

A-Level Politics (AQA)

Year 12 and 13 students will sit AQA A level Politics exams at the end of year 13. There are three papers each worth 77 marks and lasting two hours and 15 minutes.

Year 12

Paper 1: Government and Politics of the UK

There are five content areas in the UK Politics unit:

1. Democracy and participation,
2. Elections and referendums,
3. Political Parties,
4. Pressure Groups and
5. European Union.

Students will investigate in detail how people and politics interact. They will explore the emergence and development of the UK's democratic system and the similarities, differences, connections and parallels between direct and indirect democracy. They will focus on the role and scope of political parties that are so central to contemporary politics including the significance of the manifestoes they publish at election time and their relevance to the mandate of the resulting government.

Students will examine how electoral systems in the UK operate and how individuals and groups are influenced in their voting behaviour and political actions. The students will examine the role of pressure groups within the UK system as well as the European Union and its impact on the UK.

Paper 3: Political ideas

This unit includes 3 Core Ideologies in year 12:

1. Liberalism (classical and modern),
2. Conservatism (traditional and the 'new right') and
3. Socialism (revolutionary and evolutionary).

This section allows students to explore 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; and the divisions within each idea and their key thinkers.

Year 13

Paper 3: Political Ideas

This unit includes 4 Core Ideologies:

1. Liberalism (classical and modern),
2. Conservatism (traditional and the 'new right') and
3. Socialism (revolutionary and evolutionary).

This section allows students to explore 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; and the divisions within each idea and their key thinkers.

For year 13s, the unit also includes one Non-Core Ideology, where students can choose to focus on either feminism, nationalism, anarchism, multiculturalism or ecologism.

Paper 2: Comparative Politics - Government and Politics of the USA

There are six content areas in this unit:

1. The US Constitution and federalism,
2. US Congress,
3. US presidency,
4. US Supreme Court and US civil rights,
5. US democracy and participation and
6. Comparative theories.

Students will explore 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, students will judge ultimately whether 'liberty and justice for all' has been achieved in the USA. Students will be expected to highlight the debates on the nature of democracy in the USA and evaluate the extent to which it remains an issue.

The impact of the US government on the world beyond its borders is increasingly a feature of international politics. Students will begin to engage with this interaction by comparing and contrasting politics and institutions in the US with those in the UK. This will develop a wider understanding of politics as a discipline, underpinned by the theoretical concepts of comparative politics.