



BEECHEN CLIFF

A Level Politics

Curriculum Booklet

2025 - 2026

Head of Subject: Ms M Sinclair

Subject Curriculum Intent:

“If you do not take an interest in the affairs of your government, then you are doomed to live under the rule of fools.”

- Plato

In an age of misinformation and polarisation, our Beechen Cliff Politics curriculum will help students to form a well-balanced and highly informed understanding of the world in which they live. Our vision for the Government and Politics Curriculum at Beechen Cliff is to help students gain a coherent knowledge and understanding of government and politics in the UK and the wider world. This will equip our students to engage confidently and knowledgeably with political debate and current affairs, and to become politically aware citizens.

In lessons we aim to inspire students' curiosity to know more about the world around them and the way it is governed. We aim to train students to ask perceptive questions, think critically, weigh evidence, sift arguments, and develop perspective and judgement. Politics helps students to understand the complexity of society and government, the various forces and factors which influence politics and society, and the debates which have shaped and continue to shape the world we live in.

We aim to create the very best thinkers, analysts and communicators. The aim of the Politics curriculum is to equip students with the knowledge and skills needed to be able to understand the ever changing world around them and to be able to communicate their analysis of current events. We want our students to be able to navigate the best course for themselves through an understanding of power and influence in the 21st century and to appreciate how decisions are made that affect their lives.

Students will learn to scrutinise political processes and structures in detail. They will develop the skills of critical source evaluation. They will be able to make well evidenced comparisons between the political systems of the US and UK. Finally students will gain an understanding of a broad range of ideologies underpinning the study of politics. Through regular discussion and debate, politics students at Beechen will be given the opportunity to develop, articulate and defend their political opinions. Alongside this they will be able to listen to, understand, and appreciate the different views of others. They will form the habit of always asking critical questions of the information they receive. Our curriculum and teaching aims to produce politically aware, informed and engaged citizens who understand and promote the importance of democracy.

Subject Curriculum Implementation:

At Beechen Cliff we not only want to unpack the Edexcel specification but aim to develop a broad knowledge of the institutions, systems, people and ideas that underpin the political environment in both the UK and the USA. Through the study of politics we are committed to encouraging students to think critically, develop both substantive and disciplinary knowledge and use a wide range of evidence to reach measured judgements. The course is divided into the three distinct parts to reflect the exams they will sit at the end of year 13. Students have two teachers, each being a subject specialist on one side of the course for the UK, and content matter is split for the US course.

We begin each lesson by reviewing previous learning, showing students how their learning fits within the wider context of the uni. This helps develop a broader understanding and to remember more. Our wider goal is to develop student's syntopic understanding of the subject and become outstanding Social Scientists and Politicians. Our lessons are kept up to date and reflect the ever changing political landscape. We also encourage independence and set regular reading homework that draws links to current affairs. All lessons can be found on our Google Classroom allowing students to revisit learning or catch up on work missed through absence. To complement the schemes of work students also engage in politics through a visit to the Houses of Parliament and meeting the local MP. These activities allow students to gain valuable insight into the subject that is only available through participatory experiences.

The Lower Sixth curriculum is sequenced in a logical manner with students studying UK Politics with one teacher, alongside UK government with another teacher. Once mock exams are completed in May, students will then begin to study the political ideas of; Liberalism, Conservatism, Socialism and Anarchism. The Upper Sixth curriculum has been designed to enable students to build upon some of the foundational knowledge acquired so students are prepared to compare the UK and US political institutions. Essay writing skills are consolidated and as students grow in confidence we see increasing levels of flair as the course progresses.

Students' learning is assessed through the regular setting of low tariff questions and longer essays as well as less frequent exam style formal assessments. Comprehensive verbal and written feedback is then provided to ensure students know how they can improve. In addition to this we use regular knowledge quizzes in class to remind students of the importance of key terminology. students' political literacy is also developed by highlighting and modelling the use of keywords in lessons and wider reading is encouraged through reading lists and the use of excerpts from relevant contemporary texts in lessons.

Allocated Curriculum Time:

	Lower Sixth	Upper Sixth
Fortnightly lesson allocation	8	8

Aspiration Compassion Independence Respect

Course Information

Exam Board: Edexcel

Specification: UK Government and Politics, US and Comparative Politics

Lower Sixth

Term	Curriculum Foci Areas	Assessment
1	<p>UK Politics: Democracy and participation</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The state of democracy in the UK• To what extent have pressure groups been successful?• How have think tanks, large corporations and lobbyists influenced the government?• Do pressure groups enhance or threaten democracy?• Which rights are enforced and which are in danger in the UK? <p>UK Government: The constitution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The nature and purpose of the UK constitution• The details of constitutional reforms since 1997• The nature and context of devolution, and how it differs across the UK• The impact of devolution, both positive and negative• Debates about future constitutional reform issues, including English devolution and the future of the Human Rights Act	
2	<p>UK Politics: Political parties</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• What are the issues surrounding the funding of political parties?• What are the ideas and policies of the three main UK parties?• What are the factions within the main parties?• What are the ideas and policies of small and emerging parties?• What party system is used? <p>UK Government: Parliament</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The structure and composition of the House of Lords and House of Commons• The legislative process, how a bill becomes a law• The different kinds of bills which pass through Parliament• The role of MPs and peers	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The influence of backbench MPs and the barriers they face 	
3	<p>UK Politics: Electoral Systems</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The impact of all the electoral systems described, with the + and - How are the formation of governments and the party system are affected by different electoral systems Arguments for and against the introduction of PR for GE Recent referendums Arguments for and against referendum use <p>UK Government: The prime minister and the executive</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The role and structure of the executive Individual ministerial responsibility and its limits Collective ministerial responsibility and how its erosion affects the authority of the prime minister The sources of prime ministerial power 	
4	<p>UK Politics: Voting behaviour and the media</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The influence of social class on voting behaviour The influence of other demographic factors such as age, region, gender and ethnicity The debates about turnout and tactical voting, and whether these affect electoral outcomes What are the significance of GE campaigns, specifically party manifestos. <p>UK Government: Relations between branches</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The Supreme court and the protection of rights The debate about the power of the Supreme Court How Parliament can control the executive How the executive can control Parliament What factors affect the relationship between Parliament and the executive 	
5	<p>Core Political Idea: Liberalism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the core beliefs? What are the various strands to this political idea? What are tensions within the strands? Where do they agree? How has this ideology changed over time? <p>Core Political Idea: Conservatism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> What are the core beliefs? What are the various strands to this political idea? What are tensions within the strands? 	

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Where do they agree? • How has this ideology changed over time? 	
6	<p>Core Political Idea: Socialism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the core beliefs? • What are the various strands to this political idea? • What are tensions within the strands? • Where do they agree? • How has this ideology changed over time? <p>Core Political Idea: Anarchism</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are the core beliefs? • What are the various strands to this political idea? • What are tensions within the strands? • Where do they agree? • How has this ideology changed over time? 	

Upper Sixth

Term	Curriculum Foci Areas	Assessment
1	<p>The Constitution</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why did the US Constitution come to be written in its original form • The significance of the process for constitutional amendment • The link between separation of powers and checks and balances • The way federalism works in the USA • The similarities and differences between the US and UK constitutions and some of the reasons behind the differences <p>Congress</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The structure and composition of Congress • The powers of Congress • The importance of congressional committees • The effectiveness of Congress in legislation, oversight and representation • Voting in Congress 	
2	<p>The Presidency</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The powers of the president - both formal and informal • The vice president • The president's cabinet • The Executive Office of the President • The president's relations with Congress 	

	The Supreme Court <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The membership of the Supreme Court • The philosophy of the justices • The appointment and confirmation process • The power of judicial review • Judicial activism and judicial restraint • The Supreme Court and Bill of Rights 	
3	Political Parties <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Party organisation • Party ideology • Party policies • Coalitions of supporters • The polarisation of US politics Civil Right and Liberties <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What are civil rights and liberties? • Affirmative action • Voting rights • Minority representation • Immigration reform • The similarities and differences between the protection of rights in the USA and the UK 	
4	Elections <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The requirements for presidential candidates • The importance of incumbency • Campaign finance • The main processes to elect a US president • The selection of vice presidential candidates Interest groups <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Types of interest groups • Functions of interest groups • Methods used by interest groups • The power and impact of interest groups • Arguments for and against interest groups • The similarities and differences between interest groups in the USA and UK 	
5	Revision and Exams	
6	Exams	

Reading List:

UK Government and Politics:

- Jones, Bill, *British Politics Today*
- Kavanaugh, Dennis, *The Major Effect*
- Marr, Andrew, *Ruling Britannia*

US Government and Politics:

- Ashbee, Edward, *US Politics Today*
- Lasser, William, *Perspectives on American Government*
- Bowles, Nigel, *Government and Politics of the United States*

Studying/Revision Information

Ongoing Studying

It is essential for A level Politics that you are up to date with current affairs and the changing political landscape. Students need to be able to give up to date, relevant examples in exams and it will hold them back from the top marks if they always refer to Bush or Blair!! Stay informed. It is clear in essay writing and discussion which students are going the extra mile and can communicate their understanding using contemporary events and issues.

Revision

How to prepare for assessments:

Your class notes will be titled each lesson with direct links to the specification. This means you can read and revise your notes knowing what it is you are trying to understand.

Emphasis is placed on your class notes to guide and support your revision.

We will direct you to revision sources in class but expect you to be proactive in wider reading and revision.

Useful resources:

My revision notes are the best revision guides for our specification:

[My Revision Notes: Pearson Edexcel A Level UK Politics: Second Edition: Amazon.co.uk:](#)

[McNaughton, Neil, Souza, Nick de: 9781398325531: Books](#)

[My Revision Notes: Pearson Edexcel A Level Politics: US Politics: Second Edition:](#)

[Amazon.co.uk: Bennett, Anthony J, Mogridge, Angela: 9781398325517: Books](#)

[My Revision Notes: Pearson Edexcel A Level Political Ideas: Second Edition: Amazon.co.uk:](#)

[Mogridge, Angela, Tuck, David, McNaughton, Neil: 9781398325524: Books](#)

They can be bought as a bundle for £34.00!

Final Assessment Structure:

Component	Weighting (%)	Content	Proposed Examination Date
Paper 1: UK Politics and core political ideas	33.3%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">UK PoliticsLiberalism, Conservatism, Socialism	May/June of Upper Sixth
Paper 2: UK Government and non-Core political ideas	33.3%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">UK GovernmentAnarchism	May/June of Upper Sixth
Paper 3: Comparative Politics - USA	33.3%	<ul style="list-style-type: none">US Government and PoliticsComparative politics between US and UK	May/June of Upper Sixth

Please see Exam Board websites for up to date information: [Edexcel AS & A level Politics \(2017\) | Pearson qualifications](#)