

'The Aspiring Politician'

KS4/5



**CHELTENHAM
BOURNSIDE
SCHOOL**

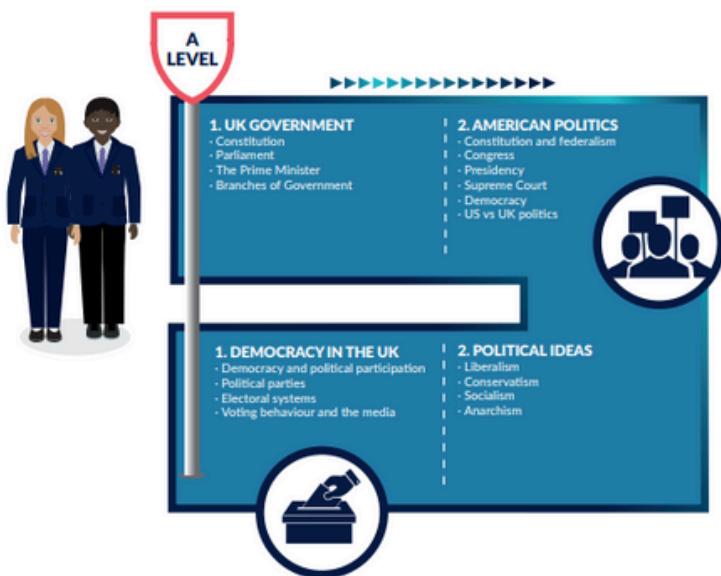


Inspiring lives through learning

'The Aspiring Politician'



POLITICS



'The Aspiring Politician'



Welcome to the Aspiring Politics Programme. Whether you're thinking of taking the subject at A-Level or Degree Level, or are simply exploring your interest in Politics, this booklet will help you build the skills, knowledge, and confidence needed to succeed in the subject.

Politics is more than just elections and politicians – it is the study of power, people, ideas, and institutions that shape the world around us. It encourages critical thinking, debate, and the ability to understand and challenge different viewpoints.

Inside, you'll find a series of engaging tasks designed to stretch your curiosity and prepare you for the academic demands of A-Level study and beyond. From exploring key political thinkers to analysing current affairs, this Programme will also help you improve your research, writing, and argument-building – all of which are essential not only for Politics but for many university subjects such as Law, History, Sociology, and International Relations.

By completing the activities, you'll begin to think like a Politics student and develop the habits of independent study that universities value highly. Whether you're considering a future in government, media, education, or simply want to understand the forces that shape our society, this booklet is your first step. Engage with it fully, and you'll be better prepared for the exciting academic journey ahead.

Top tips include:

- Participating in competitions
- Reading around the subject
- Watching or listening to lectures/podcasts/documentaries
- Politics related work experience
- Complete a related EPQ in year 13
- Conduct your own research projects

Good luck!

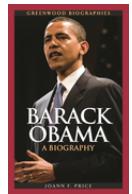
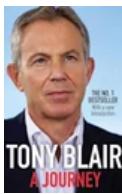
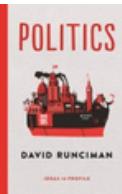
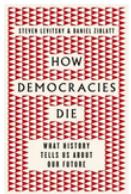
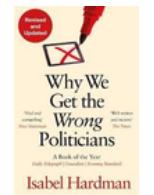
Mr P Lockyer
Head of Politics

Reading list



Read one of these Political books and write a book review to share with your Politics teacher. Include details of what the book says, how interesting it is and how well written it is.

- **Politics: An Introduction (2000)** Kenneth Minogue
- **British Politics: An introduction (2020)** Tony Wright
- **American Politics: An introduction (2013)** Richard M. Valley
- **Why We Get the Wrong Politicians (2022)** Isabel Hardman
- **How Britain Really Works (2018)** Stig Abell
- **Who Governs Britain? (2015)** Anthony King
- **How democracies die (2018)** Steven Levitsky and Daniel Ziblatt
- **Politics: Ideas in Profile (2015)** David Runciman
- **Ten Years to save the West. (2024)** Liz Truss
- **Boris Unleashed. (2024)** Boris Johnson
- **Tony Blair: A Journey. (2011)** Tony Blair
- **Barack Obama: A Biography. (2008)** Joann F Price



Competitions



CHELTENHAM
BOURNSIDE
SCHOOL



Politics Aspire Debate Club

Join the Debating club and take part in an inter-school team debate

Listen and Watch



Podcasts

Listen regularly to at least 3 of these Politics-related Podcasts below throughout the year and give regular updates of what they say to your teacher during your Politics lessons. These are available on Apple Podcasts and Spotify.



The Rest is Politics - Former politicians Alastair Campbell and Rory Stewart break down current affairs in the UK and abroad.



BBC Radio 4 Political Thinking with Nick Robinson - He has a conversation with people regarding who shaped our political thinking and what shaped theirs.



BBC Radio 4 Westminster Hour - Excellent weekly podcast on current politics, news and current debates.



The Rest is Politics US - Uncovering secrets from inside the White House, wider look at intricacies of United States society and how they shape the world's most important economy.



The New Statesman - Reporting and analysis to help you understand the forces shaping the world



Politics Weekly UK - Political columnist John Harris hosts a cast of voices from up and down the country and across the political spectrum to analyse the week's political news.



Politics Weekly US - Every Friday, Guardian columnist and former Washington correspondent, Jonathan Freedland, invites experts to help analyse the latest in American politics.



Politics Unpacked - Hugo Rifkind unpacks the politics of the day



Where Politics Meets History - Iain Dale and historian Dr Tessa Dunlop take a fresh look at the biggest news of the week, through the lens of history.



Political Currency - Ed Balls and George Osborne take us behind closed doors into the rooms where decisions are made.



The A Level Politics Show - A one-stop shop for A Level Politics revision focusing on UK and US politics.

Listen and Watch



Films/YouTube/TV

Regularly watch these YouTube sites to keep up-to-date with the latest developments in Politics. Regularly share what you are finding out with your Politics teacher in lessons.



Khan Academy

([The free, time-saving teaching tool you've been looking for - Khanmigo!](#)) Interactive articles and videos to help students succeed in politics.



CrashCourse ([Welcome to Crash Course](#))

More than 50 courses on a wide variety of subjects, ranging from the humanities to sciences and so much more



10 Downing Street ([The first 24 hours as Prime Minister - Behind the Scenes with Keir Starmer](#)) - Official page for Prime Minister Keir Starmer's office, based at 10 Downing Street.



UK Parliament ([UK Parliament - YouTube](#))

Where UK House of Commons and UK House of Lords scrutinise the work of the Government. Learn more about Parliament, its people and our unique heritage.



The White House ([America is BACK.](#)

Official White House YouTube channel.



Political TV ([Political TV - YouTube](#)) - A number of political programmes, such as Question Time, for free.



PoliticsJOE ([PoliticsJOE - YouTube](#)) - Interviews, analysis and debate making politics for the many, not the few.

Listen and Watch



Social media

Follow at least 5 of these groups/individuals on X and regularly discuss in your Politics lessons what they have been 'tweeting'.

@Conservatives – Official account of the UK Conservative Party

@UKLabour – Official feed of the Labour Party

@LibDems – The Liberal Democrats' official account

@10DowningStreet – The official government account for the office of the UK Prime Minister and Cabinet announcements.

@Keir_Starmer – Personal and official Twitter account of UK Prime Minister

@UKParliament – The official account of the UK Parliament

@HouseofCommons – Official House of Commons account

@HouseofLords – Official House of Lords account

@CommonsLibrary – UK Parliament's impartial research service

@POTUS – Official account of the President of the United States

@WhiteHouse – Official White House account

@UKSupremeCourt – Official feed of the UK Supreme Court

@electoralreform – The Electoral Reform Society's account

@YouGov – UK-based polling organisation

@YouGovAmerica – YouGov's US-focused account

@TheDemocrats – Official account of the US Democratic Party

@GOP – Official Republican Party account

@SenateDems - Official account of the Democratic caucus in the U.S. Senate

@SenateGOP – Official U.S. Senate Republican caucus feed

@HouseDemocrats – Official account of Democrats in the U.S

@HouseRepublicans – Official feed for Republican members of the U.S.

@cspan - Non-partisan broadcaster providing live coverage of U.S. Congress

Work Experience and Events



The Politics Department understands the importance of work experience for students wishing to study the subject at University and encourages those who are interested in reading Politics to gain as much experience as possible.

Work experience in politics gives you the chance to see how government and democracy operate beyond the classroom. Whether you're shadowing a councillor, volunteering with a political party, or taking part in youth representation, these opportunities show how political decisions are made and how individuals can influence change.

Politics-related experiences can include:

- Work experience with an MP, such as Max Wilkinson, Liberal Democrat MP for Cheltenham
- Virtual programmes, including Politics Work Experience via Springpod
- Volunteering with political parties, through Young Labour, Young Conservatives or Young Liberals
- Think tanks and charities, such as the Institute for Government or Chatham House
- Local government, for example shadowing councillors at Cheltenham Borough Council
- Youth representation, including the UK Youth Parliament or local youth councils.

These opportunities help develop communication, critical thinking and leadership skills, while strengthening applications for future study or careers in politics, law, public service or campaigning.

Work Experience and Events



Max Wilkinson - MPs and Lords - UK Parliament

Liberal Democrat MP for Cheltenham. He currently undertakes the role of Liberal Democrat Spokesperson. He offers Bournside students work experience who are interested in Politics.



Politics Work Experience | Springpod

Interested in a career in politics but not sure where to start? This programme will help you experience different areas in politics & explore the careers available



Young Labour | Young Conservatives | Young Liberals

Volunteering with a political party is a great way to gain experience. Youth wings of major parties are particularly welcoming to students.



Institute for Government

Think tanks like the Institute for Government or Chatham House, as well as charities working on political or social causes sometimes offer work experience or volunteering



Cheltenham Borough Council

Councils often allow sixth form students to shadow councillors or attend meetings. Contact your local council or councillor directly and explain your interest.



UK Youth Parliament | National Youth Agency

You can run to become a Member of Youth Parliament (MYP) or take part in your local youth council. You'll debate issues, propose policies, and even speak in the House of Commons.



The Careers Team at Bournside deliver regular Inspire Breakfast Lectures. Open to students in Year 10 - 13, these business-focused breakfasts invite speakers from all corners of industry to share their professional experiences and valuable insights with Bournside students over breakfast; opening our eyes to the opportunities available across many industry sectors.

[Take a look at upcoming speakers and reserve your space here.](#)



