



**ST BERNARD'S
HIGH SCHOOL**

Curriculum Guide

Politics

2025 - 26



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Curriculum Intent

Politics at its core engages the future generation in critical debates about the structures of power within our society and across the world. The Politics curriculum is grounded the exploration of democracy, considering how citizens can engage in democracy but also the practicalities of how the mother of all Parliaments functions in a very practical sense.

Students begin their learning in year 1 with an exploration of UK politics. The subject takes students on a journey to explore how the citizens engage in democracy through, voting, elections, interest groups, political parties and the media. The curriculum is structured so that whilst students explore this very practical side of the course they concurrently learn about the nuts and bolts of our political system. Students explore the origins of the constitution, the functioning nature of parliament via the House of Commons and the House of Lords, and the power and role of the executive and the influence of institutions such as the Supreme Court. Throughout this detailed exploration students are practically applying and mastering complex concepts such as sovereignty.

Political ideology is a central tenant to the A level Politics course. Students are expertly guided through each of the core political ideologies exploring how this relates to different aspects of life; human nature, society, the state and the economy. The second-year curriculum content guides students through the world of international politics; using core concepts such as power, democracy and sovereignty students start to explore how the UK plays a role upon the global stage and how these concepts can be applied in different global political contexts. It gives students a deeper respect for other cultures and fosters an ability to analyse global and national political justice.

The introduction of a large amount of subject specific concepts, many of which are brand new to students at the start of the course, has led to an emphasis on developing methods of embedding subject terminology into students' core memory right from day one. The subject is developing its use of dual coding to assist in this process and uses an array of knowledge organisers and retrieval grids to help students grasp these concepts from the beginning of their learning.

An appreciation of current affairs is essential for students to succeed in their study of Politics. Teachers encourage this in a range of ways, students complete news diaries, weekly news discussions and are given analytical political podcasts to explore and consider their own opinions. Politics comes to life with practical application, before this happens a concept may seem dry and inaccessible for young people, with a real-life example it becomes clear and its importance is established and engrained within a student's memory. Politics as an A-Level subject challenges students to think outside of their own interests, their own political echo chambers and explore why people disagree within society, why we as citizens must always question, hold our leaders to account and how we can engage within the political systems which govern every aspect of our lives.

The learning of A level Politics fosters a deeper understanding of the world around the young person – it helps them to understand their place in the world and how they can affect change. It links to all the aspects of Catholic Social Teaching with a particular emphasis on understanding how politics impacts on the concept of peace both globally and nationally.

Head of Social Sciences Faculty

Mr J Toms

Head of Politics Department

Mrs E Owen

Year 12

EDEXCEL A LEVEL POLITICS: Paper 1 UK Politics & Paper 2 UK Government

Number of lessons per fortnight: 5 lessons each fortnight which equates to 500 minutes

Skills developed: Acquisition of relevant knowledge, interpretation of sources, comparative analysis, analysis, evaluation, critical thinking, research skills, persuasive writing and problem solving skills.

Essential equipment: Folder, dividers, plastic wallets, paper, blue or black pen, green pen, red pen, pencil, ruler, highlighters, Essentials of UK Politics and Government & Essentials of Political Ideas text books – both text books are provided by the school - students must return these at the end of the course.

Extracurricular and enrichment opportunities: Visit to Parliament, Talks and Q&A sessions with people involved in politics (including the local MP), debate club, news diaries, podcast listening, documentary analysis.

Careers curriculum:

Politics can lead to a range of different career pathways due to the broad skill set that the subject develops. Some of the particular careers the subject can lead to are:

- **Civil Service**
- **Standing as a local or national representative – local councillor or MP.**
- **Journalism**
- **Teaching**
- **Diplomacy**
- **Charity work**
- **Advocacy**

	Content studied	Literacy focus	What parents can do to help
Autumn Term	Paper 1: Representation & democracy, Rights in context and Political parties. Paper 2: Constitution, Devolution and Parliament and its functions.	We encourage students to read a variety of news sources including broadsheet newspapers. They have to reflect on a local/national and global news story each week in their news diaries. We ask students to engage in a weekly podcast which they reflect upon on a review sheet. We direct students to a range of podcasts to help develop their political literacy. Students are given articles from political magazines and online journals as homework tasks. We always require students to link their learning back to the content studied.	Engaging your child with the news and discussing current affairs is the most helpful activity you can do throughout the academic year. Ask them why they think what they think, try to ask them to give an alternative argument – why might someone disagree with them. Ask them to link examples from the news to the course they are studying.
Spring Term	Paper 1: Political parties, electoral systems, general elections, voting behaviour and the Media. Paper 2: PM and the executive, relations between institutions and the location of sovereignty.	We encourage students to read a variety of news sources including broadsheet newspapers. They have to reflect on a local/national and global news story each week in their news diaries. We ask students to engage in a weekly podcast which they reflect upon on a review sheet. We direct students to a range of podcasts to help develop their political	Engaging your child with the news and discussing current affairs is the most helpful activity you can do throughout the academic year. Ask them why they think what they think, try to ask them to give an alternative argument – why might someone disagree with them. Ask them to link examples from the news to the course they are studying.

		literacy. Students are given articles from political magazines and online journals as homework tasks. We always require students to link their learning back to the content studied.	
Summer Term	Paper 1: Core Ideologies – Liberalism, Conservatism & Socialism. Paper 2: Non Core Ideologies	We encourage students to read a variety of news sources including broadsheet newspapers. They have to reflect on a local/national and global news story each week in their news diaries. We ask students to engage in a weekly podcast which they reflect upon on a review sheet. We direct students to a range of podcasts to help develop their political literacy. Students are given articles from political magazines and online journals as homework tasks. We always require students to link their learning back to the content studied.	Asking students to attach current political parties policies to the ideologies they are learning about. See if they can give you examples and link them to the ideologies effectively. Can they explain which sub ideologies current political parties align with.

Read:**A Level Politics reading list: UK Government Politics**

- [UK Politics Annual Update 2023](#) – this annual book written for A Level Politics students includes all of the recent big political events. Events this time include the government response to the COVID-19 pandemic, Black Lives Matter protests and the state of political parties.
- [This Land](#) – written by Owen Jones, a columnist for the Guardian and activist for Labour, this book looks to build a more equal society using figures from across the political spectrum.
- [We're Living Through the Breakdown](#) – this book is written by Tatton Spiller of [Simple Politics](#), and looks at how we can understand politics in an age of huge change.
- [The Life of an MP](#) – Jess Phillips, Labour MP for Birmingham Yardley, discusses the role of an MP and the occurrences that happen in their personal and political lives.

A Level Politics reading list: Political Ideas

- [50 Politics Classics](#) – a great book that helps to condense the main ideas of many key thinkers, including Thomas Hobbes, Mary Wollstonecraft and more.
- [Essentials of Political Ideas](#) – an A Level book that looks into the political ideas, their thinkers and other revision tips.
- [50 Political Ideas You Really Need to Know](#) – a book that includes many of the political ideas covered in the course (though many also don't apply).
- [Conservatism: The Fight for a Tradition](#) – an exploratory book that looks at the history of conservatism and the different strands that it encompasses.
- [The Communist Manifesto](#) – the most notable work of socialist literature by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels.

- **[On Liberty](#)** – written by John Stuart Mill (key thinker), advocates for individualism and limited government.

Listen – PODCASTS are your best option for A level Politics – here are some of my favourite – all available on Spotify.

The News Agents

The Rest is Politics

The Westminster Hour

Political currency

The New Stateman Podcast

Coffee House Shots

Red Box Politics

Politics Weekly – The Guardian

Bloomberg UK Politics

Westminster Insider podcast

Newscast

Political thinking

The A level Politics Show – this is an excellent podcast from an A level politics teacher.

Watch:

State of Chaos series – BBC Iplayer : [Laura Kuenssberg: State of Chaos - BBC iPlayer](#)

Political thinking: [Political Thinking with Nick Robinson - BBC iPlayer](#)

Brown and Blair: The Labour revolution: [Blair & Brown: The New Labour Revolution - BBC iPlayer](#)

Surviving Politics: [Surviving Politics with Michael Gove - Surviving Politics: Margaret Hodge - BBC iPlayer](#)

Newsnight

The rise of the Murdoch dynasty: [The Rise of the Murdoch Dynasty - Series 1: 1. Kingmaker - BBC iPlayer](#)

The Diplomat: Netflix

The Crown: Netflix

Useful websites:

[A Level Politics: Unlock your A* potential - Study Politics](#)

The Politics shed: [The Politics Shed](#)

Politics Teaching: [Politics Teaching – Supporting Students and Teachers of A-Level Politics](#) – this has a range of articles written on examination skills as well as content specific articles.

[A Level Politics](#)

[Politics | tutor2u](#)

Year 13

Edexcel A LEVEL POLITICS : Paper 3 - Global Politics

Number of lessons per fortnight: 5 – 500 minutes

Skills developed: Acquisition of relevant knowledge, interpretation of sources, comparative analysis, analysis, evaluation, critical thinking, research skills, persuasive writing and problem solving skills.

Essential equipment: Folder, dividers, plastic wallets, paper, blue or black pen, green pen, red pen, pencil, ruler, highlighters and Pearson Edexcel A level Global Politics textbook – text books will be provided by the school – students must return these at the end of the course.

Extracurricular and enrichment opportunities: Visit to Parliament, Talks and Q&A sessions with people involved in politics, debate club, news diaries, podcast listening, documentary analysis.

Careers curriculum:

Politics can lead to a range of different career pathways due to the broad skill set that the subject develops. Some of the particular careers the subject can lead to are:

- **Civil Service**
- **Standing as a local or national representative – local councillor or MP.**
- **Journalism**
- **Teaching**
- **Diplomacy**
- **Charity work**
- **Advocacy**

Students are encouraged to seek advice and ask questions about political careers on all visits and from all the speakers we have

	Content studied	Literacy focus	What parents can do to help
Autumn Term	Global political theory, State and Globalisation, Power & Development, Global Governance: Political	We encourage students to read a variety of news sources including broadsheet newspapers. They have to reflect on a local/national and global news story each week in their news diaries. We ask students to engage in a weekly podcast which they reflect upon on a review sheet. We direct students to a range of podcasts to help develop their political literacy. Students are given articles from political magazines and online journals as homework tasks. We always require students to link their learning back to the content studied.	Engaging your child with the news and discussing current affairs is the most helpful activity you can do throughout the academic year. Ask them why they think what they think, try to ask them to give an alternative argument – why might someone disagree with them. Ask them to link examples from the news to the course they are studying.
Spring Term	Global Governance: Economic, Global Governance: Human Rights Global Governance Environment Regionalism & the EU Applying global theory	We encourage students to read a variety of news sources including broadsheet newspapers. They have to reflect on a local/national and global news story each week in their news diaries. We ask students to engage in a weekly podcast which they reflect upon	See above

		on a review sheet. We direct students to a range of podcasts to help develop their political literacy. Students are given articles from political magazines and online journals as homework tasks. We always require students to link their learning back to the content studied.	
Summer Term	Revision	We encourage students to read a variety of news sources including broadsheet newspapers. They have to reflect on a local/national and global news story each week in their news diaries. We ask students to engage in a weekly podcast which they reflect upon on a review sheet. We direct students to a range of podcasts to help develop their political literacy. Students are given articles from political magazines and online journals as homework tasks. We always require students to link their learning back to the content studied.	Testing students on content, reading their practice essays – are they coherent – can you understand the content they are sharing.

Read

A Level Politics reading list: Global Politics

- [Prisoners of Geography](#) – a book detailing the big powers in global politics, and how maps can explain them.
- [The Power of Geography](#) – the sequel to Prisoners of Geography that discusses the future of global politics and power.
- [The Last Utopia](#) – the history of human rights and where they're heading for.
- [Politics Among Nations: The Struggle for Power and Peace](#) – a fundamental work in the realist school of international relations.
- [Theory of International Politics](#) – Introduces structural realism or neorealism, focusing on the anarchic structure of the international system.
- [The Tragedy of Great Power Politics](#) – A newer realist perspective focusing on the inevitability of conflict between great powers.
- [The Liberal Tradition in America](#) – Explores the historical roots and characteristics of liberalism in the United States and its implications for international relations.
- [After Victory](#) – A liberal perspective on how international institutions can create a lasting peace after conflicts.

Listen: PODCASTS are your best option for A level Politics – here are some of my favourite for global politics, remember many of the podcasts you listen to for year 12 and national politics may reflect on global issues if the event is current – all are available on Spotify.

World Review

Global News Podcast

Global Dispatches

The Rachman Review

Newshour

From our own correspondent

The Foreign Desk

Pod Save the World

The intelligence (The Economist)

World in 10

Watch:

Thatcher and Regan – A very special relationship: [Thatcher & Reagan: A Very Special Relationship - BBC iPlayer](#)

The West Wing series

Corridors of Power series: [Corridors of Power: Should America Police the World? - Series 1: 1. Iraq – For Every Insect There Is an Insecticide - BBC iPlayer](#)

China – the new world order: [China: A New World Order - Series 1: Episode 1 - BBC iPlayer](#)

Useful websites:

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The Politics shed: [The Politics Shed](#)

Politics Teaching: [Politics Teaching – Supporting Students and Teachers of A-Level Politics](#) – this has a range of articles written on examination skills as well as content specific articles.

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