

Y11 into Y12 AQA A-Level Politics: Summer Work

Welcome to A-Level Politics! The jump from GCSE to A-Level requires strong independent study habits, organisation, and academic literacy. Because politics changes every single day, the best political analysts are those who stay informed.

This document contains 5 hours of compulsory transition work designed to take about 1 hour per week. We will be using your research and findings directly in our first lessons this September. Make sure your work is organised and ready to bring to your first lesson.

Compulsory Plan (5 hours total)

Introduction to Democracy & Participation

- 1 hour
- Research the difference between Direct Democracy and Representative Democracy.
- Create a clear, two-column summary table in your notes comparing the two systems. Include:
 - A clear definition of each.
 - Two advantages and two disadvantages of each system.
 - A real-world example of each in action within modern UK history (Hint: Think about referendums vs. general elections).

Executive Power – The Prime Minister’s Cabinet

- 1 hour
- The UK Prime Minister is supported by a Cabinet of senior ministers.
- Research and create a "Who's Who" fact file for the following three key positions in the current UK Government:
 - The Prime Minister
 - The Chancellor of the Exchequer
 - The Home Secretary
 - *For each person, note down their name, political party, their main responsibilities, and one major policy or headline they have been involved in recently.*

Parliament – The House of Commons vs. House of Lords

- 1 hour
- Watch a recent 15-minute clip of Prime Minister’s Questions (PMQs) via *UK Parliament TV* or YouTube.
 - What role does the House of Commons play in holding the government to account?
 - Did the debate seem professional and effective, or chaotic and adversarial?

- Briefly note one key difference in how members get their seats in the House of Commons vs. the House of Lords.

Political Parties – Ideas and Ideologies

- 1 hour
- Research the three main political parties in the UK: the Conservative Party, Reform UK and the Labour Party.
- Create a mind map or bulleted summary highlighting their core beliefs on the following two areas:
 - The Economy: Who favours higher public spending and taxes? Who favours free markets and lower taxes?
 - Social Issues: What are their views on public services like the NHS, immigration and law and order?

The Judiciary & The UK Constitution

- 1 hour
- The UK constitution is "uncodified" (not written down in one single document). Research what this means.
- Write a one-paragraph summary explaining the concept of Parliamentary Sovereignty and look up the UK Supreme Court, find and briefly summarise one landmark court case from the last 10 years where the Supreme Court ruled on a government decision.

Optional Extension Activities

Podcasts - these are fantastic and will keep you well informed:

- The News Agents
- Newscast
- The Rest is Politics
- Political thinking with Nick Robinson

Watch and engage

- BBC News / Sky News / Channel 4 News: Watch the news or spend 10 minutes a day checking the politics section of a major news app.
- The Thick of It: Brilliant (comedic, and very rude) fictional insights into the inner workings of British political machinery. Well worth a watch!