
A-LEVEL POLITICS

(7152)

Specification

For teaching from September 2017 onwards
For A-level exams in 2019 onwards

Version 1.1 28 January 2020



Contents

1 Introduction	5
1.1 Why choose AQA for A-level Politics	5
1.2 Support and resources to help you teach	5
2 Specification at a glance	7
2.1 Subject content	7
2.2 Assessments	7
3 Subject content	9
3.1 Government and politics of the UK	10
3.2 Government and politics of the USA and comparative politics	15
3.3 Political ideas	23
4 Scheme of assessment	29
4.1 Aims	29
4.2 Assessment objectives	30
4.3 Assessment weightings	30
5 General administration	31
5.1 Entries and codes	31
5.2 Overlaps with other qualifications	31
5.3 Awarding grades and reporting results	31
5.4 Resits and shelf life	32
5.5 Previous learning and prerequisites	32
5.6 Access to assessment: diversity and inclusion	32
5.7 Working with AQA for the first time	33
5.8 Private candidates	33
5.9 Use of Calculators	33

Are you using the latest version of this specification?

- You will always find the most up-to-date version of this specification on our website at [aqa.org.uk/7152](https://www.aqa.org.uk/7152)
- We will write to you if there are significant changes to the specification.

1 Introduction

1.1 Why choose AQA for A-level Politics

Lively, relevant, controversial... there are many ways to describe A-level Politics. There's no denying that it's one of the most interesting and engaging qualifications you can choose.

Covering news and current affairs from the UK and US, it helps you understand how the UK country is run and develops research, written communication and debate skills. It also helps grow your confidence.

It's ideal if you're considering studying politics, sociology, ethics, advertising or journalism at university and is highly regarded by employers in industries including politics, international organisations, the media, government and the civil service.

A specification designed for you and your students

This new qualification retains much of the content that we know you and your students enjoy. Topics are clearly and logically structured and include:

- the three traditional ideologies of Liberalism, Conservatism and Socialism
- one of either: feminism, nationalism, multiculturalism, ecologism or anarchism.

Clear, well-structured exams, accessible for all

To enable your students to show their breadth of knowledge and understanding, we've created a simple and straightforward structure and layout for our papers, using a mixture of question styles. There will be no coursework.

You can find out about all our Politics qualifications at [aqa.org.uk/government-and-politics](https://www.aqa.org.uk/government-and-politics)

1.2 Support and resources to help you teach

We've worked with experienced teachers to provide you with a range of resources that will help you confidently plan, teach and prepare for exams.

1.2.1 Teaching resources

Visit [aqa.org.uk/7152](https://www.aqa.org.uk/7152) to see all our teaching resources. They include:

- sample schemes of work and lesson plans to help you plan your course with confidence
- student textbooks that have been checked by AQA
- progress tests with engaging on-screen delivery and instant feedback
- training courses to help you deliver AQA Politics qualifications
- subject expertise courses for all teachers, from newly qualified teachers who are just getting started to experienced teachers looking for fresh inspiration.

1.2.2 Preparing for exams

Visit [aqa.org.uk/7152](https://www.aqa.org.uk/7152) for everything you need to prepare for our exams, including:

- sample papers and mark schemes for new courses
- Exampro: a searchable bank of past AQA exam questions
- example student answers with examiner commentaries.

1.2.3 Analyse your students' results with Enhanced Results Analysis (ERA)

Find out which questions were the most challenging, how the results compare to previous years and where your students need to improve. ERA, our free online results analysis tool, will help you see where to focus your teaching. Register at [aqa.org.uk/era](https://www.aqa.org.uk/era)

For information about results, including maintaining standards over time, grade boundaries and our post-results services, visit [aqa.org.uk/results](https://www.aqa.org.uk/results)

1.2.4 Keep your skills up-to-date with professional development

Wherever you are in your career, there's always something new to learn. As well as subject specific training, we offer a range of courses to help boost your skills.

- Improve your teaching skills in areas including differentiation, teaching literacy and meeting Ofsted requirements.
- Prepare for a new role with our leadership and management courses.

You can attend a course at venues around the country, in your school or online – whatever suits your needs and availability. Find out more at [coursesandevents.aqa.org.uk](https://www.aqa.org.uk/coursesandevents)

1.2.5 Help and support

Visit our website for information, guidance, support and resources at [aqa.org.uk/7152](https://www.aqa.org.uk/7152)

If you'd like us to share news and information about this qualification, sign up for emails and updates at [aqa.org.uk/keepinformed-computer-science](https://www.aqa.org.uk/keepinformed-computer-science)

Alternatively, you can call or email our subject team direct.

E: govandpol-s@aqa.org.uk

T: 0161 958 3861

2 Specification at a glance

This qualification is linear. Linear means that students will sit all their exams at the end of the course.

2.1 Subject content

1. [Government and politics of the UK](#) (page 10)
2. [Government and politics of the USA and comparative politics](#) (page 15)
3. [Political ideas](#) (page 23)

2.2 Assessments

Paper 1
<p>What's assessed</p> <p>Government and politics of the UK</p>
<p>How it's assessed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written exam: 2 hours • 77 marks • 33⅓ % of A-level
<p>Questions</p> <p>A mixture of medium length 'explain' and essay style questions.</p>



Paper 2
<p>What's assessed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The government and politics of the USA • Comparative politics
<p>How it's assessed</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written exam: 2 hours • 77 marks • 33⅓ % of A-level
<p>Questions</p> <p>A mixture of medium length 'explain' and essay style questions.</p>



Paper 3
What's assessed Political ideas
How it's assessed <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Written exam: 2 hours• 77 marks• 33⅓ % of A-level
Questions A mixture of medium length 'explain' and essay style questions.

3 Subject content

There are three broad areas of study in this specification:

- the government and politics of the UK
- the government and politics of the USA, and comparative politics
- political ideas.

The specification requires in depth study of UK and US government and politics. Comparisons across the two political systems are required in the topic entitled [Comparative politics](#) (page 21). Students will be required to identify parallels, connections, similarities and differences between aspects of politics. This will ensure that students develop a critical awareness of the changing nature of politics and the relationships between political ideas, political institutions and political processes.

The political ideas to be studied have relevance to both of the systems of government and politics. The study of the four ideologies will enhance the students' knowledge and understanding of politics, political debate and political issues in both the UK and the USA.

Skills

In all components of this subject students must demonstrate the following skills:

- to comprehend and interpret political information
- to critically analyse and evaluate the areas of politics studied
- to construct arguments and explanations leading to reasoned conclusions
- to identify parallels, connections, similarities and differences between aspects of the areas of politics studied
- to construct and communicate arguments and explanations with relevance, clarity and coherence
- to use appropriate political vocabulary
- to make connections between the different areas of politics studied
- to make comparisons across two political systems.

Synopticity

An essential element of the assessment of students' work in A-level politics is the extent to which they display a synoptic or holistic understanding of the subject. To demonstrate this students will be expected to inter-relate areas of content within each module and, when appropriate, across modules, to address the requirements of the exam papers. They must use appropriate concepts and knowledge as well as the skills listed above in developing their answers.

Politics, as a subject, is inherently synoptic. The political knowledge, concepts, behaviours and institutions studied in any particular module can often be used and applied to new contexts in other parts of the course. The essay questions are particularly synoptic, giving students the opportunity to draw on and synthesise the knowledge, understanding and skills gained throughout the course.

Guidance on teaching and learning

The specification content is divided into two categories:

- key concepts and terminology
- focus

Students should understand the meaning of the key concepts and terminology as these are implicit in the areas of focus for each section. Some areas require students to demonstrate awareness. These areas are meant to serve as a background to the points that require analysis and evaluation.

3.1 Government and politics of the UK

3.1.1 The government of the UK

Government and Politics of the UK is divided into ten sections. Each has a particular focus but their interrelationships must be understood to appreciate the complexities of the system. Students will study each of the prescribed sections below.

3.1.1.1 The nature and sources of the British Constitution

Key concepts and terminology:

- codified
- uncodified
- statute
- common law
- conventions
- authoritative opinions
- The royal prerogative
- rule of law
- parliamentary sovereignty
- individual and collective rights.

Focus

Students should develop awareness of the significance of the following historical documents to the development of rights in the UK:

- Magna Carta (1215)
- Bill of Rights (1689)
- Act of Settlement (1701)
- Parliaments Acts (1911 and 1949)
- European Communities Act (1972).

Students should analyse and evaluate:

- the nature and sources of the British constitution
- contemporary legislation and current issues regarding rights
- issues and debates around recent constitutional changes
- debates about the extent of rights in the UK
- two examples of constitutional changes since 1997, such as the establishment of devolved legislative bodies in constituent countries of the UK, the introduction of a Freedom of Information Act, adoption of the Human Rights Act, changing composition of the House of Lords
- areas where individual and collective rights are in agreement and where they are in conflict.

3.1.1.2 The structure and role of Parliament

Key concepts and terminology:

- scrutiny of executive
- Commons
- Lords
- MPs and peers
- delegates and trustees
- Burkean theories of representation
- delegate theories
- mandate theories
- trustees
- parliamentary privilege
- opposition
- legislation
- debate
- redress of grievances
- campaign
- referendum.

Focus

Students should analyse and evaluate:

- scrutiny of the executive and how effective scrutiny of the executive is in practice
- parliamentary debate and the legislative process
 - Commons
 - Lords
- theories of representation - Burkean, delegate, mandate theories
- the roles and influence of MPs and peers
- the significance of Commons and Lords:
 - work of committees
 - role of the opposition
 - the extent of Parliament's influence on government decisions:
 - Party discipline enables the government to routinely outvote opposition
 - government control of civil servants' appearances before Select Committees
 - membership of those committees is largely controlled by the Whips' offices.
- interactions of parliament and other branches of government.

3.1.1.3 The Prime Minister and cabinet

Key concepts and terminology:

- core executive
- prime minister
- primus inter pares
- cabinet
- inner cabinet
- cabinet committee
- individual and collective responsibility
- accountability.

Focus

Students should analyse and evaluate:

- how policy is made
- the relationship between Prime Minister and cabinet
- the difference between individual and collective responsibility. Examples might include:
 - resignation of Sir Thomas Dugdale – Crichel Down (1954)
 - resignation of Iain Duncan Smith over Welfare Reforms (2016)
- two examples that demonstrate the power of the Prime Minister and cabinet to dictate events and determine policy making. One example must be from 1945–1997. The second example must be from 1997 to the present. Examples might include:
 - introduction of poll tax (1990)
 - invasion of Iraq (2003)
- government/parliament relations – accountability/interest.

3.1.1.4 The judiciary

Key concepts and terminology:

- Supreme Court
- judicial independence and impartiality
- separation of powers
- ultra vires
- judicial review.

Focus

Students should analyse and evaluate:

- the composition of the judiciary and the appointments process
- the role of the Supreme Court and its impact on government, legislature and policy process
- judicial influence on government
- importance of ultra vires, judicial review and the Supreme Court's interactions with and influence over the legislative and policy making processes.

3.1.1.5 Devolution

Key concepts and terminology:

- devolution
- The Scottish Parliament and Government
- The Welsh Assembly and Government
- The Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive.

Focus

Students should analyse and evaluate:

- the roles, powers and responsibilities of the different devolved bodies in the UK
- debate around devolution in England
- existing devolution in England
- impact of devolution on government of the UK.

3.1.2 The politics of the UK

3.1.2.1 Democracy and participation

Key concepts and terminology:

- direct democracy
- representative democracy
- suffrage
- participation
- partisan dealignment.

Focus

Students should develop awareness of development of the suffrage in the UK – debates and issues:

- how suffrage has changed since the Great Reform Act (1832) to the present
- debates regarding gender, class, ethnicity and age
- the significance of the Chartists, Suffragists and Suffragettes
- suffrage as a human right.

Students will be required to analyse and evaluate:

- the nature of democracy
- different types of democracy – direct democracy, representative government
- patterns of participation and different forms of participation.

3.1.2.2 Elections and referendums

Key concepts and terminology:

- majoritarian and proportional electoral systems
- representative democracy
- suffrage
- participation
- voting behaviour
- manifesto
- campaign
- referendums.

Focus

Students will be required to analyse and evaluate the characteristics of different systems used in parliamentary elections and in elections to one of the devolved bodies in the UK including:

- debates and issues around the performance of those systems
- the advantages and disadvantages of those systems
- three key elections since 1945 should be selected for detailed study. These should include:
 - the 1997 general election
 - one election from before 1997
 - one election since 1997.

The study of these elections, the wider political context in which they occurred and the techniques used by political parties in their campaigns will provide perspectives on the issues and outcomes of each election, particularly in relation to the following:

- patterns of voting behaviour/changes over time – as revealed by relevant national data sources, and explanations of how and why they varied in different elections
- the influence of the media on the outcomes
- the reasons for and the impact of party policies on the outcomes
- the reasons for and the influence of manifestos on the outcomes
- the impact of campaigns and leadership on the outcomes
- the role of elections and their influence on policy and policy making
- likely effects of the electoral system on the party system.

These elections should be selected because they exemplify particular characteristics of the British electoral system, electoral behaviour or electoral outcomes eg:

- an election resulting in a landslide victory for one party
- an election where results reveal a clear discrepancy between the number of votes and the number of seats gained
- an election which shows how large numbers of voters are effectively disenfranchised by the preponderance of voters for one party in large areas of the country
- an election the outcome of which is greatly influenced by a particular leadership style or personality

Students should analyse and evaluate the nature and use of referendums in the UK and their impact.

3.1.2.3 Political parties

Key concepts and terminology:

- ideology
- party structure
- party systems
- party funding
- party functions
- minor parties
- political agenda.

Focus

Students should analyse and evaluate:

- the origins, ideas and development of the Conservative, Labour, and Liberal Democrat parties and how these have helped shape their current policies
- party structures and functions of Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat parties
- issues and debates around party funding
- relations with, and influence of, the media
- factors affecting electoral outcomes
- policies of minor parties and their impact on political debates and political agenda
- development towards a multi-party system in the UK and its impact on government and policy.

3.1.2.4 Pressure groups

Key concepts and terminology:

- pluralism
- political agenda
- insider and outsider pressure groups
- promotional and interest groups.

Focus

Students should analyse and evaluate:

- pressure groups and democracy – pluralism
- other influences on government and parliament:
 - think tanks
 - lobbyists
 - corporations
 - media
- typologies of pressure groups, including a detailed study of one insider and one outsider group
- methods used by pressure groups
- factors likely to affect the political influence of different groups, such as membership and resources
- links with political parties, government and the media.

3.1.2.5 The European Union

Key concepts and terminology:

- EU institutions

Focus

Students should analyse and evaluate:

- aims of the EU and the extent to which they have been achieved
- the impact of the EU on UK politics and policy making.

3.2 Government and politics of the USA and comparative politics

3.2.1 Government and politics of the USA

Government and politics of the USA is divided into eight sections. Each has a particular focus but their interrelationships must be understood to appreciate the complexities of the system.

Students will study each of the prescribed sections below.

3.2.1.1 The constitutional framework of US government

Key concepts and terminology:

- US Constitution
- Bill of Rights

-
- separation of powers
 - checks and balances
 - federalism.

Focus

Students should analyse and evaluate:

- the nature and significance of the US Constitution
- the significance of constitutional principles
- framework of government laid down in the US Constitution
- federal system of government
- federal state relations
- amendment process
- debates concerning the importance of the US Constitution to the working of contemporary US government
- protection of civil liberties and rights under the US Constitution, Bill of Rights, and Supreme Court rulings.

3.2.1.2 The legislative branch of government: Congress

Key concepts and terminology:

- Congress
- House of Representatives
- Senate
- oversight
- committee System.

Focus

Students should analyse and evaluate:

- the structure, role and powers of the US Congress
- composition of Congress, the different terms of office and party allegiance
- debates concerning the functions, powers and effectiveness of Congress in legislation, oversight and the power of the purse
- party system and committee system and their significance within Congress
- representative role of senators and representatives
- relative strengths of the House of Representatives and the Senate
- relationship of Congress to the executive branch of government and the Supreme Court.

3.2.1.3 The executive branch of government: President

Key concepts and terminology:

- The Executive
- The President
- formal powers
- informal powers
- checks and balances
- imperial presidency
- imperilled presidency

Focus

Students should analyse and evaluate:

- sources of presidential power: selecting two relevant examples to demonstrate how these have been used by different presidents
- difference between formal powers (enumerated and inherent powers outlined in Article 2 of the constitution) and informal powers (President as de facto party leader, agenda setter, world leader, modern developments eg stretching of implied powers and the creation of institutions such as Executive Office of the President (EXOP))
- constraints on President's ability to exercise those powers:
 - the effectiveness of formal checks and balances
 - key variables such as party support in Congress
 - the prevailing orientation of the Supreme Court
 - the attitudes of the media and public opinion
- the relationship between the presidency and other institutions eg the cabinet, the Executive Office of the President (EXOP), the federal bureaucracy and federal agencies, and why this relationship varies from one president to another
- one example that shows the waxing and waning of presidential power
 - eg Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR) and Executive Office of the President (EXOP), John F. Kennedy (JFK) and the Cuban missile crisis, Reagan and Clinton's relationships with Congress, significance of which party controls Congress
- the debate about the 'Imperial versus Imperilled Presidency'.

3.2.1.4 The judicial branch of government

Key concepts and terminology:

- Supreme Court
- judicial activism
- judicial restraint
- judicial review
- strict and loose constructionism.

Focus

Students should analyse and evaluate:

- process of selection and appointment of Supreme Court judges
- current composition
- the nature of judicial power
- the constitutional role of the Supreme Court:
 - Supreme Court as the guardian of the constitution/constitutional interpretation
 - Supreme Court as protector of citizens' rights
- the significance of judicial review

-
- debates about the political significance of the Supreme Court
 - two examples of landmark rulings and related debates and controversies
 - these are Court decisions which establish a significant new legal principle or concept, or otherwise substantially change the interpretation of existing law. The following are a guide to some of the wide range of landmark cases that could be taught:
 - The Warren Court 1954–1969
 - *Brown vs Topeka Board of Education* (1954)
 - *Miranda vs Arizona* (1966)
 - The Burger Court 1969–1986
 - *Roe vs Wade* (1973)
 - *United States vs Nixon* (1974)
 - The Rehnquist Court 1986–2005
 - *Texas vs Johnston* (1989)
 - *Bush vs Gore* (2000)
 - The Roberts Court 2005 – present
 - *District of Columbia vs Heller* (2008)
 - *Obergefell vs Hodges* (2015)
 - significance of the judiciary in shaping one area of public policy in terms of, for example, federalism, civil rights, race, gender, punishment.

3.2.1.5 The electoral process and direct democracy

Key concepts and terminology:

- electoral college system
- primaries
- caucuses
- national nominating conventions
- direct democracy
- voting behaviour
- popular vote
- split ticket voting
- abstention
- incumbency.

Focus

Students should analyse and evaluate:

- the electoral systems used in the USA
- main characteristics of presidential and congressional elections and campaigns
- candidate selection and nomination:
 - primaries
 - caucuses
 - national nominating conventions
- debates concerning the workings, outcomes and impact of the electoral college system on campaigns
- factors determining electoral outcomes:
 - money
 - media
 - issues

- leadership
- the significance of incumbency
- debates about campaign finance
- direct democracy at state level:
 - referendums, initiatives, propositions, recall elections and debates concerning their use
- voting behaviour and the main variables affecting the way people vote in the USA
- links between parties and their core voting coalitions
- factors in voting behaviour:
 - issues, candidates
 - the significance of recent (post 1980) and historic (eg 1932 and 1968) re-aligning elections can be used to illustrate arguments relating to factors influencing voting
- split ticket voting and high levels of abstention in US elections.

3.2.1.6 Political parties

Key concepts and terminology:

- ideology
- factionalism
- party decline
- party renewal
- party organisation
- third parties
- independent candidates.

Focus

Students should analyse and evaluate:

- the two main political parties and their:
 - ideologies
 - values
 - policies
 - traditions
 - party organisation
- the ideological changes in both the Democratic and Republican parties making them more distinct and polarized
- factionalised nature of parties and internal divisions
- debates concerning party decline or renewal
- weakness of US parties
- the two party dominance in US politics
- significance of third parties and independent candidates.

3.2.1.7 Pressure groups

Key concepts and terminology:

- political pluralism
- electoral finance
- iron triangles
- promotional groups

-
- interest groups
 - Political Action Committees and Super PACs.

Focus

Students should analyse and evaluate:

- the extent of political pluralism in the USA
- typologies of pressure groups
- methods and tactics used by pressure groups to influence decision making
- pressure group funding of elections:
 - funding of Washington insiders
 - iron triangles
 - reinforcing incumbency
 - relative power of pressure groups vis-a-vis political parties
- debates concerning the power of pressure groups in the USA
- role and significance of Political Action Committees and Super PAC's regarding electoral finance.

3.2.1.8 Civil rights

Key concepts and terminology:

- Civil Liberties
- Bill of Rights
- landmark rulings
- Supreme Court
- Civil Rights movement.

Focus

Students should analyse and evaluate:

- protection of civil liberties and rights under:
 - the constitution
 - Bill of Rights
 - subsequent amendments
 - landmark rulings of the Supreme Court
- the role of pressure groups in promoting and supporting rights
- the impact of salient political issues concerning civil rights and liberties on US politics eg in relation to one of:
 - abortion
 - race
 - immigration
 - religion
 - freedom of speech
 - gender
 - sexual orientation
 - privacy
 - disability
 - the right to bear arms

3.2.2 Comparative politics

Students should use the following three theoretical approaches to make a comparative study of the government and politics of the UK and the USA, analysing and explaining similarities and differences between them.

- structural
- rational
- cultural.

3.2.2.1 Constitutional arrangements

Key concepts and terminology:

See [The nature and sources of the British Constitution](#) (page 10), [The structure and role of Parliament](#) (page 11) and [Devolution](#) (page 12) for key concepts and terminology relevant to UK constitutional arrangements.

See [The Constitutional framework of US government](#) (page 15), [The legislative branch of government: Congress](#) (page 16) and [The executive branch of government: President](#) (page 16) for key concepts and terminology relevant to US constitutional arrangements.

Focus

Students should analyse and evaluate:

- key similarities and differences between the UK and US constitutions and their impact on government and politics in their respective countries
- their nature (codified/uncodified), sources and provisions, separation of powers, checks and balances
- similarities and differences between the devolution model in the UK and the federal model in the USA
- the legislatures: their relative strengths and weaknesses and the extent to which their roles are similar and their powers equal
- powers, composition, structure, strengths and weaknesses.

3.2.2.2 The executives

Key concepts and terminology:

See [The Prime Minister and Cabinet](#) (page 11) for key concepts and terminology relevant to UK prime minister and cabinet.

See [The executive branch of government: President](#) (page 16) for key concepts and terminology relevant to the US executive branch of government.

Focus

Students should analyse and evaluate:

- the role and powers of the UK prime minister and of the US president, how they differ from each other and the extent of their accountability to the legislatures
- a comparison of the relationship of the UK prime minister and of the US president to other institutions of government.

3.2.2.3 The judiciaries

Key concepts and terminology:

See [The judiciary](#) (page 12) for key concepts and terminology relevant to the UK judiciary.

See [The judicial branch of government](#) (page 17) for key concepts and terminology relevant to the US judiciary.

Focus

Students should analyse and evaluate:

- similarities and differences of supreme courts
- impact on government and politics
- the relative extent of the powers of the UK Supreme Court and the US Supreme Court and the bases of those powers within their systems of government
- comparison of the relative independence of the judiciary in the UK and the USA.

3.2.2.4 Electoral and party systems

Key concepts and terminology:

See [Elections and referendums](#) (page 13) and [Political parties](#) (page 19) for key concepts and terminology relevant to UK electoral and party systems

See [The electoral process and direct democracy](#) (page 18) and [Political parties](#) (page 19) for key concepts and terminology relevant to US electoral and party systems

Focus

Students should analyse and evaluate:

- comparisons of elections and electoral systems used in the UK and USA
- comparisons of the two party systems and how they operate in the UK and the USA
- debates in the UK and USA surrounding campaign and party finance
- degrees of internal unity within the parties in the UK and the USA
- explanations of why the USA has a two party system whilst the UK is moving towards a multi-party system
- third party and independent candidates in the UK and the USA
- comparisons of party policies in the UK and the USA.

3.2.2.5 Pressure groups

Key concepts and terminology:

See [Pressure groups](#) (page 15) for key concepts and terminology relevant to the UK pressure groups

See [Pressure groups](#) (page 19) for key concepts and terminology relevant to US pressure groups

Focus

Students should analyse and evaluate:

- comparison of key similarities and differences of the influences on government in the UK and the USA
- the relative power, influence and methods of pressure groups in the UK and the USA.

3.2.2.6 Civil Rights

Key concepts and terminology:

See [The nature and sources of the British Constitution](#) (page 10) for key concepts and terminology relevant to UK civil rights.

See [Civil rights](#) (page 20) for key concepts and terminology relevant to US civil rights.

Focus

Students should analyse and evaluate:

- protection of civil rights key similarities and differences regarding the protection of civil rights in the UK and the USA
- debates about civil rights issues
- comparisons of methods, influence and effectiveness of civil rights campaigns in the UK and the USA.

3.3 Political ideas

3.3.1 Core ideologies

3.3.1.1 Liberalism

Key concepts and terminology:

- the individual and freedom
- human nature, the state, society and the economy
- classical liberalism
- modern liberalism.

Focus

Students should analyse and evaluate:

- debates about the nature of liberalism
- core liberal ideas and values concerning the individual and freedom
- classical liberalism, modern (new/progressive) liberalism
- in their study of the following thinkers students should focus on the aspects indicated after each thinker's name and relate this to liberal thinking on human nature, the state, society and the economy:
 - John Locke – natural rights, liberty and individualism, fiduciary power of government
 - John Stuart Mill – criticism of hedonism, freedom, integrity and self respect of the individual, self regarding and other regarding actions
 - John Rawls – concept of justice, principles of justice
 - Thomas Hill Green – self development/role of the State, negative and positive freedom
 - Mary Wollstonecraft – equality and rights, 'revolution controversy', criticisms of aristocracy and republicanism
 - Betty Friedan – equal rights, Civil Rights and feminist movements in the USA.

3.3.1.2 Conservatism

Key concepts and terminology:

- government, the free market, the individual
- authority, tradition, private property human nature, the state, society and the economy
- traditional conservatism
- the new right.

Focus

Students should analyse and evaluate:

- debates about the nature of conservatism
- core conservative ideas and values concerning government, the free market and the individual
- different strands of conservative thinking from traditional Conservatism to the New Right
- in their study of the following thinkers students should focus on the aspects indicated after each thinker's name and relate this to conservative thinking on human nature, the state, society and the economy:
 - Thomas Hobbes – concept of human nature/laws of nature, power of the sovereign/the individual and self protection
 - Edmund Burke – Anti-Jacobinism/Whig principles, Burke's reaction to the American and French Revolutions
 - Michael Oakeshott – importance of tradition/criticisms of rationalism, 'Politics of Faith' vs 'Politics of Scepticism'
 - Ayn Rand – opposition to collectivism and statism, rational and ethical egoism/individual rights
 - Robert Nozick – limited functions of the State, justification of inequalities of wealth resulting from freely exchanged contracts.

3.3.1.3 Socialism

Key concepts and terminology:

- Marxism, class analysis and fundamental goals of socialism
- human nature, the state, society and the economy
- revolutionary socialism
- social democracy.

Focus

Students should analyse and evaluate:

- debates about the nature of socialism
- core socialist views and values concerning Marxism, class analysis and the fundamental goals of socialism
- differing views and tensions within and between revolutionary socialism and social democracy
- in their study of the following thinkers students should focus on the aspects indicated after each thinker's name and relate this to socialist thinking on human nature, the state, society and the economy:
 - Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels – class and class struggle, dialectical materialism
 - Rosa Luxemburg – inevitability of the triumph of revolution/capacity of the masses, spontaneity/party oriented class struggle
 - Beatrice Webb – co-operative movement, co-operative federalism and co-operative individualism
 - Anthony Crosland – criticism of Marxism/Revisionism, rejection of nationalisation as central goal of party, political values of personal liberty, social welfare and equality
 - Anthony Giddens – rejection of traditional conception of socialism, the 'Third Way' in politics, combination of right wing economic and left wing social policies.

3.3.2 Other ideologies

Students will study **one** of the following five ideologies:

3.3.2.1 Nationalism

Key concepts and terminology:

- nation, sovereignty of the people
- human nature, the state, society and the economy
- minority nationalism, state nationalism.

Focus

Students should analyse and evaluate:

- debates about the nature of nationalism
- types of nationalism including minority nationalism and state nationalism and the extent to which they vary
- recent developments
- types and recent developments of minority nationalism, state nationalism, and the extent these different types of nationalism vary
- in their study of the following thinkers students should focus on the aspects indicated after each thinker's name and relate this to nationalist thinking on human nature, the state, society and the economy:
 - Jean Jacques Rousseau – the 'general will' of the people, sovereignty of the people, opposition to representative assembly
 - Johann Gottfried von Herder – importance of language and cultural traditions to create a nation, concept of nationality and patriotism
 - Giuseppe Mazzini – promotion of ideas of republicanism and nationalism, concept of 'thought and action'
 - Marcus Garvey – Garveyism, philosophy to inspire a global mass movement and economic empowerment focussed on Africa, pan-Africanism movement
 - Charles Maurras – integral nationalism, anti-France (anti-Protestants, Jews, Freemasons and foreigners), rejection of democratic principles.

3.3.2.2 Feminism

Key concepts and terminology:

- equality of treatment, recognition of gender differences
- human nature, the state, society and the economy
- liberal feminism, radical feminism.

Focus

Students should analyse and evaluate:

- debates about the nature of feminism
- core feminist views and values concerning equality of treatment, recognition of gender differences, affirmative action
- liberal feminism and radical feminism, and more recent developments such as difference feminism and post-feminism
- in their study of the following thinkers students should focus on the aspects indicated after each thinker's name and relate this to feminist thinking on human nature, the state, society and the economy:
 - Charlotte Perkins Gilman – reform Darwinism, role of females in society, androcentric culture
 - Simone de Beauvoir – feminist existentialism, patriarchal society, feminism and socialism
 - Kate Millett – theory of sexual politics, radical feminism

-
- Sheila Rowbotham – oppression of women and the working class, socialist feminism
 - bell hooks (Gloria Jean Watkins) – intersectionality, education gap between those lower in the economic scale and the leader of the feminist movement.

3.3.2.3 Multiculturalism

Key concepts and terminology:

- equality of opportunity, anti discrimination
- human nature, the state, society and the economy
- integration and segregation.

Focus

Students should analyse and evaluate:

- debates about the nature of multiculturalism
- core ideas and values of multiculturalism concerning equality of opportunity, anti-discrimination, assimilation
- integration and segregation
- in their study of the following thinkers students should focus on the aspects indicated after each thinker's name and relate this to multiculturalist thinking on human nature, the state, society and the economy:
 - Isaiah Berlin – negative/positive freedom
 - Will Kymlicka – rights and status of minority cultures, toleration
 - Charles Taylor – human rights and the dignity of human life, benevolent formula for mutual existence
 - Tariq Modood – multiculturalism, cosmopolitanism, assimilation, liberalism and multiculturalism
 - Bikhu Parekh – cultural pluralism, the limits of diversity.

3.3.2.4 Anarchism

Key concepts and terminology:

- autonomy of the individual, opposition to and abolition of coercive relationships, opposition to government and society without government
- human nature, the state, society and the economy
- individual anarchist traditions and collectivist anarchist traditions.

Focus

Students should analyse and evaluate:

- debates about the nature of anarchism
- core anarchist views and values concerning autonomy of the individual, opposition to and abolition of coercive relationships, opposition to government, society without government
- individualist and collectivist anarchist traditions
- in their study of the following thinkers students should focus on the aspects indicated after each thinker's name and relate this to anarchist thinking on human nature, the state, society and the economy:
 - Max Stirner – freedom/the state, individualist anarchism, property
 - Mikhail Bakunin – collectivist anarchism, syndicalism
 - Emma Goldman – freedom/self expression, tactical use of violence in the revolutionary struggle

- Peter Kropotkin – mutual aid (mutually beneficial co-operation), anarchist communism
- Pierre-Joseph Proudhon – anarchy, order without power, workers' associations, co-operatives, property.

3.3.2.5 Ecologism

Key concepts and terminology:

- the intrinsic relationship between humankind and nature, sustainability
- human nature, the state, society and the economy
- light greens and dark greens.

Focus

Students should analyse and evaluate:

- debates about the nature of ecologism
- core ecologist views and values concerning the intrinsic relationship between humankind and nature, sustainability
- light greens and dark greens
- in their study of the following thinkers students should focus on the aspects indicated after each thinker's name and relate this to ecologist thinking on human nature, the state, society and the economy:
 - Aldo Leopold – wilderness protection/wildlife management, conservation as harmony between men and land
 - Rachel Carson – grassroots environmentalism, environmental protection agency, environmental movement, sustainable management of resources
 - EF Schumacher – appropriate technologies, more empowerment of people, sustainable development/technology transfer
 - Carolyn Merchant – interactions of people and nature, moral concern with participatory democracy.
 - Murray Bookchin – communalism, anti capitalist, decentralisation, libertarian municipalism/ face to face assembly democracy.

4 Scheme of assessment

Find past papers and mark schemes, and specimen papers for new courses, on our website at aqa.org.uk/pastpapers

This specification is designed to be taken over two years.

This is a linear qualification. In order to achieve the award, students must complete all assessments at the end of the course and in the same series.

A-level exams and certification for this specification are available for the first time in May/June 2019 and then every May/June for the life of the specification.

All materials are available in English only.

Our A-level exams in Politics include questions that allow students to demonstrate their ability to:

- recall information
- draw together information from different areas of the specification
- apply their knowledge and understanding in practical and theoretical contexts.

Our A-level exams in politics include three broad question types.

9 mark questions require students to explain and analyse different political institutions, processes, concepts, theories and issues prescribed in the specification. Students are required to develop and substantiate at least three points in a structured, analytical answer, making use of appropriate political vocabulary and examples to substantiate their answer.

25 mark extract based questions require students to comprehend and interpret the argument(s) contained in political information, using their knowledge and understanding of the issue to analyse and evaluate the argument(s) put forward. The answer should be balanced, maintain a sustained line of reasoning and lead to a reasoned conclusion, communicated with relevance, clarity and coherence. The political information used in exams may take the form of political publications, government publications, newspaper extracts, manifestos, visual material and data.

25 mark essay questions require students to analyse and evaluate a given statement using their knowledge and understanding of the issue under discussion. The question may draw from different sections of the specification, requiring students to identify and substantiate parallels, connections, similarities and differences between aspects of politics studied. The answer should take the form of a structured and balanced argument, maintaining a sustained line of reasoning, communicated with relevance, clarity and coherence and leading to a reasoned conclusion. The 25 mark essay questions for comparative politics (component 2, section C), will require students to make explicit comparisons between UK and US government and politics.

4.1 Aims

Courses based on this specification must encourage students to:

- develop knowledge and an informed understanding of contemporary political structures and issues in their historical context, both within the UK and globally
- develop a critical awareness of the changing nature of politics and the relationships between political ideas, institutions and processes
- develop knowledge and an informed understanding of the influences and interests which have an impact on decisions in government and politics

- develop knowledge and an informed understanding of the rights and responsibilities of individuals and groups
- develop the ability to critically analyse, interpret and evaluate political information to form arguments and make judgements
- develop an interest in, and engagement with, contemporary politics.

4.2 Assessment objectives

Assessment objectives (AOs) are set by Ofqual and are the same across all A-level Politics specifications and all exam boards.

The exams will measure how students have achieved the following assessment objectives.

- AO1: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of political institutions, processes, concepts, theories and issues.
- AO2: Analyse aspects of politics and political information, including in relation to parallels, connections, similarities and differences.
- AO3: Evaluate aspects of politics and political information, including to construct arguments, make substantiated judgements and draw conclusions.

4.2.1 Assessment objective weightings for A-level Politics

Assessment objectives (AOs)	Component weightings (approx %)			Overall weighting (approx %)
	Paper 1	Paper 2	Paper 3	
AO1	30-40	30-40	30-40	30-40
AO2	35-45	35-45	35-45	35-45
AO3	25-35	25-35	25-35	25-35
Overall weighting of components	33⅓	33⅓	33⅓	100

4.3 Assessment weightings

The marks awarded on the papers will be scaled to meet the weighting of the components. Students' final marks will be calculated by adding together the scaled marks for each component. Grade boundaries will be set using this total scaled mark. The scaling and total scaled marks are shown in the table below.

Component	Maximum raw mark	Scaling factor	Maximum scaled mark
Paper 1	77	x1	77
Paper 2	77	x1	77
Paper 3	77	x1	77
Total scaled mark:			231

5 General administration

You can find information about all aspects of administration, as well as all the forms you need, at aqa.org.uk/examsadmin

5.1 Entries and codes

You only need to make one entry for each qualification – this will cover all the question papers, non-exam assessment and certification.

Every specification is given a national discount (classification) code by the Department for Education (DfE), which indicates its subject area.

If a student takes two specifications with the same discount code, further and higher education providers are likely to take the view that they have only achieved one of the two qualifications. Please check this before your students start their course.

Qualification title	AQA entry code	DfE discount code
AQA Advanced Level GCE in Politics	7152	TBC

This specification complies with:

- Ofqual *General conditions of recognition* that apply to all regulated qualifications
- Ofqual GCE qualification level conditions that apply to all GCEs
- Ofqual GCE subject level conditions that apply to all GCEs in this subject
- all other relevant regulatory documents.

The Ofqual qualification accreditation number (QAN) is 603/1403/5.

5.2 Overlaps with other qualifications

There is overlapping content in the AS and A-level Politics specifications. This helps you teach the AS and A-level together.

5.3 Awarding grades and reporting results

The A-level qualification will be graded on a six-point scale: A*, A, B, C, D and E.

Students who fail to reach the minimum standard for grade E will be recorded as U (unclassified) and will not receive a qualification certificate.

5.4 Resits and shelf life

Students can resit the qualification as many times as they wish, within the shelf life of the qualification.

5.5 Previous learning and prerequisites

There are no previous learning requirements. Any requirements for entry to a course based on this specification are at the discretion of schools and colleges.

5.6 Access to assessment: diversity and inclusion

General qualifications are designed to prepare students for a wide range of occupations and further study. Therefore our qualifications must assess a wide range of competences.

The subject criteria have been assessed to see if any of the skills or knowledge required present any possible difficulty to any students, whatever their ethnic background, religion, sex, age, disability or sexuality. Tests of specific competences were only included if they were important to the subject.

As members of the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) we participate in the production of the JCQ document *Access Arrangements and Reasonable Adjustments: General and Vocational qualifications*. We follow these guidelines when assessing the needs of individual students who may require an access arrangement or reasonable adjustment. This document is published at jcq.org.uk

Students with disabilities and special needs

We're required by the Equality Act 2010 to make reasonable adjustments to remove or lessen any disadvantage that affects a disabled student.

We can make arrangements for disabled students and students with special needs to help them access the assessments, as long as the competences being tested aren't changed. Access arrangements must be agreed **before** the assessment. For example, a Braille paper would be a reasonable adjustment for a Braille reader.

To arrange access arrangements or reasonable adjustments, you can apply using the online service at aqa.org.uk/eaqa

Special consideration

We can give special consideration to students who have been disadvantaged at the time of the assessment through no fault of their own – for example a temporary illness, injury or serious problem such as family bereavement. We can only do this **after** the assessment.

Your exams officer should apply online for special consideration at aqa.org.uk/eaqa

For more information and advice visit aqa.org.uk/access or email accessarrangementsqueries@aqa.org.uk

5.7 Working with AQA for the first time

If your school or college hasn't previously offered our specifications, you need to register as an AQA centre. Find out how at [aqa.org.uk/becomeacentre](https://www.aqa.org.uk/becomeacentre)

5.8 Private candidates

This specification is available to private candidates.

A private candidate is someone who enters for exams through an AQA approved school or college but is not enrolled as a student there.

A private candidate may be self-taught, home schooled or have private tuition, either with a tutor or through a distance learning organisation. They must be based in the UK.

If you have any queries as a private candidate, you can:

- speak to the exams officer at the school or college where you intend to take your exams
- visit our website at [aqa.org.uk/privatecandidates](https://www.aqa.org.uk/privatecandidates)
- email privatecandidates@aqa.org.uk

5.9 Use of Calculators

Students may use a calculator in the examination. They must however ensure that their calculator meets the requirements as set out in the *JCQ Instructions for conducting examinations*. These instructions make it clear what the requirements are for calculators (what they must be) and what they are not (what they must not be). The instructions are regularly updated and can be found on the Joint Council for Qualifications website at www.jcq.org.uk.

Get help and support

Visit our website for information, guidance, support and resources at aqa.org.uk/7152

You can talk directly to the Politics subject team:

E: govandpol-s@aqa.org.uk

T: 0161 958 3861