

# Government & Politics: summer preparation

*Building the basics in order to get into the fun of debating issues sooner!*

Below is a list of tasks to complete over the summer to prepare for your Government & Politics A' Level. The 'must' section has compulsory tasks that you are required to do and, for 1 and 2, hand in when you arrive in September. The 'strongly advisable' section is exactly that; if you do both of them, then a) you will hopefully find it interesting, and b) it will put you in a really strong position to start the A' Level. One of the key routes to facilitating A\* performances is building genuinely detailed political knowledge about the recent past, and the below documentaries and reading will provide an excellent opportunity to do exactly that without being strenuous as you enjoy your holiday!

The 'a real challenge' section is also exactly that; there is no expectation that you are equipped to tackle these difficult primary texts yet, but some of you may well be up of the challenge already, getting to grips with some of the key political ideas of our civilisation!

## **Must:**

1. **Complete the following essay (before September):** "Evaluate the view that the UK is suffering from a democratic deficit' (30)?" **(use can use the model answer given and then add your own additional x2 paragraphs)**
2. *Keep up to date with current affairs via Newspapers and/or websites such as BBC News, Sky News etc.*
3. *Read through the specification.*

## **A real challenge:**

1. *Read Anthony Seldon, 'The Impossible Office?' - THIS WILL HELP WITH THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE PM OFFICE.*
2. *Read any of the following: Karl Marx, Das Kapital; J S Mill, On Liberty; J-J Rousseau, The Social Contract; Isaiah Berlin, Two Concepts of Liberty – THESE WILL HELP WITH IDEOLOGIES.*
3. *Read Francis Fukuyama The End of History and the Last Man – THIS WILL HELP WOTH GLOBAL POLTICS.*

## **\*AO1-Building Questions:**

1. What does 'First Past the Post' (FPTP) mean in politics?
2. How was the voting franchise extended in 1832, 1918, 1928, and 1969?
3. Name five referenda that have occurred since 1997 (either national or regional).
4. What is parliamentary sovereignty?
5. What is the different between a codified and uncoded constitution?
6. What is one advantage of a codified constitution?
7. What is one disadvantage of a codified constitution?

**Challenge task:** Find something that comes up in the news over the summer holidays, and write a paragraph about how it links to the concepts of either parliamentary sovereignty, uncoded constitution, representative democracy, judicial independence, elective dictatorship, collective ministerial responsibility, OR individual ministerial responsibility.

## 'Evaluate the view that the UK is suffering from a democratic deficit' (30)

Democratic deficit – a situation where democratic institutions are seen as not fully representing or responding to the people

### Structure

Intro: define key terms, lay out points, state line of argument judgement → i.e., “this is essay is going to argue...”

Main body (x3 paragraphs):

### 'Evaluate the view that the UK is suffering from a democratic deficit' (30)

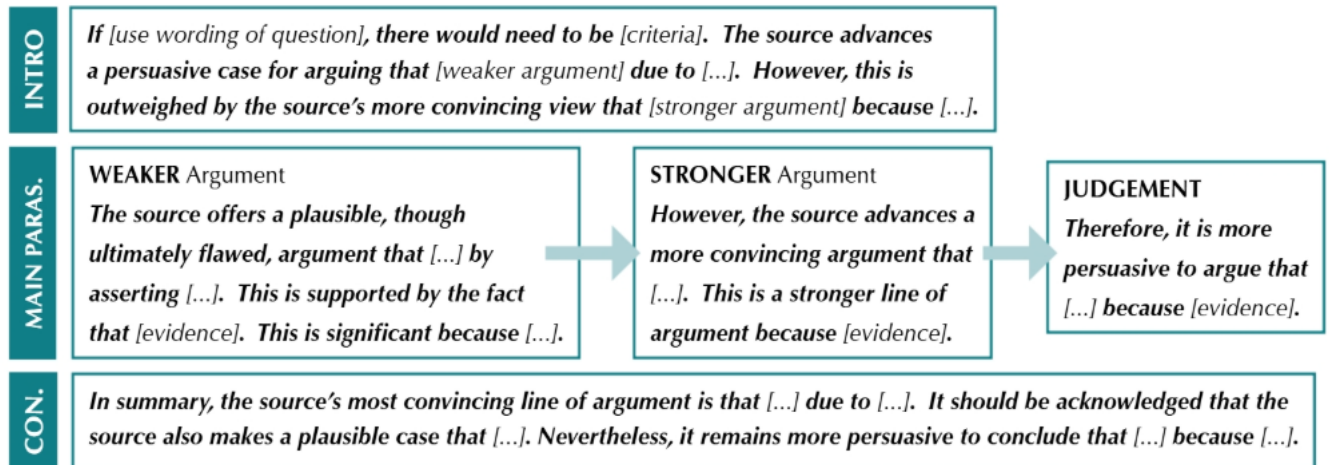
**Introduction:** Clarify key terms, instruct the reader about the general debate, and state a quick summary of what you believe and why

- x3 {
- PEE:** A point/claim, backed up with detailed knowledge and explanation, linking it to the question
  - CEE:** That specific point's counter claim, backed up with detailed knowledge and explanation, linking it to the question
  - Evaluative comment:** Mini conclusion, forming a judgement about the above point and counter
- Conclusion:** Summing up what you have argued, giving a central thesis and justification

### Points to consider

Yes – there is a democratic deficit	No – there isn't a democratic deficit
FPTP is not representative <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Weakens <b>representative democracy</b></li> </ul>	FPTP doesn't always favour 2 major parties <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Rise of minor parties splits vote share more (eg <b>coalitions</b>)</li> </ul>
Participation crisis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Low turnout weakens <b>legitimacy</b></li> </ul>	Participation is high in forms of <b>direct democracy</b> (eg referendums)
Safe seats <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Can lead to low turnout</li> <li>- Weakens representative democracy</li> </ul>	Safe seats show concentrated support for a party <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Representative democracy intact</li> <li>- Constituency link</li> </ul>
Increased use of <b>referendums</b> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- Form of <b>direct democracy</b></li> <li>- Hold governments accountable</li> </ul>	Referendums weaken democracy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>- <b>Tyranny of the majority</b></li> <li>- Political tool used to settle divisions</li> </ul>

## 30-Mark Source Essays



### BUILDING an argument

- *This is supported by a wealth of evidence: [...]*
- *There have been several instances of this in recent years: [...]*
- *An example with long-lasting significance is [...]*
- *There are several thinkers who agree over this fundamental principle. [...]*

### UNDERMINING an argument

- *This case is undermined by [...]*
- *While this argument is accurate, it does not represent the norm. [...]*
- *However, this tends to be an exception to the more common reality, which is [...]*

### Introducing SIMILARITIES

- *These two [thinkers or extracts] do not wholly disagree, because both accept that [...]*
- *Because of their similar views on [...], thinkers from both strands also agree over [...]*
- *These similarities are also reflected in agreements over [...]*
- *Similarly, [...]*
- *Furthermore, [...]*

### Introducing DIFFERENCES

- *However, there is a divergence of views over [...]*
- *There are profound differences between [...] and [...] over [...]*
- *This disagreement over [...] also leads to wider differences over [...]*
- *By contrast, [...]*
- *[...], whereas [...]*

### Introducing EVIDENCE

- *An example of this is [...]*
- *One way of showing this is [...]*
- *This happened most notably when [...]*
- *This judgement is justified by [...]*

### Analysing EVIDENCE

- *This highlights that [...]*
- *This is important because [...]*
- *Arguably, this shows that [...]*
- *This may imply that [...]*

### EVALUATING sources/extracts

- *Source/Extract [...] is right to highlight [...]*
- *Source/Extract [...] rightly points out [...]*
- *Source/Extract [...] fails to account for [...]*
- *Source/Extract [...] doesn't address [...]*

### EVALUATING agreement/disagreement

- *[...], the extent of agreement/disagreement is minimal.*
- *[...], the agreements/disagreements are fundamental.*
- *[...], agreements/disagreements are minimal/infrequent.*

### TRANSITIONING between arguments

- *Although these arguments are all accurate, there is a more persuasive case that [...]*
- *More often than not, however, [...]*
- *These points notwithstanding, it is more typically the case that [...]*

### SYNTHESISING arguments

- *These arguments may not outweigh the opposing side, but they do provide an important layer of nuance.*
- *While the examples of [...] and [...] are important, it is more often the case that [...]*
- *It is therefore important to take into account both [...] and [...] in arguing that [...]*