more frequently than we do in the UK. There are two main types of elections for their federal (Washington DC) government.

Presidential - An election for president of the United States happens every four years on the first Tuesday after the first Monday in November. The next presidential election will be November 3, 2020. At the same time 1/3 of the Senate and the entire House are elected. This can change which party controls both houses of Congress.

Midterms – These are in the middle of a presidential term. So every 2 years. 1/3 of the Senate and the entire House are elected. This can change which party controls both houses of Congress.

Date	President	Congress	
		House of Representatives	Senate
2008	Barack Obama (Democrat)	Democrats	Democrats
2010 (Midterm)			
2012			
2014 (Midterm)		Republican	Republican
2016			
2018 (Midterm)			
2020			

(3) Summary of the Presidential Election 2020

	Democrat	Republican
Watch: https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/2020/nov/07/joe-biden-wins-us-election-donald-trump-loses-final-result-2020		
Candidates		
VP candidates		
Main policies		
Turnout		
Electoral College Votes		
States won		

(4) Summary of the Democrat Presidential Primaries 2020

Candidate	Age	Background	Key Policies
Bernie Sanders			
Elizabeth Warren			
Michael Bloomberg			

Joe Biden	
Watch: https://youtu.be/SzBFR2EE8hM	
How old is he?	
Where was he born?	
What did he do prior to 2008?	
What was his role in the Obama administration?	
What are his key policies?	
What are some of his key policies since he became president?	

(5) History of the Presidency 1789 – 2020

What is the minimum age for a President?	
How many Presidents have there been?	
How many have been male?	
How many have been lawyers?	
How many have been Harvard educated?	

The Obama Presidency (2008 – 2016)

Watch: Obama The Final Year (Netflix)

If you don't have a Netflix account you may skip this section

	Question	Answer
1	How did John Kerry first meet Obama?	
2	When did Obama win the Nobel Peace Prize?	
3	What role did Samantha Power have at the time of filming?	
4	What role did John Kerry have at the time of filming?	
5	What does Ben Rhodes, Deputy National Security Advisor to Obama, describe his role as including?	
6	What role did Susan Rice have at the time of filming?	
7	Why did John Kerry initially get into politics?	
8	Where did diplomats meet to discuss Syria?	
9	What happened to a group of 276 girls in Nigeria in 2014?	
10	What does John Kerry says makes a big difference in avoiding war?	
11	Where does Obama say there was a secret war held between 1964-1973?	
12	What role did John Earnest have at the time of filming?	
13	Obama became the first President to serve two full terms during a time of _____.	
14	What is the UN General Assembly jokingly described by the Secretary of State?	
15	How many people were displaced in the world at the time?	
16	Who was the first female Secretary of State?	

(6) What are the main functions of the different branches of government?

Watch: https://ed.ted.com/lessons/how-is-power-divided-in-the-united-states-government-belinda-stutzman		
<i>Sort the captions below into the different columns:</i>		
Executive	Judiciary	Legislature

Captions

Making legislation	Representation of constituents	Supreme Court	Controls the Budget
Commander in Chief	President	Senate	Highest court in the land
Congress	Interpret the Constitution	Head of Government	House of Representatives

(7) Congress

	Congress	
	The House of Representatives	The Senate
How many members?		
How many per state?		
How often are they elected?		
Name one power they hold?		
Speaker		
Majority Leader		
Minority Leader		

(8) Federalism

Watch: <https://youtu.be/bO7FQsCcbD8>

What is Federalism?

Federalism is the process by which two or more governments share powers over the same geographic area. It is the method used by most democracies in the world. For example we have Parliament in Westminster but in Scotland they have the Scottish Parliament in Holyrood.

While some countries give more power to the overall central government, others grant more power to the individual states or provinces.

In the United States, the Constitution grants certain powers to both the U.S. government and the state governments. So there is a Federal government based in Washington DC but each states also have their own government. The two different layers of government have different powers and responsibilities.

Federal v State Power

Key (colour code each box according to whether they are a power held by the federal, state or both layers of government)

Federal Government	State Government	Both
Print money	Maintain law and order	Print money
Establish and maintain schools	Declare war	Ratify (approve) changes to the constitution
Raise taxes	Maintain an army	Conduct foreign relations

UNITED STATES OF AMERICA



(9) The Supreme Court

What is the Supreme Court? The Supreme Court of the United States (or SCOTUS) is the highest federal court in the country and the head of the judicial branch of government. Established by the U.S. Constitution, the Supreme Court has the ultimate jurisdiction over **all laws** within the United States and is responsible for deciding whether these laws are **constitutional**. The Supreme Court can declare actions or laws made by the President and Congress **unconstitutional**.

Elena Kagan – 2010 – Barack Obama



Here are the 9 justices of the US Supreme Court. Find their names, the year they were appointed and who appointed them.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/magazine-33103973>

How does the Supreme Court work?

Watch: <https://ed.ted.com/lessons/how-do-us-supreme-court-justices-get-appointed-peter-paccone>

How many justices are there?

What are three main things that happen before you become a justice?

What requirements does a justice have to meet?

What can influence why a President picks a justice?

What types of questions are nominees asked about during their Senate hearing?

How long do you have the job for?

What is the fundamental role of the Supreme Court?

How has the Supreme Court changed America?

Watch: https://ed.ted.com/best_of_web/BOC7SbYP

Case name	How did it change America?
Brown vs. Board of Education 1954	
Roe vs. Wade 1973	
Obergefell vs. Hodges 2015	



Glossary

Term	Definition
Congress	
Democratic Party	
Electoral College	
Executive	
Federal Government	
House of Representatives	
Midterm	
Primary Election	
Republican Party	
Senate	
Unconstitutional	
US Constitution	