

All Saints Politics Department - Intro & Summer Work!

In Y12 you will be studying all aspects of UK government & politics, before beginning to compare the UK system to the USA and exploring the ideologies of liberalism, conservatism, socialism & nationalism.

You will study the British Constitution and how it has changed over time, including devolution in Scotland, Wales & Northern Ireland, and the UK's changing relationship with the EU. You will also examine the roles of Parliament, the Prime Minister, the cabinet and the judiciary in depth, exploring various historic and recent case studies. Along the way, you will be considering and debating the important issues of democracy & participation with a focus on elections & referendums, political parties & their policies and pressure groups.

Textbook: *AQA A-level Politics: Government & Politics of the UK, Government & Politics of the USA and Comparative Politics* by Lemieux, Hammal, Fairclough & Bennett (Hodder Education, **Second Edition, 2025**).

Summer work:

Be ready to discuss this summer work in your first Politics lesson! The main purpose of this is to pique your interest in this fascinating new world and make you all feel confident when starting the course that you have a little bit of basic background knowledge about politics (or political 'cultural capital') to make it less daunting beginning what is a new subject for everyone. But, remember: we do not expect you to have lots of existing knowledge and know that some of you will know more than others - don't be intimidated by this: it's our job to teach you! All we require is interest & enthusiasm! However, if you do want to get your head around the basics of how UK government & politics works, there are loads of helpful explainers on the UK Parliament website.

- **Main Task: *Policies*** - Do some research & make some brief notes on where each of Labour, the Conservatives & one other UK political party currently stand on key issues like the economy & tax, foreign & defence policy, the environment, the NHS and immigration. The parties' own websites & 2024 General Election manifestoes will be helpful for this. But try to get into good habits by starting to keep abreast of the UK & US political news (whether the nightly TV news/ Newsnight/ Question Time/ via the radio/ X/ podcasts/ etc).
- **Optional Task: *History for Politics*** - For some aspects of the course, it's helpful to have a very basic understanding of the historical context (although we are mainly studying contemporary politics, we also look at some earlier case studies and need to know how & why the UK & US political systems have developed as they have). So, to help your understanding of this, you might want to do some research and make some (very brief) notes on some of the following historical events: the British Civil War; the Industrial Revolution; the French Revolution; the American Revolution (independence from Britain & the Founding Fathers setting up the US Constitution); Brexit; and Margaret Thatcher, Tony Blair, Boris Johnson, Liz Truss & Rishi Sunak as PMs.
- **Optional longer read!** Andrew Marr's '*A History of Modern Britain*' (will provide you with a good contextual background to much of what you will be studying).
- **Optional watch!** '*Blair & Brown: The New Labour Revolution*' (on BBC iPlayer) or '*The Iron Lady*'.
- **Optional listen!** Alastair Campbell & Rory Stewart's '*The Rest is Politics*' podcast (an entertaining weekly look at political developments from different perspectives, plus interviews with some of the 'big beasts' of recent times). There is also a US politics version. The BBC's '*Newscast*' would do a similar job.