



Explore the institutions ideas and debates that shape political life

Politics does not stop at the classroom door. This collection will help you go beyond the Edexcel A Level Politics course by exploring political institutions, evidence, arguments and ideas through articles, podcasts, videos, lectures, data, primary sources and interactive activities. All resources are free to access.

How to use this collection

- Choose a topic that interests you or connects with your current classroom learning.
- Use the format, level and approximate time to select a suitable resource.
- Follow the Think question as you read, watch, listen or explore.
- Return regularly. Politics changes, so connect the core ideas in this collection with current events.

Explore Connect Question

1. What is the most important thing I discovered?
2. Which part of the Politics course does it connect to?
3. What claim, evidence or assumption would I challenge?
4. What further question has it left me considering?

Contents

Section	What you will find
Keeping Politics Current	News, analysis and podcasts
UK Politics and Government	Democracy, parties, elections, the constitution and governing institutions
US Politics and Government	The Constitution, Congress, presidency, Supreme Court and participation
Political Ideas	Liberalism, conservatism, socialism and feminism

Keeping Politics Current

Use these resources to follow political developments as they happen. Current-affairs sources select stories and frame arguments differently, so compare coverage, distinguish reporting from opinion and test important claims against more than one reliable source.

[BBC Politics](#)

Read and watch | Start here | 10 minutes

Follow the main developments in Westminster and across the UK with regularly updated reporting and explainers.

Think Which institution, individual or political pressure has most influenced this story?

[The Conversation UK Politics](#)

Read | Develop | 10 to 20 minutes

Read accessible analysis written by university researchers and subject specialists.

Think What evidence does the author use, and what might an alternative interpretation be?

[Inside Briefing from the Institute for Government](#)

Listen | Develop | 30 to 45 minutes

Hear expert analysis of the political and constitutional issues shaping Westminster.

Think What does the episode reveal about how government works in practice rather than in theory?

[The Rest Is Politics](#)

Watch or listen | Start here | 30 to 60 minutes

Explore current UK and international politics through discussion between two former political insiders with different political backgrounds.

Think Where do the presenters agree, and where might their experience or viewpoint shape the discussion?

[BBC Americast](#)

Listen | Start here | 30 to 45 minutes

Follow elections, institutions and political conflict in the United States through accessible BBC analysis.

Think Which constitutional or electoral feature helps explain the development being discussed?

[Civics 101](#)

Listen | Start here | 15 to 40 minutes

Use short, engaging episodes to understand how American government and democracy are designed to work.

Think Does the institution described operate today as the Constitution intended?

UK Politics and Government

Explore the democratic processes and governing institutions of the United Kingdom. Begin with the accessible resources, then use the developing and stretch choices to encounter data, constitutional debate and expert analysis.

Democracy and participation

[How Parliament Government Democracy and You](#)

Interactive ebook | Start here | 30 minutes

Build a secure overview of Parliament, government, elections and the ways citizens can participate in political life.

Think Which form of participation gives citizens the greatest influence between elections?

[Ways to Get Involved in Democracy](#)

Explore | Start here | 10 minutes

Explore practical forms of political participation, from contacting representatives to observing elections.

Think Is voting the most important form of democratic participation?

[Public Attitudes to Elections and Democracy](#)

Read and explore data | Develop | 20 minutes

Examine national research into trust, participation, electoral integrity and attitudes towards UK democracy.

Think What is the strongest evidence that UK democracy is healthy or under strain?

Political parties

[MPs and Political Parties](#)

Read | Start here | 10 minutes

Understand how parties structure Parliament, form governments and organise opposition.

Think Do parties strengthen representative democracy or limit the independence of MPs?

[State of the Parties](#)

Explore live data | Start here | 10 minutes

View the current party composition of the House of Commons and see how parliamentary strength differs from national vote share.

Think What does the distribution of seats suggest about the effects of first past the post?

[Political Financing Donations Loans and State Funding](#)

Read | Stretch | 25 minutes

Explore how parties are funded and why donations, transparency and state funding remain controversial.

Think Would greater state funding make political parties more democratic?

Electoral systems

[Voting Systems Resource Pack](#)

Read and explore | Start here | 20 minutes

Compare the purposes, strengths and weaknesses of electoral systems used across the UK.

Think Which matters more: proportional representation or effective government?

[Types of Elections](#)

Explore | Start here | 15 minutes

See which institutions are elected in different parts of the UK and how their electoral arrangements vary.

Think Why might different elections require different electoral systems?

[Report on the 2024 UK Parliamentary General Election](#)

Read and explore data | Develop | 25 minutes

Investigate turnout, voter experience, campaigning and the administration of a recent general election.

Think What should count as evidence that an election has been conducted successfully?

Voting behaviour and the media

[British Election Study](#)

Explore research and data | Stretch | 20 to 40 minutes

Use the UK's longest-running election study to investigate changing party support, political attitudes and voting behaviour.

Think Which social or political factor appears most useful in explaining how people vote?

[News Consumption in the UK](#)

Read and explore data | Develop | 20 minutes

Examine how adults and young people access news and how trust differs between television, online news and social media.

Think Has social media made citizens better informed about politics?

[Full Fact Misinformation Toolkit](#)

Interactive toolkit | Start here | 15 minutes

Practise checking political claims, images and online information before accepting or sharing them.

Think What makes a political claim persuasive even when its evidence is weak?

The UK constitution

[Parliament and the Constitution](#)

Read and explore | Develop | 20 minutes

Explore how constitutional rules shape Parliament, government, the courts and the monarchy.

Think Does the UK constitution place sufficient limits on executive power?

[Constitution Unit Briefings](#)

Read | Stretch | 20 to 40 minutes

Choose an expert briefing on constitutional principles, elections, Parliament, the executive, devolution or democratic standards.

Think Which reform would most improve the UK's constitutional arrangements?

[Why Does the UK Not Have a Written Constitution](#)

Read | Stretch | 25 minutes

Consider the historical reasons for the UK's uncoded constitution and the arguments for and against codification.

Think Would codification strengthen democracy or reduce valuable flexibility?

Parliament

[How Parliament Works](#)

Explore | Start here | 15 minutes

Explore Parliament's legislative, representative and scrutiny functions and its relationship with government.

Think Which parliamentary function matters most in holding government to account?

[House of Lords Explainer](#)

Read | Develop | 10 minutes

Understand the composition, powers and revising role of the second chamber.

Think Can an unelected chamber possess democratic legitimacy?

[Parliamentary Scrutiny](#)

Read and explore | Stretch | 20 minutes

Investigate questions, committees and other mechanisms used to scrutinise ministers and government policy.

Think Why does scrutiny sometimes fail even when Parliament has formal powers?

Prime Minister and executive

[Appointment of Prime Ministers and the Role of the King](#)

Read | Start here | 10 minutes

Understand how prime ministers take office and how confidence in the House of Commons shapes the process.

Think Where does the legal power to appoint a prime minister end and political reality begin?

[Cabinet](#)

Read | Develop | 15 minutes

Explore the cabinet's formal role, collective decision-making and its changing relationship with the prime minister.

Think Is modern UK government genuinely cabinet government?

[Collective Responsibility](#)

Read | Develop | 15 minutes

Examine why ministers must publicly support government decisions and when collective responsibility can break down.

Think Does collective responsibility promote effective government at the expense of open debate?

Relationships between the branches

[Parliament and the Government](#)

Read | Start here | 15 minutes

Explore the close relationship between the executive and legislature within the UK's parliamentary system.

Think Is Parliament able to control a government with a secure Commons majority?

[Select Committees](#)

Read | Develop | 15 minutes

Investigate how cross-party committees question ministers, conduct inquiries and influence policy.

Think What gives select committees influence despite their limited power to compel government action?

[UK Supreme Court Learning Resources](#)

Watch and explore | Develop | 20 to 40 minutes

Use cases, debates and videos to understand the Court's role, judicial independence and the rule of law.

Think When should judges be willing to challenge decisions made by elected politicians?

Devolution and the European Union

[Introduction to Devolution in the United Kingdom](#)

Read | Develop | 25 minutes

Compare the development, powers and institutions of devolution in Scotland, Wales, Northern Ireland, London and parts of England.

Think Has devolution strengthened the Union or made its break-up more likely?

[Devolution Hub](#)

Explore | Develop | 20 minutes

Follow research on the devolved nations, English devolution and relations between different levels of government.

Think Should further powers be transferred away from Westminster?

[The UK and the European Union](#)

Read | Develop | 20 minutes

Trace the UK's changing legal and political relationship with the EU after Brexit.

Think To what extent does the EU still influence UK government and politics?

US Politics and Government

Explore the constitutional structures, political institutions and democratic processes of the United States. Look for opportunities to compare the dispersal of power in the US system with the concentration and fusion of power found in the UK.

The Constitution and federalism

[Constitution 101](#)

Self-guided course | Start here | Choose a unit

Work through a free, non-partisan course on the Constitution's text, history, principles and case law.

Think Which constitutional principle does the most to prevent the abuse of power?

[Interactive Constitution](#)

Interactive primary source | Develop | 20 minutes

Read each article and amendment alongside explanations and competing interpretations from constitutional scholars.

Think Why can the same constitutional words support different political conclusions?

[Separation of Powers and Federalism](#)

Video and activities | Develop | 30 minutes

Explore checks and balances and the division of power between the federal government and the states.

Think Does divided power protect liberty or make effective government unnecessarily difficult?

Congress

[Educators and Students at the House of Representatives](#)

Explore | Start here | 15 minutes

Follow the legislative process and explore the people, procedures and history of the House.

Think Which stage of the legislative process gives representatives the greatest influence?

[Senate Rules and Procedure](#)

Read and watch | Develop | 20 minutes

Explore lawmaking, debate, committees, cloture and the procedural rules of the Senate.

Think Does the Senate's distinctive procedure improve deliberation or encourage obstruction?

[LawCraft](#)

Interactive simulation | Start here | 20 to 30 minutes

Simulate the congressional lawmaking process while balancing constituents, compromise and competing interests.

Think Why is passing legislation more difficult than simply having a majority?

The presidency

[The Presidency Project](#)

Read and watch | Develop | 20 to 40 minutes

Explore presidential power, leadership, decision-making and the changing relationship between the executive and Congress.

Think Why has presidential power expanded beyond the Constitution's brief description?

[The American Presidency Project](#)

Primary sources and data | Stretch | 20 minutes

Search speeches, executive orders, party platforms, debates and other presidential documents.

Think How does presidential rhetoric attempt to turn formal authority into political influence?

[Executive Power and the US Constitution](#)

Watch | Stretch | 45 minutes

Consider how war, media and political precedent have transformed executive power.

Think Is an energetic presidency necessary in a modern state or dangerous to constitutional government?

The Supreme Court and civil rights

[Oyez Supreme Court Multimedia](#)

Cases and courtroom audio | Develop | Choose a case

Search plain-English case summaries, judgments and transcript-synchronised recordings of oral arguments.

Think How far do legal arguments reveal the political significance of a case?

[Argument Wars](#)

Interactive simulation | Start here | 20 to 30 minutes

Argue a real Supreme Court case and decide which constitutional reasoning is strongest.

Think Should constitutional rights depend on judges' interpretation of earlier cases?

[Originalism in Constitutional Interpretation](#)

Read | Stretch | 20 minutes

Examine the argument that constitutional language should retain its original public meaning.

Think Should judges interpret the Constitution according to its original meaning or contemporary circumstances?

Democracy and participation

[Civics 101 Starter Kit](#)

Podcast and activities | Start here | Choose an episode

Learn six essential features of American democracy using audio, transcripts and graphic organisers.

Think Which feature of American government is least well understood by the public?

[Branches of Power](#)

Interactive simulation | Start here | 30 minutes

Control all three branches and experience how legislation, vetoes and judicial review interact.

Think Do checks and balances prevent tyranny or produce gridlock?

[Pew Political Engagement Research](#)

Read and explore data | Develop | 20 minutes

Investigate participation, political attention and the unequal influence of highly engaged citizens.

Think Does political participation give all Americans an equal voice?

Elections and campaign finance

[What Is the Electoral College](#)

Read | Start here | 15 minutes

Understand how electors translate state results into the formal election of the president.

Think Does the Electoral College protect federalism or undermine political equality?

[Win the White House](#)

Interactive simulation | Start here | 30 minutes

Build a campaign, target states, choose messages and experience the strategic pressures of a presidential election.

Think Why do presidential campaigns focus more heavily on some voters and states than others?

[Federal Election Commission Campaign Finance Data](#)

Explore live data | Stretch | 20 to 40 minutes

See how candidates, parties and political committees raise and spend money in federal elections.

Think When does political spending become political influence?

Political parties and voters

[Political Parties and Polarization](#)

Read and explore data | Develop | 20 minutes

Use survey evidence to explore party coalitions, ideology and political polarisation.

Think Are the Democratic and Republican parties becoming more internally united or more divided?

[Beyond Red versus Blue Political Typology](#)

Interactive report | Develop | 25 minutes

Look beyond a simple left-right divide and explore the groups that make up America's party coalitions.

Think Does a two-party system accurately represent the range of American political opinion?

[270toWin](#)

Interactive maps | Start here | 15 minutes

Explore historical and prospective presidential election maps and model different routes to an Electoral College majority.

Think How does geography shape party strategy and electoral outcomes?

Interest groups and political influence

[OpenSecrets Learning Center](#)

Read and explore data | Develop | 20 minutes

Investigate campaign donations, lobbying, outside spending and the organisations seeking political influence.

Think Does transparency solve the democratic problems created by money in politics?

[FEC Introduction to Campaign Finance](#)

Read | Start here | 15 minutes

Understand contribution limits, political committees, public funding and the rules governing federal election finance.

Think Are existing campaign finance rules capable of ensuring fair political competition?

Federalist Number 10

Primary source | Stretch | 20 minutes

Read Madison's argument about factions and consider how it applies to modern parties and pressure groups.

Think Did the constitutional system control factions, or simply give powerful factions more routes to influence?

Political Ideas

Political ideologies offer competing answers to questions about freedom, equality, authority, society and the state. Use the overview resources to establish the tradition, then encounter its thinkers through lectures, podcasts and original texts.

Liberalism

[Liberalism](#)

Academic overview | Stretch | 30 to 45 minutes

Explore the liberal tradition, individual freedom, toleration and disagreements between classical and modern liberals.

Think Is liberalism best understood as a single ideology or a family of competing traditions?

[Locke Equality Freedom Property and the Right to Dissent](#)

University lecture | Develop | 45 minutes

Examine Locke's arguments about natural rights, consent, property and limited government.

Think Does the protection of property follow logically from individual freedom?

[The Rawlsian Social Contract](#)

University lecture | Stretch | 45 minutes

Understand the original position, the veil of ignorance and Rawls's attempt to reconcile liberty with social justice.

Think What principles would you choose if you did not know your place in society?

[On Liberty by John Stuart Mill](#)

Primary text | Stretch | Choose a chapter

Read Mill's defence of individuality and freedom against state coercion and the tyranny of public opinion.

Think When, if ever, should society restrict an individual's freedom for their own good?

[History of Ideas](#)

Podcast | Develop | Choose an episode

Explore thinkers including Hobbes, Locke, Mill and Rawls through accessible lectures by political theorist David Runciman.

Think Which liberal idea remains most influential in contemporary politics?

Conservatism

[Conservatism](#)

Academic overview | Stretch | 30 to 45 minutes

Explore conservatism as a disposition and philosophy centred on tradition, authority, human imperfection and organic society.

Think Can conservatism be a coherent ideology if it distrusts abstract political theory?

[The Burkean Outlook](#)

University lecture | Develop | 45 minutes

Examine Burke's defence of cautious change, inherited institutions and the partnership between generations.

Think When does respect for tradition become an obstacle to necessary reform?

[Reflections on the Revolution in France](#)

Primary text | Stretch | Choose an extract

Encounter Burke's critique of revolutionary politics and abstract rights in the foundational text of traditional conservatism.

Think Why does Burke believe that political knowledge grows through experience rather than reason alone?

[Contemporary Communitarianism](#)

University lecture | Stretch | 45 minutes

Compare traditional conservative appeals to inherited values with modern communitarian criticism of liberal individualism.

Think Are individuals shaped more profoundly by their communities than liberalism acknowledges?

[Political Philosophy Course](#)

Lecture series | Develop | Choose a lecture

Place conservative arguments about authority, order and political judgement within the wider history of political philosophy.

Think What distinguishes conservative caution from simple resistance to change?

Socialism

[Socialism](#)

Academic overview | Stretch | 30 to 45 minutes

Explore social ownership, equality, democracy and disagreements between socialist traditions.

Think Is social ownership necessary for a society to count as socialist?

[Socialism at the Internet Encyclopedia of Philosophy](#)

Academic overview | Develop | 25 minutes

Compare socialism with capitalism and investigate competing models of ownership, planning and markets.

Think Can market competition be reconciled with socialist equality?

[Marx Theory of Class and Exploitation](#)

University lecture | Develop | 45 minutes

Examine Marx's analysis of class, labour, ownership and exploitation under capitalism.

Think Is class still the most important division in modern society?

[The Communist Manifesto](#)

Primary text | Stretch | Choose a section

Read Marx and Engels' influential account of class struggle, capitalism and revolutionary change.

Think Which of the Manifesto's claims about capitalism remains most persuasive today?

[Marxian Failure and Legacy](#)

University lecture | Stretch | 45 minutes

Evaluate which parts of Marx's theory failed and which critiques of power and exploitation remain influential.

Think Can Marx's critique of capitalism survive the failure of his predictions?

Feminism

[Feminist Political Philosophy](#)

Academic overview | Stretch | 30 to 45 minutes

Explore liberal, radical, Marxist, socialist and contemporary feminist political thought.

Think Do different feminist traditions agree more about the problem or the solution?

[Feminism and Women Rights Movements](#)

Read | Start here | 20 minutes

Trace waves of feminist activism and compare liberal, radical and socialist explanations of inequality.

Think How far have changes in law transformed underlying relations of power?

[Liberal Feminism](#)

Academic overview | Stretch | 30 minutes

Examine feminist arguments based on autonomy, equal rights and the reform of laws and institutions.

Think Can equal opportunity produce genuine equality within existing social structures?

[A Vindication of the Rights of Woman](#)

Primary text | Stretch | Choose a chapter

Read Wollstonecraft's argument that reason, education and rights must belong equally to women and men.

Think Is Wollstonecraft's argument primarily liberal, feminist or both?

[De Beauvoir on the Other](#)

Podcast | Develop | 45 minutes

Explore Simone de Beauvoir's account of woman as the socially constructed 'Other' and its significance for modern feminism.

Think What does it mean to argue that femininity is made rather than simply born?

A final challenge

After exploring three or more resources, choose one of the questions below and plan a reasoned response. Draw evidence from what you have encountered rather than relying only on material from lessons.

- Is political power ever effectively controlled?
- Does democracy require more than free and fair elections?
- Which better protects liberty: a flexible constitution or a codified one?
- Does the separation of powers prevent tyranny or prevent effective government?
- Can freedom and equality be advanced at the same time?
- Which political ideology offers the most convincing account of human nature?

Be curious.

Follow the evidence.

Question confidently