

POLITICS

Exam board: AQA

% of exam vs. coursework/practical assessment: 100% exam

Length of exams: Three 2 hour exams

Breakdown of units

Component One – Government and Politics of the UK introduces students to the key channels of communication between government and the people and to the major governmental processes within the UK. It encourages them to evaluate the adequacy of existing arrangements for ensuring representative democracy and participation. It also promotes the development of a critical understanding of the role and effectiveness of key institutions, and of the relationship amongst them. The unit is broken in two and in UK Politics the students will cover: democracy and participation; voting behaviour, elections and referendums; pressure groups; political parties; and the EU. In the Government of the UK the topics are: the constitution; Parliament; the Prime Minister and cabinet; the judiciary; and devolution.

Component Two – Government and Politics of the USA and Comparative Politics examines the constitution of the US and its operation in practice. Students consider the institutional framework of US government and the interrelationships between its legislative, executive and judicial processes. Alongside this, students also assess the electoral process, the roles of political parties and pressure groups and examine the role and significance of direct democracy. This unit also focuses on comparing two distinct systems; US and UK government. The topics covered are: the constitution and federalism; Congress; the presidency; the Supreme Court; the electoral process and direct democracy; political parties; pressure groups; and civil rights.

Component Three – Political Ideas introduces core political ideologies and the philosophical bases for the political parties and policies of contemporary politics. Through their studies of liberalism, conservatism, socialism, and either feminism or anarchism, the students will look at the differing understandings of human nature, the state, society and the economy to understanding the nature of modern politics in both the UK and the USA. In their studies, they will consider key political thinkers such as John Locke, John Stuart Mill, Betty Friedan, Thomas Hobbes, Ayn Rand, Karl Marx, Simone de Beauvoir and Peter Kropotkin and understand their differing understanding of the nature and institutions of politics.

Overlap with other subjects

Government and Politics seeks a critical understanding of political processes and the place of people within them. As such it overlaps with subjects which seek a similar understanding of the world, such as History, Geography and Sociology. The Political Ideas sections will complement the current Philosophy and English Literature courses, while the US Politics dovetails with our History specification.

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