

Subject: Politics

Curriculum vision

At United Sixth Form, our aim is to provide an ambitious and inclusive Politics curriculum that empowers students to become confident, informed, and active global citizens, as well as lifelong learners.

Through the study of A Level Politics, students gain a comprehensive understanding of the UK's political system, including the roles of political parties, elections, Parliament, and the judiciary. They also explore four major political ideologies—conservatism, socialism, liberalism, and feminism—developing the knowledge needed to engage critically with complex political ideas. This foundation enables students to compare and evaluate the UK and US political systems, forming reasoned judgments about their effectiveness. Our carefully sequenced curriculum builds this knowledge over time, ensuring that all learners are consistently challenged and supported.

The curriculum places a strong emphasis on developing political vocabulary, with subject-specific and disciplinary language taught explicitly to help students think, speak, and write with clarity and precision.

In addition, students acquire valuable transferable skills, including how to interpret sources, assess competing arguments, and communicate persuasive viewpoints. Our Politics curriculum encourages students to form their own interpretations and express them confidently through both written and spoken debate. As part of our Enriched and Society-Centred Curriculum, students also learn the importance of political engagement and how their actions can positively impact the society they live in.

Studying Politics at United Sixth Form also opens the door to a wide range of career opportunities, including law, journalism, government and civil service, public policy, international relations, education, research, and roles within NGOs and political organisations. It equips students with the analytical, communication, and critical thinking skills that are highly valued in many professional fields.



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Term 1

	Autumn 1	Why this? Why now?	Autumn 2	Why this? Why now?
Year 12	Paper 1 UK Politics – Democracy and participation Paper 2 UK Government – The constitution	The topic of Democracy and Participation covers the two main types of democracy: direct, where citizens are directly involved in decision-making, and representative, where elected officials make decisions on their behalf. It explores the strengths of UK democracy, such as free elections and political rights, as well as weaknesses like low voter turnout and unelected institutions. Students also look at how people participate in politics through voting, pressure groups, and petitions, and how this has changed over time. The topic includes possible reforms to improve participation, like lowering the voting age or introducing more proportional electoral systems. It also examines how rights are protected in the UK through laws like the Human Rights Act and the Freedom of Information Act. Students study the UK constitution as an uncodified and flexible system made up of laws, conventions, and traditions rather than a single written document. They learn about key principles like parliamentary sovereignty, meaning Parliament is the highest authority, and the rule of law, which holds that everyone must follow the law. They also explore current debates on constitutional reform, including whether to adopt a written constitution, increase regional devolution, and enhance human rights protections.	Paper 1 UK Politics – Political parties Paper 2 UK Government – The constitution	The topic of Political Parties explores the main roles and features of parties in the UK, such as representing the public, forming governments, and creating policy. It examines how parties are funded and the debates around reforming party finance. Students study the Conservative, Labour, and Liberal Democrat parties, focusing on their ideologies, key policies, and how they have changed over time. The topic also looks at the growth of smaller and emerging parties, such as the Greens or Reform UK, and their impact on UK politics. Finally, it considers whether the UK has a two-party system or is moving towards a multi-party system. Students study the UK constitution as an uncodified and flexible system made up of laws, conventions, and traditions rather than a single written document. They learn about key principles like parliamentary sovereignty, meaning Parliament is the highest authority, and the rule of law, which holds that everyone must follow the law. They also explore current debates on constitutional reform, including whether to adopt a written constitution, increase regional devolution, and enhance human rights protections.
Year 13	Paper 1 Core Political ideas – Liberalism Paper 3 – Comparative Politics USA – US Constitution	Liberalism focuses on key ideas like individualism, freedom, tolerance, and the importance of a limited government to protect these rights. It is divided into classical liberalism, which emphasizes free markets and minimal state intervention, and modern liberalism, which supports some government action to ensure equality and social justice. Important thinkers studied include John Locke, who influenced ideas about natural rights; John Stuart Mill, known for his work on liberty	Paper 1 Core Political ideas – Conservatism Paper 3 – Comparative Politics USA – US Congress	Conservatism centres on key ideas like tradition, hierarchy, authority, and pragmatism, valuing social stability and gradual change. It includes different strands such as Traditional conservatism, which emphasizes preserving established institutions; One-Nation conservatism, focused on social cohesion and reducing



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		and tolerance; John Rawls, who developed theories of social justice; and Mary Wollstonecraft, an early advocate for women's rights. Students study the US Constitution as a codified and rigid document that sets out the fundamental laws and principles of the country. They learn about federalism, which divides power between the federal government and the states, and key features like checks and balances and separation of powers, designed to prevent any one branch from becoming too powerful. The role of judicial review is also covered, highlighting how the courts can interpret the constitution and limit government actions.		inequality; and the New Right, which promotes free markets and limited government intervention. Important thinkers include Thomas Hobbes and Edmund Burke, who defended order and tradition; Michael Oakeshott, who emphasized pragmatism; and Ayn Rand and Robert Nozick, associated with the New Right's focus on individualism and minimal state. Students study the structure and roles of the US Congress, focusing on its two chambers: the House of Representatives and the Senate. They learn about Congress's key powers, including making laws, overseeing the executive branch, and controlling the budget. The topic also covers the complex relationship between Congress and the President, exploring how they interact and sometimes clash in the law-making process and government oversight
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	Spring 1	Why this? Why now?	Spring 2	Why this? Why now?
Year 12	Paper 1 UK Politics – Political parties Paper 2 UK Government – Parliament	The topic of Political Parties explores the main roles and features of parties in the UK, such as representing the public, forming governments, and creating policy. It examines how parties are funded and the debates around reforming party finance. Students study the Conservative, Labour, and Liberal Democrat parties, focusing on their ideologies, key policies, and how they have changed over time. The topic also looks at the growth of smaller and emerging parties, such as the Greens or Reform UK, and their impact on UK politics. Finally, it considers whether the UK has a two-party system or is moving towards a multi-party system. Students study Parliament by examining the composition and roles of the House of Commons and House of Lords, focusing on their key functions of legislation, scrutiny of the government, and representation of the public. They explore how Parliament checks and holds the government accountable, while also considering issues like the relative power of the Commons versus the Lords. Additionally, students learn about debates surrounding parliamentary reform aimed at improving its effectiveness and democratic legitimacy.	Paper 1 UK Politics – Electoral systems Paper 2 UK Government – Parliament	The topic of Electoral Systems looks at how votes are translated into political representation. It focuses on First Past the Post (FPTP), the main system used in UK general elections, and compares it with alternative systems like AMS, STV, and the Supplementary Vote used in devolved and local elections. Students evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of each system in terms of fairness, representation, and effectiveness. The topic also covers the role and impact of referendums in the UK, exploring when and why they are used and how they influence democracy. Students study Parliament by examining the composition and roles of the House of Commons and House of Lords, focusing on their key functions of legislation, scrutiny of the government, and representation of the public. They explore how Parliament checks and holds the government accountable, while also considering issues like the relative power of the Commons versus the Lords. Additionally, students learn about debates surrounding parliamentary reform aimed at improving its effectiveness and democratic legitimacy.
Year 13	Paper 1 Core Political ideas – Socialism Paper 3 – Comparative Politics USA – US Presidency	Socialism is based on key ideas such as equality, the importance of social class, collectivism, and common ownership of resources. It includes different strands: revolutionary socialism, which calls for a complete overthrow of capitalism; social democracy, which supports gradual reform and welfare within a capitalist system; and the Third Way, a more centrist approach blending market economics with social justice. Key thinkers include Marx and Engels, founders of revolutionary socialism; Beatrice Webb and Rosa Luxemburg, early socialists with different views on reform and revolution; and Anthony Crosland and Tony	Paper 2 Non-core Political ideas – Feminism Paper 3 – Comparative Politics USA – US Judiciary and Supreme Court	Feminism in Paper 2 of Edexcel A Level Politics focuses on achieving equality between men and women across social, political, and economic life by challenging patriarchy and traditional gender roles. It emphasizes intersectionality, recognizing how gender intersects with race, class, and other identities. Different types include liberal feminism (legal reforms), radical feminism (fundamental change to patriarchy), Marxist/socialist feminism (linking capitalism and oppression), and intersectional feminism (multiple inequalities). Key thinkers like Mary Wollstonecraft, Simone de



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		Giddens, who shaped social democracy and the Third Way. Students study the powers and roles of the US President, including their leadership of the executive branch, role as commander-in-chief, and ability to influence legislation and foreign policy. They explore the President's relationships with Congress, the Cabinet, and the bureaucracy, which are crucial for governing effectively. The topic also covers the limits on presidential power, such as checks from Congress and the courts, and factors that affect presidential success, including public support, party backing, and political events.		Beauvoir, bell hooks, and Kate Millett have shaped feminist thought. The movement aims to secure political rights, challenge sexism, and influence policies on issues such as violence against women and workplace equality. Students study the role and powers of the US Supreme Court, focusing on its authority to interpret the Constitution and carry out judicial review, which allows it to declare laws or actions unconstitutional. They learn about the appointment process of justices, including nomination by the President and confirmation by the Senate, and how this process can be politically significant. The topic also explores the Court's impact on American politics and society through its decisions on key constitutional issue
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Term 3



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	Summer 1	Why this? Why now?	Summer 2	Why this? Why now?
Year 12	Paper 1 UK Politics – Voting behaviour and the media Paper 2 UK Government – The Prime Minister and executive	The topic of Voting Behaviour and the Media explores the factors that influence how people vote, including social class, age, region, and the role of the media. It involves studying key general elections—such as 1979, 1997, 2010, 2017, 2019, and 2024—to understand how voter behaviour has changed over time. The topic also examines how different types of media, including newspapers, TV, and social media, shape public opinion and political participation, as well as debates over media bias and influence during election campaigns. Students study the powers and roles of the Prime Minister, including their leadership of the government and influence over policy. They learn about the structure of the executive, focusing on Cabinet government and how ministers work together. Key concepts include collective responsibility, where the Cabinet acts as a united team, and individual ministerial responsibility, where ministers are accountable for their actions. Students also explore factors that affect the Prime Minister's power, such as party support, media influence, and handling of crises.	Paper 1 UK Politics – Voting behaviour and the media Paper 2 – UK Government – Relations between branches	The topic of Voting Behaviour and the Media explores the factors that influence how people vote, including social class, age, region, and the role of the media. It involves studying key general elections—such as 1979, 1997, 2010, 2017, 2019, and 2024—to understand how voter behaviour has changed over time. The topic also examines how different types of media, including newspapers, TV, and social media, shape public opinion and political participation, as well as debates over media bias and influence during election campaigns. Students study the relationship between the branches of government, focusing on how the executive and legislature interact and share power. They examine the role of the judiciary, including its ability to carry out judicial review to check government actions. The topic also explores the concept of separation of powers compared to the UK's system of fusion of powers, where the executive is drawn from and accountable to the legislature.
Year 13	Paper 3 – Comparative Politics USA – US Democracy and participation & Political parties and elections Revision and exams	Students study voting behaviour, party systems, and political participation in the US, examining how different groups vote and engage with politics. They explore the influence of media and pressure groups on shaping public opinion and political outcomes. The topic also covers key issues such as the role of the Electoral College in presidential elections, the impact of campaign finance on democracy, and challenges related to voter turnout. Students study the structure and functions of the two main US political parties, the Democrats and Republicans, including how they organize and	Revision and exams	



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promote their policies. They learn about the election process, covering primary elections, general elections, and the campaign strategies parties use to win votes. The topic also examines the role of third parties in influencing politics and the concept of party realignment, where voter support shifts between parties over time.

Wider reading

Extracurricular Opportunities (competitions, associations and clubs)

- Weekly Politics Club
Explore current political developments in the UK and around the world through debates, discussions, and activities.
- Visit to the UK Parliament (if successful in the ballot)
Gain first-hand insight into how democracy works by touring the Houses of Parliament and meeting political representatives.
- A Level Politics Conferences (November & March)
Attend national conferences featuring guest speakers, including politicians, journalists, and academics, to deepen your understanding of key topics and exam content.
- Tom Hayes (MP) to visit Y12 and Y13 Politics classes to head a debate

Revision Guides

We have created revision guides for A Level students, although we recommend students purchase their own textbooks, which they can highlight.

Academic Reading

Students are actively encouraged to read widely in politics to excel in the subject. It is also essential to keep up to date with current political developments in the UK and USA as they will be expected to incorporate this in their exams.

- At the end of each booklet, students have a 'further resources' page - this signposts students to books, videos and podcasts that they may wish to explore in their own time.