

# **Government and Politics Yr 11 into Yr 12 Holiday**

## **Preparation Work**

This Summer Project Booklet is designed to give you a head start on UK Government and Politics, which is the first part of the specification you will be studying in Yr 12. You'll explore democracy and participation, political parties, electoral systems, voting behaviour, and the media while also diving into the UK constitution, Parliamentary law-making, the Prime Minister and Cabinet, and the UK judiciary.

The activities in this pack mirrors exactly the AO1 knowledge you need and sharpens your AO2/AO3 analysis and evaluation skills. By working through the booklet, you'll encounter and practise the key terms and look at real-world examples to see how theoretical concepts play out in practice. Each task is an insight to what we will be doing in class, so you'll arrive confident, curious, and ready to hit the ground running!

## **Political News Diary**

In A Level Politics, we are expected to be as contemporary as we possibly can. In class, we will regularly discuss recent political developments, and we will always ensure that your learning is linked to recent examples. However, it is also expected that you will keep up with political news developments yourself. For seven consecutive days, read one UK politics news story (e.g. from BBC News or The Guardian or the Times or the Telegraph). Complete a section for each news story.

### **Day One**

Date:

Headline:

Source:

In your own words, summarise the story:

Write down one question you have about why this story is important

### **Day Two**

Date:

Headline:

Source:

In your own words, summarise the story:

Write down one question you have about why this story is important

### **Day Three**

Date:

Headline:

Source:

In your own words, summarise the story:

Write down one question you have about why this story is important

#### **Day Four**

Date:

Headline:

Source:

In your own words, summarise the story:

Write down one question you have about why this story is important

#### **Day Five**

Date:

Headline:

Source:

In your own words, summarise the story:

Write down one question you have about why this story is important

#### **Day Six**

Date:

Headline:

Source:

In your own words, summarise the story:

Write down one question you have about why this story is important

## **Day Seven**

Date:

Headline:

Source:

In your own words, summarise the story:

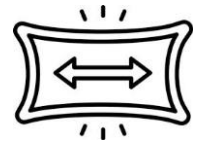
Write down one question you have about why this story is important

## **Need a hand?**



- Use bullet points for clarity.
- If you are struggling to summarise, highlight who, what, where, when, why in the article before you start writing your summary.

## **Stretch and Challenge**



Have you noticed any bias in any of the articles? Why do you think this might be? *Hint: For example, you need to be thinking about the choice of words and the tone of the article.*

## Understanding Electoral Systems

In the UK we use an electoral system called First Past the Post (FPTP) to elect a new government at a General Election. These General Elections must happen at least every five years. However, there are some who argue that FPTP is not a fair electoral system. Complete the activity below to find out why.

*Scenario:*

*You arrive at two neighbouring constituencies (parts of the country represented by an MP), Northville and Southport, on Polling Day.*

*Three candidates stand in each:*

*Red (Major Party A)*

*Blue (Major Party B)*

*Green (Minor Party C)*

*Voters use the FPTP system to cast a single vote to say who they want to be the MP in their constituency.*

Constituency	Red (Major Party A) Votes	Blue (Major Party B) Votes	Green (Minor Party C) Votes	WINNER
Northville	4,800	4,200	1,000	
Southport	5,100	5,000	1,900	

- 1) Fill in the 'Winner' column for each constituency. The winner is the candidate who received the highest number of votes.
- 2) Calculate how many votes there were against the winning candidate (add together the number of votes won by the other two candidates). What do you notice?
- 3) How many seats did each party win? Even though Green got 2,900 votes in total, how many seats did they win?
- 4) Why do you think First-past-the-post makes it so hard for minor parties to win any seats, even when they attract thousands of voters?
- 5) How might the above push voters toward only choosing Red or Blue in future elections?

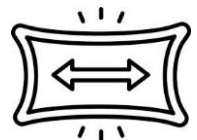
## The UK Constitution

A constitution is a set of rules about how a country is run. It explains who is in charge, what powers they have, and how people's rights are protected. Read the information below about the UK constitution. Fill in the table which follows to show what the **sources** of the UK constitution are.

*The UK's constitution isn't contained in a single written document but is built from a mix of sources: statute law (laws passed by Parliament, like the Parliament Acts); common law (legal principles set by judges in court decisions); conventions (unwritten but widely followed rules, such as the requirement that the Prime Minister maintain the confidence of the Commons); works of authority (respected texts like Erskine May that guide parliamentary procedure); and international treaties and—formerly—EU law (agreements that, once ratified by Parliament, become part of domestic law). This patchwork approach makes the UK constitution both stable and adaptable, helping explain how some rules can change quickly while others demand extensive debate.*

Constitutional Source	Definition (and an example if you can find one!)

### Stretch and Challenge



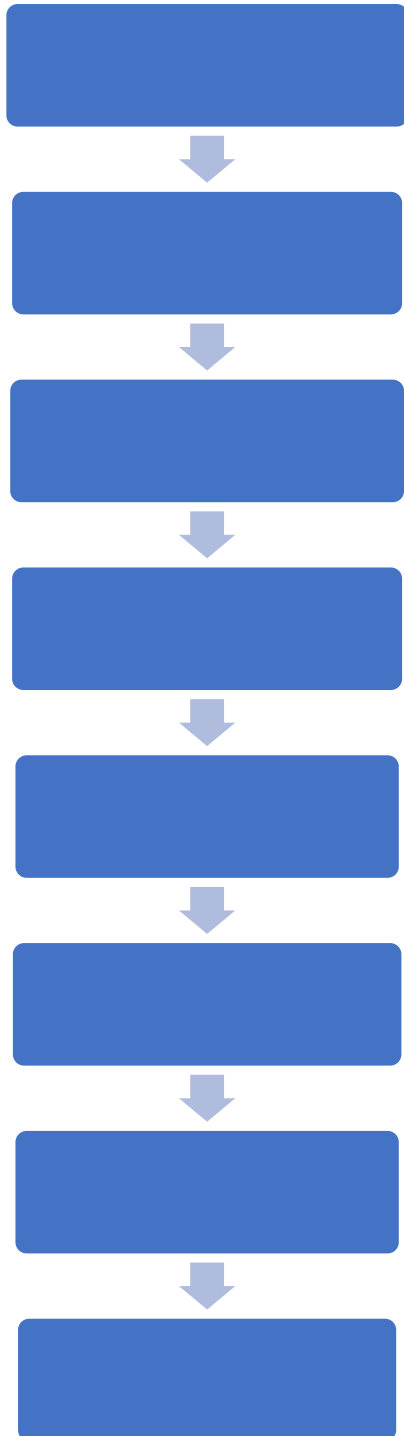
The UK's constitution is uncoded - this means that it is not a written document but instead is made up of many different sources. Explain one issue you can see with this.

# The Legislative Process

One of the main jobs of our politicians (MPs who sit in the House of Commons and Peers who sit in the House of Lords) is to make laws for our country. Before a Bill (a draft law) becomes an Act of Parliament (a law which has been passed), it has to go through the legislative process.

Below is a blank flowchart. Place the stages a Bill passes into the flowchart show how a Bill becomes an Act of Parliament.

HINT: The Bill in this flowchart below starts in the House of Commons



Stages for your flowchart

House of Lords

Royal Assent

Green Paper

Report and Third Reading in House of Commons

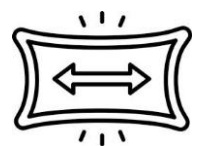
White Paper

Public Bill Committee

First Reading in House of Commons

Second Reading in House of Commons

**Stretch and Challenge**



Can you find the names of any Bill which have recently become Acts of Parliament?

## Prime Ministers' Profiles

The Prime Minister is the head of the government and runs the country. Four mini-bios of Prime Ministers are missing their names. You need to read through the bios and match each bio to the correct Prime Minister.

Bio	Prime Minister
A former 'Iron Lady' who served through the 1980s.	
Won landslide victories after promising 'New Labour'.	
Called a referendum on EU membership in 2016.	
Steered the country through COVID-19 as PM from 2019 – 2021.	

Prime Ministers:

Boris Johnson

Tony Blair

David Cameron

Margaret Thatcher

Write down three major policies/events from each Prime Minister's time in office.

Margaret Thatcher:

Tony Blair:

David Cameron:

Boris Johnson:

## Pressure Groups

A pressure group is an organisation which works to try to get the government to act differently on a particular issue. Below is some information about six major pressure groups and the tactics they use. In the table which follows, match each group to its main campaigning tactic.

**Greenpeace** - An independent global environmental network campaigning on issues like climate, oceans, and forests using nonviolent direct action and public outreach.

**Just Stop Oil** - A British climate-action group founded in 2022 aiming to end new fossil-fuel licensing, notorious for disruptive protests like road blockades and artwork vandalism.

**Stop HS2** - A grassroots campaign opposing the High Speed 2 rail project, best known for legal challenges and court cases to halt construction.

**Stonewall** - The UK's largest LGBTQ+ rights charity, lobbying ministers and producing research to shape inclusive laws and policies.

**People's Vote Campaign** - Cross-party movement launched in 2018 to demand a second Brexit referendum, famous for mass digital petitions and large-scale marches.

**Friends of the Earth** - A UK environmental federation founded in 1971, organising consumer boycotts and local community events to pressure businesses and government.

Group	Main Tactic
Greenpeace	
Just Stop Oil	
Stop HS2	
Stonewall	
People's Vote Campaign	
Friends of the Earth	

### Tactics

- Non-violent direct action and public stunts
- Digital petitions and mass email campaigns
- Litigation and judicial review
- Lobbying and policy briefings
- Consumer boycotts and community outreach
- Mass marches and street demonstrations

Now, in one sentence, explain what the impact of this tactic could be on the government.

Group	Impact of the Tactic
Greenpeace	
Just Stop Oil	
Stop HS2	
Stonewall	
People's Vote Campaign	
Friends of the Earth	

### Need a hand?



- Think about whether the tactic would infuriate the British public – is it very disruptive?
- Think about whether the tactic shows public support on the streets
- Think about whether the tactic would persuade MPs to think differently.
- Think about whether the tactic means that judges can stop the government acting in a certain way.

### Stretch and Challenge

Which type of tactics do you think would be most effective? Why?

