

# A-LEVEL POLITICS

## PREPARATION TASKS



Tupton Hall Sixth Form  
REDHILL ACADEMY TRUST





## Tupton Hall - A Level Politics

### Introduction

You are choosing to study Politics at a fascinating time of change in the UK and around the world. With democracies facing huge challenges from rising economies with more autocratic systems of government and an erosion of trust in our institutions and politicians— prepare for the next half of the century to be a time of great change. One thing is for certain: uncertainty. Whether our democratic institutions are able to adapt to these changes and, if so, what those adaptations should be, are some of the great challenges your generation will be at the forefront of.

In the UK we have had 7 Prime Ministers in the past 10 years. To put that in perspective, the previous 35 years had only 5. We have someone in The White House who divides opinion all over the world and even refused to accept that he had lost in 2020.

Having an opinion is the easy part. Understanding where we are at and how we got here; how our systems work (and, arguably, don't work) and what alternatives there are to make meaningful and positive change is the more challenging part. This course will hopefully provide you with the knowledge

and understanding to face these challenges with more confidence. You may start the course with strong political views and leave with them reinforced by what you have learned. Or maybe have those views challenged. Either way, we hope you will feel that your opinions are more informed. In Politics, there are no easy answers.

**Politics is local, national and international.** It is often about personalities and policies but these are often shaped with ideas. Ideas that are often international but reflect local or national concerns.

You only have to look at the recent events in Ukraine and the Middle East to see that what happens somewhere else has an impact that is felt far and wide.

Whether it is the rise of Ai, the re-election of Donald Trump, funding for schools and hospitals or the issues town centres face – politics matters!

Democracies are not all the same and can and should change to reflect changes in social attitudes and the priorities of the people they serve. Ideas can seem dominant only to be swept away by changing circumstances and influences. Leaders can seem all powerful in one minute and then weak and defeated the next. However, Politics is not just about what happens in parliaments or congresses with Prime Ministers and Presidents but also about grassroots movements from pressure groups ranging from the Suffragettes to modern campaigners such as those protesting against the war in Gaza. It is about ideas, ideologies and debates about the way our country and the world should be run, who influences this and what messy compromises are often found. It is about systems of power, influence and accountability and how well they serve their electorates and what we can do about it if they don't!

Summer Work

**Government and Politics of the UK**



Research Task

1. Find out at least 2 ways in which political parties are funded in the UK.
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
  
2. Find out the name and political party of 3 of the UK's post-war Prime Ministers. For each of these 3, find out the following:

PM	Achievements	Failures	Challenges faced (eg: war, strikes, unemployment etc)

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3. Find out what FPTP (First past the post) is. Find out the name of two other forms of voting systems and briefly explain them.

4. Find out about the 2016 Referendum on Membership of the EU (aka Brexit). There was the 'Remain' and 'Leave' campaign. Leave won with 52%. Summarise below the main arguments of each campaign:

**Leave:**

**Remain:**

5. Find out 3 things the current government (2024 Labour Government) have changed or introduced since being in power. This can include policy announcements.

## Government and Politics of the USA



1. How many terms can a US President serve?
2. Find out 3 different powers a US President has.
3. Find out how political parties in the USA are funded. Find out how much each party (Republicans and Democrats) received in the 2024 Presidential election. Find out who the biggest donors were.

4. Find out what the different roles are of these US political institutions. Write a paragraph in your own words explaining these:

Congress

Senate

Supreme Court

5. Find out and write down 5 differences between the UK and US political systems.

6. Research one US President from the 1970s onwards. Try and include the following information: number of terms served, achievements and failures.

## Research Task

### Political Ideas



Choose one of the following political ideas and research it. Explain the key ideas and what influence these may have had on the UK. Give your opinion on this idea.

**Conservatism**

**Socialism**

**Nationalism**

**Feminism**

**Multiculturalism**

**Anarchism**

**Ecologism**

## MY MANIFESTO



### The main political parties' manifestos for the 2017 General Election\*

*\*There have been 2 elections since 2017 but these have been chosen as there was more of an ideological difference between the main 3 parties in this election.*

A **manifesto** is a set of proposals that politicians and political parties put forward and ask for people to vote for them on that basis. It is meant to be a form of **electoral contract** between the party and the people who vote for them. Governments rarely stick to all of the promises or proposals in their manifestos. However, it is still controversial to break a manifesto commitment.

In truth, most voters do not read the manifestos and vote based on a number of different reasons including perception of the leader or a party; recent experience of being governed by that political party or a more tribal loyalty to a political party that may come from family or place.

A good example of this was in the 2017 General Election where Labour's manifesto ideas were put to a group of voters without telling them which party had proposed them. The policies proved to be very popular. However, opinion polls kept pointing to the leader of the Labour Party, Jeremy Corbyn, being unpopular amongst the very same voters as the perception of him was that he was unpatriotic.

Some manifesto proposals are also deliberately vague so the party can later claim that they have fulfilled their promises to the people who voted for them. For example, in their 2019 General Election manifesto, Boris Johnson's Conservative Party, pledged to put recruit 20,000 **more** Police Officers. Both are clearly quite appealing to voters. However, the Conservative government, since 2010, had cut around 20,000 Police Officers. So, although the word 'more' is technically correct, it was really just a plan to replace the 20,000 officers that had been cut.

**TASK:** Imagine you are designing the manifesto for a political party. **Come up with no more than ten ideas or pledges that you either would like to see yourself or that you think would prove to be popular with UK voters.**

Your party could be a left or right-wing party or a more centre-ground one. It's up to you! Political parties often take ideas from each other in order to persuade so-called '**swing voters**' (those who do not always vote for the same party).

You will need to look at some existing political party manifestos for ideas about how to write these.

You can either complete this task as a poster, a graphic (using websites such as Canva) or on a Word document.

**We will debate some of these ideas in our first few lessons so you will need to think about why these policies are needed and even how you would pay for them.**

Manifestos normally cover a wide range of topics so try and make sure you have a manifesto commitment for most of the following areas

- ✓ Education
- ✓ Health
- ✓ Environment
- ✓ Law and Order (Crime and Justice)
- ✓ Economy and Business
- ✓ Taxation and people's finances
- ✓ International affairs
- ✓ Immigration
- ✓ Regional issues
- ✓ Identity and culture

*Some examples of manifestos follow on the next pages.*

## Boris Johnson's Guarantee

We will get Brexit done in January and unleash the potential of our whole country.

I guarantee:

- ✓ **Extra funding for the NHS, with 50,000 more nurses and 50 million more GP surgery appointments a year.**
- ✓ **20,000 more police and tougher sentencing for criminals.**
- ✓ **An Australian-style points-based system to control immigration.**
- ✓ **Millions more invested every week in science, schools, apprenticeships and infrastructure while controlling debt.**
- ✓ **Reaching Net Zero by 2050 with investment in clean energy solutions and green infrastructure to reduce carbon emissions and pollution.**
- ✓ **We will not raise the rate of income tax, VAT or National Insurance.**

Thank you for supporting our majority Conservative Government so we can move our great country on instead of going backwards.



BORIS JOHNSON  
PRIME MINISTER

## Key policies

- Scrap student tuition fees
- Nationalisation of England's nine water companies.
- Re-introduce the 50p rate of tax on the highest earners (above £123,000)
- Income tax rate 45p on £80,000 and above
- More free childcare, expanding free provisions for two, three and four year olds
- Guarantee triple lock for pensioner incomes
- End to zero hours contracts
- Hire 10,000 new police officers, 3,000 new firefighters
- Moves to charge companies a levy on salaries above £330,000
- Deliver rail electrification "including in Wales and the South West".

## Your manifesto

My political party would be \_\_\_\_\_

(right-wing, left-wing, centrist, a mixture of viewpoints and ideologies)

Our policies would include (you need at least 5 – try and explain how they would work)

Example:

***To fund the NHS through higher taxation on the assets and properties of billionaires.***  
*According to the OXFAM charity, over 60% of billionaire wealth comes from assets and inheritances not income and their wealth is increasing every year. This could be a way to ensure that our public health system has more of the funds that it needs.*