POLITICS

Bridging the Gap: Part 1

This job is a lot harder than I expected...

Welcome, Upper Fifth! This is your first 'Bridging the Gap' session for A-level Politics, which you've chosen (or are considering) to study from September. This information is designed to give you a flavour of what A-level Politics is all about and will introduce you to some core political concepts and events, to aid your understanding of Politics ready for Sixth Form. The second session will be an independent research project. The work in these packs will take a while to complete, so you should break it up into manageable chunks. Do not feel you need to complete it all in one go! You can complete the tasks in this booklet in the spaces provided.

-   We hope that you find the work interesting and thought-provoking. We look forward to seeing you in our Lower Sixth Politics class in September.

Mr. Morrissey, Mr. Gonsalves, Mr. Symaka & Mr. Bodle.

A-level Course Outline – AQA Politics		
UK Politics	Upper Sixth: Ideologies	US Politics
UK Constitution, Supreme Court, Legislature & Executive	Liberalism	US Constitution, Supreme Court, Legislature & Presidency.
UK Democracy	Conservatism	US Democracy & Participation
UK Parties	Socialism	US Parties
UK Elections & Voting	Nationalism	US Pressure Groups

Task One: What is Politics?

"Politics is the study of how a people, a nation or a state is governed."

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 why politics is so exciting to study is because 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 of theUSA. In 2001, he authorised the invasion of Afghanistan and in 2003, the USA invaded Iraq. These two historic events have profoundly influenced the 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, the UK would have remained. 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 have taken just a small number of them to possibly change the result.

Your first task is designed to help you gain an understanding of what the study of Politics isall about. Use the internet (e.g. Wikipedia, YouTube and other sources) to research and understand 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 to develop *your own understanding* – so it is not about having the "right" or "word-perfect"definition, it's about you *understanding* what a concept.

Term	Explanation
Power	
Authority	
Legitimacy	
Government	
Politics	
Civil society	
Executivebranch	
Prime minister	

Cabinet	
Legislative branch	
Parliament	
House of Commons	
House of Lords	
Judicial branch	
Supreme Court (UK – not US!)	
Rule of Law	
Westminster Model	
Elective dictatorship	
Direct democracy	
Representative democracy	
Sovereignty	
Parliamentary sovereignty	
Referendum (UK – not US!)	
Constitutional monarchy	
Fusion of powers	
Separation of powers	
Devolution	
Labour Party	
Conservative Party	
Liberal Democrats	

Brexit Party	

Presidency (USA)	
Congress (USA)	
Constitution (USA)	
Checks & Balances (USA)	
Supreme Court (USA)	
Republican Party (USA)	
Democratic Party (USA)	
Liberalism (Ideology)	
Conservatism (Ideology)	
Socialism (Ideology)	
Nationalism (Ideology)	

Task Two: British Politics

Go to these links here for the UK's three major parties:https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/election-2019-50524262 https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/election-2019-50501411

https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/election-2019-50459123

These links summarise their key manifesto policies in the 2019 general election. I would like you to choose a few policies of your choice and explain below why you support OR do not support that policy. You must choose at least one policy from each manifesto to discuss your agreement to or opposition against – if you want to extend yourself and go further, you can do more than three by copying and pasting the spaces I have provided.

Party: _____

Manifesto policy:

_____

_____

Agree/disagree & why:

_____

_____

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Party: _____

Manifesto policy:

_____

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Agree/disagree & why:

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Party: _____

Manifesto policy:

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Agree/disagree & why:

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Next, I want you to conduct some research into the role of your local MP.

I would like you to find out who your local MP is and the following details about them:MP's

name:

Political party:

Constituency (the area they represent):

Areas they have a particular interest in:

And finally, look at their voting record (found here https://www.theyworkforyou.com/ byclicking
'voting record') and note down some ways in which they've voted in Parliament.

Task Three: Making a Case

The next task will involve you making a case for and against a particular issue. Politics at A-
level will require you to make judgements about issues. You need to create a for/against listfor
the issue of:

Should we lower the voting age from 18 to 16 in the UK?

This will require you to write at least three paragraphs (approximately ¾ to 1 full typed A4page
– but if you like you can write more). You can use websites like this:
https://yougov.co.uk/topics/politics/articles-reports/2012/02/15/and-against-lowering-voting-age or
Google search "for and against [issue]" to get more information about the issue at hand. I've written a
sample paragraph below – I'm interested in you ARGUING your case with evidence!

Some who think we should extend the vote to 16- and 17-year-olds say that it may lead them to understand political issues more if they have to research them. If under 18s have to make choices on issues like taxes, the NHS and the size of the army, they would have to research them, so this will improve their understanding and they will make good choices. However, this argument doesn't hold water because over-18s currently rarely research political issues – if we do not have adults researching taxes, the NHS or the size of the army before elections, why would we expect children to?Therefore, this is not a good argument for extending the vote to 16- and 17-year-olds.

Write your paragraphs below. Once you have completed this, you have finished the first Bridging the Gap booklet for A-level Politics and are ready to move onto the second booklet – well done!

Bridging the Gap: Part 2

This is your second 'Bridging the Gap' session for A-level Politics. This session is also designed to give you a flavour of what A-level Politics is all about and takes the form of an independent research project. Once again, there is a lot of work to complete in this booklet, so please do not feel you need to complete it all in one go!

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UK Research Task:

Your research task involves choosing one of the following parties: Conservative & UnionistParty or Labour Party.

You need to research the history of the party, their ideology and policy beliefs (including their most recent election manifesto), their electoral performance (are they currently in government? How well did they do at the last election (Dec 2019)?) and, finally, key figuresin that party (include photos and descriptions of who they are). This should be approximately one A4 page of typed work. **You then need to turn this into some sort of informative leaflet/flyer about that party including pictures. It should not be just a set ofnotes.**

Wikipedia is an excellent resource for this task (as a general rule, you shouldn't rely on Wikipedia – but it IS a really good source of useful information!) but you should use morethan one source to complete this work.

USA Research Task:

Your research task is to choose one of the following parties: Republican Party or Democratic Party.

You need to research the history of the party, their ideology and policy beliefs (including their most recent election platform), their electoral performance (Is the current President from that party? Do they have a majority in Congress? How well did they do at the last elections (Nov 2016 for the presidential election and Nov 2018 for Mid-term elections for Congress?) and, finally, key figures in that party (include photos and descriptions of who they are). **You then need to turn this into some sort of informative leaflet/flyer about thatparty including pictures. It should not be just a set of notes.**

Wikipedia is an excellent resource for this task (as a general rule, you shouldn't rely on Wikipedia – but it IS a really good source of useful information!) but you should use morethan one source to complete this work.