



**LANGLEY PARK
SCHOOL FOR BOYS**

POLITICS

A-level Politics: Independent Study Guide

REFLECT

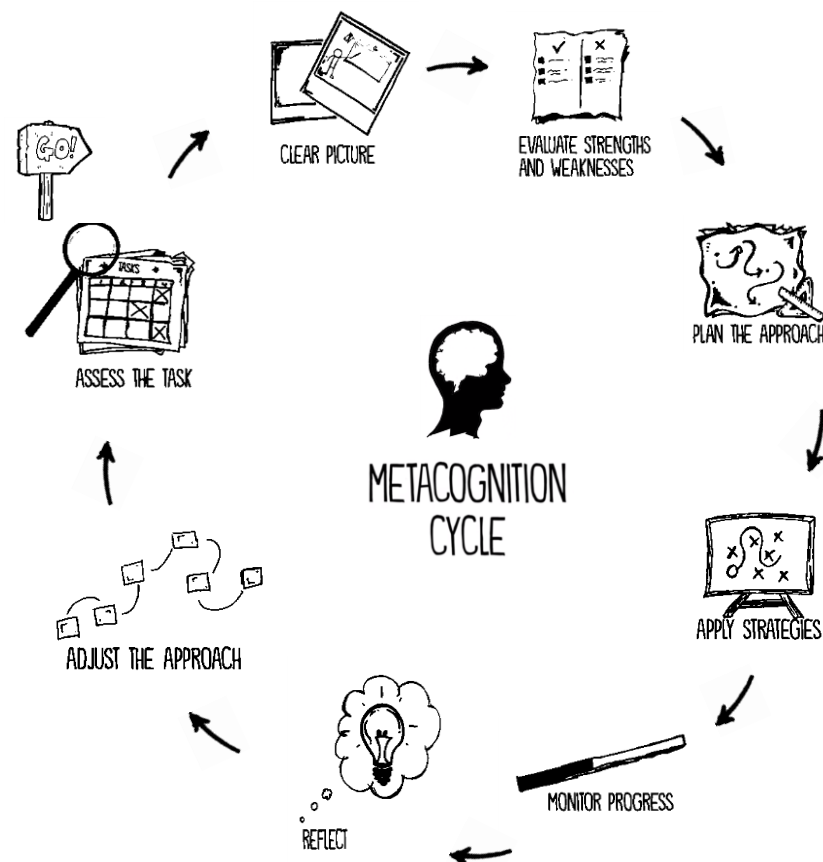
- Designate a page or two for each of the topics on the A-level course (e.g. Constitutions)
- Write down what you already know (list / mind-map)

RESEARCH

- Use the audio-visual resources provided, or do your own research using internet search engines or news websites.
- Record your findings in note-form.

REPEAT

- Use this new information in conversation with friends and family.
- Make practice essay plans of the exam questions if you are confident enough.
- **Start this process again!**



To be an effective independent learner, you must develop your planning, research and reflection skills.

Use these diagrams to help guide your thought process as you study on your own this Summer.

Remember: This is a **CYCLE**. Going through it once will not be enough. Revisit topics multiple times. Keep finding new sources of information and new ways of learning!

A-level Politics: Course Topics

YEAR 12

Component 1: UK Politics and Core Political Ideas

UK Politics content

1 Democracy and participation

- 1.1 Current systems of representative democracy and direct democracy.
- 1.2 A wider franchise and debates over suffrage.
- 1.3 Pressure groups and other influences.
- 1.4 Rights in context.

2 Political parties

- 2.1 Political parties.
- 2.2 Established political parties.
- 2.3 Emerging and minor UK political parties.
- 2.4 UK political parties in context.

3 Electoral systems

- 3.1 Different electoral systems.
- 3.2 Referendums and how they are used.
- 3.3 Electoral system analysis.

4 Voting behaviour and the media

- 4.1 Case studies of three key general elections.
- 4.2 The influence of the media.

Core Political Ideas content

Conservatism

1. Conservatism: core ideas and principles
2. Differing views and tensions within conservatism
3. Conservative thinkers and their ideas.

Liberalism

1. Liberalism: core ideas and principles
2. Differing views and tensions within liberalism
3. Liberal thinkers and their ideas.

Socialism

1. Socialism: core ideas and principles
2. Differing views and tensions within socialism
3. Socialist thinkers and their ideas.

Component 2: UK Government and Non-core Political Ideas

UK Government content

1 The constitution

- 1.1 The nature and sources of the UK constitution
- 1.2 How the constitution has changed since 1997.
- 1.3 The role and powers of devolved bodies in the UK, and the impact of this devolution on the UK.
- 1.4 Debates on further reform.

2 Parliament

- 2.1 The structure and role of the House of Commons and House of Lords.
- 2.2 The comparative powers of the House of Commons and House of Lords.
- 2.3 The legislative process.
- 2.4 The ways in which Parliament interacts with the Executive.

3 Prime Minister and Executive

- 3.1 The structure, role, and powers of the Executive.
- 3.2 The concept of ministerial responsibility.
- 3.3 The Prime Minister and the Cabinet.

4 Relations between branches

- 4.1 The Supreme Court and its interactions with, and influence over, the legislative and policy-making processes.
- 4.2 The relationship between the Executive and Parliament.
- 4.3 The aims, role and impact of the European Union (EU) on UK government.
- 4.4 The location of sovereignty in the UK political system.

Non-core Political Ideas content

Ecologism

1. Ecologism: core ideas and principles
2. Different types of ecologism
3. Ecologist thinkers and their ideas.

YEAR 13

Component 3: Comparative Politics

Government and Politics of the USA

1 US Constitution and federalism

- 1.1 The nature of the US Constitution.
- 1.2 The principles of the US Constitution (as listed below) and an evaluation of their effectiveness today.
- 1.3 The main characteristics of US federalism.
- 1.4 Interpretations and debates around the US Constitution and federalism.

2 US Congress

- 2.1 The structure of Congress.
- 2.2 The functions of Congress.
- 2.3 Interpretations and debates around Congress.

3 US presidency

- 3.1 Formal sources of presidential power as outlined in the US Constitution and their use.
- 3.2 Informal sources of presidential power and their use.
- 3.3 The presidency – Relations with other branches
- 3.4 Interpretations and debates of the US presidency.

4 US Supreme Court and civil rights

- 4.1 The nature and role of the Supreme Court.
- 4.2 The appointment process for the Supreme Court.
- 4.3 The Supreme Court and public policy.
- 4.4 The protection of civil liberties and rights in the US today.
- 4.5 Race and rights in contemporary US politics.
- 4.6 Interpretations and debates of the US Supreme Court and civil rights.
















5 US democracy and participation

- 5.1 Electoral systems in the USA.
- 5.2 The key ideas and principles of the Democratic and Republican parties.
- 5.3 Interest groups in the USA – their significance, resources, tactics and debates about their impact on democracy.
- 5.4 Interpretations and debates of US democracy and participation

6 Comparative approaches

- 6.1 Theoretical approaches – understanding of these three approaches and the different ways they explain similarities and differences between the government and politics of different countries.
Rational – Cultural – Structural
- 6.2 Similarities and differences in the UK and USA.

A-level Politics: Audio-Visual Resources

<p>Listen to this podcast. </p> <p>Today in Focus - <i>The Guardian</i></p> <p>Listen to the story behind the headlines for a deeper understanding of the news. Every weekday with Anushka Asthana. (this podcast has a UK focus)</p> <p>Look back through the episode catalogue to find what interests you the most.</p> <p></p> <p>Ask yourself : Which of the topics in the A-level Politics course is this episode relevant to? Which episode do I want to listen to next?</p>	<p>Listen to this podcast. </p> <p>The Rest is Politics - Podcast</p> <p>Two men who've been at the heart of the political world - former Downing Street Director of Communications and Strategy Alastair Campbell and cabinet minister Rory Stewart - join forces from across the political divide. The Rest Is Politics lifts the lid on the secrets of Westminster, offering an insider's view on politics at home and abroad, while bringing back the lost art of disagreeing agreeably.</p> <p>Look back through the episode catalogue to find what interests you the most.</p> <p></p> <p>Ask yourself : Which of the topics in the A-level Politics course is this episode relevant to? Which episode do I want to listen to next?</p>	<p>Listen to this podcast.</p> <p>The NPR Politics Podcast - <i>NPR</i></p> <p>Every weekday, NPR's best political reporters are there to explain the big news coming out of Washington and the campaign trail. They don't just tell you what happened. They tell you why it matters. (this podcast has a US focus)</p> <p>Look back through the episode catalogue to find what interests you the most.</p> <p></p> <p>Ask yourself : Which of the topics in the A-level Politics course is this episode relevant to? Which episode do I want to listen to next?</p>	<p>Listen to this radio station. </p> <p>LBC 97.3 - <i>Global Player</i></p> <p>"Leading Britain's Conversation"</p> <p>News, opinion and debate. Listen to broadcasters interview leading politicians and members of the public. (Andrew Marr, Nick Ferrari, James O'Brien, Tom Swarbrick, Iain Dale, Shelagh Fogarty, Lewis Goodall)</p> <p></p> <p>Ask yourself : What would I have to say if I rang in to participate in this conversation.</p>
<p>Watch this Netflix documentary. </p> <p>The Great Hack – <i>Netflix</i></p> <p>What begins as one man's quest to see his personal data morphs into an investigation an exposé that impacts democracy's very future.</p> <p></p> <p>Ask yourself : Which of the topics in the A-level Politics course is this film relevant to? How does technology threaten democracy? Can you think of any benefits that outweigh the negatives?</p>	<p>Watch this Netflix dramatisation. </p> <p>Brexit: The Uncivil War – <i>Netflix</i></p> <p>As he steers the campaign for the United Kingdom to leave the E.U., a strategist uncovers data and voter sentiment to design a subversive plan.</p> <p></p> <p>Ask yourself : Which of the topics in the A-level Politics course is this film relevant to? Are the British public easily manipulated, or do they make informed decisions? Does anything need to change to protect democracy, or is the status quo acceptable?</p>	<p>Watch this BBC documentary. </p> <p>Laura Kuenssberg: State of Chaos – <i>BBC</i></p> <p>From referendums to resignations, Laura Kuenssberg has had a ringside seat for politics at its most chaotic. She asks if the system is broken - and can it ever return to 'normal'?</p> <p></p> <p>Ask yourself : Which of the topics in the A-level Politics course is this documentary relevant to? How well do you think the British government has functioned in the last several years? What changes would you make if you could?</p>	<p>Watch this Netflix documentary series. </p> <p>Turning Point: 9/11 and the War on Terror - <i>Netflix</i></p> <p>Both enlightening and deeply moving, this comprehensive series explains the roots of the 9/11 attacks, the events of the day and the ongoing aftermath.</p> <p></p> <p>Ask yourself : Which of the topics in the A-level Politics course is this documentary relevant to? In what ways did US government and politics evolve as a result of the 9/11 attacks?</p>

A-level Politics: Example Exam Questions

Democracy and Participation

Evaluate the view that UK democracy is in urgent need of reform.

Evaluate the view that interest groups in the US have too great an influence.

Political Parties

Evaluate the extent to which the United Kingdom has become a multi-party democracy.

Evaluate the view that the Republican and Democratic Parties have little in common.

Elections

Evaluate the view that FPTP is the most effective electoral system for promoting representative democracy.

Evaluate the view that Electoral College system is an appropriate way to elect a president.

Voting Behaviour and the Media

Evaluate the view that image of the party leader is the most important factor in deciding the result of a general election.

Evaluate the view that swing voters ultimately decide the outcome of US elections.

Constitution

Evaluate the view that the UK constitution is fit for purpose.

Evaluate the view that the power of the US federal government has grown too powerful.

Legislatures

Evaluate the view that the House of Commons is fulfilling its roles effectively.

Evaluate the view that the US Congress is a representative institution.

Executives

Evaluate the view that cabinet plays an insignificant role in British politics.

Evaluate the view that the President of the United States has unlimited power.

Judiciaries

Evaluate the extent to which the UK Supreme Court is effective in limiting the power of the executive/legislature.

Evaluate the extent to which the United States Supreme Court is an 'imperial judiciary'.

Political Ideologies

To what extent do different conservatives agree about human nature?

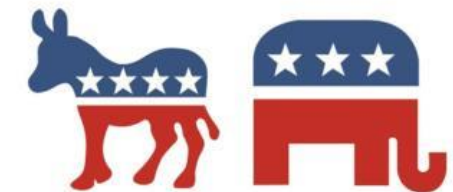
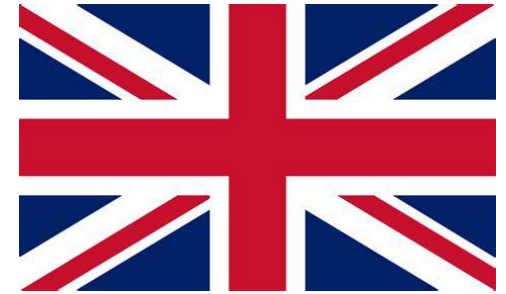
To what extent do different liberals agree about the role of the state?

To what extent do different socialists agree about the nature of the economy?

To what extent do different ecologists agree about sustainability?

Which of these questions do you already have an opinion on?

Which would you need to research more to form an opinion?



Write one of these essays and impress your Politics teacher!

