

Salvatorian College Sixth Form

A-Level

Transition Project-

Politics



Salvatorian
Sixth Form



Transition Project: Summer 2024

Introduction

In order to prepare for your A level Politics course on Democracy and Participation, the Constitution and Parliament, it is important that you do some ground work over the holidays. You are asked to complete most of the Preliminary tasks and all of the tasks in the **core** section; from the rest you may choose one or more, allowing you to follow your enthusiasms.

Preliminary Tasks – complete all 6 tasks from the list apart from task 4 which is optional.

1. Create a timeline of key political events affecting Britain between 1945 and 2017. This will help if you have difficulty remembering dates! See <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/world-europe-18028620>
2. Go to <http://www.bbc.co.uk/newsround/32205042>. Go through all the pages on this site relating to the General Election 2017. Good as an introduction to politics.
3. Go to <https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL03FFE1F0B34AA057>. Videos from Parliament's Education Service, supporting young people's understanding of Parliament and democracy. Choose as many clips as you wish to gain a further understanding of Parliament and how it works (minimum 10).
4. Go on to <https://www.parliament.uk/> Sign up for our mailing list for updates on how to get your voice heard in Parliament on the issues you care about. Get informed, get empowered and you can make a difference.
5. Go on to <http://www.parliament.uk/education/> and browse through the different educational resources and look into the 2017/ 2019 Elections.
6. Sign up to the student room A level Politics and set up a folder to download some of the many resources you may find useful. Go to <https://www.thestudentroom.co.uk/>

Core Tasks

During the first year of this course, we will be studying a variety of political structures, political parties, the Constitution and Parliament. In order that you have an advantage on your fellow politics students across the country it is very important that you **fully complete** these core political research tasks. **A Level Politics will be a significant step up from the work you have completed in Year 11 so it is important that you engage with these tasks so you are fully prepared.**

Task 1: Investigate the role of an MP.

- a.) research your local MP, who is he/she; which party do they represent; which constituency do they represent; what have they recently shown an interest in; research their voting history to see where they stand on key issues. <https://members.parliament.uk/>
- b.) investigate the role of an MP by playing the game in the link below.
<https://learning.parliament.uk/resources/mp-for-a-week/#cta-target>

Task 2: British Political History

You need to create an A3 or A4 Political History timeline for the UK. On your timeline you should include a number of features such as (but not necessarily ONLY these – and for an A grade extension, include the dates at which major UK political parties were founded):

The signing of the **Magna Carta**, the **opening of the House of Commons**, the introduction of the **Bill of Rights**, the **Act of Union**, **Representation of the People Acts**.

Task 3: Parties and Issues

To start, you should quickly research the Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat parties. What do they stand for?

Task 4: Participation in politics

Read the source below and then answer the question:

In the UK, the minimum voting age is 18, except in Scotland, where 16- and 17-year-olds have been given the right to vote in local and Scottish parliamentary elections. By and large, 16-year-olds haven't yet entered the world of home ownership, employment, tax or pensions but these economic issues are often at the forefront of election campaigns. The main argument against lowering the voting age is that a lack of experience in these matters prevents young people from making a considered judgement at the ballot box.

Opponents also point to the fact that 18- to 24-year-olds have the lowest turnout of any age group in elections, reflecting an apparent lack of interest in politics. These critics question whether an even younger generation would be any different. And there are concerns that teenagers who do want to cast their votes would be impressionable and easily influenced by radical politics, or would not fully think things through and would blindly vote for the same party as their parents.

But calls to lower the voting age come from a range of sources – adults as well as teenagers themselves, backed up by youth organisations, pressure groups and politicians. 16- and 17-year-olds in the Isle of Man, Jersey, Guernsey, Brazil and Austria already have the vote. They can also vote in some elections in Germany, Malta and Norway. Evidence from the Scottish independence referendum, substantiated by research from Austria and Norway, shows – aided by the encouragement of families and schools – 16- and 17-year-olds have higher rates of turnout than 18- to 24-year-olds.

For supporters, it's about giving young people a say in matters that directly affect them, such as tuition fees. It's also thought that lowering the limit will encourage civic-mindedness at an earlier age and establish an interest in the political system, which will be continued throughout a person's life. Scotland's positive experience of including 16- and 17-year-olds in the 2014 independence referendum led to the lowering of the voting age for local and Holyrood elections.

A study by the University of Edinburgh during the referendum found that some teenagers were initially doubtful of their own abilities to make the right decision, but that this led them to actively seek out information to help inform their judgement. In some cases, teenagers even influenced their parents' voting intentions with their new-found knowledge.

But as there are no immediate plans for the UK government to debate lowering the voting age for general elections, it is unlikely that all 16-year-olds will get the chance to put that to the test any time soon.

Sources: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/guides/zsbtbk7> and <https://www.electoral-reform.org.uk/campaigns/votes-at-16/>

You are now going to practice **analysing** this argument. You are going to use evidence to back-up your analysis. **You may need to do some additional research to answer this question:**

(Remember to consider both arguments but also make YOUR argument clear)

QUESTION: Do you agree that it is time to extend the vote to 16- and 17-year-olds?

Task 5– Soon we will may a new Prime Minister and government. Before or after the Election on July 4th, research the two main parties manifestoes and create a table listing the similarities and differences between them.

Read the news! 30 mins a day have a scroll through some news

Success at A Level depends not only on the 'textbook' knowledge, but also understanding of current events. Sow the seeds of success NOW by getting in the habit of checking a good quality newspaper at least every other day – you do not need to read every article, but perhaps one or two that are related to Politics

This is much easier with an app on your phone! Many are now subscription only, but you can get some, like The Independent & The Guardian for free. There are also many apps that bring together news from a variety of sources, such as Feedly, which lets you customise the type of news you want. Twitter is also a valuable source of political news and discussion. I would advise that you create a Twitter account and follow the below users for political information and news (and build the habit of checking in regularly!)

@BBCNews / @Channel4News (or any other news station of your choice)

@easypoliticsUK (SimplePolitics – short explainers of current issues and daily updates)

@BBCNewsnight (regular short clips on current issues and interviews with politicians)

You will also find useful analysis of the news by following: - some of the big national newspapers (Times, Independent, Guardian etc.) - UK political journalists (Chris Mason, Robert Peston, Laura Kuenssberg, Owen Jones etc.)

Screenshot diary

Once a week until we start the course, screenshot one news story about UK Politics (so you will have 10 stories in total)

Suggested Videos to use for research

There's a lot to choose from here, so pick and choose what appeals to you! Watching these will give you a good grounding – particularly if you watch with an adult who can share their experiences and thoughts!

BBC iPlayer

What's it about?

Thatcher: A Very British Revolution

UK's first female PM – how she gained, held on to, and lost power, and how her premiership changed the political landscape in Britain

Blair & Brown: The New Labour Revolution

The story of two powerful personalities at the heart of a political phenomenon. Tony Blair, Gordon Brown and their closest allies chart the rise and difficult legacy of New Labour.

Taking Control: The Dominic Cummings Story

How the strategist behind the Vote Leave campaign, who became the PM's most senior adviser, played a key role in the Brexit process

Everything Has Changed with Laura Kuenssberg

The former BBC Political Editor looks back on Brexit, Covid and other political challenges, over the last seven years (March 2022)

YouTube

Andrew Marr's Making of Modern Politics

Tracks how politics became increasingly about leader's personalities and celebrity in post-war era

The Brexit Storm: Laura Kuenssberg's Inside Story

Political journalist's behind-the-scenes explainer of the attempts by Theresa May to achieve a Brexit deal, up to April 2019

Yes Minister

An 80s sitcom unpicking the relationship between a government minister and their civil servants. An absolute classic

lhavenotv.com

An idiot's guide to politics

