

A LEVEL POLITICS

SUMMER TASKS

To succeed in A level Politics, you need to be able to analyse political information, research issues and to keep up to date with current affairs.

Complete the 4 sections below and bring the completed work to your first class.

1. CURRENT AFFAIRS DIARY

As a Politics student, you need to keep up to date with news and current affairs.

Task: Each week record at least one news article/story or report that has influenced UK Politics.

DATE	NEWS SOURCE	SUMMARY OF NEWS	IMPACT ON UK POLITICS
06.09.19	BBC News website	What happened? Why?	This has meant that...

You can look at the following news sources to get your stories:

-BBC News <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/politics>

-Sky News: <https://news.sky.com/politics>

-The Guardian: <https://www.theguardian.com/politics>

2. POLITICS TERMINOLOGY

As a politics student it is important you understand key terminology.

Task: Using the Internet define the following terms (you only need to provide a simple definition):

- DIRECT DEMOCRACY
- REPRESENTATIVE DEMOCRACY
- UNIVERSAL SUFFRAGE
- PRESSURE GROUP
- HUMAN RIGHTS
- REFERENDUMS
- FIRST PAST THE POST
- MANIFESTO
- PARLIAMENT
- THE CABINET
- DEVOLUTION
- CONSTITUENCY
- CODIFIED CONSTITUTION
- LEGITIMACY
- PLURALIST DEMOCRACY
- PARTICIPATION CRISIS
- POLITICAL PARTY
- TURNOUT
- IDEOLOGY
- ACCOUNTABILITY



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3. KEY POLITICAL DEBATES: CASE STUDY 'VOTES AT 16'

Politics is about debating and discussing ideas and viewpoints as well as analysing and evaluating information. One of the key debates you will look at in the first few weeks is whether the voting age in the UK should be reduced to 16.



Task 1: Watch the video and create a table outlining the main arguments FOR and AGAINST lowering the voting age https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=MpKv2p_yJ04

Task 2: Read the following source. Highlight the main arguments from the source FOR and AGAINST lowering the voting age

In the UK, the minimum voting age is 18, except in Scotland, where 16- and 17-year-olds have been given the right to vote in local and Scottish parliamentary elections. By and large, 16-year-olds haven't yet entered the world of home ownership, employment, tax or pensions but these economic issues are often at the forefront of election campaigns. The main argument against lowering the voting age is that a lack of experience in these matters prevents young people from making a considered judgement at the ballot box.

Opponents also point to the fact that 18- to 24-year-olds have the lowest turnout of any age group in elections, reflecting an apparent lack of interest in politics. These critics question whether an even younger generation would be any different. And there are concerns that teenagers who do want to cast their votes would be impressionable and easily influenced by radical politics, or would not fully think things through and would blindly vote for the same party as their parents.

But calls to lower the voting age come from a range of sources – adults as well as teenagers themselves, backed up by youth organisations, pressure groups and politicians. 16 and 17 year olds in the Isle of Man, Jersey, Guernsey, Brazil and Austria already have the vote. They can also vote in some elections in Germany, Malta and Norway. Evidence from the Scottish independence referendum, substantiated by research from Austria and Norway, shows – aided by the encouragement of families and schools – 16 and 17 year-olds have higher rates of turnout than 18 to 24 year-olds.

For supporters, it's about giving young people a say in matters that directly affect them, such as tuition fees. It's also thought that lowering the limit will encourage civic-mindedness at an earlier age and establish an interest in the political system, which will be continued throughout a person's life. Scotland's positive experience of including 16- and 17-year-olds in the 2014 independence referendum led to the lowering of the voting age for local and Holyrood elections.

A study by the University of Edinburgh during the referendum found that some teenagers were initially doubtful of their own abilities to make the right decision, but that this led them to actively seek out information to help inform their judgement. In some cases, teenagers even influenced their parents' voting intentions with their new-found knowledge.

But as there are no immediate plans for the UK government to debate lowering the voting age for general elections, it is unlikely that all 16-year-olds will get the chance to put that to the test any time soon.

Task 3: Create a poster outlining the arguments FOR and AGAINST lowering the voting age in the UK. Use the Internet, information from the source above and the following sources:

- <https://youngov.co.uk/topics/politics/articles-reports/2012/02/15/and-against-lowering-voting-age>
- <http://www.votesat16.org/about/>
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-46737013>

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4. WHAT IS DEMOCRACY?

The first topic you will look at is the idea of democracy and assessment of the strength of democracy in the UK.

Task: Watch the following documentary 'Big Ideas that changed the world: Democracy'-
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=o8KOUrVxYiw>

Answer the following questions:

1. What is democracy?
2. What were the main developments in UK democracy? Create a mind map or timeline
3. Explain why democracy is important
4. What final message does Tony Benn say in relation to the importance of democracy?

