






Congratulations for choosing such a fascinating and relevant A level subject! We're sure you'll love your course. To help you start on the right note, here are some introductory tasks to support you in building some overarching knowledge of the key topics and issues in Component 2 (UK Government).









Task 1 - Introductory Key Terms





Whilst there are some key terms in the course that are very specific to certain areas, there are other important political key terms and concepts that you'll meet time and again – they aren't relevant to just one area. It's definitely worth being confident with their meaning and with relevant examples from Day One.

Complete the table below by providing definitions - we've given you some hints via the QR codes for where to find some good definitions. As an extension task, for each key term, see if you can find a recent news story that uses that term.

Key Term	Definition
Cabinet	
Constitution	
Democracy	
Devolution	
Electoral system	

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Executive	
General election	
Judiciary	
Legislature	
Manifesto	
Peers	
Prime Minister	
Referendum	

Rights	
Select Committee	
Sovereignty	
White Paper	

Task 2 – who am I?

For each of the political figures shown below, find out at least 5 key pieces of information. Possible pieces of information include:

- The party with which they are associated
- Their position on Brexit
- Their constituency (if they are an MP)
- Their experience in politics
- The nature of their job
- A famous quote
- Interesting political events that they have been involved in
- Why they could be a key political figure in the next few months/years



John Bercow

image source:
<http://www.parliament.uk/business/news/2010/09/papal-visit/speaker-bercow-speech/>



Keir Starmer

Image source:
http://www.keirstarmer.com/sir_keir_starmer_people_make_assumptions_about_me_which_turn_out_to_be_wrong



Nicola Sturgeon

Image source:
<https://www.snp.org/nicola-sturgeon>



Vince Cable

image source:
<https://www.libdems.org.uk/vince-cable>



Nigel Dodds

Image source:
<http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-31863675>



Nicky Morgan

Image source:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/speeches/nicky-morgan-bett-show-2016>

Task 3 – Recent Political Events

Read through each of the news stories provided below. Highlight any political terminology and jot down a definition in the space provided below the story. Rank each story according to its importance in British politics, in your opinion, and justify your rank.

Tory election campaign lacked clear policy message Adapted from The Guardian, 28/8/2017	
<p>Theresa May is being urged by Conservative MPs and defeated candidates to offer voters clear messages on policy and to shake up the party machine after June's catastrophic election performance.</p> <p>An internal review being carried out by the former minister Eric Pickles and set to be discussed at the party's October conference will contain painful home truths about the campaign, which led to Labour achieving the biggest jump in its share of the vote since 1945. Pickles, who is being aided in the task by Graham Brady, chair of the 1922 Committee of backbenchers, has been told the party lacked a convincing political narrative, leaving MPs little riposte to Labour's policies on the doorstep. The review has also heard that Conservative headquarters (CCHQ) ignored early warning signs from MPs in the south of England that they were being outgunned on the ground by Labour for the first time in years, and that overconfidence about the result meant candidates in marginal constituencies were left exposed.</p> <p>He said the biggest problem was not the party's electoral ground game but its absence of a clear policy message. "The big absence from the manifesto was anything significant about the economy, which was a great story to tell. What was at the core of the manifesto was 'strong and stable', foxhunting and social care." Carmichael said that by pressing ahead with what May called a "red, white and blue Brexit" the Conservatives had shown they had little to say to young people, who tended to be pro-European. "Over the previous year we had spent time showing we weren't listening to young people. They clearly felt disconnected. We had no message for them whatsoever," he said.</p> <p>May's chiefs of staff, Fiona Hill and Nick Timothy, <u>resigned in the immediate aftermath</u> of the election amid complaints about their controlling management style and refusal to pass on criticism. But the chairman remains in place. Grant Schapps also blamed a lack of on-the-ground campaigning, as well as a lacklustre social media campaign, for the Conservatives' performance. "There was also a lack of understanding that real people posting on social media are worth 10 times a paid advert. The result we had was partly due to not putting those key parts of the ground campaign in place."</p>	
Definitions	Importance: /10 Justification:

Nick Clegg's refusal to enter the House of Lords proves he's exactly the sort of person they desperately need

Adapted from The Independent, 13/6/2017

Mere hours after the unseating of former Liberal Democrat leader Nick Clegg as dawn broke on Friday morning – an overdue but nevertheless, in my view, unwelcome beheading delivered by an angry young electorate – the clamouring to find him somewhere to sit on the red benches had already begun.

Yesterday, Clegg brought it to an abrupt end. After promising that he would continue advocating for a progressive, open, pro-European Britain though outside Westminster, he tweeted: "Thanks for the kind petition to put me in the Lords, but I'm afraid an unelected chamber is not for me. Ermine just isn't my thing...."

In this simple message, the former deputy prime minister showed just how suited he would have been to membership of the Lords, in both temperament and values. He would have offered an unmuddled, informed voice on the biggest issues we face in the coming years; he holds strong relationships within both houses at home and across European politics too; and yet Clegg remains, at heart, a democrat who disapproves of unelected privilege and seeks to remove unfair advantage wherever he sees it. Shame, then, that a man with such principles ergo finds himself unable to act upon them in service of the country.

Not every campaigner has been as honest to their initial driving values when it comes to accession to the Lords. The lure of unelected political power has been too seductive to some of the biggest critics of it, particularly those on the left – former deputy prime minister John Prescott, and the former Liberty director Shami Chakrabarti to name just two.

Clegg's refusal to cast aside his long-held beliefs in order to cling onto some semblance of national influence deserves our utmost respect, though it nevertheless robs British politics of an important figure upon whom historians will look more fondly than the electorate of his day. It's also a reminder of how far progressive politics is from finding a satisfactory answer to the vexed question of the upper chamber.

The Liberal Democrat position is to call for reform of the Lords to ensure that those who scrutinise the laws made in the Commons are also directly elected by the people. Under that system, however, Clegg would also find himself unlikely to secure a seat even if he desired to cross the lobby.

Definitions

Importance: /10

Justification:

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Why Labour's new Brexit stance could change everything

Adapted from the New Statesman, 27/8/2017

The Opposition wants a four-year transition arrangement, during which Britain would remain a full member of the customs union and the single market. The announcement isn't that drastic of a shift from Labour. What really divides the party is on the shape of the deal *after* Britain's exit from the European Union is over, where there is agreement over what words to say but disagreement over what those words mean.

What Keir Starmer has done is more of a clarification – we knew that Labour supported a transition, we didn't know what that transition would look like or how long it would be – than a change of policy. Thanks to the loss of the Conservative majority, Labour can, in concert with the other opposition parties, enforce its will on the shape of negotiations provided some Remainer Tories are willing to vote against the government.

As it stands, both the major parties support a fairly drastic exit from the European Union, but the Conservative position is several degrees of magnitude harder than Labour's, as it would involve shucking off the judgement of the European Court and leaving bodies such as Euratom and the customs union.

For one thing, every year that Britain's transition agreement lasts is a year that, demographically speaking, the country becomes more pro-Remain. The electoral incentives start to tilt in favour of a government adopting the Liberal Democrat position of a vote on the final deal or a return to Britain's full membership of the EU. There are a number of obstacles to that, not least the question of whether the 27 member states of the EU would all agree to allow the United Kingdom back into the fold. But it is plausible enough that you can see why it occupies a place in Brexiteer demonology and why many Remainers are putting their hopes in it.

There's the added factor, too, that the economic indicators all make it more likely than not that the next election will produce a Labour government, which will either be dependent on its own Europhile wing or the Liberal Democrats *and* its own Europhile wing. A transition deal that stretches past the next election on 5 May 2022 is significantly more likely to become forever or be the scene for a U-Turn into full EU membership. So while Labour's position is, in of itself, some way away from a soft Brexit or no Brexit at all, it makes the possibility of a soft Brexit or a return to the EU more likely.

Definitions

Importance: /10

Justification:

<p>Theresa May strikes ‘confidence and supply’ deal with DUP</p> <p>Adapted from The Financial Times, 26/6/2017</p> <p>Theresa May has struck a “confidence and supply” deal with the Democratic Unionist party, which should ensure the Conservatives have a majority on key parliamentary votes in exchange for extra funding for Northern Ireland.</p> <p>The government has committed an extra £1bn in funding to the province, mostly over two years, and promised to give the regional executive greater influence over how another £500m is spent. It will work to devolve control over corporation tax to Northern Ireland, potentially allowing it to compete with the lower rate in the Republic of Ireland. It will also consult on how to adjust value added tax and air passenger duty to boost the province’s tourism industry. In exchange, the DUP’s 10 MPs will support confidence motions, the Queen’s Speech, the budget and finance bills, Brexit legislation and national security legislation. Votes on other matters will be dealt with on a “case by case basis”.</p> <p>The deal is for the length of the parliament, scheduled to last up to five years. Of the additional funding, £850m is over two years, and £150m is over five years. Progress will be reviewed in 2019. The additional funding is equivalent to about £530 per resident of Northern Ireland. Asked where the extra money would come from, First Secretary of State Damian Green, who is in effect Mrs May’s deputy, pointed to the “strong economy”. Arlene Foster, DUP leader, said the Conservatives had “recognised the case for higher funding in Northern Ireland given our unique history and circumstances over recent decades”. But the deal immediately faced criticism that Northern Ireland was receiving special treatment. Labour’s Carwyn Jones, Wales’s first minister, called the deal “unacceptable”, saying it “further weakens the UK” and “all but kills the idea of fair funding for the nations and regions”. Tim Farron, the Liberal Democrat leader, said: “While our schools are crumbling and our NHS is in crisis, Theresa May chooses to throw cash at 10 MPs in a grubby attempt to keep her Cabinet squatting in Number 10.”</p> <p>The DUP has said it supports Britain leaving the European single market and customs union, the key elements of what is commonly labelled a “hard” Brexit. Talks between the two parties began just over two weeks ago, following the general election that left Mrs May without a parliamentary majority and anointed the DUP as kingmakers. Although Gavin Williamson, the Conservative chief whip, had heralded a deal almost immediately, the DUP held out, insisting that austerity in Northern Ireland should be eased.</p> <p>Sinn Féin, the largest nationalist party in Northern Ireland, has said it will oppose any deal that breaches the Good Friday peace agreement. The Northern Irish parties, including the DUP and Sinn Féin, are locked in separate discussions about restoring the power-sharing executive at Stormont. The</p>	

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executive collapsed in January, following months of tension stoked by the DUP's involvement with a renewable heating scandal.

Definitions

Importance: /10

Justification: