



Heston
COMMUNITY
SCHOOL



A-Level Politics
Transition Tasks
Year 11 → Year 12

Compulsory Tasks These must be completed before you start your course in September	Minimum Time	Date
<p>KS5 Preparation: AO1 is for me</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - In Sixth Form you are expected to arrive at your lessons having already learnt the key facts in advance. This will involve completing reading before the lesson and the completing a task or taking notes on it - Complete activity 1 page 4 - Complete activity 2 pages 5-6 - Complete activity 3 pages 7-8 - Complete Activity 4: page 9 	5 Hours	
<p>Developing your political understanding :</p> <p>1) Click on the link: Link Read the whole booklet and for each section create some cornel note</p> <p>2) How bad is the crisis in democracy? Watch the documentary and take cornel notes link</p> <p>3) Devolution in Scotland: watch the video and take cornel notes Link</p> <p>There is guidance on how to take cornel notes on page 9</p>	10 Hours	
<p>Current affairs</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Politics is ever changing and it is vital that you keep up to date with these changes. You must keep a weekly log of what you have read about politically. Focus on articles that give opinions on: political leaders and parties, the impact of government policies, problems with society e.g crime, poverty, unemployment • Use these sites to help you • https://www.bbc.co.uk/news • https://news.sky.com/ • https://www.itv.com/news/ • https://www.theguardian.com/uk • https://www.independent.co.uk/news/uk/politics 	15 Hours	
<p>Research Articles</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Click on the link below to take you to the A-Level Magazine Archive • Link • Use the search function and type in key topics you have already read about such as: devolution, House of Commons, House of Lords, Labour Party • You will need to read 8 articles and take notes 	10 hours	

Challenge task These must be completed before you start your course in September	Date
Suggested Reading <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Anthony Seldon and Daniel Collings, Britain under Thatcher (Seminar Studies In History, Routledge, 1999) • Political Ideologies by Vincent Geoghegan 10 Mar 2014 • The Politics Book: Big Ideas Simply Explained 	
Suggested Videos/ films / Lectures <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Introduction to British Government How has Brexit reshaped British politics? Introduction to Power and Politics in Today's World 	
Suggested Online Courses <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. What is politics? The politics of racial violence in Britain Understanding Political Concepts 	

Activity 1

Task: Read the article below and watch the clips and answer these questions

1. Describe the 4 main functions of parliament
2. List the two parts which make up the UK's parliament
3. How do you become a member of the House of Lords and how many members are there?
4. How do you become a member of the House of Commons and how many members are there?
5. How are laws made?

Clips

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RAMblz3Y2JA>

<https://learning.parliament.uk/resources/what-is-the-house-of-commons-video/>

<https://learning.parliament.uk/resources/how-laws-are-made/>

<https://learning.parliament.uk/resources/who-is-in-the-house-of-lords/>

What is Parliament?

What is the job of Parliament?

The main functions of Parliament are:

1. to pass laws
2. to provide, by voting for taxation, the means of carrying on the work of government
3. to scrutinise government policy and administration, including proposals for expenditure
4. to debate the major issues of the day

Parliament is made up of 2 parts:

1. The Queen
2. The House of Lords
3. The House of Commons

The House of Lords

The House of Lords is made up of people who have inherited family titles and those who have been given titles because of their outstanding work in one field or another. There are 675 members of the Lords. The main job of the House of Lords is to 'double check' new laws to make sure they are fair and will work.

The House of Commons

The House of Commons has 650 members who have been elected by local residents to represent an area of the country in Parliament. The members are called MPs (Members of Parliament). Each MP represents one of 650 constituencies (areas) in the UK and is a member of a political party, such as New Labour or the Conservative party. The Commons is the most important place for discussing policies and making laws.

Activity 2

Task: read the article and complete the table below

The First Past the Post voting system

The voting system used to elect MPs to the UK Parliament is called First Past the Post (FPTP).

The FPTP electoral system is used to elect MPs to the House of Commons. For the purpose of the election, the UK is divided into 650 areas or constituencies (seats) and at the election the candidate with the most votes becomes the MP.

In addition to voting for a local MP, voters are also taking part in choosing a government. The party with the most MPs becomes the government. In 2015, the Conservatives had more MPs than all the other parties put together (a majority of the MPs) so they became the government.

In 2010, unusually, no party won a majority of the MPs (had more MPs than all the other parties put together) so the Conservative Party (the largest party after the election) invited the Liberal Democrat Party to share power in a coalition government.

Close MP-constituency relationship: One representative is elected for each constituency and this usually means there will be a strong constituency-MP relationship. It also means that if voters do not like their MP they can also vote to get rid of an individual person.

One party strong government: Usually one party wins the election which means the winning party gets five years to put its plans (given in its manifesto) into action. In 2015 it was the Conservative Party who won the General Election.

Simplicity: The FPTP system is easily understood and familiar. Voters were given the chance a few years ago to get rid of FPTP for UK parliament elections but they choose to keep it.

Minority of the vote: In most constituencies more people (in total) vote against the winning candidate than for them. Sometimes an MP can be elected on a vote as low as only 35%, a minority, of the vote. The winning party is also usually elected by less than 50% of the voters. In 2015, the Conservative Party won the election and formed the government but only 36.9% of the people who voted chose to support the Conservatives.

Smaller parties do not gain fair representation: In 2015, UKIP polled 12.6% of the vote but returned only 1 MP. In Scotland, Labour received 24.3% of the vote and returned 1 MP, while the SNP received 50% of the vote and returned 56 of the 59 Scottish MPs.

Tactical voting: It is argued that FPTP encourages tactical voting (or people not bothering to vote) as they think their vote will have little chance of helping elect their candidate. For example, in a constituency or seat that usually returns a Conservative MP (sometimes called a 'safe' seat), there is little point in a voter choosing Labour as they are unlikely to have their candidate elected. Where this happens, and it happens in many constituencies, people may vote not for a candidate they prefer but against a candidate they dislike. Two-thirds of constituencies in the UK are described as safe seats.

Strengths FPTP	Weaknesses FPTP

Activity 3

Task: read the text and complete the tasks below

- 1) What is a referendum
- 2) Complete the advantages and disadvantages table for referendum

A referendum is when the legislative body of a country decides to allow the people of the country to decide on a single issue. For example should Britain remain or leave the EU

Referendums give the public unmediated and direct control over a policy, making sure that the public's view is clearly articulated, not distorted by those who 'represent' them.

Political education - by widening debate on an issue, referendums create a better educated electorate, who have a stronger incentive to think and act politically.

Responsive government - referendums make governments more responsive between elections by forcing them to listen to public opinion, and allow public opinion to be expressed on a particular issue, which cannot be done during elections.

Reduced government power - provides a check on government power, as the government has less control over the outcome of a referendum than it does over Parliament. Citizens are protected from an over-powerful government.

Constitutional changes - it is appropriate that constitutional changes be approved by public referendum, as they affect the way the country is governed, so are more important than ordinary laws. This ensures any newly created public body has democratic legitimacy.

Ill-informed decisions - the general public are less informed than elected politicians, and have no political experience. The public's interests are therefore best protected by 'government by politicians' rather than self-government.

Weakens parliament - referendums undermine parliamentary sovereignty, and are decisions that are not made on the basis of deliberation and debate.

Irresponsible government - governments are elected to govern, so should make policy decisions and be accountable for said decisions, instead of handing over responsibilities to the public.

Strengthens government - governments decide when and on what issues referendums are called, they frame the question and they dominate the publicity campaign. This creates an automatic bias.

Unreliable views - referendums provide a gauge of public opinion at a given time, therefore being an unreliable guide to public interest and an inappropriate means of approving constitutional decisions that will have far-reaching, long-term implication

Strengths of referendums	Weaknesses of referendums

Activity 4:

The two major parties in the UK are the Conservative and Labour Party. Click on the links to watch some clips and read some articles about their History. Then write a summary of what you have learnt about each 300 words on each party

Conservative Party

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=U3fi-lhelrY>

<https://www.historyextra.com/period/georgian/conservative-party-history-britain-tories-facts-robert-peel-prime-ministers/>

Labour Party

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=_3A_nChO1G8

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0TYNwgoIXGc>

<https://www.historyextra.com/period/20th-century/labour-party-history-facts-origin-uk-first-prime-minister-britain/>

How to take cornel notes?

Watch the clip and read and the article about how to do this

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ErSjc1PEGKE>

<https://www.thoughtco.com/notes-with-the-cornell-note-system-4109052>