

Name: _____

A Level Politics Summer Tasks Booklet

Instructions:

This booklet contains clear information about starting this A level. Please read it carefully before starting in September.

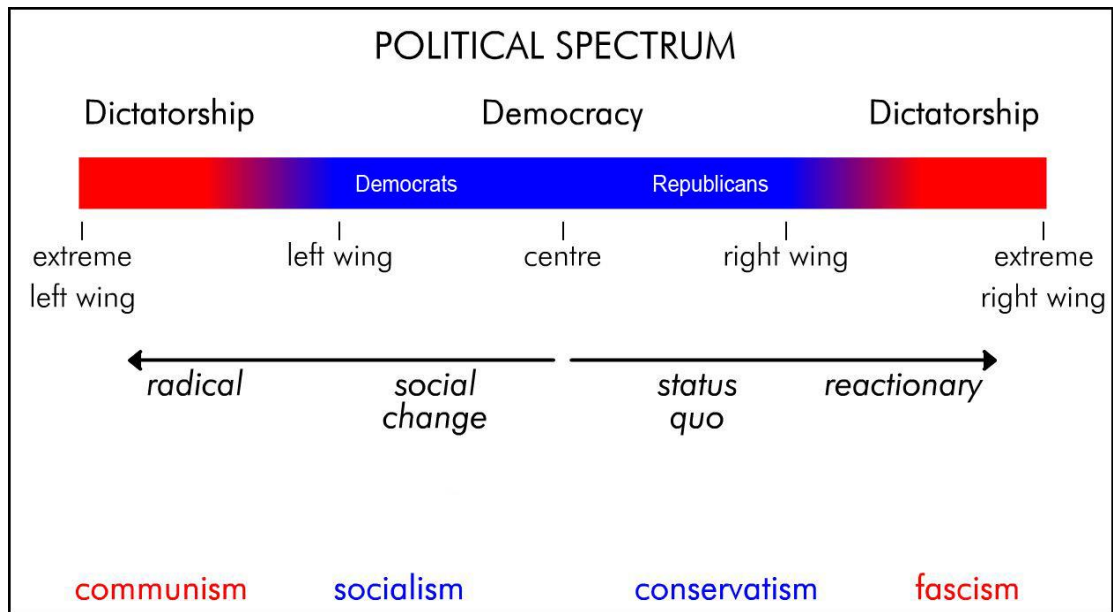
Please complete all of the tasks set in this booklet before beginning your A-Level Politics course in September.

Before joining the course officially, this book must be totally completed and handed in on your first day.

Failure to complete this booklet will result in your being sent away from your first Politics lesson.

The booklet is divided into two sections- **UK Politics and UK Government**

Any questions/ problems, please email :
mcocker@rodingvalley.net



Module Breakdown and Exam Overview

Year of study	Topic	How is it assessed	Percentage of total grade.
Year 12	UK Politics	Exam 2 hours 1x Source question E.g. Using the source, evaluate the view that 1 x essay question E.g. Evaluate the extent to which ___ was the most important factor 1x Core political ideology question (see year 13)	33.3%
	UK Government	Exam 2 hours 1x source analysis question E.g. How far could a historian make use of sources _ and _ together to investigate the role of 1 x Essay question E.g. To what extent ... How far do you agree ... 1x Feminism question (see year 13)	33.3%
Year 13	Politics of USA - Comparative unit USA/UK	Exam 2 hours 2x mid length questions E.g. Examine the differences between... Analyse the difference between... 2 x source question E.g. Evaluate the extent to which ...	33.3%
	Core and Non-core political ideologies	This topic forms the last questions on the UK Politics and UK Government papers. 1 x 30 mins essay question E.g. To what extent do liberals/ socialists/ conservatives/ feminists agree/disagree about ...?	

Course overview

Component 1: UK Politics (*Component code: 9PL0/01)
<p>Written examination: 2 hours</p> <p>33½% of the qualification</p> <p>84 marks</p>
<p>Content overview</p> <p>1. Political Participation, students will study:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • democracy and participation, political parties, electoral systems, voting behaviour and the media. <p>2. Core Political Ideas, students will study:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • conservatism, liberalism, socialism.
<p>Assessment overview</p> <p>Section A: Political Participation</p> <p>One 30-mark question from a choice of two (each question uses a source) – students must complete one of these. Plus one 30-mark question from a choice of two – students must complete one of these.</p> <p>All questions assess AO1, AO2 and AO3.</p> <p>Section B: Core Political Ideas</p> <p>One 24-mark question from a choice of two, which assesses AO1, AO2 and AO3.</p>

Component 2: UK Government (*Component code: 9PL0/02)
<p>Written examination: 2 hours</p> <p>33½% of the qualification</p> <p>84 marks</p>
<p>Content overview</p> <p>1. UK Government, students will study:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the constitution, parliament, Prime Minister and executive, relationships between the branches. <p>2. Non-core political ideas, students will study:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • one idea from the following: anarchism, ecology, feminism, multiculturalism, nationalism.
<p>Assessment overview</p> <p>Section A: UK Government</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One 30-mark question from a choice of two (each question uses a source) – students must complete one of these. Plus one 30-mark question from a choice of two – students must complete one of these. • All questions assess AO1, AO2 and AO3. <p>Section B: Non-core Political Ideas</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • One 24-mark question from a choice of two, which assesses AO1, AO2 and AO3.

Component 3: Comparative Politics (*Component code: 9PL0/3A or 3B)	
Written examination: 2 hours 33⅓% of the qualification 84 marks Students study either USA (9PL0/3A) or Global (9PL0/3B)	
Content overview For USA (3A), students will study: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> the US Constitution and federalism, US Congress, US presidency, US Supreme Court and civil rights, democracy and participation, comparative theories. OR For Global (3B) students will study: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> sovereignty and globalisation, global governance: political and economic, global governance: human rights and environmental, power and developments, regionalism and the European Union, comparative theories. 	
Assessment overview for 3A and 3B Section A <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One 12-mark question from a choice of two, which assesses AO1 and AO2. Section B <ul style="list-style-type: none"> One compulsory 12-mark question focused on comparative theories, which assesses AO1 and AO2. Section C <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Two 30-mark questions from a choice of three, which assess AO1, AO2 and AO3. 	

Assessment Objectives

Students must:		% GCE A Level
AO1	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of political institutions, processes, concepts, theories and issues.	35
AO2	Analyse aspects of politics and political information, including in relation to parallels, connections, similarities and differences.	35
AO3	Evaluate aspects of politics and political information, including to construct arguments, make substantiated judgements and draw conclusions.	30
Total		100%

PLCs

Government and Politics Paper 2

Key Questions	Notes / Mind Map	Cue card	Practice question
1. The Constitution			
What are the key sources of the British constitution?			
What are the main principles of the constitution?			
Describe the main features of a codified constitution.			
What are the main strengths and weaknesses of the traditional constitution?			
What is the rule of law?			
Is parliament sovereign?			
Describe the main features of the constitutional reform act 2005.			
What are the constraints on parliamentary sovereignty?			
How significant are the constitutional reforms introduced by the Labour Governments (1997-2010)?			
How significant are the constitutional reforms introduced by the Conservative-Liberal Democrat coalition?			
Should the UK adopt a codified constitution?			
What is a judicial review?			
What is the difference between statute and common law?			
What is the main function of the Judiciary?			
How are senior judges appointed?			
How powerful is the UK Judiciary?			
How has the creation of the supreme court changed things?			
Describe the main features of civil liberties?			
Does the UK need a bill of rights?			
2. Parliament			
What are the main features of parliamentary government?			
What are the powers and composition of the House of Lords			
What are the powers and composition of the house of commons?			
Describe the main features of the Westminster Model?			
Describe the main functions of parliament?			
How does a bill become legislation?			
What are the three main types of bills and how are they used?			
How well does parliament perform its roles?			
How effective is Question time in ensuring parliamentary scrutiny?			
Describe the main functions of departmental select committees.			
How effective is parliamentary scrutiny?			
How representative is parliament?			
How has parliamentary legitimacy been undermined in recent years?			
Describe the main features of the official parliamentary opposition			
How has the house of commons been reformed?			
How has the Lords been reformed?			
Are the House of Lords reforms sufficient?			
Is parliament an effective check on the power of the executive?			
Describe the function of a whipped vote?			
What is the difference between select committees and public bill committees?			

How effectively does parliament perform its representative function?			
What are the arguments for and against an elected second chamber?			
3. The Prime Minister and the Core Executive			
Describe the main functions of the Prime Minister?			
What are the requirements of the prime minister?			
What are the constraints on the Prime Minister's Power?			
Do the resources the prime minister has bring him or her significant power?			
What are the two main theories of executive power?			
Has there been a presidentialisation of the office of prime minister?			
Describe the main functions of the cabinet.			
In what circumstances do cabinet ministers resign?			
Where does power lie within the executive			
What is the role of the civil service?			
What do special advisors do?			
How has the relationship between the cabinet and the prime minister changed?			
Describe the main features of collective ministerial responsibility.			
The prime minister is now effectively a president. How far do you agree with this point of view?			
4. Relations between branches			
Describe the functions of the supreme court.			
The prime minister is now effectively a president. How far do you agree with this point of view?			
Describe three important cases that the Supreme court has dealt with.			
Describe the main features of judicial neutrality.			
Describe the main features of Judicial independence.			
What influence does the supreme court have over parliament?			
Describe the main function of a judicial review			
How effective is the UK parliament at influencing the executive?			
How has the relationship between parliament and the executive changed?			
Describe the main features of the European Union.			
The UK will regain its sovereignty after it leaves the European Union. How far do you agree?			
Brexit will have a damaging impact on the UK. How far do you agree?			

Key Questions			
Chapter 1 – Democracy and Participation			
1.Current systems of representative democracy and direct democracy in the UK			
Explain the features of direct and representative democracy			
Compare the similarities and differences between direct and representative democracy			
Give advantages and disadvantages of direct and representative democracy			
Give an outline of a case for reform			
1.2 A wider franchise and debates over suffrage			
What are the key milestones of the Franchise? eg 1832 Great Reform Act			
Describe the work of suffragists and suffragettes to extend the franchise			
Extending the franchise further (a current movement)			
1.3 Pressure groups and other influences			
Participation and influence			
How do different pressure groups exert influence			
How do pressure groups vary their methods and influence			
Features and Functions of pressure groups			
Give two case studies of pressure groups highlighting their methods and influence			
Describe other collective organisations and their influence on government and parliament			
1.4 Rights in Context			
Significance of Magna Carta / Human Rights Act 1998 / Equality Act 2010			
Describe the extent/limits/tensions within UK rights-based culture			
Explain possible conflict between individual and collective rights			
Use the work of two contemporary civil liberty groups			
Liberty and The Howard League for Penal Reform			
Individual liberty and collective rights			
Chapter 2 - Political Parties			
2.1 Principles of Political Parties			
Functions and features of political parties			
The importance of the manifesto			
Right and Left wing in UK politics			
Party Funding - considerations and implications			
Alternative funding and restrictions			
2.2 Established Political Parties			
Core background - Conservatives (law,order,welfare, foreign policy)			
Factions in Conservatism. Thatcherism / One Nation & policies			
Core background - Labour (law,order,welfare, foreign policy)			
Factions in the Labour Party. Old labour/New labour/Third way			
Core background - Liberal Democrat Party (law,order,welfare, foreign policy)			
Factions in the Liberal Democratic Party. Social Liberals and Orange Book Liberals			
2.3 Emerging and minor UK political parties			
Growth of other parties			
Policies and successes of two other parties			
Influence and impact of minor parties on 'major' parties			
2.4 UK Political Parties in context			
Models of political party classification			

Classification in Westminster and beyond			
Factors that affect party success			
Chapter 3 - Electoral Systems			
3.1 Different Electoral systems			
FPTP / AMS / STV /SV			
Advantages and Disadvantages of various systems			
Comparing FPTP to a different political system			
3.2 Referendums			
Uses and Impacts			
For and against in a representative democracy			
3.3 Electoral system analysis			
The electoral impact on government			
Impact of different systems on party representation/electoral systems/voter choice			
Chapter 4 - Voting behaviour			
4.1 Class voting and influencing social factors			
Class - based voting			
Gender, age, ethnicity, regional influences			
4.2 Case studies of three key general elections			
General elections Pre-1997 / 1997 / Post-1997 - Common themes			
Impact on parties and government			
Factors influencing outcomes of these three elections			
Analysis of national voting- data			
4.3 The Influence of the Media			
Role and impact of media during and between key general elections			
How bias impacts political choice			
Does media reflect or create opinions or political views			
The use and impact of opinion polls			

UK Politics- Summer Task

Task 1: Using the following link complete the political compass test. Print your result out and bring it to your first lesson.

<https://www.politicalcompass.org/test>

Task 2: You will need to download the following booklet: <https://assets-learning.parliament.uk/uploads/2019/12/How-it-Works-booklet.pdf>

Read through the booklet and In your own words write a short definition for each of these keywords/ phrases:

Keyword/ phrase Definition

Politics

Suffrage

Political Participation

Democracy

Direct Democracy

Representative Democracy

Member of Parliament (MP)

General Election

Devolution

Devolved Assemblies/ Parliament

By-election

Referendum

Manifesto

First-Past-The-Post (FPTP)

Constitution

Uncodified Constitution

Parliamentary sovereignty

Legislature

Executive

Judiciary

Role of Parliament

Parliamentary Reform Acts 1911 and 1949

Human Rights Act 1998

Constitutional Reform Act 2005

Fixed Term Parliament Act 2011

Bicameral legislature

House of Commons

Constituency

Frontbencher minister

Backbench MP

The Speaker

The Opposition

House of Lords

Crossbencher

Life Peer

Hereditary Peer

Select Committee

Legislative Committee

Government Bills

Private Members Bills

Political Party

Party Whips

Party Rebel

Coalition government

Partisan

Partisan
Dealignment

Pressure Group

Sectional Pressure Group

Causal Pressure Group

Insider Pressure Group

Outsider Pressure Group

Lobbying

Petition

Task 3: Research one pressure group that currently exists in the UK. Who are they? What type of group are they? (causal, sectional, insider, outsider) What are they campaigning for and why? What methods have they used to campaign? Do you think they have been successful so far?

Example of a Pressure Group:

Task 4: Read the source below and answer the questions:

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.

Sources: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/guides/zsbtbk7> and <https://www.electoral-reform.org.uk/campaigns/votes-at-16/>

Activity 1: Define the following political and non-political words from the source.

Parliamentary elections

Forefront

Ballot box

Turnout

Impressionable

Radical politics

Blindly

Pressure groups

Substantiated

Tuition fees

Civic-mindedness

Referendum

Holyrood

Voting intentions

Activity 2: Using two different 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

Activity 3: Match up three arguments that 16-18 years olds should be given the vote with three counter-arguments that support the view that they should not.

Arguments that support the view that 16 to 18 year olds should get the vote.	Counter-arguments that support the view that the voting age should remain at 18

Activity 4: You are now going to practice **analysing** one of these arguments. You are going to use **evidence** to back-up your analysis. You may need to do some additional research to answer these questions.

The source states that the 18-24 age group has the lowest turnout in UK elections so therefore even younger voters are likely to have an even lower turnout.	
What is turnout?	
For example, what was the turnout for 18-24 year olds in the recent 2019 general election?	
How does this compare with turnout for this age group in the 2017 and 2015 general elections?	
Why therefore is it perhaps not a good idea to extend the vote to 16 and 17 year olds?	
In the 2014 Scottish Independence Referendum (the first UK election to give 16 year olds the vote) what was the turnout for 16-18 years old? Which age group had the lowest turnout in this referendum?	
Therefore, how does this argument prove that the voting age should not be reduced to 16 years old?	

Activity 5: The work you have just done is how you would write a paragraph for an A level exam question - **‘Using the source, evaluate the view that the voting age should be lowered to 16 for UK general elections.’** Don’t worry you are not going to have to write a full answer to this question: you are just going to have a go at writing a conclusion to this question using the AS IF approach.

A	Answer (what is your decision should 16 years olds get the vote?)	
S	Substantiate your view	
I	It Depends on...	
F	Future Prospects	

UK Government - Summer Task

Task 1: Watch the news over the summer holidays and create a 10 question quiz for when we come back. None of the questions are allowed to be about Covid-19.

1.
2.
3.
4.
5.
6.
7.
8.
9.
10.

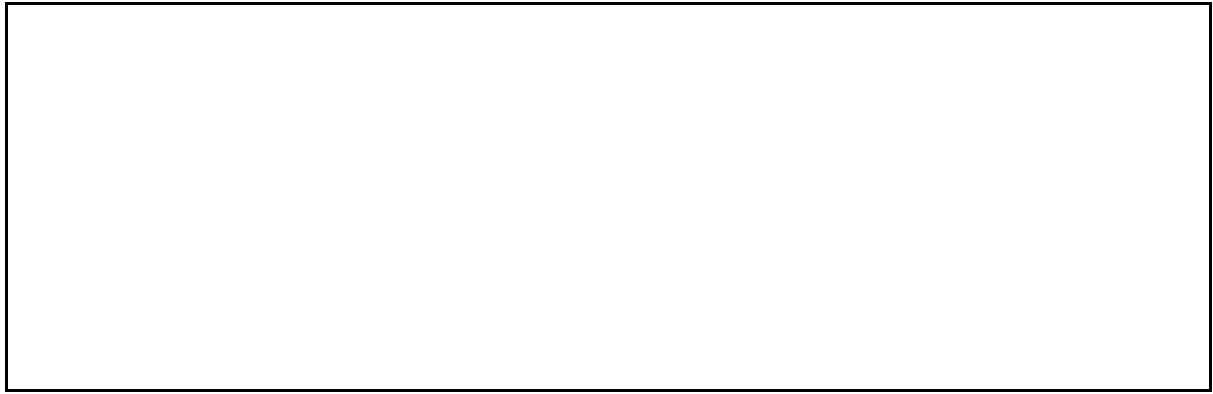
Task 2: Investigate the role of an MP.

a.) research your local MP, who is he/she; which party do they represent; which constituency do they represent; what have they recently shown an interest in; research their voting history to see where they stand on key issues. <https://members.parliament.uk/>

b.) investigate the role of an MP by playing the game in the link below.
<https://learning.parliament.uk/resources/mp-for-a-week/#cta-target>

My Local MP:

The Role of an MP:



Task 3: Read the following extract and answer the questions at the end. For more information on the European Convention on Human Rights use the link below:

<https://www.amnesty.org.uk/what-is-the-european-convention-on-human-rights>

Constitution: time for a British Bill of Rights?

Exam success

The up-to-date facts, examples and arguments in this chapter will help you to produce good-quality answers in your AS and A-level tests in the following areas of the specifications:

Edexcel	AQA
2.1 The constitution	3.1.1.1 The nature and sources of the constitution

Context

For some time past the Conservative Party has added to its policy aspirations the introduction of a British Bill of Rights, either to replace or to stand alongside the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR). Since 2010, however, it has been unable to introduce such a measure, largely because it has not enjoyed a working majority in parliament. All the other parties (with the exception of UKIP) oppose such a measure so there has been little or no chance of securing a majority of support for it. Nevertheless, it remains Conservative policy. This chapter examines what such a Bill of Rights would entail and examines the prospects for its future introduction.

How are rights currently protected in the UK?

One of the main arguments for introducing a British Bill of Rights is that the current position regarding rights protection in the UK is somewhat confused, not least because there are a number of different sources of rights in the UK. This is in marked contrast to many other democracies that have their own Bill of Rights which is entrenched in their constitution. In other words, countries with codified constitutions, such as the USA, Germany or France, have a single source of individual and collective rights.

The unusual situation in the UK is that there are several sources. These are:

- **Common law.** This is law that has existed for many years and has been confirmed by judges in what are known as judicial precedents whenever the nature of rights has come into question during court cases. It is unwritten law in the sense that parliament has not passed any legislation relating to such rights. Common law rights typically relate to the rules of a 'fair trial', the rights of husbands and wives in relation to each other, and rights of inheritance.



- **Equity.** This is similar to common law and is best described as common conceptions of 'fairness'. It is typically used to establish and confirm rights in relation to commercial practices and trading in general.
- **Statute law.** From time to time the UK parliament is required to clarify and develop rights by passing statutes. These have the immediate force of law and must be enforced by the courts. Typical examples are various Habeas Corpus Acts, which forbid any authority from holding people suspected of a crime for any significant length of time without bringing them to trial, or the Equality Act of 2010 which forbids discrimination against any individual or group and so guarantees rights against unfair treatment.
- **European Union law.** These regulations normally relate to people's economic and social rights, such as the right to fair employment practices and the right to fair treatment in welfare provision and pensions.
- **The European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR).** This is, effectively, a Bill of Rights enforceable in the 47 members of the Council of Europe (not to be confused with the European Union). It describes a wide range of rights to be enjoyed by citizens of the member states. In most member countries it has the full force of law, but in the UK it does not have to be enforced by parliament. This is because the UK parliament remains sovereign. In other words, the UK parliament has the power to pass laws that contravene the ECHR. This apparent contradiction is one of the reasons why a British Bill of Rights is an attractive proposition.

What are the arguments against the ECHR?

There is one overriding objection to the ECHR commonly expressed in the UK, mainly among conservatives. This is that it is outside the control of the UK. In other words, there is the same objection as there has been to the UK's membership of the EU. However, there are also detailed objections to some aspects of the Convention. These problems include the following:

- The ECHR contains a section guaranteeing 'family life' as a right. This has caused problems in the UK when attempts have been made to deport foreign criminals but these have been thwarted because they have established some sort of family in the UK and deportation would break up that family.
- The right to freedom of expression has seriously interfered with the attempts of government to prevent hate and terrorist propaganda from being published on the internet.
- The right to a speedy trial and to be free from imprisonment without trial inhibits the security services in their attempts to prevent terrorist activity.
- The privacy provisions of the Convention make it difficult for the police and security services to monitor the communications and movements of suspected terrorists and criminals.

These and other problems have frustrated both Conservative and Labour governments. The introduction of a British Bill of Rights, many argue, would be an opportunity to remove these difficulties by amending the terms to deal with the situations described above.

What difference would a British Bill of Rights make?

The replacement of the ECHR with a British Bill would have a number of political and judicial consequences. The situation with the ECHR includes these principles:

- The terms of the ECHR are determined by external bodies – the Council of Europe and the European Court of Human Rights. Critics say this defies democratic principles.
- The UK has only a minor degree of influence over the terms of the ECHR.
- This means that parliament and government in the UK cannot alter the terms of the ECHR for their own political purposes.
- Critics say this severely curtails the power of UK political institutions.
- Supporters say this is an essential safeguard for rights protection in the UK.

In contrast, the situation with a British Bill of Rights would include these principles:

- The terms of the British Bill would be controlled by the UK parliament.
- This would mean that government and parliament could adjust the Bill to take current circumstances (such as terrorist threat or social media problems) into account.
- Supporters argue this would be more democratic than arrangements with the ECHR.
- Critics argue that rights would then be vulnerable in the face of political expediency.

The case for a British Bill of Rights

Option 1: Adding to the ECHR

This option has been supported at various times by liberals, conservatives and members of the Labour Party. Adding to the ECHR implies two consequences:

- 1 The ECHR could be brought more up-to-date to take account of modern developments, such as those thrown up by international terrorism and social media. It also needs to be updated to take account of modern employment practices (zero hours employment, Uber taxis etc.) and internet consumer practices.
- 2 In order to deal with threats from international terrorism or hate crimes and other developments, some exceptions need to be added, whereby some rights could be temporarily set aside in the interests of security etc.

We might call this a British Bill of Rights, but it could also be described as the 'ECHR Plus'. As things stand, however, the political circumstances will not allow such a solution to take hold. To be successful, such a proposal would require a government with the political will to carry through the measure and a working parliamentary majority. Neither of these is in sight as things stand.

Option 2: Parallel bills

This proposal has been widely criticised for the judicial problems it would throw up. If there were two codified sets of rights operating together, judges would have difficulty deciding which one they should enforce if there were a conflict between the two.



A solution to this problem would be to establish that, in any conflict between the ECHR and a British Bill of Rights, the latter should prevail. This would beg the question: what would be the point of the ECHR if a British Bill were superior? The answer to this objection is that the ECHR would be advisory and judges would follow it in appropriate cases, while the British Bill would be obligatory.

This remains the most likely development. It would be a compromise, allowing liberals to be satisfied that rights would still be robustly protected, while conservatives would be satisfied that the UK government and UK judges would retain some control over how rights were enforced.

Option 3: Replacing the ECHR

This might be described as the 'nuclear' option and it is supported largely by right wingers in the Conservative Party and by UKIP. The arguments for a British Bill of Rights and a clean break from the ECHR include:

- UK rights would be controlled by UK political institutions.
- Rights in the UK would be designed to suit the specific circumstances in the UK.
- UK rights would be enforced only by UK judges.
- There would be no appeal to an appeal court of foreign judges, as is the case with the ECHR.

The problem with this option is that the Conservative Party stands virtually alone in supporting the measure. In other words, there is little chance of a consensus being created. Only a Conservative government with a large parliamentary majority would have a realistic chance of replacing the ECHR completely with a British Bill of Rights.

Option 4: A codified and entrenched constitution

The arguments in favour of a codified constitution for the UK are well known. The key issue here is that an entrenched constitution would be protected against the actions of a temporary government that might try to take too much power for itself and might attempt to reduce the rights of the people in so doing.

Many liberals argue that it is impossible to separate the arguments for entrenched rights from the argument for an entrenched constitution in general. In other words, they argue that a British Bill of Rights would be useless unless the sovereignty of parliament were set aside. As long as parliament remains sovereign, *any* measure to safeguard rights permanently would be futile, liberals insist. This is because a sovereign parliament could amend a Bill of Rights at will and at any time.

So, a full-scale entrenched and codified constitution would contain a Bill of Rights and it would be protected from amendment by parliament. There would be special arrangements (such as a referendum, or a two-thirds majority of parliament) for any amendment to be made. The experience of the USA, where the Bill of Rights section of the constitution has not been amended for 227 years, reinforces this proposal.

Why oppose a British Bill of Rights?

Having reviewed the case for various changes to the UK's arrangements for the protection of rights, we can now summarise the arguments against the introduction of a British Bill of Rights. The arguments include these:

- In principle, it is argued that rights are universal. All citizens of the world are entitled to the same rights, liberal philosophers have insisted, so a 'British' Bill of Rights is a contradiction in terms.
- A British Bill would be inadequate because it could be amended by parliament at any time.
- An external appeal court (the European Court of Human Rights) is more neutral than the UK Supreme Court, which would view rights only from a British perspective.
- A practical argument is that it would be impossible to find widespread agreement about what should be included in a British Bill.

Some of the objections to a British Bill would be removed if it were to be entrenched. However, as this would entail the abolition of the sovereignty of parliament, there is no immediate prospect of this happening.

In September 2017 an e-petition was sponsored by the website 38 Degrees to retain the Human Rights Act and therefore reject a British Bill to replace it. It received over 300,000 signatures. Most of the concern at that time was related to the rights of EU citizens already living in the UK. Without the safeguard of the European Convention, such people and their families would be vulnerable to being repatriated against their will. The right to a family life currently protects them. This illustrates the fact that the debate over a British Bill and the Human Rights Act is very much tied up with the negotiations over Brexit.

Conclusion

The question we must now ask is: what are the prospects for a British Bill of Rights in the future? This is very much dependent on the fortunes of the various parties in the UK. Some facts are known:

- The proposal for a Bill was included in the Conservative Party's 2015 election manifesto and in 2016 the then-justice secretary, Liz Truss, announced that the plan for a Bill would go ahead. However, she added few details and there was no timescale. Strangely, however, she made no proposals for the UK to withdraw from the European Convention on Human Rights, implying that the new Bill would run parallel with the ECHR (option 2 above). It may well be, however, that the Conservatives will, in the future, opt for the 'nuclear' option of abandoning the ECHR altogether and replacing it with a British Bill (option 3 above).
- Before the 2017 election campaign, the Conservative manifesto committed the UK to the ECHR for 5 years at least, in order to 'avoid any confusion while Brexit is being negotiated'. Once Brexit was completed, however, it was likely that the Conservatives would revive interest in either the replacement of the ECHR (option 3 above) or parallel sets of codified right.



When the Conservatives failed to win a majority, it seemed that prospects for a British Bill of Rights had receded into the distance.

- The Human Rights Act of 1998, which brought the ECHR into UK law, was introduced by the Labour Party. It is therefore no surprise to learn that Labour does not wish to see it replaced by a British Bill of Rights. However, the shadow justice secretary, Keir Starmer, does support the idea of incorporating the EU Charter of Human Rights into UK law after Brexit. The EU Charter includes all the terms of the ECHR but has certain additions, including the right to dignity in work, bioethics, data protection and the right to freedom of information. This would therefore constitute option 1 above — adding to the ECHR. On Brexit, the Conservatives and their partners, the DUP, propose that the EU Charter will be set aside.
- The Liberal Democrats support Starmer's policy, but hope to take things further in the future. The party supports the long-term aspiration of a codified constitution for the UK (option 4 above). If the UK were to introduce such a codified and entrenched constitution it would effectively contain a Bill of Rights which would guarantee rights. This would replace the ECHR, though it would almost certainly contain all the rights in the ECHR and more besides. The idea of a codified constitution is also supported by the major reform pressure groups, Unlock Democracy and Liberty.

Exam focus

To consolidate your knowledge of this chapter, answer the following questions:

- 1 What is meant by the term 'Bill of Rights'?
- 2 Why do most conservatives favour the introduction of a British Bill of Rights?
- 3 Explain the main *judicial* objections to a British Bill of Rights.
- 4 Explain the main *political* objections to a British Bill of Rights.
- 5 How might a British Bill of Rights differ from the European Convention on Human Rights?

Activity 1: What is meant by the term bill of rights?

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Activity 2: Why do most conservatives favour the introduction of a British Bill of Rights rather than following the European Convention on Human Rights?

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Reading List:

The list below is suggested reading and viewing that will help support your study of Politics. You do not need to read them all, nor are they an exhaustive list of reading materials but they are a starting point to encourage you to learn more about politics and the political economy.

Non-Fiction/ current affairs:

- Podcasts
 - BBC Beyond Today - a 30 minute episode available each week day. It takes one current event and explains it in detail. The topics vary and some are more relevant than others. This is a great way to get to grips with an important event without having to watch the news 24/7. Download the BBC Sounds App and subscribe or visit <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p06pzmr4/episodes/downloads>
 - BBC Week in Westminster - A 30 minute summary of what has happened in parliament each week. Also available on BBC Sounds this will be used as homework to help you get up to date case studies of the political events we are learning about. <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qjfq>
 - New Statesman - A weekly 1 hour podcast covering the political developments of the week. This offers a different interpretation to the BBC. <https://www.newstatesman.com/podcast>

Weekly email briefings:

Another nice way to keep up to date is to subscribe to some of the weekly updates sent out as emails by major newspapers. Again this is easier than watching the news everyday for hours on end as it focuses just on the political events. It is also useful for US politics (Year 13) where there is less UK news coverage. The example below are all free and you can unsubscribe at any time.

- The Guardian Weekly Politics Briefing <https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2016/may/31/eu-referendum-morning-briefing-sign-up>
- US Politics Minute <https://www.theguardian.com/us-news/series/the-campaign-minute-2016>
- Week in the Patriarchy - Feminism (Non-Core Political ideology depth study - Year 13) <https://www.theguardian.com/world/series/the-week-in-patriarchy>
- The New Statesman - Morning call <https://www.newstatesman.com/new-statesman-morning-call>

TV/ Series

- Yes Minister - a BBC Sitcom set in Westminster in the 1980s. Although it was designed to entertain it gives an interesting insight into UK Politics and how the political establishment operates.

- Have I Got News for You - BBC topical panel show featuring news and current affairs from that week.
- House of Cards - US Political drama - Netflix
- The thick of it - British satirical comedy set in Westminster (2009-2012)

Books:

- 15 minutes of power: The uncertain life of British Ministers - Peter Riddell
- For the Record - David Cameron
- Feminists don't wear pink and other lies - Scarlett Curtis
- Michael Gove: A man in a hurry - Owen Bennett
- The Great Betrayal: The True Story of Brexit - Rod Liddle
- The European Union: What is it and is Britain right to be leaving it (all you need to know) - Jane Lewis

RVHS Academic Reading List

Subject: Politics	
Key Stage: 5	

V = Visit NFA = Non Fiction Article TB = School revision / Textbook	S = TV Drama Series D = Documentary N = Novel for Adults	YA = Novel for Teenagers F = Film NA = News Article
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Year of Study	Topic	Suggested reading	Type
12	UK Politics	UK Government and Politics for AS/A Level (Fifth Edition)	TB
		For the Record - David Cameron	
		Politics: Between Extremes - Nick Clegg	NF
		Brexit: what the hell happens now - Ian Dunt	NF
		Making a success of Brexit and reforming the EU - Roger Bootle	NF

			NF
12	UK Government	BBC Beyond Today - Podcast BBC Week in Westminster - Podcast New Statesman The Prime Ministers: Reflections of Leadership from Wilson to May - Steve Richards	NF NF NF NF
12	Core Political ideologies	Candide - Voltaire The Communist Manifesto - Karl Marx Leviathan - Hobbs The Handmaid's Tale - Margaret Atwood Political ideas for A Level - Neil McNaughton	N NF NF N TB
13	Feminism	Feminists don't wear pink and other lies - Scarlett Curtis The Guilty Feminist - Deborah Frances White Sexual Politics - Kate Millet Feminism is for everybody - bell hooks I Know Why the Caged Bird Sings - Maya Angelou	NF NF NF NF N
13	Politics of the USA	Fire and Fury - Michael Wolf American Politics: A very Short Introduction - Richard Valelly US Government and Politics of A Level (Fifth Edition) - Anthony Bennet	NF NF NF