

REVISED GCE AS & A LEVEL  
Student Guide  
**Government & Politics**

For first teaching from September 2008

For first award of AS Level in Summer 2009

For first award of A Level in Summer 2010

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# Student Guide: Government & Politics

Political issues and events are frequently the main focus of local, national and international news. This is not surprising as government and politics involves the big issues that affect all our lives.

This course will help to develop your knowledge and understanding of political systems and who has the authority and power to make political decisions. You will learn about individual rights and responsibilities and compare how government works in different countries. The AS course can be taken as a final qualification or as the first half of the A Level qualification. If you wish to obtain a full A Level qualification, you must complete the second half of the course referred to as A2.

## Q. Why study Government and Politics?

If you have an interest in finding out more about political systems and ideas and how political changes are brought about, then this course can help you achieve this. Through studying Government and Politics you can develop your knowledge and understanding and relate this to current events reported in the media.

## Q. Would this course suit me?

You should have obtained at least a Grade C in GCSE English or an equivalent award as this will help you with the extended writing required. You should also have an interest in politics and current affairs and want to understand more about how government works.

This course will be suitable for you if you enjoy analysing and evaluating information, using source material and weighing up arguments.

## Q. What will I study?

There are two units at AS and a further two at A2. You will have a choice between two options of study in both A2 units.



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AS 1	This unit will cover the arrangements for government of Northern Ireland since 1994, the strategies, policies and electoral support of the main Northern Ireland political parties and the political effects of the different electoral systems used in Northern Ireland.
AS 2	This unit will focus on how Britain is governed and on the inter-relationships of the executive, legislature and judiciary in particular. You will also have the opportunity to learn about the impact of the European Union on the British political process.
A2 1	In this unit, you will have the option to study either the UK and USA or the UK and Ireland. This will enable you to compare the legislative and executive processes for your chosen option.
A2 2	In A2 2, you will have a choice of studying either Political Power or Political Ideas. Political Power will focus on the concepts of political power, the factors involved in exercising this power, and the basis of political authority, legitimacy and stability. Political Ideas will consider liberalism, socialism and conservatism as expressed in three classical political texts and how these ideas differ.

## Q. How will I be assessed?

Each unit is assessed through an examination set by CCEA examiners. There is no coursework. Details of each of the examinations are set out in the following table.

Unit	Type of Assessment
<b>AS 1: The Government and Politics of Northern Ireland</b>  Worth 40% of AS      20% of A Level	1 hour 15 minutes examination paper. One piece of source material and three questions.  <i>Available in the January and Summer series</i>
<b>AS 2: The British Political Process</b>  Worth 60% of AS      30% of A Level	1 hour 45 minutes external examination paper with five questions  <i>Available in the January and Summer series</i>
<b>A2 1: Comparative Government</b>  Worth 30% of A Level	2 hours and 15 minutes external examination paper. One piece of source material and five questions on your chosen option.  <i>Available in the January and Summer series</i>
<b>A2 2: Political Power and Political Ideas</b>  Worth 20% of A Level	1 hour and 30 minutes external examination paper. One piece of source material and three questions on your chosen option.  <i>Available in the January and Summer series</i>

## Q. What can I do with a qualification in Government and Politics?

The study of Government and Politics encourages you to become actively involved as a citizen and helps you to develop your critical thinking and communication skills.

This course can provide a sound foundation for further study of politics and related courses in higher education.

Studying government and politics can help prepare you for a career in a number of fields such as law, business, finance, government services, education, journalism, public relations or political research.

### How can I find out more?

There are a number of ways that you can find out more about studying government and politics.

These include:

- Teachers at your school or college
- Students who are already studying the subject
- The Politics Association ([www.politics-association.org.uk](http://www.politics-association.org.uk)) and the Political Studies Association ([www.psa.ac.uk](http://www.psa.ac.uk))
- Careers advisor
- UCAS ([www.ucas.com](http://www.ucas.com)) or CAO ([www.cao.ie](http://www.cao.ie)) for details on entry requirements for university courses

To view the full specification and the full range of support material available for GCE Government and Politics, please visit the Government and Politics microsite [www.ccea.org.uk/government](http://www.ccea.org.uk/government)

