

# Edexcel A Level Politics

## Transition Pack



## **Welcome to A level Politics at KBA!**

I hope you enjoyed the taster lesson and found the information provided useful. In order that you are able to 'hit the ground running' in September it is vital that you start to make yourself more familiar with how Britain is governed and what 'Politics' is about on a daily basis.

Completing the tasks in this transition activity pack will equip you with the basic level of knowledge and awareness that you will need to make a successful start to our course.

Work through these activities at regular points throughout the Summer - don't leave it until the last minute before we return. Some of the activities require you to develop an awareness of, and to reflect on, 'current affairs'. You will do this through watching news programming, reading the print media, and by using the political social media sites suggested in this booklet. As we move through our course we will constantly refer to 'what's going on' in the UK, the USA and globally - so the work you put in now will be invaluable!

Have a great Summer and I'll see you in September!

*Mr Pringle*

## “A week is a long time in politics”



Uniquely, Politics is a living subject so you will see much of what you are studying happening in the ‘real world’. It can also be a very fast moving one, as Harold Wilson’s famous quote above indicates. This means any textbook is, to some degree, out of date by the time it is published. This may sound daunting, especially when this is part of your introduction to the subject, but it also provides you with a great opportunity. It is precisely because no book can give you the most up-to-date examples that using recent/current examples effectively will be highly rewarded by examiners. Consequently, you should be keeping an eye on American government and politics during Year 1, when you are studying the UK, and continue to follow what is happening in the UK during Year 2, when the focus of the course is on the USA.

Following politics in the media should, therefore, be a regular part of your independent study throughout the course. First, however, you need to be organised. One file per component is recommended. Buy or use ‘homemade’ dividers and label them as follows. You will then be able to file your examples in the appropriate section. *(Be aware that some examples will be relevant to two or more topics – more on this later.)* Make a start on this now, establishing a good habit to continue throughout the course, so that **by the end of the summer you will have filed five examples plus your reflections on each one.** The expectation is that you will have five examples in total i.e. it does not matter which topics they relate to. The summer is usually a quiet time in the political world but Brexit is set to ensure that this is not the case this summer.

### **This is what you will be studying in year 1:**

#### **Component 1 UK Politics**

- Democracy and participation
- Political parties
- Electoral systems
- Voting behaviour and the media

You will also study the following political ideas: liberalism, conservatism, and socialism

#### **Component 2 UK Government**

- The constitution
- Parliament
- Prime Minister and executive
- Relationships between the branches

You will also study one of the following political ideas: feminism

**In Year 2 you will be studying US Politics and Government and will also focus on comparative features and synoptic tasks in relation to UK and US politics.**

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# Politics in the UK

This is a detailed and comprehensive assignment that you have been given. **Do not rush it.** We advise that you complete different parts of the transition pack at different points in the Summer holiday, rather than leaving it all until the final week of your break. **You should expect to spend longer on these tasks than any homework you have completed before.** A Level Politics will be a significant step up from the work you have completed in Year 11.

## Task One – People in Politics

Look at the below photographs of British politicians. You must identify who they are, which party they belonged to and whether or not they were Prime Minister (PM) or Leader of Her Majesty's Opposition (HMO). Get your family involved in this task – your parents will remember many of these faces, and some of them might be better suited even to your grandparents!



## Task Two – News and Elections

Politics is a subject which cannot be unplugged from news and current affairs. Twitter is seen by some to be the future of Politics – it is used by journalists, politicians and politicians alike to share news and information as well as discuss political issues. I would advise that you create yourselves Twitter accounts as soon as possible and follow the below users for Political information and news:

**@Britainelects (for news and updates on all things electoral in the UK)**

**@BBCNews / @SkyNews (or any other news station of your choice – or even more than one!)**

**@bbcquestiontime (the UK's most-watched political talk-show: BBC Question Time)**

**@BorisJohnson (prime minister)**

**@POTUS (the president of the United States of America)**

**@DExEUgov (The Department for Exiting the European Union)**

**And a range of political journalists like Julia Hartley-Brewer, Owen Jones, etc...**

Your second task is to keep an eye on these Twitter accounts (as well as wider sources – the news and shows on TV, newspapers and others) over the Summer holidays and make a note of any particularly interesting news that is relevant to Politics in the UK. You may even find some stories which are interesting internationally, particularly if you choose to follow Donald Trump...

## Task Three – British Political History

You need to create an A3 or A4 Political History timeline for the UK. On your timeline you should include a number of features such as (but not necessarily ONLY these – and for an A grade extension, include the dates at which major UK political parties were founded):

The signing of the Magna Carta, the opening of the House of Commons, the introduction of the Bill of Rights, the Act of Union, Representation of the People Acts and European Communities Act. This will be the focus of the first topic we will study next year.

## Task Four – Parties and Issues

To start, you should quickly research the Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat parties. What do they stand for? Then, use the internet, textbooks and your imagination to create your own political party which will stand at the next election. You should include the party's name, some points as to what the party stands for and three key policies your party will introduce if they are elected including **why** you would introduce them. These policies will cost money - will people have to pay more tax or would you make savings elsewhere? You have to **justify** your decisions. Some topics to consider might be:

**Economic Policy**

**Health**

**Crime**

**International Affairs**

**Housing**

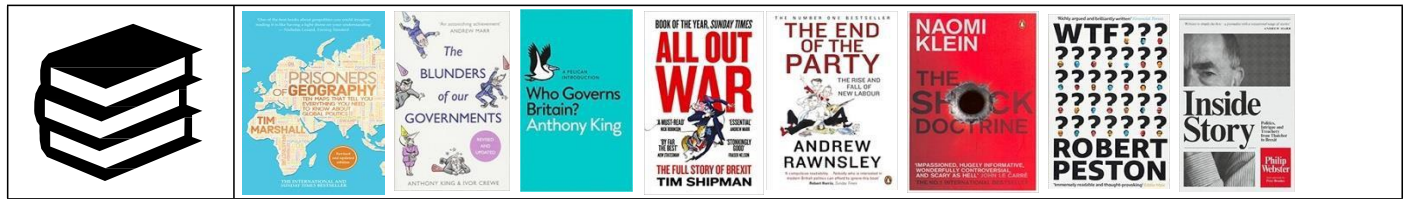
**Education**

# 10 key facts to learn for the start of the course


1. Name the party leader:
  - Conservatives = .....
  - Labour = .....
  - Liberal Democrats = .....
  - SNP = .....
  - PC = .....
  - DUP = .....
  - Greens = .....
  - Reform Party = .....
2. In the 2016 EU referendum, Leave gained .....% of votes compared to Remain's .....%.
3. 'Initiatives' occur in ..... and some US states, where citizens gather signatures on a petition for a public vote on a proposed new law. These are similar to a referendum but they are .....
4. In the 2019 general election the Conservatives won .....% of seats with .....% of the votes.
5. In the 2019 general election the Labour gained .....% of seats with .....% of the votes.
6. Turnout in the 2019 general election was.....%.
7. Explain the impact that the 2019 General Election had on the leadership of the Labour Party. What were the reasons highlighted in both the media and the Labour Party for the electoral defeat?
8. A hung parliament is a parliament in which ..... Either a minority government or a coalition will then result.
9. An electoral ..... is a document produced by a political party at election times, stating what policies it intends to implement if it gains power.

10. An electoral ..... refers to the authority to govern granted by voters to the winning party at an election. The ..... suggests that the government may ..... the measures in its election .....

We would love for you to use the time over the coming weeks and months to get interested in Politics. Developing your interest in the subject and building your general political knowledge. The following are suggestions, they are not compulsory, but we would love for you to engage in any that you find interesting.



	<p><a href="#">Stitcher – A-level politics podcast</a>  <a href="#">Beyond Westminster</a>  <a href="#">BBC politics podcasts</a>  <a href="#">The Westminster Hour</a>  <a href="#">Politics.co.uk podcasts</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Guardian ‘po litics w eek ly’ po dcasts</a>  <a href="#">Going the way of the dodo</a>  <a href="#">10 of the best podcasts</a>  <a href="#">Takes from the lobby</a>  <a href="#">Learn out loud podcasts</a></p>
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	<p><a href="#">iPlayer Climate Change Playlist</a>  <a href="#">Politics Live – BBC iPlayer</a>  <a href="#">The Andrew Marr Show</a>  <a href="#">The Politics Show</a></p>	<p><a href="#">Question Time BBC</a>  <a href="#">Parliament</a>  <a href="#">Cabinet Confidential</a></p>
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