

TALLIS 16+

THOMAS TALLIS SCHOOL POST 16 CENTRE

TRANSITION READING LIST

SUBJECT: **Government and Politics**

The A Level specification covers three main areas: UK Politics, Political Ideologies, and US Politics.

In Paper 1 you will study UK Politics and Core Ideologies.

You will explore the emergence and development of the UK's democratic system and the similarities, differences, connections and parallels between direct and indirect democracy. You will focus on the role and scope of political parties that are so central to contemporary politics, including the significance of the manifestos they publish at election time and their relevance to the mandate of the resulting government. You will examine how electoral systems in the UK operate and how individuals and groups are influenced in their voting behaviour and political actions, including the role of the media in contemporary politics. You will also study the three traditional political ideas of conservatism, liberalism and socialism. Students will learn about the core ideas and principles and how they apply in practice to human nature, the state, society and the economy, the divisions within each idea and their key thinkers.

In Paper 2 you will study UK Government and Non-Core Ideologies.

You will learn about the UK constitution, and the specific roles and powers of the different major branches of the government – legislative, executive, and judiciary – as well as the relationships and balance of power between them, and considers where sovereignty now lies within this system. You will also study three additional political ideologies.

In Paper 3 you will study US Politics.

You will begin by studying the US Constitution and the arguments surrounding this guiding document of US democracy. In learning about the key institutions of government in the USA and analysing the manner in which they achieve this power and exercise it over their citizens, you will judge ultimately whether 'liberty and justice for all' has been achieved in the USA. You will compare and contrast politics and institutions in the US with those in the UK.

Newspapers and other online resources

It is essential that you read reputable broadsheet newspapers in order to keep up-to date with current affairs. You can look at articles on their websites (many articles will be behind paywalls but The Guardian remains free to access and some other provide a limited number of articles free-to-view):

- The Times: <http://www.timesonline.co.uk>
- The Independent: <http://www.independent.co.uk>
- The Guardian: <http://www.guardian.co.uk>
- The Telegraph: <http://www.telegraph.co.uk>
- The Financial Times: <https://www.ft.com/>

Other useful websites for up-to-date political news stories are:

- <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/politics/>
- <https://www.politico.eu/uk>
- <https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/>
- The Economist: <http://economist.com>

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- Politics Review Magazine: <https://www.hoddereducation.com/magazines/magazines-extras/politics-review-extras>

Subscribe to some politics podcasts!

There are a huge number to choose from. The following can be found wherever you get your podcasts.

- Politics Without the Boring Bits (The Times)
- How to Win an Election (The Times)
- The Newsagents
- The Rest is Politics
- Today in Focus (The Guardian)
- Political Fix (The Financial Times)
- Westminster Insider (Politico)
- Politics Weekly America (The Guardian)
- Political Currency
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Read the following independent websites on the three main UK political parties:

- Conservative Home <https://conservativehome.com/>
- Lib Dem Voice <https://www.libdemvoice.org/>
- Labour List <https://labourlist.org/>

Further online resources for each unit

Component 1 Topics

- Information on voting patterns: <http://www.statistics.gov.uk>
- Information on opinion polls: <http://www.ipsosmori.com/political/trends.shtml>
- The Electoral Reform Society: <http://www.electoral-reform.org.uk>
- Conservative Party: <http://www.conservatives.com>
- Labour Party: <http://www.labour.org.uk>
- Liberal Democrat Party: <http://www.libdems.org.uk>
- Greenpeace: <http://www.greenpeace.org.uk>
- Unlock Democracy: <http://unlockdemocracy.org.uk/>
- Liberty: <http://www.liberty-human-rights.org.uk>
- 38 Degrees: <http://38degrees.org.uk>

Component 2 Topics

- The Constitution Research Unit at UCL: <http://www.ucl.ac.uk/constitution-unit/>
- Parliament: www.parliament.uk
- Cabinet Office website: <http://www.cabinetoffice.gov.uk>
- Prime Minister's Office Website:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/prime-ministers-office-10-downing-street>
- Ministry of Justice website: <http://www.justice.gov.uk>

TV News/Current Affairs programmes to watch:

- BBC 6 o'clock or 10 o'clock news

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- Channel 4 news
- Question Time (BBC)
- Daily Politics Show (BBC)
- Newsnight (BBC)
- Have I Got News For You (BBC)
- Mock The Week (BBC)

Preparing for your Government and Politics A-Level

Summer Learning: Politics Case studies

To keep up to date with UK Politics, the Politics Department would like you to complete two case studies. These will be written up or typed and should be approximately 3-4 four pages each.

Case study One: The 2024 General Election

Look back at news stories about the 2024 General Election campaign, from Sunak calling the election on 22 May until polling day on 4 July, so you can recreate a 'real-time' summary of the campaign as it unfolded:

Please include the following:

- A summary of the manifesto promises of each of the parties
- Any key events e.g., gaffes, bounces or drops in the polls during the campaigns.
- Analysis of the big set-piece televised events e.g. leaders' debate, question time.
- What parties did the main newspapers endorse.
- How did the election play out on social media.
- Select one marginal seat to follow and use a poll tracker to chart the predictions and then the final outcome of the constituency.
- A summary of the result and commentary on this from two political analysts from different perspectives
- Overall turnout figures
- How different groups of people voted e.g. 18-24, people in big cities...
- Define tactical voting and how significant was it?
- How close were the opinion poll predictions to the final result?

Suggested reading and research

- [General election 2024 poll tracker: How do the parties compare? - BBC News](#)
- [What happened this week in the UK election campaign, from manifesto launches to robots and Haribos | AP News](#)
- [Pippa Crerar on X: "NEWS: Grant Shapps becomes first minister to publicly acknowledge Tories are unlikely to win the election. "It's possible to win the election. Do I accept it's not the most likely outcome? Yes, I accept that. I'm a realist," - @TimesRadio" / X](#)

Case study Two: The Rwanda Policy

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The controversial Conservative plan to send to Rwanda all asylum seekers judged to have arrived in the UK 'illegally', as a deterrent to small boat crossings across the English Channel, has dominated the political agenda for the last couple of years. Producing a case study document on this policy will allow you to engage with many of the key themes we study in the A Level.

Please include the following:

- When the policy was first suggested.
- Who is for and against the immigration policy - look at different factions in The Conservative Party, the views of Opposition parties, and the views of pressure groups.
- How it relates to our international obligations under the Refugee Convention.
- The votes in the House of Commons.
- The House of Lords' role delaying and amending the bill.
- Legal challenges and judicial rulings, including in the Supreme Court, and how the Government reacted to these.

Suggested reading and research

- [What is the UK's plan to send asylum seekers to Rwanda? - BBC News](#)
- [The tortuous journey of the UK government's Rwanda plan | Rwanda | The Guardian](#)
- [How the bill to declare Rwanda a 'safe' country for refugees could lead to a constitutional crisis \(theconversation.com\)](#)
- [Safety of Rwanda Bill corrodes the rule of law and access to justice | The Law Society](#)

Please bring these to week one of the new academic year.

Keep up to date with the changing UK political landscape!

There is so much happening in UK politics that we suggest over the summer you keep a 'news log': that is, a weekly summary of key stories. This can be in a lined book or a word document.

This is a key component of home learning when you start the course in September, and essential for success in the A Level. If you have already begun this over the summer, you will be well on your way to becoming a politico!

Further suggested activities to get you to get ready for 2024 A Level Government and Politics

Research Labour and Conservative policy in the following areas, and create a comparison table:

- Economic policy and taxation
- Voting age

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- Devolution within the UK
- Constitutional reform
- Education
- Relations with European Union
- Foreign policy

Create a table showing the election results from 2019 and compare to the July 2024 general election.

Ensure you include:

- Number of seats for each party
- Percentage of the vote for each party.
- Regional differences in the results in the UK e.g. seats in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, the north of England, London
- Statistics for the number of MPs according to factors such as gender/ethnicity/level of education

Research and define the following key terms, with UK-relevant examples

- Constitution
- Codified
- Uncodified
- Entrench
- Judicial review
- Unitary constitution
- Federal constitution

Knowing our Prime Ministers:

Create an A3 information sheet, with facts and images of the following UK Prime Ministers: Margaret Thatcher, John Major, Tony Blair, Gordon Brown, David Cameron, Theresa May, Boris Johnson, Liz Truss, Rishi Sunak.

Follow the changing political landscape:

Find at least 5 newspaper articles about UK Politics, and summarise each in no more than 5 bullet points. Use at least one bullet point to identify the political perspective it is written from, and at least two bullet points to summarise whether you agree or disagree with the perspective.

Further suggested activities:

- Create a timeline showing the main events in British Politics since 1997 – you need to include the UK Prime Ministers, key national and global (and local?) events e.g. elections, referendums, crises, scandals...
- Create a summary of the 2024 manifestos of the three main parties (Conservative, Labour, Lib Dem). Include their policy on welfare, the economy, taxation, foreign policy, immigration, health, education, and law and order.

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- Create a diagram showing how laws are passed. Include an example of a recent law.
- Create a diagram showing how Parliament works and interacts with the other two branches of power, the Executive (Government) and the Judiciary (the Courts)
- Briefly explain: The role of the Monarch and the PM in UK politics.
- Research your local MP and create a fact file on them – include when they became an MP, their majority, their party and what they have done to improve their constituency, how they have voted on recent issues. Make use of <https://www.theyworkforyou.com/>

Going even further...

Write a summary set of arguments on the following debate question:

- Should the monarchy be abolished?
- Should we hold more referendums?
- Should the voting age be changed?
- Should we abolish the House of Lords?
- Is the UK truly democratic?

Make up a question that interests you and you would want the class to debate and do a fact sheet on both sides of the debate. Is there a key argument you find particularly compelling? Try to write up why you find it convincing.