Well done for choosing to study Politics—has there ever been a time when politics has more clearly impacted all of our lives?

The most important thing to do before we start is to become familiar with everyday politics, including the language and ideas we will be studying. Getting stuck into current affairs is essential! This booklet aims to give you a range of resources, information and tasks to get you started on your studies for A Level Politics. We hope you find it interesting and helpful and if you have any queries please email us: jcotton@bayhouse.gfmat.org

Getting Started:
1. Download the BBC News app on your phones/tablets & set up a few relevant topics to follow. As a minimum this should include UK Politics, US Politics & Parliament
2. Set yourself up on Twitter – even if it’s not your thing. It’s a brilliant tool to keep in touch with political issues, top trends, memes & breaking news. Follow @mrsjcotton for relevant links & people to follow. You can also follow politicians, journalists & news agencies on Snapchat & Instagram – but make sure they’re trustworthy and reliable.

Recommended Weekly Habits:
1. Fill in the template on the last page of this booklet for 2 stories a week. Copy and paste the story into the middle, and then think about how the story relates to different bits of the course using the boxes (they will not be relevant to all of them). Use reputable news sources: www.bbc.co.uk/news is a good place to start.
2. Listen to one podcast, choosing from the list on page 2 of your booklet.

Some optional suggestions for Summer preparation:
3. Watch the documentaries on page 2 of your booklet.
4. Choose one or two of the books suggested and read them.
5. Learn the vocabulary—see the bottom of page 3 for the link. Make a glossary and then get someone to test you.
6. Visit our Year 11 Preparation Google Folder here and try out some of the activities:  
https://drive.google.com/drive/folders/1csRXJf0JiOzeHZOzSdVOVMcst22E0vFB?usp=s haring

There are extra things you can also do—have a go at the blog competition, and look at the Open University courses on page 3.
How to Study Politics:

To be really successful in A-level Politics, the most important thing is to read and watch the news. Ideally, find three news sources that you are comfortable with and look out for political news on them every day. Get used to saving news stories and develop methods for doing this - screenshotting and adding to Google Keep is a good way to start.

Don’t feel the need to read all or buy new - Google the books, pick one that appeals to you, try to buy secondhand from sites like Abe Books, or use the LRC at college in due course. These recommendations are for fun and helpful enrichment and wider reading relevant to your course.

Edexcel Specification:

- Unit 1 – UK Politics & Core Ideologies
- Unit 2 – UK Government & Feminism
- Unit 3 – US Politics

Politics Podcasts & Radio Programmes:

The Coronavirus Podcast - BBC
Talking Politics
For the Many - LBC
James O’Brien - LBC
The Guardian UK: Politics Weekly
The A-Level Politics Show (Spotify link)
FiveThirtyEight
Politico - Nerdcast
The New Elizabethans – Tony Blair
The New Elizabethans – Margaret Thatcher
The Decade That Invented The Future – 1970s Feminism
The People’s Thatcher
The Republicans BBC
The Trumped Republicans
Obama Profile BBC
What Does Boris Really Think

UK Politics:

Dominic Cummings & The Battle For Downing Street
BBC Panorama – Coronavirus & the NHS
Election 2019
Margaret Thatcher series - iPlayer
Weekly shows - Peston, Andrew Neil, Marr etc - all available on catch-up
5 Days that Changed Britain - youtube
The Brexit Storm - BBC/youtube
Inside the Commons - BBC/youtube
Inside the Lords - BBC/youtube
Inside the Foreign Office - BBC/youtube
The Cameron Years - BBC/youtube
The Rise and Fall of Tony Blair – Youtube
Brexit - the Uncivil War
The Special Relationship

US Politics:

Knock Down the House – Netflix
Daily Show - Trevor Noah
Creating Case Studies:
As explained on the first page, case studies of key events are vital. These will provide you with examples to help you exemplify key concepts in essays, or as we call it “your examples bank” – essential for good grades & understanding!

On the next page is a template you can use for recording your case studies. Paste the news story into the gap and tick the boxes to show which of the course themes it is related to.

Your viewing & listening habits. We’ve included a few optional suggestions to get you started on Page 2 and full lists of UK & US Politics TV shows & films are available here:

Your reading habits: Keep up to date with relevant news websites – BBC, ITN, Sky News, Vox, Politico

OPEN LEARN

The Open University have a huge number of free online courses that you can study. They tell you how long they take and give you an outline of what is included. You also get a free statement of participation on completion. Take a look and see if any take your interest.

Student Blog competition

The Political Studies Association and the Financial Times are running a competition for students aged 16-19 to write a 500-600 word blog. The question is:

‘Does the public expect too much of UK politicians?’

Researching and writing this blog post would be a good way to start your Politics studies.

Deadline: May 8th.

Course Information

The Edexcel Politics course at Bay House Sixth Form consists of the following units:

Unit 1 – UK Politics + Core Ideologies: Liberalism, Conservatism & Socialism
Unit 2 - UK Government with additional ideology - Feminism
Unit 3: Comparative Politics—the politics and government of the USA.

Note: we do not do the Global unit.

Link to specification
Exam board resource list

Useful Tasks

Learn the key terms and definitions

Appendix 2 in the specification (p64-92) contains a glossary of key words and definitions relating to the course.

Committing these to memory would be an excellent use of your time.

Read up on recent elections

You will be expected to know about recent elections in the UK and the USA. The Pearson website has case studies of the 2019 and 2017 UK General Elections to get you started.

Find out about your MP

Use the website TheyWorkForYou to find out about your local MP. You can look up their voting records and find out more about how they represent your constituency.
WHAT DOES THIS NEWS STORY TELL US ABOUT...

POLITICS
- Democracy
- Human/Civil Rights
- The Conservative Party
- The Labour Party
- Other political parties
- The Media

GOVERNMENT
- The Constitution
- Parliament
- The Executive (Prime Minister and Cabinet)
- The Judiciary (courts)
- The EU