

Government & Politics

Independent Summer
Learning

Introductory Assignment



Introduction



Over the course of studying A-Level politics for two years you will learn several different topics

The first topic that you will learn about is Democracy

Democracy Task 1



The debate around 16 year-olds having the vote is becoming a key theme on the debate of improving democracy in the UK in 2018.

Read the source and complete the following tasks that lead on from the source.

Democracy Task 1



the SOURCE

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.

Democracy Task 1



1. Define the following political and non-political terms from the SOURCE

A	Parliamentary elections	
B	Forefront	
C	Ballot box	
D	Turnout	
E	Impresisonable	
F	Radical politics	
G	Blindly	
H	Pressure groups	
I	Substantiated	
J	Tuition fees	
K	Civic-mindedness	
L	Referendum	
M	Holyrood	
N	Voting intentions	



2. Using two differently coloured highlighters, indicate:

- a. The arguments in the source that support the view that 16 to 18 year olds should be given the vote
- b. The arguments in the source that support the view that the voting age should remain at 18



3. Select 3 arguments from each side and add them to the balanced debate see-saw below.

WEAKER ARGUMENTS

1

2

3

STRONGER ARGUMENTS

1

2

3



Referendums

Task 2



- “Referendums for and against” – task on the following slides
- Using the statements provided complete the table of arguments for and against the use of referendums.
- In September, we will go through the correct answers in class.

Referendums

Task 2



- **REFERENDUMS – FOR AND AGAINST**

- Referendums are when the people of the UK have a vote (a say) on a particular issue. Like the 2016 EU referendum! Using the statements provided complete the table of arguments for and against the use of referendums.

FOR	ISSUE	AGAINST
	Direct democracy	The general public is ill-informed, poorly educated and little interested in politics; its interests are best safeguarded by representative democracy - government by politicians
Wider political participation will help to create a better informed, more educated and more politically engaged electorate	Political education	
	Responsible government	
	Government power	
	Constitutional issues	

Write the following statements out into the box
that the statement should go in. Two have
already been done for you!



- The general public is ill-informed, poorly educated and little interested in politics; its interests are best safeguarded by representative democracy – government by politicians
- Wider political participation will help to create a better informed, more educated and more politically engaged electorate
- Referendums do not educate the electorate because their views are largely a reflection of media manipulation and pressure from the political elite
- Governments are made more responsible because referendums force them to listen to public opinion between elections
- Referendums extend government power because governments can manipulate the outcome by deciding whether and when and over what issues to call referendums, and they can also dominate the publicity campaign
- Constitutional issues should not be decided simply through the normal legislative processes because they alter the way the country is governed: they thus need to be popularly endorsed
- Referendums give the general public direct and unmediated control over decision-making, ensuring that their own views and interests are expressed, not those of politicians
- Referendums provide only a snap-shot of public opinion at one point in time, and so are not appropriate for making constitutional decision that have far-reaching effect
- Referendums provide a much needed check on government power because they have less control over their outcome than over Parliament
- Governments can absolve themselves of responsibility by handing decisions over to the electorate – governments are elected to govern (that is, make decisions)

Referendums Task 2



As a recap:

Once you have filled in every box with a statement you will have completed Task 2 and be ready to share your answers with the class in September

What do you know about British politics?- Task 3



Use Internet research to answer the following questions:

1. How many MPs sit in the House of Commons?
2. What is the job of an MP?
3. How many MPs do the following parties have in the House of Commons: Conservatives, Labour, Liberal Democrats, Scottish National Party (SNP), Plaid Cymru, Green Party, Sinn Fein, Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), Democratic Unionist Party (DUP)?
4. Sinn Fein do not take their seats in the House of Commons. Why?
5. Who is the Leader of the Opposition? What is their name? What is their role?
6. What majority does the Conservative Party currently have in the House of Commons?
7. Who is the current Speaker of the House of Commons?
8. What is the job of the Speaker?
9. Who currently hold the positions of: Prime Minister, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Foreign Secretary, Home Secretary?
10. What do the roles of Prime Minister, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Foreign Secretary, Home Secretary involve?

Current Affairs Task 4



One of the most important tasks in Politics is being up to date with current affairs, read the news online, watch the news, newsnight, question time, etc. Here are some tasks for you to research;

Find out about your local MP – who are they? What party do they represent? How long have they been in Parliament? What are some of their key beliefs/policies?

Find an example of an important current news story that shows an important aspect of politics, for example, what is happening with Brexit, how has Coronavirus impacted on the government? Bring it in with you and be prepared to discuss it with the class.

Democracy Video Task 5



Our first topic is on democracy. Watch the following video and make some Cornell notes on it. An example of how to do this is shown on the following slides, it is not for Politics, but the principle is the same.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ARnQmrLxjBk>

Cornell notes



2. Questions

- Questions that are answered by the notes
- Wide range of questions
- Low level to high level

1.2 WHERE DO EARTHQUAKES OCCUR GLOBALLY?

Describe the distribution of earthquake epicentres around the world. Describe the relationship between the location of seismically active areas and plate boundaries.

Questions	Notes

Summary

"How would you explain this information to someone else?"

1. Notes

- Key definitions
- Sketch diagrams
- Bullet points
- Explanations
- Paraphrase key ideas

3. Summary

- Summarise key ideas
- Full sentences
- Own words

What coastal geography affects tsunamis?

Coastal Geography

- Height of the surrounding area,
- how quickly the coast shelves,
- the presence of bays and estuaries,
- depth of water above the fault rupture.

How does gradual shallowing affect a tsunami?

Gradual shallowing

- Highest tsunamis occur in long and gradual shallowing of the water. Allows enough time for damage to occur.
- e.g. Sri Lanka - waves swept inland for 5km as it has a flat topography even though it was 1600 km from the focus

Why was Bang Tao destroyed?

Phuket Island (2004 Indian Ocean tsunami)

Bang Tao - open bay - completely destroyed.

faced directly on to the oncoming tsunami - funnelled the waves towards the town. Northern part slightly protected by

Why wasn't Surin Beach destroyed?

Surin Beach - sea bed rises steeply so wave did not travel far inland. The headland protected the beach from full force of waves.

Why was Kamala destroyed?

Kamala - open bay, gently sloping sea bed, waves rushed 1km inland flooding up to 7-8m. The headland to the SW refracted the waves into the bay.



Coastal geography - gradual shallowing causes the highest tsunamis. Headlands protect areas, bays have most damage. Coastal geography of fault rupture zone - affects the size of the tsunami.

Coastal Geography of the rupture zone

Why did the 2005 earthquake only cause a moderate tsunami compared to the 2004 one?

A similar earthquake struck the same area 3 months after the 2004 tsunami. On the 28th March 2005, an 8.7 EQ struck further south along the same fault zone. It extended an additional 350 km southwards than the previous. This only caused a moderate tsunami because:

- the rupture occurred mostly under islands, rather than underwater.
- the channel between the offshore islands and the mainland was relatively shallow in the 2005 event, so there was relatively little water to be displaced.

Summary: Tsunami characteristics - diffraction causes waves to spread into shadow zones. Deep water waves are when depth of water > λ/2. Shallow water waves are when depth of water < λ/2. Shallow = high amplitude in shallow waters.

Political Ideologies - Task 6

As part of your study of politics you will look at a number of *political ideologies* (theories and ideas about how the world works)...



Task 5 – Watch the short video for each ideology and identify the **key ideas**, **philosophers/thinkers** and **criticisms/challenges** of each of them – finally try to think of at least one **policy** (a law implemented by a government in the UK) that is based on the values of each ideology. Set this out in a table like the one below...

- 1. **Conservatism** - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=khzQ8iOuwgl>
- 2. **Liberalism** - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KO8OxfFiVv8>
- 3. **Socialism** - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z_TTYd6yIYI

	Conservatism	Liberalism	Socialism
Key Ideas			
Philosophers/Thinkers			
Criticisms/Challenges			
Policies in the UK			

News story - Task 7



What you need to do:

Produce a newspaper style report/article that addresses why young people should be interested in politics.

This is your chance to showcase your own interest in politics!

News story - Task 7



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News story - Task 7

Think!

Why should young people be engaged in politics in the UK?

- How does politics impact on people's lives?
- How can politics change people's lives?
- Why is it so important that people in society are engaged and active within the political process?

USA research task- Task 8



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 2020 for the President and Congress)?) and finally key figures in that party (include photos and descriptions of who they are).

This should be about one A4 page of typed work. You need to turn this into some sort of leaflet/flyer about that party including pictures, not 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 more than one source to complete this work.

Summary



You will have completed the summer independent learning activity after you have completed each of the following tasks:

- ✓ Task 1 – Read the source and complete the 3 tasks associated with the source
- ✓ Task 2 - The referendum statements have been written into the correct boxes
- ✓ Task 3– Researched and answered the knowledge questions on British politics
- ✓ Task 4 - Completed the current affairs research

Summary

You will have completed the summer independent learning activity after you have completed each of the following tasks:

- ✓ Task 5 - Watched the democracy video and completed the Cornell notes
- ✓ Task 6 - – Watched the 3 videos and completed a table on the aspects of the different political ideologies
- ✓ Task 7- Produce your newspaper report/article
- ✓ Task 8- USA research task