

# Politics Bridging work

## Part 1: Learning the basics

Download the following file from the Parliament website: <https://assets-learning.parliament.uk/uploads/2019/12/How-it-Works-booklet.pdf>

Use it to help answer the following questions:

- 1) What do you think are some of the advantages and disadvantages of direct democracy? Try to come up with at least 3 of each.
- 2) What do you think are some of the advantages and disadvantages of representative democracy? Try to come with at least 3 of each.
- 3) Read through the three different theories on representation on page 7. Which do you think is the correct way to view elected politicians? Why do you think this?
- 4) Read through the electoral systems on page 9 – which do you think sounds the best? Why?
- 5) Read through the advantages and disadvantages of using referendums on page 10. Use page 11 to help. Use this to explain whether you think it is a good way of deciding issues like Scottish Independence or leaving the EU.
- 6) Create a table comparing the different roles and make up of the House of Commons and House of Lords. Eg what are their jobs? How are they chosen?

Although these questions only focus on certain parts of the booklet, it is worth reading the entire thing. It will give you a useful introduction to a lot of what we will study on the course.

Watch the following video: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=LX1UI0oX9DY> then answer these questions:

- ❖ What would the UK be like if we didn't live in a democracy?
- ❖ What are the strengths and weaknesses of the UK system of democracy?
- ❖ What other options are there and where are they in place right now?

## Part 2: General Political Knowledge

- 1) Complete the table below for the main political parties in the UK: For current position you need to say if they form the current government, opposition, are a significant Parliamentary party or relatively minor

	Leader	Key beliefs	Current position
Conservative Party			
Labour Party			
Liberal Democrats			
UKIP			
SNP			
Green Party			
Plaid Cymru			

- 2) Research who your local MP is ([www.theyworkforyou.com](http://www.theyworkforyou.com) will help you)

Name:	
Constituency	

Political Party	
Roles	
Key votes	

- 3) What is the name of the electoral system used to elect MPs to Westminster?
- 4) What is a referendum?
- 5) What was the percentage result from the Brexit referendum?
- 6) Name two other referendums that have happened in the UK from the last 20 years.
- 7) What are the name of the devolved bodies used in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland, and who controls them currently?

	Name of devolved body	Who controls?
Scotland		
Wales		
Northern Ireland		

- 8) What were the results from the most recent election?

	Number of seats	Percentage of seats	Overall % of votes
Conservatives			
Labour			
Liberal Democrats			
UKIP			
SNP			
Plaid Cymru			
Green Party			
DUP			

- 9) What problem do you see with these results?
- 10) Who are the key members of the cabinet?

## Part 3: Political Debates

A big part of the Politics A-level is considering different debates surrounding politics in this country and the US, weighing up the different arguments and coming to a conclusion.

Your task is to create a well presented poster, considering both sides to a political debate. It must include:

- Both (or multiple) sides to the argument
- Up to date evidence to help support your points
- A conclusion summarising what you think overall
- Pictures and colour to make it eye-catching and well presented

The debate you could focus on could be one of the following, or another relevant example:

- Social media and the internet is good for democracy
- It was wrong for people to try to ban Donald Trump entering the country
- 16 and 17 year olds should be able to vote in general elections
- Voting should be made compulsory
- Referendums are good for democracy
- First Past the Post is the best ideal voting system for the UK
- The media have too much influence on who wins elections

- The only Political Parties that ever have an real power in the UK Parliament are Labour and Conservatives

All of these will need some research, some more than others. Feel free to choose a different political debate if you wish.

## **An example of what you need to do**

If for example you chose to do 'Social media is good for democracy' you would need to consider arguments in favour (it's an easy form of participation) and against (it often has little real impact). You will need a number of arguments clearly explained on each side.

You need evidence/examples to support your points – to show that it has little impact you could refer to the petition for a second Brexit referendum which was signed by many, debated by Parliament but nothing came of it.

You then need to a conclusion – 'Overall, social media is good for democracy. This is because....' It's best to show why you have come to this conclusion by showing why the positives outweigh the negatives (or vice versa).

## **The purpose of the task**

This task will help prepare you for the A-level in a number of ways:

- ✓ Prepares you for planning essay questions for exams
- ✓ Introduces you to a number of different political debates
- ✓ Practice in backing up your points with evidence
- ✓ Develop your ability to conduct research
- ✓ Good practice for keeping up with current affairs.

The work will be marked on the basis of the quality of the different arguments, research conducted, evidence provided, conclusion made and the presentation.