

Politics Revision Checklist: Paper One - Politics of the UK

IMPORTANT:

This is a **GUIDE** to the **basic things you need to know and the main topic areas. In all of these areas you need to have detailed CASE STUDIES, EXAMPLES and be able to quote different THEORIES and THEORISTS.**

Constitution:

- Key features UK constitution.
- What makes up the UK constitution?
- What key changes have been made in recent years?
- Strengths and weaknesses of UK constitution
- Arguments for and against a written constitution.

Judiciary:

- Functions of UK Judiciary
- Key features/ principles of Judiciary
- Problems with Judiciary- Background? Neutrality? Activism?
- Impact of recent reforms since 1997
- Human Rights act- What is it? Impact?
- Has the Judiciary become more politicised? Arguments for and against.
- Key case studies: Factortame, Abu Hamza, Article 50, any others.

Legislature

Commons

- Functions of the Legislature
- Role of MPs- Conflicts within these roles.
- Legislative process- How are Laws passed?
- How effective is the Legislative process?
- How does Parliament scrutinise the executive?
- How effective is parliamentary scrutiny of the Executive?
- Role of speaker and organisation of Commons
- Problems with Parliament- Effectiveness and problems with MPs
- Recent reforms to Commons and impact.

Lords

- House of Lords- Functions
- Recent reforms to Lords and impact (1997 onwards, including failed 2012 reform)
- Should Lords be abolished? Elected?
- Case studies: MPs expenses, Lobbying scandal, Vote leave in select committees, others.

Executive:

Core Executive

- Functions and make up of Executive.
- Cabinet and collective cabinet responsibility.
- Role of Prime minister
- Where does power lie? Prime Minister or Cabinet?

- Relationship between Parliament and Executive- Where does power lie?
- Key case studies- Thatcher, Blair (strong) Major, Brown and May (weak). Johnson- Unknown.

Civil Service

- Civil Service- Functions
- Impact of recent civil service reforms.
- Where does power lie in the civil service? Mandarins? SPADs? Ministers?

Multi Tiered Government:

EU

- Structure of the EU (Basic)
- Impact Eu/ Brexit

Devolution

- Devolved Government- Welsh, Scottish, NI parliaments; How do they work? How are they different?
- Problems with devolution- West Lothian Question, Stormont suspension, Nationalism and UK break up.
- Has devolution been a success- Arguments for/ against.

Local Government

- Local government- Functions
- Impact of recent local government reforms- Elected mayors
- Future of UK- Arguments for/ against: more devolution to regions? English Parliament? Federal UK

Democracy, Participation and Voting Behaviour.

Democracy:

- What is democracy?
- What different types of democracy exist?
- How do people participate in democracy?
- Direct and indirect democracy.
- Role of MPs in a democracy.
- Should MPs be representatives or delegates?

Engagement with democracy:

- Is voter turnout declining? Why?
- Are other means of democratic expression growing?
- Does participation matter?

Voting behaviour:

- Determinants of voting behaviour- part and class alignment, dominant ideology, rational choice, etc.
- Patterns of recent voting behaviour-
- De-alignment.
- How far do old patterns still exist?
- How far does age, gender, ethnicity etc influence voting?
- What influences voters today? Issues, Media, Leaders etc..

Election campaigns:

- How do parties campaign in the lead up to an election?
- Target voters.
- Role of Media
- Opinion polls- what are they and do they matter?

'Second order elections'- Local/ Regional etc

- How far does voting behaviour differ in 'second order elections and why?

Elections and electoral reform.

Elections:

- Why are elections important to democracy?
- What types of elections are held in Britain (General, local, euro etc...)

Electoral reform:

- What makes a good electoral system? (Jenkins Report)
- Difference between Plurality, Majority and Proportional systems.
- How does the first past the post system work?
- Strengths and weaknesses of 'First Past the Post System'.
- How do other electoral systems work?
 - Alternative vote.
 - List systems.
 - Single Transferable vote.
 - Additional Member System.
- Strengths and weaknesses of other electoral systems.
- Should the UK first past the post system be reformed, and if so with what?

Coalition governments:

- What are 'coalition governments?'
- Pros and cons of Coalition government compared to 'single party government'.

Referendums:

- What are referendums?
- What are the pros and cons of referendums?

- Do referendums enhance democracy?

Parties and the party system:

What are political parties?

- Functions of parties in democracy.
- Which parties exist in the UK.
- What basic ideologies and groups exist within these parties?

Labour Party:

- Ideology and factions.
- Early origins.
- Overview of party history.
- Impact of Blair and 'New Labour' - is Labour still socialist?
- Problems faced since 2005.

Conservative Party:

- Ideology and factions.
- Overview of History.
- Impact of Thatcher.
- Cameron- Is he a conservative?
- Problems faced since 1997.

Liberal Democrats:

- Ideology.
- Overview of History.
- Problem of '3rd party'
- 'Breakthrough in 2010?' – use election for this.

Other parties:

- Overview of main other parties and policies. Greens, SNP, UKIP
- Do minor parties make a difference?
- Do we have a two party system?- Arguments for and against

Party organisation:

- How are the Tories and Labour structured?
- What is the role of conference in the main two parties?
- What is the role of the party leader in the main political parties?
- How are the party leaders elected?
- Where does power lie in the two main parties?

Party funding:

- How are the main parties funded?

- What are the pros and cons of voluntary funding and state funding for parties?

Do parties matter any more?

- Consensus politics what does this mean, and how far does a consensus exist today?
- Do parties offer a real choice any more?
- Why is support for traditional parties declining?

Pressure Groups.

- What are pressure groups?
- Why have pressure groups grown so much in recent years?
- Difference between pressure groups, parties and social movements.
- Classification of pressure groups- insider and outsider, Protective and promotional.

Pressure group methods:

- How do pressure groups influence:
 - The executive?
 - The legislature?
 - The Public?
- What is meant corporatism and 'tripartism'?
- What are policy networks?
- How do pressure groups organise campaigns?
- What is direct action?
- Is direct action justified?

Perspectives on Pressure groups activity:

- What is the 'pluralist approach'?
- What is the 'corporatist' approach?
- What other perspectives on pressure group activities are there?
- Do pressure groups benefit democracy?