

Transition work for A Level Politics 2026

Welcome to Politics!

You have chosen a brilliant new subject to study at A Level. Politics will help you to make sense of the world. Politics is a fast-changing subject, so we are always discussing current issues, events and developments. Politics is also fun. If you engage with the subject, we hope you will learn to enjoy it as much as we do.

Complete the following tasks in preparation for starting the course:

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. Donald Trump’s great comeback from defeat in 2020 to a very comfortable victory in 2024. These three things have changed European, North American (Canada), Australasia (Australia) 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 23rd 2016. 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.

Research 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

Key Terms

Core Political Concepts

Term	Definition / explanation
Politics	
Power	
Authority	
Legitimacy	
Government	
Democracy	
Direct democracy	
Representative democracy	

UK Constitution and Democracy

Term	Definition / explanation
Sovereignty	
Parliamentary sovereignty	
Rule of Law	
Constitutional monarchy	
Referendum (UK – not US!)	
Devolution	

UK Government Structures

Term	Definition / explanation
Executive branch	
Prime Minister	
Cabinet	

Legislative branch	
Parliament	
House of Commons	
House of Lords	
Judicial branch	
Supreme Court (UK – not US!)	

UK Political Parties

Term	Definition / explanation
Labour Party	
Conservative Party	
Liberal Democrats	
Reform UK	
Green Party	

Challenge: Stretch Terms

Term	Definition / explanation
Civil society	
Westminster Model	
Elective dictatorship	
Fusion of powers	
Separation of powers	
Scottish National Party	
Liberalism	
Conservatism	
Socialism	
Feminism	

Task Two: 2024 General Election Party Manifestos

Find out three manifesto pledge made by each political party before the General Election in 2024. The Green Party is done for you. You may wish to use - [Who should I vote for? Compare 2024 election manifestos and policies - BBC News](#)

Write your own views on each of their pledges, e.g. *aim to reach net zero – Great idea but is this realistic?*

Candidate	Pledges	Thoughts (Positive/Negative)
Green	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Aim to reach net zero - to stop adding to the total amount of greenhouse gases in the atmosphere - by 2040, investing £40bn a year to move to a green economy. • Introduce a wealth tax on assets above £10m and raise National Insurance for those earning more than £50,270. • Cut energy bills by improving home insulation and installing low-carbon heating systems such as heat pumps. 	
Labour		
Reform		
Conservatives		

Liberal Democrats		

Challenge: Which political party had the most appealing pledges to you? Explain your reasoning.

Task Three: 2024 General Election Results

Do some research and answer the following questions.

- a. What is the name of the Constituency in which you live?
- b. Who became MP for your Constituency in the 2024 election? Which party are they a member of?
- c. How many more votes did they get than the person who came second?
- d. Nationally, what was the % turnout of voters?
- e. Was the turnout the same, higher or lower than in the 2019 election?
- f. Complete the table of national results from the 2024 election.

Party	Number of seats won	Is this up or down on the 2019 election (e.g. +39 seats)	Percentage of the national vote	How many votes did they receive nationally?
<i>Conservative</i>				
<i>Labour</i>				

Liberal Democrats				
Reform				
Green				

Challenge: To what extent do you think your MP effectively represents their constituents? Why? You may wish to consider the work and issues that they have shown an interest in and/or their voting record in Parliament? (This may help: <https://members.parliament.uk/FindYourMP>)

Task Four: Evaluate one of the following views

- The voting age for elections should be lowered from 18 to 16.
- Voting should be made compulsory for all adults.
- Britain should get rid of all of its nuclear weapons.
- Students should not have to pay to go to university.
- The monarchy in the UK should be abolished.
- Britain should rejoin the European Union.

Write a response of **approximately 500 words** in which you:

1. **Explain the issue** and why it is controversial.
2. **Outline arguments in favour** of the statement.
3. **Outline arguments against** the statement.
4. **Evaluate** the strength of these arguments, not just describe them.
5. **Reach a reasoned conclusion**, explaining your own view based on the evidence discussed.

You must consider **both sides of the argument fairly**, even if you strongly agree with one side.

Your work may be **typed or handwritten**. Use paragraphs and clear written English.

Example: Evaluate the view that the voting age for elections should be lowered from 18 to 16.

The voting age in the UK is currently 18, meaning that people under this age have no say in general elections. However, some argue that the voting age should be lowered to 16. This is a controversial issue because it raises questions about maturity, political knowledge and fairness, and there are strong arguments both for and against the change.

One argument in favour of lowering the voting age is that 16- and 17-year-olds are already trusted with significant responsibilities. At 16, young people can work full time, pay taxes, and in some cases join the armed forces. Supporters argue that if young people are expected to contribute to society financially, they should also have a say in how the country is run. From this perspective, it seems unfair to tax young people while denying them the right to vote.

Another argument is that allowing people to vote at 16 could increase political engagement. Young people are still in education, where politics and citizenship may be discussed, so they may be better placed to learn about elections and political issues at this age. Supporters suggest that voting early could create lifelong voting habits, increasing turnout and strengthening democracy in the long term.

However, there are also strong arguments against lowering the voting age. A common concern is that many 16- and 17-year-olds may lack the maturity or life experience needed to make informed political decisions. Critics argue that important decisions about issues such as the economy, defence and healthcare require a level of understanding that often comes with age and experience. As a result, younger voters may be more easily influenced by peers, social media or family opinions.

In addition, turnout among 18–24-year-olds is already relatively low, suggesting that many young adults are disengaged from politics. Those opposed to lowering the voting age question why giving the vote to even younger people would improve participation. There is little evidence that simply extending the vote would automatically lead to greater political knowledge or interest.

In conclusion, lowering the voting age to 16 has some clear advantages, particularly in terms of fairness and encouraging early political engagement. However, concerns about maturity and political understanding remain persuasive. Overall, while the idea has merit, it may be more effective to focus on improving political education and engagement among all young people before making such a significant change to the voting system.

Task Five: Read/watch the news over the summer holidays.

Create a 10-question quiz on current political events that we can use in September. Don't forget to write the answers as well as the questions!

Further Challenge: Watch the following documentaries.

On BBC iPlayer:

- **Blair & Brown: The New Labour Revolution (4 episodes)** – This series examines how Tony Blair and Gordon Brown reshaped the Labour Party into New Labour, exploring their achievements in government and the tensions and controversies that defined their legacy.
- **Clash of the Superpowers: America v China (2 episodes)** – The documentary explores how relations between the United States and China broke down after Donald Trump became president, leading to a trade war and heightened rivalry between the two global superpowers.

- **Reform: Ready to Rule? (1 episode)** – This film investigates the rise of Reform UK, examining its appeal to dissatisfied voters and asking whether it is capable of becoming a serious party of government.

On 4OD:

- **The Rise and Fall of Boris Johnson (4 episodes)** – This series traces Boris Johnson’s political career, examining how ambition, scandals and leadership decisions led to his rise to prime minister and his eventual downfall.
- **The Tony Blair Story (3 episodes)** – This documentary explores Tony Blair’s journey to power, his years as prime minister, and the successes and controversies that shaped his time in office and long-term legacy.
- **Trump’s Heist: The President Who Would Not Lose (2 episodes)** – This documentary examines attempts by Donald Trump and his supporters to challenge and overturn the result of the 2020 US presidential election after his defeat.

For further queries or to submit work, please email jmanton@wigstonmat.org