

# A Level Politics

## Bridging the Gap from Year 11



Welcome, Year 11! This is 'Bridging Work' from Y11 to introduce you to A level Politics. The pack is designed to give you a flavour of what A level Politics is all about. Part 1 of the pack will introduce you to some core political concepts and events, to aid your understanding of politics ready for sixth form. Part 2 of the pack will be an independent research project. The work in these packs will take some time, so you can break it up. Don't feel you need to complete it all in one go! You can complete the tasks in this booklet in the spaces provided.

NAME:

# PART 1

## Task One: What is Politics?

*"Politics is the study of how a people, a nation or a state is governed."*

When most people think of politics, they think of old, wealthy men (only sometimes women, and only sometimes ethnic minorities) in offices, making deals and agreements that will affect millions of people, just for personal gain. And it's true that some decisions are made that way, but politics is much more than that.

Politics is about power, about people, equality, war, conflict, debate, cooperation, freedom, money, etc. – it's about the relationship between the state (the government) and its citizens, or the state and other states. It governs everything we can and will do in our lives.

One of the reasons politics is so exciting is that it changes every single day based on the actions of individuals. Less than 500 people (in a country of 330 million) decided the result of the 2000 presidential election that made George Bush president. In 2001 he invaded Afghanistan and in 2003 he invaded Iraq. These two things have changed the Middle East and global politics, perhaps forever. Closer to home, if just one out of every 50 people who voted to leave the EU had voted differently, we wouldn't have left. Each individual vote is vital, and yet 28% of all the people who could vote and registered to vote in that referendum didn't turn out on June 23<sup>rd</sup>. It would take just a small number of them to change the result.

Your first task is to help you garner an understanding of what Politics is really all about. Use the internet to research and understand what the following key terms mean and create a short definition for each in your own words.

You are welcome to try to get your families involved in this – they may have some understanding of these concepts already! The most important thing in an A level is your understanding – so it's not about having the "right" or "word-perfect" definition, it's about you understanding what a concept means.

| Term           | Explanation |
|----------------|-------------|
| Power          |             |
| Authority      |             |
| Legitimacy     |             |
| Government     |             |
| Politics       |             |
| Civil society  |             |
| The executive  |             |
| Prime minister |             |
| Cabinet        |             |
| Legislation    |             |

|                              |  |
|------------------------------|--|
|                              |  |
| Parliament                   |  |
| House of Commons             |  |
| House of Lords               |  |
| Judiciary                    |  |
| Uncodified Constitution      |  |
| Supreme Court (UK – not US!) |  |
| Rule of Law                  |  |
| Elective dictatorship        |  |
| Suffrage                     |  |
| Direct democracy             |  |
| Representative democracy     |  |
| Sovereignty                  |  |
| Parliamentary sovereignty    |  |
| Referendum (UK – not US!)    |  |
| General election             |  |
| By-election                  |  |
| Manifesto                    |  |
| Fusion of powers             |  |
| Separation of powers         |  |
| Devolution                   |  |
| Pressure group               |  |
| Brexit                       |  |
| First Past The Post          |  |

|                             |  |
|-----------------------------|--|
|                             |  |
| Proportional Representation |  |
| Frontbench Minister         |  |
| Backbench MP                |  |

## Task Two: British Politics

Go to these links here for the UK's three major parties:

<https://labour.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/06/Labour-Party-manifesto-2024.pdf>

<https://public.conservatives.com/static/documents/GE2024/Conservative-Manifesto-GE2024.pdf>

<https://www.libdems.org.uk/manifesto>

These links summarise their key manifesto policies in the 2024 general election. I would like you to choose a few policies of your choice and explain below why you support OR do not support that policy. You must choose at least 1 policy from each manifesto to discuss why you agree or disagree with it (you must complete at least 3).

**Challenge!** If you want to extend yourself and go further, you can do more than 3 by copying and pasting the spaces I have provided.

Party: \_\_\_\_\_

Manifesto policy:

---

---

---

Agree/disagree & why:

---

---

---

---

---

---

Party: \_\_\_\_\_

Manifesto policy:

---

---

---

Agree/disagree & why:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

Party: \_\_\_\_\_

Manifesto policy:

---

---

---

Agree/disagree & why:

---

---

---

---

---

---

---

**What has changed since the 2024 general election?**

Leaders? Party size? Membership? Research the 3 major parties current situation in 2026

Write down some key changes that have occurred

---

---

---

---

---

---

---



# Task Three: Making a Case

Politics A Level requires you to have opinions on a range of current political debates. For example, ***should the voting age for General Elections be lowered from 18 years old to 16 years old***. The Labour government has recently proposed he wants to lower the voting age for the next general election.

Bullet-point below your initial thoughts and opinions on this debate. Make sure you explain why you agree or disagree with the voting age being lowered. There is no right or wrong answer just your opinion.

- \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_
- \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

One style of exam question at A Level requires you to read a contemporary source and analyse the competing arguments for and against a particular issue. You need to read the source below and complete tasks 1- 5.

## Source A: Votes at 16

*The UK government plans to lower the voting age from 18 to 16 before the next general election. This would give around 1.5 million 16 and 17-year-olds the right to vote in UK parliamentary elections. Similar systems already exist in Scotland and Wales for some elections. Supporters argue that this change will strengthen democracy, while critics question whether teenagers are mature enough to make informed decisions.*

*One argument in favour of votes at 16 is that many young people already take on adult responsibilities. At 16, people can work, pay taxes, join the armed forces with parental permission and make important decisions about their education and future careers. Supporters believe that if teenagers contribute to society, they should have a say in how the country is run.*

*Another advantage is that voting at a younger age could encourage lifelong participation in democracy. Research suggests that people who vote when they are young are more likely to continue voting as adults. Schools could also provide opportunities for students to learn about politics and elections while they are still in education, helping them become informed citizens. The government has proposed improving citizenship education alongside the change.*

*Supporters also argue that decisions made today will affect young people for many years. Issues such as climate change, housing, education costs and employment opportunities will have a major impact on their futures. Allowing them to vote ensures that politicians must listen to younger generations and consider their needs when creating policies.*

*However, there are also arguments against lowering the voting age. Critics argue that many 16-year-olds lack the life experience and maturity needed to make informed political choices. They point out that teenagers cannot legally buy alcohol, gamble, or serve on a jury, suggesting society does not yet view them as fully independent adults. Some believe the voting age should remain linked to adulthood at 18.*

Others worry that young people may be more easily influenced by social media, parents, teachers or friends. Political misinformation online could affect voting decisions, particularly among first-time voters who have less experience evaluating sources of information. Critics argue that this could weaken the quality of democratic decision-making.

There are also questions about whether 16 and 17-year-olds are interested in politics. Some polls suggest that many teenagers are unsure about lowering the voting age, and not all would choose to vote if given the opportunity.

Overall, lowering the voting age to 16 is a significant change that could reshape British democracy. Supporters believe it would give young people a voice and increase democratic participation, while opponents argue that 18 remains the appropriate age for such an important responsibility. Whether the change is successful will depend on how well young people are prepared to engage in politics and use their new voting rights responsibly.

1. Define the following political and non-political words from the source.

|                         |  |
|-------------------------|--|
| Democracy               |  |
| Voting age              |  |
| Political Participation |  |
| Turnout                 |  |
| Representation          |  |
| Misinformation          |  |
| Suffrage                |  |
| Campaign                |  |
| Public policy           |  |
| Mandate                 |  |
| Participation rate      |  |
| Political literacy      |  |

2. Using two different coloured highlighters, indicate:

- a.) The arguments in the source that support the view that 16 to 18 year olds should be given the vote
- b.) The arguments in the source that support the view that the voting age should remain at 18

3. You are now going to practice analysing one of these arguments. You are going to use evidence to back-up your analysis. You need to do some additional research to answer these questions.

|   |  |
|---|--|
| The source states that <b>the 18-24 age group has the lowest turnout in UK elections so therefore even younger voters are likely to have an even lower turnout.</b>                                     |  |
| What is turnout?  |  |
| For example, what was the turnout for 18-24 year olds in the recent 2014 general election?  |  |
| How does this compare with turnout for this age group in the 2019 and 2017 general elections?   |  |
| Why therefore is it perhaps not a good idea to extend the vote to 16 and 17 year olds?  |  |
| In the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum (the first UK election to give 16 year olds the vote) what was the turnout for 16-18 years old? Which age group had the lowest turnout in this referendum? |  |
| Therefore, how does this argument prove that the voting age should not be reduced to 16 years old?  |  |

4. In the example above, you will see that the counter-argument links to the initial argument. Go back to the arguments you highlighted in the source and match up 2 more arguments that support the view that 16 to 18 year olds should be given the vote with 2 counter-arguments that support the view that they should not.

| <b>Arguments that support the view that 16 to 18 year olds should get the vote.</b>   | <b>Counter-arguments that support the view that the voting age should remain at 18</b>   |
|---|--|
| <i>In the Scottish referendum on independence turnout among young people was very high showing that 16-17 year olds are interested in politics.</i> | <i>Opponents 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</i> |

|  |  |
|--|--|
|  |  |
|  |  |

5. Now have a go at writing one paragraph that could appear in an essay answering the exam question:  
***Evaluate the view that the UK should lower the voting age from 18 to 16 General Elections?***

There is an example paragraph below – notice how there should be a counter argument included in your response. We use a factor paragraph approach.

Factor approach includes for and against arguments within the same paragraph

***Example Paragraph:***

*The voting age should be lowered in the next general election as it will create a more representative democracy. It is very clear to argue that 16 and 17-year-olds already take on adult responsibilities such as working, paying taxes, and in some cases joining the armed forces with permission. As highlighted in the BBC source, this suggests they are already affected by government decisions, so they should have a say in policies like education, housing, and climate change. For example, it would ensure politicians made policies that applied to young people e.g. university fees and youth club support. Additionally, voting earlier could build long-term democratic habits, making young people more likely to stay politically engaged in adulthood which is vital with our current participation crisis in the UK where voter turnout was low. However, others would argue that many 16 and 17-year-olds may lack the life experience needed to make fully informed decisions. They may be more easily influenced by social media, family, or peers, which raises concerns about misinformation and whether their choices are fully independent. For example, many young people failed to vote in the 2024 election as the turnout was at 65%, Equally, since teenagers are still restricted from some adult activities, such as buying alcohol or serving on juries, it may be inconsistent to give them voting rights. However, overall it is still important in a democracy for young people to engage in politics and therefore giving them the right to vote will enfranchise them.*



# Part 2: Staying update

## Task 1: Read through these two articles (June 2026)

1. Make notes on the following - what is the article talking about? What is revealing to us about politics right now?



### What is PSED and why do the Conservatives want to scrap it?

#### 1.2.2 – Established political parties

#### 1.1.4 – Rights in context

Last week Kemi Badenoch announced she wished to abolish the Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED), which she said had led to some groups in society being 'preferred over others'. The announcement came in the wake of the protests over the murder of Henry Nowak, where police were accused of treating allegations of racism more seriously than Nowak's protests that he had been stabbed.

PSED is a legal duty within the Equality Act 2010, a significant piece of rights legislation passed by Labour shortly before the General Election that year. It came into force in England, Scotland and Wales in April 2011 and requires public bodies to consider equality when making decisions. Public bodies must have "due regard" to three aims: eliminating discrimination, advancing equality of opportunity, and fostering good relations between different groups. It applies to bodies such as schools, hospitals, councils, police forces and government departments. Whilst the Equality Act applies across all of society, PSED only applied to public bodies.

In practice, this means public authorities should think about how policies affect people with protected characteristics, such as race, sex, disability, age, religion, sexual orientation, pregnancy and maternity, and gender reassignment. For example, a school changing its uniform policy, a council closing a service, or a hospital reorganising appointments should consider whether the decision disadvantages particular groups. It therefore requires public bodies to take proactive steps to avoid

possible discrimination, rather than relying on the Equality Act to address discrimination reactively.

PSED is therefore mainly about the decision-making process for public bodies. It does not usually force a public body to reach a particular outcome. Instead, it requires them to show that equality was properly considered. In practice, this can involve equality impact assessments, consultation, data-gathering, publishing equality information, or setting equality objectives.

The Conservatives, under Kemi Badenoch, are proposing to scrap the PSED. Badenoch argues that the duty has encouraged "identity politics", bureaucracy and fear of legal challenge, and that public services should return to "common sense" and equal treatment under the law. Reports say the Conservative proposal would repeal the PSED while keeping the wider Equality Act protections in place.

This announcement by the Conservatives could be seen as an attempt by the party to carve out a position distinct from both Labour and Reform UK. Whilst Labour wish to keep the Equality Act and PSED in place, Reform UK's position is more radical. Reform figures have said they would repeal the Equality Act 2010 itself, with Suella Braverman saying Reform would scrap the Act on 'day one' and criticising

the idea of protected characteristics.

This announcement could be used to demonstrate that the Conservatives have moved further into populist territory. Earlier Conservative governments largely accepted the Equality Act settlement, even if they criticised aspects of bureaucracy. Indeed, the Equality Act (and PSED) came into force under the Coalition government in 2011 and was not repealed during the party's 14 years in government. Badenoch's position suggests a shift from liberal-conservative rights protection towards a more combative argument about identity, meritocracy, social cohesion and state overreach.

More broadly, the debate serves as an important reminder that rights in the UK are politically vulnerable. Unlike in countries with entrenched constitutional rights – such as the United States with its Bill of Rights – Parliament can amend or repeal equality protections by ordinary legislation. The courts can enforce duties while they exist, but they cannot stop Parliament removing them. This means equality rights in the UK depend not only on legal principle, but also on political consensus – and that consensus now looks much less secure.















|        |  |  |  |
|--------|--|--|--|
|        |  |  |  |
| Week 4 |  |  |  |

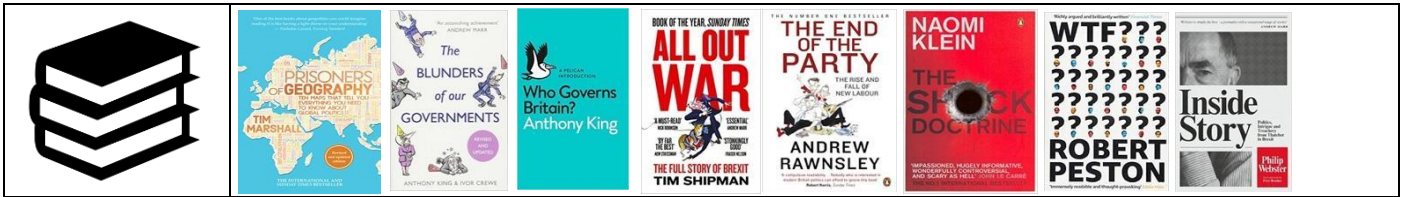



# Digging deeper


## Want to learn more?



Start to develop your interest in the subject and build your general political knowledge. The following are suggestions, they are not compulsory, but we would love for you to engage in any that you find interesting.



|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
|  | <p><a href="#">Rest is politics</a><br/> <a href="#">The News Agents</a><br/> <a href="#">Beyond Westminster</a><br/> <a href="#">BBC politics podcasts</a><br/> <a href="#">The Westminster Hour</a><br/> <a href="#">Politics.co.uk podcasts</a></p> | <p><a href="#">Guardian 'politics weekly' podcasts</a><br/> <a href="#">Talking Politics</a><br/> <a href="#">Parliament Explained</a><br/> <a href="#">Takes from the lobby</a><br/> <a href="#">Learn out loud podcasts</a></p> |
|---|--|---|

|   |  |   |
|---|--|---|
|  | <p><a href="#">Hypernormalisation</a><br/> <a href="#">The Cameron Years</a><br/> <a href="#">Sunday with Laura Kuenssberg</a><br/> <a href="#">The Politics Show</a><br/> <a href="#">The Crown</a></p> | <p><a href="#">Question Time</a><br/> <a href="#">BBC Parliament</a><br/> <a href="#">Cabinet Confidential</a><br/> <a href="#">Globalisation if Good – Johan Norberg</a><br/> <a href="#">Taking Liberties</a></p> |
|---|--|---|