



Year 13 PPE: Revision Guidance Gov&Pol

Circulation	Year 13 Students
Title	Y13 PPE Revision Guidance
Purpose	To provide revision information for PPE Examinations

You will sit three papers for your PPE exam in January. This will include the following topics:

Paper 1: Government and Politics in the UK

Paper 2: Government and Politics of the USA and comparative politics

Paper 3: Political Ideas

Revision topics: Government and Politics in the UK

3.1.1 The government of the UK

.1.1.1 The nature and sources of the British Constitution

Key concepts and terminology:

- codified
- uncodified
- statute
- common law
- conventions
- authoritative opinions
- The royal prerogative
- rule of law
- parliamentary sovereignty
- individual and collective rights.

Focus:

Students should develop awareness of the significance of the following historical documents to the development of rights in the UK:

- Magna Carta (1215)
- Bill of Rights (1689)
- Act of Settlement (1701)
- Parliaments Acts (1911 and 1949).

Students should analyse and evaluate:

- the nature and sources of the British constitution
- contemporary legislation and current issues regarding rights
- issues and debates around recent constitutional changes
- debates about the extent of rights in the UK



- two examples of constitutional changes since 1997, such as the establishment of devolved legislative bodies in constituent countries of the UK, the introduction of a Freedom of Information Act, adoption of the Human Rights Act, changing composition of the House of Lords
- areas where individual and collective rights are in agreement and where they are in conflict.

3.1.1.2 The structure and role of Parliament

Key concepts and terminology:

- scrutiny of executive
- Commons
- Lords
- MPs and peers
- delegates and trustees
- Burkean theories of representation
- delegate theories
- mandate theories
- trustees
- parliamentary privilege
- opposition
- legislation
- debate
- redress of grievances
- campaign
- referendum

Focus:

Students should analyse and evaluate:

- scrutiny of the executive and how effective scrutiny of the executive is in practice
- parliamentary debate and the legislative process
- Commons
- Lords
- theories of representation - Burkean, delegate, mandate theories
- the roles and influence of MPs and peers
- the significance of Commons and Lords:
- work of committees
- role of the opposition
- the extent of Parliament's influence on government decisions:
- Party discipline enables the government to routinely outvote opposition
- government control of civil servants' appearances before Select Committees
- membership of those committees is largely controlled by the Whips' offices.
- interactions of parliament and other branches of government.

3.1.1.3 The Prime Minister and cabinet

Key concepts and terminology:

- core executive

- prime minister
- primus inter pares
- cabinet
- inner cabinet
- cabinet committee
- individual and collective responsibility
- accountability

Focus

Students should analyse and evaluate:

- how policy is made
- the relationship between Prime Minister and cabinet
- the difference between individual and collective responsibility. Examples might include:
- resignation of Sir Thomas Dugdale – Crichel Down (1954)
- resignation of Iain Duncan Smith over Welfare Reforms (2016)
- two examples that demonstrate the power of the Prime Minister and cabinet to dictate events and determine policy making. One example must be from 1945–1997. The second example must be from 1997 to the present. Examples might include:
- introduction of poll tax (1990)
- invasion of Iraq (2003)
- government/parliament relations – accountability/interest.

3.1.1.4 The judiciary

Key concepts and terminology:

- Supreme Court
- judicial independence and impartiality
- separation of powers
- ultra vires
- judicial review.

Focus:

- Students should analyse and evaluate:
- the composition of the judiciary and the appointments process
- the role of the Supreme Court and its impact on government, legislature and policy process
- judicial influence on government
- importance of ultra vires, judicial review and the Supreme Court's interactions with and influence over the legislative and policy making processes.

3.1.1.5 Devolution

Key concepts and terminology:

- devolution
- The Scottish Parliament and Government
- The Welsh Assembly and Government
- The Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive.

Focus:



- Students should analyse and evaluate:
- the roles, powers and responsibilities of the different devolved bodies in the UK
- debate around devolution in England
- existing devolution in England
- impact of devolution on government of the UK.

3.1.2 The politics of the UK

3.1.2.1 Democracy and participation

Key concepts and terminology:

- direct democracy
- representative democracy
- suffrage
- participation
- partisan dealignment.

Focus:

Students should develop awareness of development of the suffrage in the UK – debates and issues:

- how suffrage has changed since the Great Reform Act (1832) to the present
- debates regarding gender, class, ethnicity and age
- the significance of the Chartists, Suffragists and Suffragettes
- suffrage as a human right.

Students will be required to analyse and evaluate:

- the nature of democracy
- different types of democracy – direct democracy, representative government
- patterns of participation and different forms of participation.

3.1.2.2 Elections and referendums

Key concepts and terminology:

- majoritarian and proportional electoral systems
- representative democracy
- suffrage
- participation
- voting behaviour
- manifesto
- campaign
- Referendums.

Focus:

Students will be required to analyse and evaluate the characteristics of different systems used in parliamentary elections and in elections to one of the devolved bodies in the UK including:

- debates and issues around the performance of those systems
- the advantages and disadvantages of those systems
- three key elections since 1945 should be selected for detailed study. These should include:
- the 1997 general election
- one election from before 1997
- one election since 1997.

The study of these elections, the wider political context in which they occurred and the techniques used by political parties in their campaigns will provide perspectives on the issues and outcomes of each election, particularly in relation to the following:

- patterns of voting behaviour/changes over time – as revealed by relevant national data sources, and explanations of how and why they varied in different elections
- the influence of the media on the outcomes
- the reasons for and the impact of party policies on the outcomes
- the reasons for and the influence of manifestos on the outcomes
- the impact of campaigns and leadership on the outcomes
- the role of elections and their influence on policy and policy making
- likely effects of the electoral system on the party system.

These elections should be selected because they exemplify particular characteristics of the British electoral system, electoral behaviour or electoral outcomes eg:

- an election resulting in a landslide victory for one party
- an election where results reveal a clear discrepancy between the number of votes and the number of seats gained
- an election which shows how large numbers of voters are effectively disenfranchised by the preponderance of voters for one party in large areas of the country
- an election the outcome of which is greatly influenced by a particular leadership style or personality

Students should analyse and evaluate the nature and use of referendums in the UK and their impact.

3.1.2.3 Political parties

Key concepts and terminology:

- ideology
- party structure
- party systems
- party funding
- party functions
- minor parties
- political agenda.

Focus:

Students should analyse and evaluate:



- the origins, ideas and development of the Conservative, Labour, and Liberal Democrat parties and how these have helped shape their current policies
- party structures and functions of Conservative, Labour and Liberal Democrat parties
- issues and debates around party funding
- relations with, and influence of, the media
- factors affecting electoral outcomes
- policies of minor parties and their impact on political debates and political agenda
- development towards a multi-party system in the UK and its impact on government and policy.

3.1.2.4 Pressure groups

Key concepts and terminology:

- pluralism
- political agenda
- insider and outsider pressure groups
- promotional and interest groups.

Focus:

Students should analyse and evaluate:

- pressure groups and democracy – pluralism
- other influences on government and parliament:
- think tanks
- lobbyists
- corporations
- media
- typologies of pressure groups, including a detailed study of one insider and one outsider group
- methods used by pressure groups
- factors likely to affect the political influence of different groups, such as membership and resources
- links with political parties, government and the media.

3.1.2.5 The European Union

Key concepts and terminology:

- EU institutions

Focus:

Students should analyse and evaluate:

- aims of the EU and the extent to which they have been achieved
- the impact of the EU on UK politics and policy making.

Revision topics: Government and Politics of the USA and comparative politics

3.2.1 Government and politics of the USA

3.2.1.1 The constitutional framework of US government

Key concepts and terminology:

- US Constitution
- Bill of Rights
- separation of powers
- checks and balances
- Federalism.

Focus:

Students should analyse and evaluate:

- the nature and significance of the US Constitution
- the significance of constitutional principles
- framework of government laid down in the US Constitution
- federal system of government
- federal state relations
- amendment process
- debates concerning the importance of the US Constitution to the working of contemporary US government
- protection of civil liberties and rights under the US Constitution, Bill of Rights, and Supreme Court rulings.

3.2.1.2 The legislative branch of government: Congress

Key concepts and terminology:

- Congress
- House of Representatives
- Senate
- oversight
- committee System.

Focus:

Students should analyse and evaluate:

- the structure, role and powers of the US Congress
- composition of Congress, the different terms of office and party allegiance
- debates concerning the functions, powers and effectiveness of Congress in legislation, oversight and the power of the purse
- party system and committee system and their significance within Congress
- representative role of senators and representatives
- relative strengths of the House of Representatives and the Senate
- relationship of Congress to the executive branch of government and the Supreme Court.

3.2.1.3 The executive branch of government: President

Key concepts and terminology:

- The Executive



- The President
- formal powers
- informal powers
- checks and balances
- imperial presidency
- imperilled presidency

Focus:

Students should analyse and evaluate:

- sources of presidential power: selecting two relevant examples to demonstrate how these have been used by different presidents
- difference between formal powers (enumerated and inherent powers outlined in Article 2 of the constitution) and informal powers (President as de facto party leader, agenda setter, world leader, modern developments eg stretching of implied powers and the creation of institutions such as Executive Office of the President (EXOP))
- constraints on President's ability to exercise those powers:
- the effectiveness of formal checks and balances
- key variables such as party support in Congress
- the prevailing orientation of the Supreme Court
- the attitudes of the media and public opinion
- the relationship between the presidency and other institutions eg the cabinet, the Executive Office of the President (EXOP), the federal bureaucracy and federal agencies, and why this relationship varies from one president to another
- one example that shows the waxing and waning of presidential power
- eg Franklin D. Roosevelt (FDR) and Executive Office of the President (EXOP), John F. Kennedy (JFK) and the Cuban missile crisis, Reagan and Clinton's relationships with Congress, significance of which party controls Congress
- the debate about the 'Imperial versus Imperilled Presidency'.

3.2.1.4 The judicial branch of government

Key concepts and terminology:

- Supreme Court
- judicial activism
- judicial restraint
- judicial review
- strict and loose constructionism.

Focus:

Students should analyse and evaluate:

- process of selection and appointment of Supreme Court judges
- current composition
- the nature of judicial power
- the constitutional role of the Supreme Court:
- Supreme Court as the guardian of the constitution/constitutional interpretation
- Supreme Court as protector of citizens' rights
- the significance of judicial review
- debates about the political significance of the Supreme Court

- two examples of landmark rulings and related debates and controversies
- these are Court decisions which establish a significant new legal principle or concept, or otherwise substantially change the interpretation of existing law. The following are a guide to some of the wide range of landmark cases that could be taught:
- The Warren Court 1954–1969
- Brown vs Topeka Board of Education (1954)
- Miranda vs Arizona (1966)
- The Burger Court 1969–1986
- Roe vs Wade (1973)
- United States vs Nixon (1974)
- The Rehnquist Court 1986–2005
- Texas vs Johnston (1989)
- Bush vs Gore (2000)
- The Roberts Court 2005 – present
- District of Columbia vs Heller (2008)
- Obergefell vs Hodges (2015)
- significance of the judiciary in shaping one area of public policy in terms of, for example, federalism, civil rights, race, gender, punishment.

3.2.2 Comparative politics

Students should use the following three theoretical approaches to make a comparative study of the government and politics of the UK and the USA, analysing and explaining similarities and differences between them.

- structural
- rational
- Cultural.

3.2.2.1 Constitutional arrangements

Key concepts and terminology:

- The nature and sources of the British Constitution , The structure and role of Parliament and Devolution for key concepts and terminology relevant to UK constitutional arrangements.
- The Constitutional framework of US government , The legislative branch of government: Congress and The executive branch of government: President for key concepts and terminology relevant to US constitutional arrangements.

Focus:

Students should analyse and evaluate:

- key similarities and differences between the UK and US constitutions and their impact on government and politics in their respective countries
- their nature(codified/uncodified), sources and provisions, separation of powers, checks and balances
- similarities and differences between the devolution model in the UK and the federal model in the USA
- the legislatures: their relative strengths and weaknesses and the extent to which their roles are similar and their powers equal
- powers, composition, structure, strengths and weaknesses.

3.2.2.2 The executives



Key concepts and terminology:

- The Prime Minister and Cabinet for key concepts and terminology relevant to UK prime minister and cabinet.
- The executive branch of government: President for key concepts and terminology relevant to the US executive branch of government.

Focus:

Students should analyse and evaluate:

- the role and powers of the UK prime minister and of the US president, how they differ from each other and the extent of their accountability to the legislatures
- a comparison of the relationship of the UK prime minister and of the US president to other institutions of government.

3.2.2.3 The judiciaries

Key concepts and terminology:

- The judiciary for key concepts and terminology relevant to the UK judiciary.
- The judicial branch of government for key concepts and terminology relevant to the US judiciary.

Focus:

Students should analyse and evaluate:

- similarities and differences of supreme courts
- impact on government and politics
- the relative extent of the powers of the UK Supreme Court and the US Supreme Court and the bases of those powers within their systems of government
- comparison of the relative independence of the judiciary in the UK and the USA.

Revision topics: Political Ideas

3.3.1 Core ideologies

3.3.1.1 Liberalism

Key concepts and terminology:

- the individual and freedom
- human nature, the state, society and the economy
- classical liberalism
- modern liberalism.

Focus:

Students should analyse and evaluate:

- debates about the nature of liberalism
- core liberal ideas and values concerning the individual and freedom
- classical liberalism, modern (new/progressive) liberalism
- in their study of the following thinkers students should focus on the aspects indicated after each thinker's name and relate this to liberal thinking on human nature, the state, society and the economy:
 - John Locke – natural rights, liberty and individualism, fiduciary power of government
 - John Stuart Mill – criticism of hedonism, freedom, integrity and self respect of the individual, self regarding and other regarding actions
 - John Rawls – concept of justice, principles of justice
 - Thomas Hill Green – self development/role of the State, negative and positive freedom
 - Mary Wollstonecraft – equality and rights, 'revolution controversy', criticisms of aristocracy and republicanism
 - Betty Friedan – equal rights, Civil Rights and feminist movements in the USA.

3.3.1.2 Conservatism

Key concepts and terminology:

- government, the free market, the individual
- authority, tradition, private property human nature, the state, society and the economy
- traditional conservatism
- the new right.

Focus:

Students should analyse and evaluate:

- debates about the nature of conservatism
- core conservative ideas and values concerning government, the free market and the individual
- different strands of conservative thinking from traditional Conservatism to the New Right
- in their study of the following thinkers students should focus on the aspects indicated after each thinker's name and relate this to conservative thinking on human nature, the state, society and the economy:
 - Thomas Hobbes – concept of human nature/laws of nature, power of the sovereign/the individual and self protection
 - Edmund Burke – Anti-Jacobinism/Whig principles, Burke's reaction to the American and French Revolutions
 - Michael Oakeshott – importance of tradition/criticisms of rationalism, 'Politics of Faith' vs 'Politics of Scepticism'
 - Ayn Rand – opposition to collectivism and statism, rational and ethical egoism/individual rights
 - Robert Nozick – limited functions of the State, justification of inequalities of wealth resulting from freely exchanged contracts.

3.3.1.3 Socialism

Key concepts and terminology:



- Marxism, class analysis and fundamental goals of socialism
- human nature, the state, society and the economy
- revolutionary socialism
- social democracy.

Focus:

Students should analyse and evaluate:

- debates about the nature of socialism
- core socialist views and values concerning Marxism, class analysis and the fundamental goals of socialism
- differing views and tensions within and between revolutionary socialism and social democracy
- in their study of the following thinkers students should focus on the aspects indicated after each thinker's name and relate this to socialist thinking on human nature, the state, society and the economy:
 - Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels – class and class struggle, dialectical materialism
 - Rosa Luxemburg – inevitability of the triumph of revolution/capacity of the masses, spontaneity/party oriented class struggle
 - Beatrice Webb – co-operative movement, co-operative federalism and co-operative individualism
 - Anthony Crosland – criticism of Marxism/Revisionism, rejection of nationalisation as central goal of party, political values of personal liberty, social welfare and equality
 - Anthony Giddens – rejection of traditional conception of socialism, the 'Third Way' in politics, combination of right wing economic and left wing social policies.

Each exam will be 2 hours.

The paper will contain a variety of question types, including source questions. You must answer all questions in the paper. You will need a black pen and highlighters [for question annotations] for your exam.

Further detail and revision materials can be found here:

Past Papers: [Politics Past Papers](#)

Save my exams: [Save my exams](#)

Massolit: [Massolit Politics A Level](#)

Evidence Bank (Please do not edit): [Evidence bank](#)

Podcasts: The Rest is Politics, The Rest is Politics US, Pod Save America.

Recommendations for usage:

Past Papers - Exam technique, planning questions, and practice under timed conditions.

Save my exams - Notetaking, quizzing and testing, and practice questions

Massolit - Notetaking

Evidence Bank - Notetaking

Podcasts: Notetaking