










Warlingham
Sixth Form College

Year 11 > Year 12 Transition
Summer Term
A Level Politics



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COURSE OVERVIEW

Course Title: Pearson Edexcel Level 3 Advanced GCE in Politics (9PLO)

Why should I study A Level Politics?

This is a very exciting time to study Politics. There is considerable turbulence in British politics and in the US. There are significant global challenges like climate change, growing protection in trade and inequalities in income and wealth. The course is very relevant in a changing world.

Politics is a well-established and well-respected A Level, which develops literacy, critical thinking, analysis and research skills. It goes well with Economics, History, Law, Psychology and Sociology, but other subjects as well.

The Politics department favours a number of contemporary approaches to delivering learning, including experiential learning, oracy strategies and 'flip learning' to develop independent learning skills and ensure rapid progress through the course. Each topic of the course is supported by a workbook which will contain all the materials you will need to enhance your learning.

Students also enjoy the annual trip to Parliament, which contextualises what the students are learning.

Course Overview

The aims of the course are:

- To introduce you to a truly modern and evolving political environment in the UK and around the world.
- To support you in developing an understanding of politics and the most engaging contemporary debates in the UK, and
- To develop your skills in critical thinking and analysis

Component 1 (UK Politics and Core Political Ideas):

You will explore the strengths and weaknesses of the UK's democracy, the electoral system, the mainstream political parties and the development and application of political ideas.





COURSE OVERVIEW

Component 2 (UK Government and Non-core Political Ideas):

You will explore the nature of government in the UK, which will lead you to an understanding of where, how and who makes political decisions. This component will introduce you to debates surrounding the UK's constitution, the roles of parliament, government and the judiciary, and the relationships between them. Finally you will examine one political idea: feminism, arguably the most intellectual, relevant and successful of all modern ideologies.

Component 3 (Comparative Politics - Government and Politics of the USA):

You will explore the US Constitution and the arguments surrounding this guiding document of US democracy. Further, you will learn about how power in the USA is distributed and exercised. Finally you will judge whether 'liberty and justice for all' has been achieved in the USA.

Course Entry Requirements

In addition to the standard college entry requirements, a Grade 5 or above GCSE Government and Politics if taken. Otherwise: Grade 5 or above in any GCSE Humanities subject. If no Humanities GCSEs were taken: Grade 5 or above GCSE English (in exceptional circumstances, a Grade 4 will be considered).

Assessment Format

The Politics A Level is all exam-based. There is no coursework. There are three written examination papers taken at the end of the second year. Each 2-hour examination consists of short questions and essays.

What can I do afterwards?

A qualification in Politics is valuable to anyone aiming to enter Higher Education, whatever the course for which they apply, however it is particularly relevant to courses such as Political Studies, Philosophy, Business and Economics, Law, Sociology, Social Policy Making, Comparative Studies, International Relations or History.

It is appropriate for those interested in a career in the civil service, journalism and the media, management, consultancy, marketing, law, local government, public relations or social work.





OUR EXPECTATIONS

College Expectations for Academic Success

The College will work closely with all students and parents to create a purposeful, creative and stimulating environment in which students are encouraged to fully develop - both academically and personally.

We will expect you to take responsibility for your own behaviour and learning. The current College Committee along with the student body have discussed and agreed that students should commit to:

- Ensuring academic success through regular attendance and punctuality at all required registrations, lessons, supervised study lessons and Inspire Periods. Attendance which drops below 95% reduces Key Stage 5 performance by at least one grade, so it is taken very seriously.
- Completing all set tasks on time to the best of your ability, making full use of study periods and homework to enable you to meet all deadlines.
- Using study time effectively by bringing all required equipment and resources with you and making full and regular use of the College study rooms and LRC, respecting the need for silent studying conditions.
- Working closely with all your teachers to develop an effective working relationship based on mutual respect and discussing your work with them on a regular basis and meeting targets set.
- Developing your skills as an independent, self-evaluative learner and work closely with your tutor in monitoring and discussing your academic progress. As an independent learner, if you miss a lesson, it is your own responsibility to find the teacher and catch up with the work missed.
- Organising your work efficiently and effectively into folders for each subject, making full use of individual subject expectations and using Cornell Notes daily to ensure work in your folders is relevant and meaningful.
- Keeping mobile phones out-of-sight in all classrooms and during assemblies so that lessons are not disturbed and/or important information is missed.
- Attending all parents' evenings and arrange appointments with your teachers to discuss your progress and work.

Course-specific Expectations for Academic Success

- Politics is constantly changing and evolving so it is essential that students stay up to date with current affairs.
- It's a good idea to sign up for news alerts from websites such as BBC news or specific newspapers such as the Guardian to follow the latest developments as well as to keep an eye on the passage of new laws through Parliament.

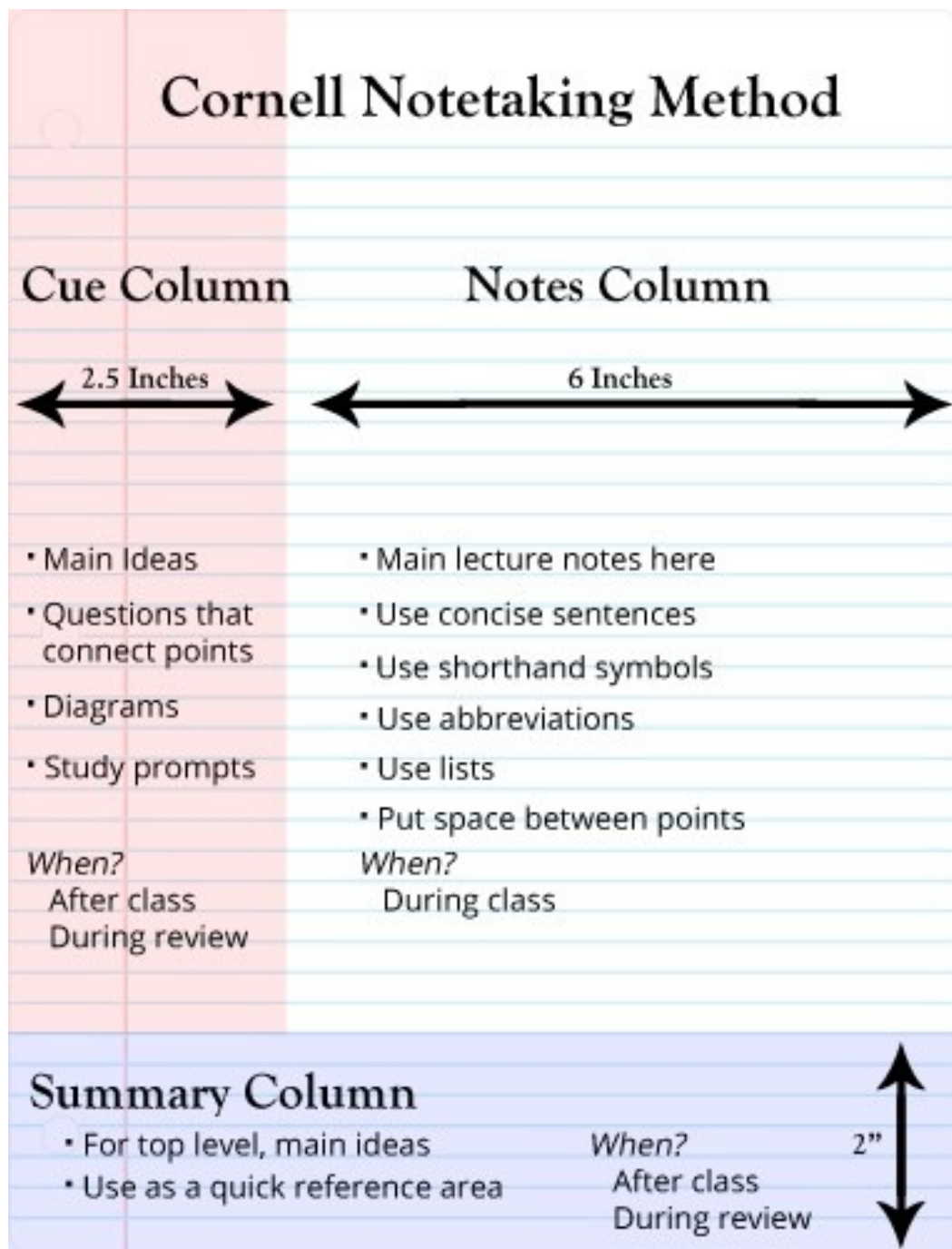


USING CORNELL NOTES

The Cornell Notes system is a note-taking system devised by Walter Pauk, an education professor at Cornell University. It is a proven method that establishes a more effective learning process.

It is designed to help the user think and reflect upon the notes they have made as well as making them more useful for revision purposes.

Please [click here](#) to watch a video that explains how to take Cornell Notes properly.





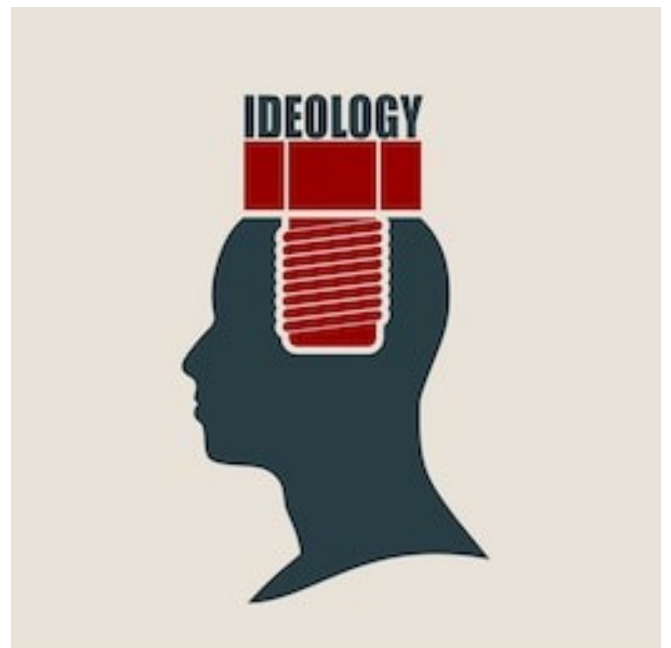
REVIEW / REVISE

Politics will be a new subject for those students taking it at A Level. Although you won't have taken it at GCSE, there are some aspects of other subjects that you can revise to help your understanding of Politics.

For example, if you studied the **Power and the People** topic as part of your History GCSE then this will give you a great overview of how democracy has developed in the UK along with the rights of individuals. Review the **Power and the People flashcards** and test yourself on them. You can even get others to test you. [Please click](#) here to access the flashcards.

As part of your Politics A Level, you will also study a unit covering different **Ideologies** which are ideas about how a country should be run. Different examples of ideologies that you will study are **Liberalism, Conservatism, Socialism and Feminism**. Choose at least one of these and review the ideology by looking at the resources on the Seneca Learning [website](#). This link should take you to the correct webpage but if not, follow the steps below:

1. Go to www.senecalearning.com
2. Click on the button 'students: use for free';
3. Search for politics and click on the button '**Political Studies: Edexcel A-Level**'
4. On the left hand side, scroll down until you reach any of the following topics: **5 Conservatism, 6 Liberalism, 7 Socialism or 18 Feminism**
5. Click on the topic and expand the menu. Click on the first section within your ideology and then on the button start learning.
6. Complete the tasks to learn about your chosen ideology.
7. Once finished, you may also wish to review any of the other ideologies or topics that interest you in the Political Studies unit. They will all be relevant to the course.





WATCH

The lecture entitled '**The 2016 Presidential Election - One Year On**' which gives an insight and analysis into Donald Trump's presidency a year after being elected. [Click here](#).

There are also a range of other lectures based on Politics which you can search for on the following website. [Click here](#).

Make sure you summarise what you have learned from the lecture(s) using the Cornell method of notetaking.

Politics on TV and Film

There are some great TV programmes and Films which are based on Politics. Try some, any or all of the following:



1. The News

The best way to stay up to date with current affairs is to watch what is happening in the world so make sure you watch the news regularly.

2. Have I Got News For You

A great satirical show that makes light of the most up to date current affairs. If you don't know what's happening in the world then you won't get the joke. Other similar shows include **the Mash Report** and **Mock the Week**.

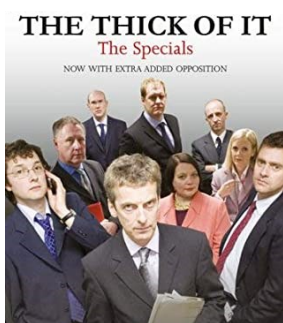
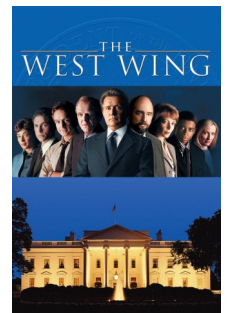


3. Political Programmes

For a more serious take on political developments and to hear in depth discussions or to watch politicians squirm in response to tough questions from journalists try any of the following shows: **The Andrew Marr Show**, **Newsnight** or **Question Time**.

4. The West Wing

This TV programme follows a fictional US President and his staff as they try to negotiate holding political power in the US and in the process gives viewers an insight into the country's political system.



5. The Thick Of It

This TV show gives a fictional view of what working in the civil service could be like. The show offers a tongue and cheek take on the sometimes unreasonable expectations that fictional ministers have on their staff who are, in most cases, more experts in their department than the actual politicians!



LISTEN TO

There are lots of great podcasts that are relevant to the different parts of the course that you will study in your Politics A Level

Choose any series and episode(s) below that interest you and make some notes afterwards using the Cornell method to summarise what you have learned on that topic.

UK Politics



There are lots of podcasts you can listen to for keeping abreast of current affairs in the UK. Many of these are programmes reporting the news such as **The Week at Westminster** ([click here](#)) or political analysis such as **Political Thinking with Nick Robinson** ([click here](#)). However **Politix and Chill** takes a sideways glance at politics across England particularly by dealing with national events from a local perspective. [Available here](#).

Political Thinking

As part of your Politics A-Level, you will study ideologies such as Liberalism, Conservatism, Socialism and Feminism. These are sets of ideas and theories about how society should be ordered and the ways in which countries should be run.

These issues are incredibly interesting but they are also fairly complex. If you fancy challenging yourself to find out more about these ideas then try listening to [this podcast](#) called '**the Public Philosopher**'.



You might like to start with [this episode](#) entitled **Why Democracy?**

US Politics

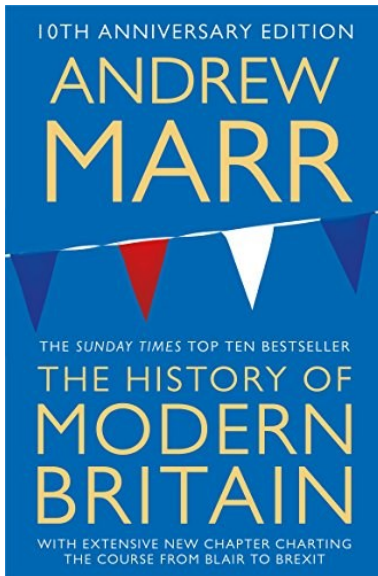


AMERICAST

[Click here](#) to listen to **Americast** - a podcast where BBC journalist Emily Maitlis and Jon Sopel discuss all the latest gossip from the 2020 US presidential race. A great way to stay up to date with developments in US Politics.



READ



The History of Modern Britain

For a comprehensive overview of the development and changes in the political landscape since World War Two then try reading **Andrew Marr's 'A History of Modern Britain'**.

As someone who has worked in Politics and interviewed some of the leading politicians of the last few decades, Marr gives an invaluable insight into the way in which Politics in Britain has changed in recent times.

It should be available to borrow from the library or can be purchased from [amazon](https://www.amazon.co.uk) or other book stores.

Articles

There are also some useful articles that you can read to give you an insight into the issues you will be studying in Politics. Remember to make notes on anything you read using the Cornell method. For example:

- **Introduction to Politics** - How to talk about Politics constructively. [Click here](#)
- **US Politics** - How does impeachment work? A quick TED explainer. [Click here](#)
- **Kialo website** - this is a good [website](#) for exploring some of the debates in Politics which form an essential part of the subject. For example, has [Trump](#) been a good president? What about [Obama](#)? And are ideologies (such as [feminism](#)) a force for good?

Newspapers

Good old fashioned newspapers are a great way to stay on top of current affairs and gain insights into the latest developments from political journalists. Of course you don't have to buy a physical copy these days but make sure you check news websites or apps regularly and even sign up for alerts.





RESEARCH

In your study of UK Politics, you need to be familiar with the results and outcomes of several general elections. You also need to be able to respond to and answer an exam question based on a source.

This means researching is a great skill that is useful to succeeding in Politics. Your challenge is to choose one (or more) of the UK general elections opposite. For your chosen year, please create a profile or summary by completing the two stages below:

Possible elections to research:

2019 - [Start here](#) or [here](#)

2017 - [Start here](#) or [here](#)

2015 - [Start here](#) or [here](#)

2010 - [Start here](#) or [here](#)

2005 - [Start here](#) or [here](#)

Stage One - Fact Finding:

First you need to gather your evidence. Try finding the answers to the following questions for your chosen election:

- Who were the leaders of the main two political parties (Labour and Conservative)?
- What were the main promises made by the political parties to the public in the election campaign?
- What impact did other parties have and why? What were their promises?
- You could consider any or all of the following for other parties - Liberal Democrats, Green Party, Brexit Party in 2019, UKIP, SNP
- What was the result of the election - how many MPs did each party receive, who formed the government, was this a straightforward process?

Stage Two - Analysing Your Findings

Now you should reflect on your findings and offer explanations for why the elections produced the results and outcomes that it did. Consider the following:

- What were the main issues for voters in the election?
- Did the winners gain a clear victory? What implications does/did this have for the government and the ability to pass laws?
- Was there a difference between the popular vote (amount of people voting for a party across the country) and the number of MPs each party received?
- If so, what does this suggest about the electoral system used for general elections (called first past the post)? Can you produce a table of strengths and weaknesses?
- What were the consequences for political parties? E.g. Did their leaders resign? If so, why?



