



Sandwell Academy



A Level in Politics

WHY STUDY A-LEVEL POLITICS?

- Insight into political beliefs central to an understanding of the modern world.
- Development of analytical and evaluative skills in relation to interesting topics prevalent in the turbulent political climate of today.
- Awareness of contemporary issues and understanding of the decisions that affect your life and those around you.
- Development of key expressive skills such as informed debate, presentation, group work and written analysis.
- Development of analytical and critical thinking skills that are useful to study a variety of subjects such as **English Literature, Economics, Sociology, History** and more.

The course prepares students for a range of careers in contexts such as (but not limited to):

Civil Service
Political risk analyst

Research officer
Politician / assistant

Policy analysis
Social Researcher

SPECIFIC ENTRY REQUIREMENTS

- Grade 6 in GCSE English.
- Grade 6 in GCSE Humanities subject.

COURSE DETAILS

During Year 12, students will study the following 3 units:

Unit 1: The Government of the UK

Students will explore how political power operates within the British political system. Students examine the structure and role of the executive, including the Prime Minister and Cabinet, and analyse how authority has evolved, particularly under leaders such as Margaret Thatcher and Tony Blair. The course also investigates the nature of the constitution, including its uncoded character, the impact of key reforms such as those introduced by David Cameron, and debates surrounding sovereignty and devolution.

Component 1 - UK Government

- Nature and Sources of the British Constitution
- Structure and Role of Parliament
- The Prime Minister and Cabinet
- The Judiciary
- Devolution

Unit 2: The Government of the USA

Pupils will study the structure and operation of American political institutions and the principles underpinning them. Students explore the constitutional framework established in 1787, including federalism, the separation of powers and checks and balances, and analyse the roles of Congress, the Presidency and the Supreme Court. The course considers how power has been exercised and challenged by key figures such as Franklin D. Roosevelt and Donald Trump, as well as the significance of landmark Supreme Court cases like Brown v. Board of Education.

Component 2 - UK Government

- The Constitutional framework of the US government
- The Legislative branch of government: Congress
- The executive branch of government: President
- The Judicial branch of government
- Comparative Politics (Structural, Rational, Cultural)

Unit 3: Core Political Ideologies

As part of this unit student will be introduced to the core ideologies that shape political debate in the UK and beyond. Students study the key principles of liberalism, conservatism and socialism, exploring how thinkers such as John Locke, Karl Marx and Edmund Burke have influenced modern political thought. The unit examines differing views on the state, human nature, the economy and society, and considers how these ideas have evolved into modern variants, including neoliberalism, neoconservatism and social democracy.

Component 3 – Core Ideologies

- Liberalism
- Conservatism

During Year 13, students will study the following 3 units:

Unit 1: The Politics of the UK

The UK component of the AQA A-level Politics course explores the core structures and processes of political power in the United Kingdom. The course covers democracy and participation, electoral systems, voting behaviour, and the role of the main political parties such as the Conservative Party, Labour Party, and Liberal Democrats, alongside pressure groups and devolved government. Overall, it develops critical understanding of how political power is distributed, challenged, and exercised within the UK political system.

Component 1 - UK Politics

- Democracy and Participation
- Elections and Referendums
- Political Parties
- Pressure Groups
- The European Union

Unit 2: The Politics of the USA

The USA component of the AQA A-level Politics course examines the political institutions of American government, focusing on democracy and participation, electoral processes, voting behaviour, political parties, pressure groups, and civil rights, developing an understanding of how power is distributed and contested within the US political system.

Component 2 - UK Government

- The electoral process and direct democracy
- Political Parties
- Pressure Groups
- Civil Rights
- Comparative Politics (Structural, Rational, Cultural)

Unit 3: Core Political Ideologies

The Political Ideas component of the AQA A-level Politics course introduces students to the core ideologies that shape political debate in the UK and beyond. Students study the key principles of liberalism, conservatism and socialism, exploring how thinkers such as John Locke, Karl Marx and Edmund Burke have influenced modern political thought. The unit examines differing views on the state, human nature, the economy and society, and considers how these ideas have evolved into modern variants, including neoliberalism, neoconservatism and social democracy.

Component 3 – Core Ideologies

- Socialism
- Feminism

Exams:

Paper 1: Government and politics of the UK

Paper 2: Government and Politics of the USA and Comparative Politics

Paper 3: Political Ideas

How will I be assessed?

Component	Assessment Information	Marks	% of A-Level
1	Written Examination - 2 hours Section A - Short Questions: ⇒ 3 9-mark questions ⇒ Assessed on AO1 Section B – Extract Question: ⇒ 1 25-mark question on two given extracts. ⇒ Assessed on AO1, AO2 and AO3 Section C - Essay Questions: ⇒ 1 25-mark question (From a choice of two) ⇒ Assessed on AO1, AO2 and AO3	77	33%
2	Written Examination - 2 hours Section A - Short Questions: ⇒ 3 9-mark questions ⇒ Assessed on AO1 Section B – Extract Question: ⇒ 1 25-mark question on two given extracts. ⇒ Assessed on AO1, AO2 and AO3 Section C - Essay Questions: ⇒ 1 25-mark question (From a choice of two) ⇒ Assessed on AO1, AO2 and AO3	77	33%
3	Written Examination - 2 hours Section A - Short Questions: ⇒ 3 9-mark questions ⇒ Assessed on AO1 Section B – Extract Question: ⇒ 1 25-mark question on two given extracts. ⇒ Assessed on AO1, AO2 and AO3 Section C - Essay Questions: ⇒ 1 25-mark question (From a choice of two) ⇒ Assessed on AO1, AO2 and AO3	77	33%