

Subject:	Intent:
<h1>Politics</h1>	The aim of Key Stage 5 Government & Politics A level is to help students get into University by doing a really interesting subject. On the way we will develop their minds and expand their abilities to debate, discuss, assess and analyse and reach smart, well informed, well balanced decisions. Politics shapes our lives – what we can do, the type of society we live in, the chances we have to succeed. This course is for people who want to understand more about how politics and government actually work.

The Big Questions...

Year 12	Year 13
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Political Basics: What is Power? What are the key elements of Democracy? (it's not just majority rules) Why do people vote the way they do? What is a constitution for? How democratic are our electoral systems? Is the UK a federal system? - Government Organisation: What does Parliament do? How powerful is the Prime Minister? What is the relationship between lawmakers, the judiciary and the executive? How important are MPs? How do we prevent governments from becoming dictatorships? How do we limit their incompetence? - Media and Voting: How do the media affect Politics? Do they lead or follow? What factors determine turnout at elections? DO governments lose elections or do oppositions win them? What are the key demographic factors? Why do Old people vote Conservative while Young people vote Labour? - Core Ideologies: What are the principles underpinning Socialism, Conservatism and Liberalism? What did different key thinkers contribute to the development of these ideas? 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - US Politics: This is basically the same as UK Politics but in an American context. What is Federalism? How powerful are the individual states? Is the USA very democratic? How important is race in US Politics? - Comparative Politics: Students develop the ability to compare US institutions like the Presidency, Congress and the US Supreme Court to UK institutions like the Prime Minister, Parliament and our own very different, Supreme Court. Who is the most powerful the UK Prime Minister or the US President? How does the US Supreme Court differ from the UK Supreme Court? Is Congress more accountable than Parliament? Which country has the best Democracy? - Elective Ideologies: As for Core Ideologies but students choose (as a class) from Nationalism, Feminism, Anarchism or Ecologism. They always choose Nationalism, the Anarchists refuse to choose, the Feminists won't let the boys vote and the Ecologists just want to recycle and do Core ideologies twice. What is Nationalism? Is Nationalism a coherent ideology or a bunch of sentimental twaddle? Why is Nationalism on the rise? What did different key thinkers contribute to the development of Nationalist ideas?

What skills will I develop?

- When studying Politics, you are encouraged to have and express an opinion.
- You are encouraged to base that opinion on facts and evidence.
- The most important skill is the ability to research, understand then debate both sides of an argument using evidence, judgement and proportion. Ultimately you should be able to make a strong case for a position you do not believe in; like a good defence lawyer.

What great resources can I use?

- <https://www.intelligencesquared.com/>
useful philosophical background
- <https://www.parliamentlive.tv/Commons>
Good background on Parliament.
- <https://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/politics/>
Reasonably impartial source of news and comment
- <https://fivethirtyeight.com/politics/> Excellent analysis on US Politics
- <https://www.270towin.com/> Fun way to grasp Geography of US Politics

How will I be assessed?

Essays, lots and lots of essays, which will be marked as if they were produced in a real exam.

You will receive feedback on how to improve, and will keep writing until you get them right!

At the end of two years there will be three 90 minute exam papers containing lots of essay questions. There is also one source based question and a shorter essay on comparative politics.

Three ways that parents/carers can help...

1. Add yourself to the mailing list that I use to communicate with students (email me). See everything I send them and encourage them to work as hard as possible.
2. Encourage them to watch as many current affairs programmes as possible.
3. Make sure they read all the stories I send them. Question them about them to ensure they are reading them properly.