

Government & Politics AS

Subject handbook 2015-2016



Exam board Edexcel

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What is A-Level Government and Politics?

Politics is a subject in which you are expected to take an interest in, and to be critical about, the way in which this country is run, and more broadly the world around you. We study issues concerned with who really has power in the UK, and about how the system could be improved. In the A2 course we study ideologies such as socialism, liberalism, conservatism and anarchism to come to conclusions about what an ideal society would look like - or perhaps to come to the conclusion that an ideal society is an unrealistic fantasy.

Specific questions we will be seeking to answer in the AS course include: Is the UK truly democratic? Why do we have political parties? Is the current coalition nothing more than a marriage of convenience between David Cameron and Nick Clegg? Do Labour and the Conservatives differ? Are decisions sometimes made according to "who shouts loudest"? Does parliament run the country? Should it? Is the prime minister like an elected monarch? Are our civil rights protected?

FAQ – Frequently asked questions:

Question	Answer
What does the term 'politics' actually mean?	The study of how society is or should be run and how power* is conducted or carried out. * <i>Power is the ability to get people to get others to act as you wish – either willingly or through coercion and force</i>
What sorts of things are actually studied in class as part of a Politics A-Level?	There are three main focuses: Political ideas: eg. What should an ideal society look like? Is an ideal society possible or even desirable? Political institutions (bodies) – eg. What is parliament? How does it work? How many members does it have? What committees does it have? What do those committees do? Are these committees accountable? Etc. Political processes and roles – How is power exercised in practice? For example, what powers does the PM have and what limits exist to PM power? What is the step by step process through which new laws are made?

Expectations and demands on students:

Politics is a demanding and well-respected course. Resultantly, students are expected to meet extremely high expectations. You will be:

- Regularly set independent research to deadlines (every week)
- Expected to engage proactively with the subject – you must read around the subject and follow the news. Without doing this it is very hard to get a C grade.
- Set regular essay writing and examination practice

For those of you that are hardworking and interested this will not seem arduous and it will help you to get the best possible grade; whereas if you are not that interested in current affairs or politics then you will end up spending a large amount of time doing something you do not enjoy.

I have read the departmental expectations. I understand that the state spends in excess of £92 billion pounds on education annually and that this equates to 12.3% of government spending and 5.1% of the UK's GDP. I also understand that this spending is derived from the general taxation levied on the labour of other people providing goods and services in society and that it is, therefore, not a right but an extreme privilege to receive. Resultantly, I will respect this privilege – unavailable to most people in the rest of the world – by committing myself fully to the expectations of punctuality, attendance, ability to meet deadlines and standards outlined above and in the Sixth Form wide home-school agreement.

Signed:

How am I assessed and what specific content is on the course?

- You will study **two main courses** – **UK Politics** at AS and **political ideology** at A2.
 - The exam board is **Edexcel**. Politics continues to have separate AS exams and A2 exams. This means that you can chose to drop the subject at the end of Year 12 and still receive a full AS qualification.
 - **You will sit four exams**. Each is **equally weighted** at 25% of your total A-Level and there is **no coursework** at any point. There are no January exams or January resists.
- **SUMMER OF YEAR 12** (50% of whole A-Level): Unit 1 and Unit 2 exams on UK Politics (see details below)
 - **SUMMER OF YEAR 13** (50% of whole A-Level): Unit 3 and Unit 4 exams on political ideology (see details below)

Edexcel Government and Politics syllabus

Unit	Content (all units have four modules/sub-topics)	Assessment	Question types
Unit 1: People and politics	<p>DEMOCRACY: We discover what democracy is, how it works in the UK and ways in which it could be enhanced.</p> <p>POLITICAL PARTIES: We discover the nature of the different political parties, the traditions and policies behind them, divisions within them, and we compare the differences and similarities between the parties.</p> <p>ELECTIONS: We look at different electoral systems, the link between elections and democracy, and we consider Britain's systems - their advantages and disadvantages.</p> <p>PRESSURE GROUPS: We look at the nature of a variety of pressure groups, the power and influence of pressure groups and their relationship with democracy.</p>	<p>Exam 1hr 20mins Summer Yr. 12</p> <p>25% of total A-Level</p>	<p>Two sets of 5, 10 and 25 mark questions</p> <p>Pick two of the four topics</p>
Unit 2: Governing the UK	<p>THE CONSTITUTION: We look at the nature of the UK's constitution, consider where power lies and study the debates around constitutional reform.</p> <p>PARLIAMENT: We look at how Parliament is made up, the role of Parliament, how a law is made (step by step) and reforms to the Houses of Commons and Lords.</p> <p>THE PRIME MINISTER AND CABINET: We study the role and responsibilities of the Prime Minister and Cabinet, the powers and constraints upon the Prime Minister and the manner of leadership that the Prime Minister can provide: is a PM first amongst equals or does he have far more power than his cabinet ministers and so act like an elected dictator?</p> <p>JUDGES AND CIVIL LIBERTIES: We look at the role of the judiciary, the power and influence which judges have and the effect of this on civil liberties and individual rights.</p>	<p>Exam 1hr 20mins Summer Yr. 12</p> <p>25% of total A-Level</p>	<p>One set of 5, 10 and 25 mark questions from a choice of two topics (at random)</p> <p>Then one 40 marker from a choice of two topics (those two not on the first section)</p>
Unit 3B: Introducing ideologies	<p>CONSERVATISM: Conserving society as it is. Hierarchy and order matters most.</p> <p>SOCIALISM: Seeking to build a more equal society</p> <p>LIBERALISM: Opposing restrictions on people's freedom (liberty)</p> <p>ANARCHISM: Opposing state (government) power as an innate harm</p>	<p>Exam 1hr 30mins Summer Yr. 13</p> <p>25% of total A-Level</p>	<p>Pick three 15 markers from a choice of five questions (all topics come up at least once)</p> <p>Pick one 45 marker from a choice of three questions (one topic randomly missing)</p>
Unit 4B: Other ideological traditions	<p>ECOLOGISM: Politics of the earth. How has environmental destruction challenged the classic approaches of capitalism and socialism to running the economy and society? Is our current society sustainable or will it suffer ecological collapse?</p> <p>FEMINISM: Sees society as having been created and shaped by men. Feminists wish to challenge this male domination and bring about gender equality and gender awareness.</p> <p>MULTICULTURALISM: Is a society with more than one culture desirable?</p> <p>NATIONALISM: Should countries just look after their own self-interests over everyone else's?</p>	<p>Exam 1hr 30mins Summer Yr. 13</p> <p>25% of total A-Level</p>	<p>Pick three 15 markers from a choice of five questions (all topics come up at least once)</p> <p>Pick one 45 marker from a choice of three questions (one topic randomly missing)</p>

Exam technique:

Success criteria (assessment objectives)

Success criteria are the requirements that your work is marked against in order to pick up marks on your exam. The three main success criteria and the question types that they are applicable to are listed below:

Success criteria	What this means
AO1 – Key knowledge and understanding	Knowledge of political ideas and terms required to answer a question. Includes knowledge of specific examples.
AO2 – Intellectual ability to explain and evaluate	Quality and extent of explanation of political terms and ideas. On 25 and 40 markers, also quality of evaluation paragraphs.
AO3 – Communication and clarity	Structure, line of argument and English language used

Three different question types exist (roughly a mark a minute for each):

Question	Type	Asking you to...	Success criteria
5 mark	Describing question	One paragraph asking you to say what something is	AO1
10 mark	Explaining question	One page asking you to say why something is the way it is as well as what it is	AO1 & AO2
25 mark	Evaluative question	Several pages asking you to write a long-answer essay weighing up for and against arguments in order to come to a conclusion	AO1; AO2; AO3
40 mark	Evaluative question	Same as the 25 marker, just a little longer	AO1; AO2; AO3

5 mark structure and mark scheme (describe questions)

One paragraph of $\frac{1}{4}$ - $\frac{1}{2}$ a page of A4.

Three main points.

No spaces between points.

Each point just *describes* the term or idea being asked about.

Example point (do this x3) →

“Describe 3 of the advantages of direct democracy? (5 marks)”

POINT

“One advantage of direct democracy is that it is the purest form of democracy. This means that direct democracy allows every single member of the population to have a say when they vote directly on an issue during a referendum – as was shown on 18th September 2014 in the referendum on Scottish independence”

Description

example

Mark Scheme: Knowledge and understanding question (total of 5 marks available). **Relevant criteria: AO1: 5 marks**

- 3 marks available for factors described (1 mark for each different factors)
- Up to 2 marks for a more detailed or developed description of a particular point (feature/function) which shows an expansive, comprehensive knowledge and understanding (1 mark per point that is fully described)

10 mark structure and mark scheme (explain questions)

Three main points, each a separate paragraph. Each paragraph should follow a P(oint) E(xplanation) E(vidence) format.

x2 examples per paragraph.

No introduction. No conclusion at all.

About 1 page of A4.

“Explain **three** strengths of parliamentary democracy.”

“**One strength of parliamentary democracy is that it** ^{Point} **allows trustees to make informed decisions. This is** ^{Explanation} **because MPs can use their superior knowledge, expertise and time dedicated to Parliamentary matters in order to make wise policy decisions. This is the opposite to direct democracy, where those voting may not be well informed. Reflecting this, 90% of MPs are university educated, as opposed to 31% of the general population.** ^{Evidence}”

Example paragraph (repeat x3) →

Mark Scheme: Explanation question (total of 10 marks available). <i>Relevant criteria: AO1 & AO2</i>	
Level 3 5-7 Marks	Good to excellent knowledge and understanding of relevant institutions, processes, political concepts, theories or debates.
Level 2 3-4 Marks	Limited to sound knowledge and understanding of relevant institutions, processes, political concepts, theories or debates.
Level 1 0-2 Marks	Very poor to weak knowledge and understanding of relevant institutions, processes, political concepts, theories or debates.
AO2	Intellectual skills
Intellectual skills relevant to this question	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ability to analyse and explain the factors behind the failure of certain pressure groups. 	
Level 3 3 Marks	Good to excellent ability to analyse and evaluate political information, arguments and explanations, and identify parallels, connections, similarities and differences.
Level 2 2 Marks	Limited to sound ability to analyse and evaluate political information, arguments and explanations, and identify parallels, connections, similarities and differences.
Level 1 1 Mark	Very poor to weak ability to analyse and evaluate political information, arguments and explanations, and identify parallels, connections, similarities and differences.

AO1 = Upto 7 marks available; AO2 = Upto 3 marks available

25 and 40 mark structure and mark scheme (explain questions)

25 and 40 mark questions are structured in one of the two following structures:

Structure 1 (recommended)	Structure 2 (some prefer)
Introduction	Introduction
For point	For
Against point	For
Evaluation (which side is more convincing and why?)	For
Repeat the above (2 more times)	Against
	Against
	Against
Conclusion	Evaluation paragraph
	Conclusion

A step-by-step guide to structuring 25 and 40 mark evaluative essays

Step 1 - Introduction:

1. **Define key terms** from the essay title (without doing this it is impossible to know what the essay is actually arguing in favour of or against)
2. Explain the **current state** of the question at hand (say if there has been a change in recent years – eg. there has been falling turnout so a discussion about falling participation over the past 20 years)
3. **State the essay's line of argument** – “This essay will argue that...” [*always use this phrase*]
THIS IS VERY IMPORTANT. NEVER, EVER, LEAVE THIS UNTIL THE CONCLUSION

(1) Democracy means _____. (1) For democracy to function fully, citizens are required to participate. (1) Participation includes _____. (2) In recent years _____. (3) This essay will argue that _____.

Step 2 – FOR PARAGRAPH:

1. **POINT: Clearly state a main point** to answer the question. Do this in no more than one sentence.
2. **EVIDENCE:** Give 2 pieces of specific evidence to support the point. This means specific names, dates, places, events or laws.
3. **EXPLANATION: Fully explain – step by step – what your point is.** Explain fully how it directly answers the question – EVERYTHING YOU SAY YOU ARE SAYING TO ANSWER THE ESSAY'S MAIN QUESTION.

Remember you are ultimately writing an argument, not a series of facts. Never digress (go off route and start talking about unrelated stuff or things that don't directly answer the question).

Also, **leave no assertions** (keep asking yourself, 'is there room for someone to turn around and say "so what?" ' Or "I'm not fully convinced"). Look carefully at how the model answer does this.

4. **CLOSING SENTENCE:** One sentence to close the paragraph that sums up the point and LINKS DIRECTLY BACK TO THE QUESTION

Note: If it naturally flows better then it is fine to switch the evidence and explanation bits, or even to naturally weave them together if you are feeling very confident.

(1) One reason why it could be argued there is currently a participation crisis in the UK is _____. (2) [INSERT SUPPORTING EVIDENCE x2] _____. (3) This suggests/indicates/implies that _____. (4) Therefore, this shows that there is a participation crisis as _____.

Step 3 – AGAINST PARAGRAPH:

This point should **directly engage** with the previous FOR argument. It should either:

1. Create a direct counter point

Or if this is not possible...

2. State the limitations to the for argument

Structure: REPEAT THE Point; Evidence; Explanation structure that you used in the FOR point above.

Step 4 – EVALUATION:

1. State which argument is most convincing: "Overall, the most convincing argument is arguably that..."
[always use this phrase]
2. Explain WHY the FOR or AGAINST argument is most convincing.

Again, do this step-by-step. There should be no room for me to go 'so what?'

How do I work out which argument is most convincing?

For a C or a B grade: Work out which argument has more weight behind it. Imagine that you think the FOR argument is strongest on a given point. This would be because there are more significant outcomes from the FOR side than the AGAINST one

- *eg. 'voter turnout consistently falling year on year as a point arguing that there IS a participation crisis is stronger than the AGAINST point that there was one referendum with a really high turnout in 2014. Why? The for point has a greater body of evidence behind it – both in quantity and extent (over a longer timeframe). Remember, this would need to be explained in your evaluation, step by step.*

For an A: Think about counter arguments to the for and against arguments you have presented. The most convincing argument is the one that cannot be rebutted (countered).

For example, you might be able to counter the against paragraph but not then re-counter the counter. In this case the most convincing argument would be the for side. If you can explain your counter to the against (or for) argument and why it can not be re-countered in your evaluation then you will convincingly argue which side is strongest.

(1) Overall, the most convincing argument is arguably that _____ . (2) This is because _____ .

Step 5 – CONCLUSION:

1. Sum up in one sentence what your argument is
2. Re-cap (sum up *briefly*) what points you have made to support your judgement

Remember – A conclusion exists in order to remind the reader what the argument is and what has been said across the 3-5 pages of writing that makes up a long essay. It is summarising everything. Look at the model answer to see how this is done.

(1) In conclusion, it is arguable that _____ .

(2) It has been shown that this is due to _____ .

_____ .

CHECKLIST AND MARK SCHEME FOR A 40 MARKER (same for a 25 but AO1 = 8; AO2 = 9; AO3 = 8)		Grade	Skill level	Skill used?		
				YES	SOMETIMES	NEVER
AO1 – Knowledge and understanding						
K1. The main points are relevant to, and suitable for answering, the question		E	3			
K2. At least three FOR and three AGAINST points are made		C	2			
K3. Each main point is distinct and unique		C	2			
K4. An average of 2 examples per paragraph is employed (10-18 in total)		A/B	2-3			
K5. Majority of examples are current ones (2010-now) or (less good) 1997>		A	3			
AO2 – Intellectual skills [ability to weigh up and make conclusions about political debates]						
E1. Each paragraph answers the question directly; paragraphs do not just describe a list of facts or statements in a narrative format		E	3			
E2. No assertions are made: all points are explained through fully		C	2			
E3. FOR points have their limitations discussed or are directly countered		B	2			
E4. Connected FOR and AGAINST points are evaluated fully to show whether the for or against points are strongest on any given point.		A	2-3			
E5. Intro and conclusion mentions, comments on and engages with the current debate being had by politicians on the issue at hand.		A/B	3			
E6. Sophisticated and multi-layered arguments and judgements are made		A/A*	3			
AO3 – Communication and coherence						
C1. A clear argument is made and the main points all directly answer the question		E	3			
C2. A clear structure is used		D	2			
C3. It is always clear where a new main point begins and ends		C	2			
C4. It is always clear what the point you are making is		C	2			
C5. Technical vocabulary and terms are used (such as 'fused government')		B	2-3			
AO1 – Key knowledge and understanding Level 3: 14-20 Marks Clear and deep knowledge and understanding of both sides of the issue, together with an impressive quantity of recent context. Level 2: 7-13 Marks Limited to sound knowledge and understanding of both sides of the issue and a reasonable amount of context used to exemplify them. Level 1: 0-6 Marks Very poor to weak knowledge and understanding. Narrow range of examples. Lack of context given.	AO2 – Intellectual ability to explain and evaluate Level 3: 8-12 Marks Not only simple points are used to answer the question. Secondary or tertiary judgements are drawn that make complex and sophisticated arguments (directly answering the question) showing a deep understanding of the debate at hand. Level 2: 4-7 Marks The question is directly answered with clear points. Analysis is based on a clear understanding of the topic. Some mistakes at the lower end. Level 1: 0-3 Marks Answers largely narratives (a list of facts without trying to answer the question). Very weak points made, often tenuously or incorrectly linked to the topic.	AO3 – Communication and clarity Level 3: 6-8 Marks Clear language and structure used throughout. Clear argument runs throughout and technical vocabulary employed with ease. Level 2: 3-5 Marks Limited to sound ability to construct and communicate coherent arguments. Some use of appropriate vocabulary. Decent structure. Level 1: 0-2 Marks Very poor to weak arguments. Little or no appropriate vocabulary. Poor introduction and conclusion.				
	/20		/12			/8
TOTAL MARK =						

Politics style guide:

Regardless of what exam question you are answering in any unit, you will still be using the same type of **ACADEMIC DISCOURSE** or **WRITING STYLE**. No matter what exam question you are answering you will always need to construct developed arguments in response to sophisticated questions, supported by factual evidence.

Your teacher will model good writing practice and support your efforts to improve. This short guide exemplifies the key language features of academic discourse that you must learn to embed in your essays. It is designed to help you make the leap from what is expected at GCSE to an A-Level style of writing. Use this style guide when you are writing essays to help you develop your written discourse.

Pre-writing checklist

<i>Have you...</i>	Y / N
Broken down the question to find the focus and the suggested factor?	
Checked over the content you will need to use for this essay?	
Checked over the success criteria for the type of question you are completing?	
Checked how long you should spend on this question and set up a timer?	
Planned how you would approach your argument and structure?	
Defined your key terms?	
Checked your targets from your last essay to ensure you don't make the same mistakes?	

Post-writing checklist

<i>Have you...</i>	Y / N
Highlighted your essay to show where you met the success criteria?	
Indicated to the teacher where time ran out?	
Put your name, class, and the date on every page?	
Stapled, paper-clipped, or put your work in a plastic wallet?	

Politics essays in particular require:

- 1. Use of evidence:** All points made in History must be supported by evidence. Evidence is information, drawn from the past, and used to prove statements. Your essays must always clearly signpost to the reader when you are doing this using specific terminology.

For example...

This is supported by...

This is shown by...

An example of this is...

- 2. Clear line of argument:** Finally, all History represents your own personal interpretation of events and all essays must contain your argument. This must be stated clearly in the Introduction, sustained through the main body of the essay, and fully justified in the Conclusion. In building your argument, you should structure your essay to consider both sides of the argument and all themes.

This essay will argue that...

However, the most convincing argument is...

Indeed, it is clear that...

In conclusion...

Therefore, it is clear that...

All essays require:

1. **Discourse markers.** They introduce a topic, move an argument forward, signal comparison and contrast and draw an argument to a close. They can be used at the start of paragraphs as well as in the body of your text. Examples of discourse markers are:

<i>However</i>	<i>Significantly</i>
<i>Moreover</i>	<i>Similarly</i>
<i>Furthermore</i>	<i>Comparatively</i>
<i>Additionally</i>	<i>Contrastingly</i>
<i>Likewise</i>	<i>Finally</i>
<i>Another point is</i>	<i>In conclusion</i>

2. **Connective phrases** ('lexical bundles'): These are phrases that link your quotes to your analysis and explorations of the text, enabling you to succinctly move between text and your comments. Examples include:

<i>which suggests that...</i>	<i>the impact of this is...</i>
<i>which implies that...</i>	<i>which conveys that...</i>
<i>the fact that...</i>	<i>which demonstrates that...</i>
<i>the impact of this is...</i>	<i>which contrasts with</i>
<i>from which we can infer that...</i>	

3. **Higher level verbs/verb phrases:** at primary school you show and tell, but you need to draw on a more sophisticated range of verbs to signal explanation, analysis and evaluation of a quotation or example.

<i>suggests</i>	<i>infer</i>
<i>implies</i>	<i>emphasizes</i>
<i>depicts</i>	<i>conveys</i>
<i>illustrates</i>	<i>explores</i>
<i>denotes</i>	<i>expresses</i>

4. **Comparative language:** you will need to be able to draw comparisons and contrasts between different arguments. Effectively used comparative language enables you to do this clearly and fluently.

<i>not only...</i>	<i>in contrast...</i>
<i>but also...</i>	<i>whereas</i>

5. **Passive voice** – the use of the passive voice creates a detached, academic tone in your writing, suggesting an exploration of different critical or analytical viewpoints rather than personal viewpoint.

<i>This essay will argue that...</i>	<i>It can be suggested that...</i>
<i>Overall the most convincing argument is arguably that...</i>	<i>It has been implied that...</i>
<i>Therefore, it is clear that...</i>	<i>It was described as...</i>
	<i>It can be inferred from this...</i>

6. **Modal verbs:** these suggest possibility, that something *could* or *might* be true but that there are a range of interpretations. It's useful to use modal verbs when you are exploring different readings of a text, either language analysis, or critical reading.

<i>could...</i>	<i>should...</i>
<i>can...</i>	<i>might...</i>

Personalised checklist for AS Politics:

	Confident 😊	Developing 😐	With difficulty 😞
UNIT 1: I have read and fully understand...			
Democracy			
Election systems			
Party politics			
Pressure groups			
UNIT 2: I have read and fully understand...			
The Constitution			
Parliament			
The Prime Minister & the cabinet			
The judiciary			
READING AND VIEWING:			
I have read all of the Edexcel textbook			
I own and have selectively read the Blue Heywood book or a revision guide I have read at least five articles from politics review (pick ones that help you to answer evaluative exam questions)			
I currently watch or read the news at least every other day I have watched at least 3 of the recommended documentaries connecting to our course (inside the commons etc.)			

	Confident 😊	Developing 😐	With difficulty ☹️
ORGANISATION			
I always meet deadlines and hand in all work asked for			
I have a clearly organised and promptly filed folder I always bring my folder and textbook to lessons			
My attendance is high and I take the initiative to catch up <u>all</u> work when away			
SKILLS AND ESSAY WRITING			
I know the difference between a describing question (5 mark), explaining (10 mark) and evaluative (25 or 40 mark) question			
I can structure a 5 marker , including for curveball questions I can structure a 10 mark question			
I can structure a 25 or 40 mark question			
I know how to write, and where to place, evaluation paragraphs in 25 & 40 mark question I know the difference between writing a narrative vs. writing an essay containing paragraphs that answer an evaluative essay question with clear arguments on either side			
My essays always contain a clear and consistent line of argument from the intro onwards			

	Confident 😊	Developing 😐	With difficulty 😞
<p>The first sentence of my main paragraphs makes it very clear what the whole point is about</p> <p>(even if it was read alone, with the rest of the paragraph covered up)</p> <p>I am familiar with a range of starting or connecting phrases that can be used in my essay writing <i>(eg. 'Overall, the most convincing argument is...' 'This means that')</i></p> <p>I can use a range of technical terms within my writing <i>(eg. 'fused government', 'sovereignty')</i></p>			
REVISION: I can do the following by the time of the exam...			
I am familiar with all the recurring past paper questions			
I can plan answers to all of the past paper questions			
I know enough specific examples to write 2 per paragraph			
<p>I can write 5 markers to time</p> <p>I can write 10 markers to time</p>			
I can write 25 and 40 markers to time			
I can write a whole past paper to time			

Suggested reading and viewing:

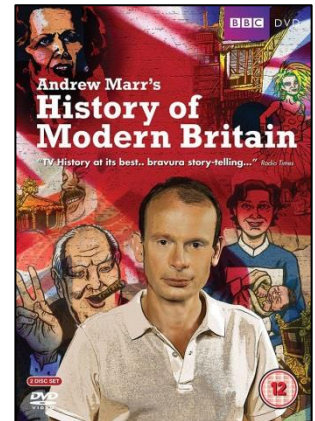
Videos:

The following videos directly cover course content. Andrew Marr has been taken off youtube (but can be bought on DVD). The others are BBC programmes that are on youtube. However, as the BBC routinely deletes programmes from youtube, it is recommended to download them to your hard drive through the use of a Firefox plug-in like 'downloadhelper' or an online site like: <http://www.videograbber.net/>

UNIT 1: People and politics

Andrew Marr's History of Modern Britain (£6.99) – Covers Atlee in 1945 to Blair in the 2000s.

Very good for the party politics module.



UNIT 2: Governing the UK

PARLIAMENT:

'Inside the Commons' (BBC) – 4 part series on youtube that covers the inner workings of the Houses of Parliament. You must watch every.

The Parliament Education Service has a number of videos and very clear explanations about how Parliament works (eg. how a Bill becomes an Act)

<http://www.parliament.uk/education/about-your-parliament/>

PM & THE CABINET:

The Secret World of Whitehall (BBC) – 3 part series on the executive. Covers the civil service and the PM and the cabinet. You must watch episode two. This covers how powerful the PM has been in comparison to the cabinet over time.

The Great Offices of State (BBC) – 3 part series. The Home Office, Foreign Office and the Treasury are covered in full. Gives you a very good idea of how the executive actually works and what ministers and the civil service do.

THE JUDICIARY AND THE CONSTITUTION:

UK Supreme Court: The Highest Court in the Land (BBC) – Single episode on the Supreme Court. We watched this in class. Highly recommended for revision.

The strange case of the law – 3 part series tracing the emergence of law and the constitution from Magna Carta in 1215 to today. Very heavy going.

Revision materials

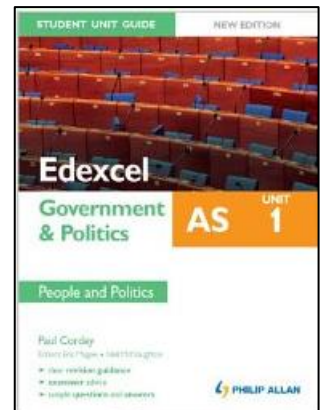
All past papers and mark schemes: Edexcel website

<http://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-a-levels/government-and-politics-2008.html>

Official Phillip Allan (Edexcel) revision guide: Unit 1 and Unit 2 available. £9.50:
Edexcel AS Government & Politics Student Unit Guide: Unit 1 New Edition People and Politics

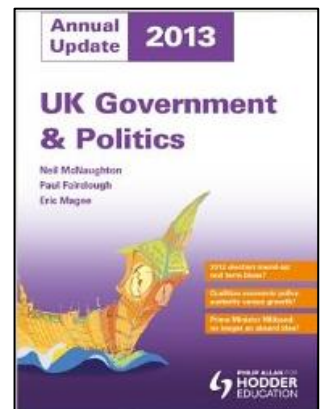
Unit 1: Paul Cordey; Unit 2: Neil McNaughton

This guide contains some content revision but mainly is very good for containing numerous past paper questions and how to answer them.



Official Phillip Allan (Edexcel) annual update 2014. £8.50:

The place to look just to collect lots of current specific examples when practicing essays

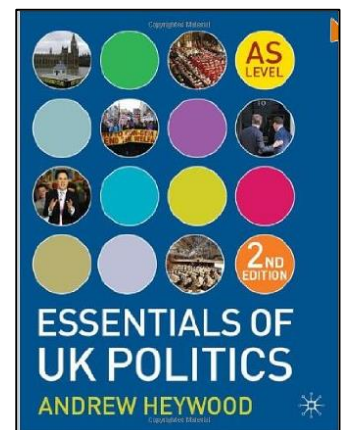


The Essentials of UK Politics (AS).

Andrew Heywood: A very good textbook to read and understand the whole course.

Contains a lot more specific and current examples than the official Edexcel (white) textbook.

However, *be careful and do not just use this book*. It does not contain some topics/information that is in your notes and white books.



The Edexcel AS Government & Politics Unit 1 Workbook. £6.00:

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