

# A LEVEL POLITICS – COMPONENT 2 LEARNING GUIDE

## Key content for Component 2

### Component 2 - UK Government

1. The UK Constitution (MM)
  - 1.1 The nature and sources of the UK constitution
  - 1.2 How the constitution has changed since 1997
  - 1.3 Devolution of power in the UK: Scotland, Wales & N Ireland
  - 1.4 Debates on further constitutional reform
  
2. Parliament (MM)
  - 2.1 The structure and role of the House of Commons & House of Lords
  - 2.2 The powers of the Commons and Lords
  - 2.3 The Legislative process
  - 2.4 Parliament and the Executive
  
3. Prime Minister and Executive (PA)
  - 3.1 The structure, role, and powers of the Executive.
  - 3.2 The concept of ministerial responsibility
  - 3.3 The powers of the Prime Minister and Cabinet - with pre-1997 and post-1997 case studies
  
4. Relations between branches of government (MM)
  - 4.1 The Supreme Court and its interactions with, and influence over, the legislative and policy-making processes.
  - 4.2 The relationship between the Executive and Parliament
  - 4.3 The aims, role and impact of the European Union on UK Government
  - 4.4 The location of sovereignty in the UK political system.

### Component 2 - Non-Core Political Ideas

#### **Feminism** (MM)

1. Feminism: ideas and principles
2. Different types of feminism
3. Feminist thinkers and their ideas.

Topic 1 - The UK Constitution

The UK Constitution Subject Content	Students should gain knowledge & understanding of:
<p><b>1. Key Terms &amp; Concepts:</b></p> <p>Constitution</p> <p>Unentrenched (vs entrenched)</p> <p>Uncodified (vs codified)</p> <p>Unitary (vs federal)</p> <p>Parliamentary sovereignty</p> <p>The rule of law</p> <p>Statute law</p> <p>Common law</p> <p>Conventions</p> <p>Authoritative works</p> <p>Treaties</p> <p>Devolution</p>	<p>1.1 The nature and sources of the UK constitution, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an overview of the development of the constitution through key historical documents:                             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>◦ Magna Carta (1215); Bill of Rights (1689); Act of Settlement (1701); Acts of Union (1707); Parliament Acts (1911 and 1949); The European Communities Act (1972)</li> </ul> </li> <li>• the nature of the UK constitution: unentrenched, uncodified and unitary, and the 'twin pillars' of parliamentary sovereignty and the rule of law</li> <li>• the five main sources of the UK constitution: statute law; common law; conventions; authoritative works and treaties (including European Union law).</li> </ul> <p>1.2 How the constitution has changed since 1997.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Under Labour 1997–2010: House of Lords reforms, electoral reform; devolution; the Human Rights Act 1998; and the Supreme Court.</li> <li>• Under the Coalition 2010–15: Fixed Term Parliaments; further devolution to Wales.</li> <li>• Any major reforms undertaken by governments since 2015, including further devolution to Scotland (in the context of the Scottish Referendum).</li> </ul> <p>1.3 The role and powers of devolved bodies in the UK, and the impact of this devolution on the UK.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Devolution in England.</li> <li>• Scottish Parliament and Government.</li> <li>• Welsh Assembly and Government.</li> <li>• Northern Ireland Assembly and Executive.</li> </ul> <p>1.4 Debates on further reform:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• An overview of the extent to which the individual reforms since 1997 listed in section 1.2 above should be taken further.</li> <li>• The extent to which devolution should be</li> </ul>

The UK Constitution Subject Content	Students should gain knowledge & understanding of:
	<p>extended in England.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Whether the UK constitution should be changed to be entrenched and codified, including a bill of rights.</li> </ul>

### Tasks

Reading and annotated timeline on constitutional development

Research and essay on codification

Reading and groupwork on constitutional changes 2010->

Debate on constitutional change

Sample essay question (timed)

### Key Reading:

*UK Government & Politics*, Lynch, Fairclough and Cooper, Hodder Education 2017 – Chapters 1, 2 3 & 4

*Politics Review*, February 2014, *Debate: Should the UK have a codified constitution?* Paul Jeater and Ian Richards

*Politics Review*, February 2014, *Constitutional Reform: Unfinished Business?* Kay Moxon

*Politics Review*, April 2014, *Focus on Constitutional Conventions*, Nick Gallop

### Extension Reading:

Vernon Bogdanor, *The New British Constitution*, 2009

<https://www.bl.uk/magna-carta/articles/why-magna-carta-still-matters-today>

[http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/civil\\_war\\_revolution/glorious\\_revolution\\_01.shtml](http://www.bbc.co.uk/history/british/civil_war_revolution/glorious_revolution_01.shtml)

<http://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/evolutionofparliament/parliamentaryauthority/revolution/>

<https://www.bl.uk/collection-items/the-bill-of-rights>

<http://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/evolutionofparliament/legislativescrutiny/act-of-union-1707/>

<http://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/evolutionofparliament/houseoflords/house-of-lords-reform/>

<http://www.parliament.uk/about/living-heritage/evolutionofparliament/legislativescrutiny/parliament-and-europe/>

### Sample Questions:

Spec 1 Q: Using the source, evaluate the view that the logical next step after devolution to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland is the devolution of further power to England. (30)

*In your answer you should draw on relevant knowledge and understanding of the study of Component 1: UK Politics and Core Political Ideas. You must consider this view and the alternative to this view in a balanced way.*

Spec 1 Q: Using the source, evaluate the view that Constitutional reforms in the UK since 1997 have been weak, incomplete and require further change. (30)

*In your answer you should draw on relevant knowledge and understanding of the study of Component 1: UK Politics and Core Political Ideas. You must consider this view and the alternative to this view in a balanced way.*

Spec 2 Q: Using the source, evaluate the view that judges should not exercise control over the power of government. (30)

*In your response you must:*

- o compare and contrast the different opinions in the source*
- o examine and debate these views in a balanced way*
- o analyse and evaluate **only** the information presented in the source.*

2019 – Q1(b) Using the source, evaluate the view that devolution is in danger of undermining the unity of the United Kingdom. (30)

*In your response you must:*

- o compare and contrast the different opinions in the source*
- o examine and debate these views in a balanced way*
- o analyse and evaluate **only** the information presented in the source.*

Spec 2 - Q2 (a) Evaluate the argument that there are more advantages to having a codified constitution than remaining with an uncoded constitution. (30)

*In your answer you should draw on relevant knowledge and understanding of the study of Component 1: UK Politics and Core Political Ideas. You must consider this view and the alternative to this view in a balanced way.*

## Topic 2 - The UK Parliament

UK Parliament Subject Content	Students should gain knowledge & understanding of:
<p><b>2. Key Terms &amp; Concepts:</b></p> <p>Parliament</p> <p>House of Commons</p> <p>House of Lords</p> <p>Confidence and supply</p> <p>Salisbury Convention</p> <p>Parliamentary privilege</p> <p>Legislative bills</p> <p>Public bill committees</p> <p>Backbenchers</p> <p>Select committees</p> <p>Opposition</p>	<p>2.1 The structure and role of the House of Commons and House of Lords.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The selection of members of the House of Commons and House of Lords, including the different types of Peers.</li> <li>• The main functions of the House of Commons and House of Lords and the extent to which these functions are fulfilled.</li> </ul> <p>2.2 The comparative powers of the House of Commons and House of Lords.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The exclusive powers of the House of Commons.</li> <li>• The main powers of the House of Lords.</li> <li>• Debates about the relative power of the two houses.</li> </ul> <p>2.3 The legislative process.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The different stages a bill must go through to become law.</li> <li>• The interaction between the Commons and the Lords during the legislative process, including the Salisbury Convention.</li> </ul> <p>2.4 The ways in which Parliament interacts with the Executive.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The role and significance of backbenchers in both Houses, including the importance of parliamentary privilege.</li> <li>• The work of select committees.</li> <li>• The role and significance of the opposition.</li> <li>• The purpose and nature of ministerial question time, including Prime Minister's Questions.</li> </ul>

**Tasks**

Play <http://www.parliament.uk/education/teaching-resources-lesson-plans/mp-for-a-week-game/>

Definitions of key concepts

Notemaking

Research on MPs backgrounds

Viewing and analysis of parliamentary debates and committee sessions

Following the progress of a Bill through parliament

Prepared debate on Lords reform

Essay on scrutiny

**Key Reading:**

*UK Government & Politics*, Lynch, Fairclough and Cooper, Hodder Education 2017 – Chapter 5

Politics Review, November 2014, *The House of Commons: A rejuvenated institution?* Kay Moxon

Politics Review, November 2013, *Parliament: What does it do and how effectively does it do it?*  
Alexandra Kelso

Politics Review, April 2013, *AS Focus on Departmental Select Committees*, Paul Smith

Politics Review, April 2013, *The House of Lords: Why is it so difficult to reform?* Paul Fairclough

Politics Review, April 2012, *The House of Commons: A pit of partisan jeering?* Peter Riddell

Politics Review, April 2011, *Why does the House of Lords Matter?* Meg Russell

Politics Review, February 2011, *Debate: Should the House of Lords be wholly elected?* Richard Whitaker and Philip Lynch

<http://www.parliament.uk/about/podcasts/video-tours/bills-and-voting/>

**Extension Reading:**

Philip Norton, *Parliament in British Politics*

Politics Review, April 2015, *Focus on... The Backbench Business Committee*, Katie Shapiro

**Sample Questions:**

Spec 2 Q: Using the source, evaluate the view that Prime Ministers Questions should be abolished and replaced by other forms of parliamentary scrutiny of the executive. (30)

*In your response you must:*

- o compare and contrast the different opinions in the source*
- o examine and debate these views in a balanced way*
- o analyse and evaluate **only** the information presented in the source.*

Spec 1 Q: Evaluate the extent to which the UK government's control over Parliament has reduced in recent years. (30)

*In your answer you should draw on relevant knowledge and understanding of the study of Component 1: UK Politics and Core Political Ideas. You must consider this view and the alternative to this view in a balanced way.*

2019 Q: Evaluate the view that although the House of Lords has less power than the House of Commons, in practice it exerts more influence on government decisions. (30)

*In your answer you should draw on relevant knowledge and understanding of the study of Component 1: UK Politics and Core Political Ideas. You must consider this view and the alternative to this view in a balanced way.*

Topic 3 - Prime Minister and Executive

UK Parliament Subject Content	Students should gain knowledge & understanding of:
<p><b>2. Key Terms &amp; Concepts:</b></p> <p>Executive</p> <p>Cabinet</p> <p>Minister</p> <p>Government department</p> <p>Royal prerogative</p> <p>Secondary legislation</p> <p>Individual responsibility</p> <p>Collective responsibility</p> <p>Presidential government</p>	<p>3.1 The structure, role,&amp; powers of the Executive:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• It's structure, including PM, Cabinet, junior ministers &amp; government departments.</li> <li>• It's main roles, including proposing legislation/budget &amp; making policy decisions within laws &amp; budget.</li> <li>• The main powers of the executive including royal Prerogative powers, initiation of legislation &amp; secondary legislative power.</li> </ul> <p>3.2 The concept of individual ministerial responsibility / The concept of collective ministerial responsibility</p> <p>3.3 The PM &amp; Cabinet</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The power of the PM &amp; Cabinet:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ factors governing PM's selection of ministers;</li> <li>○ factors affecting the relationship between Cabinet &amp; PM, &amp; how they have changed,</li> <li>○ the balance of power between them.</li> </ul> </li> <li>• The powers of PM &amp; Cabinet to dictate events &amp; determine policy:             <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>○ students must study the influence of one PM 1945-1997</li> <li>○ &amp; one PM post-1997 PM.</li> <li>○ To include events &amp; policy with examples that illustrate both control &amp; lack of control.</li> </ul> </li> </ul>

Tasks

Key reading

UK Government & Politics, Lynch, Fairclough and Cooper, Hodder Education 2017 – pps 117-157



## Extension reading

Politics Review, February 2017, *How does May's government differ from Cameron's?*

Politics Review, November 2016, *Theresa May: why kind of PM will she be?*

Politics Review, February 2016, *Prime ministerial power: is it in decline?*

Politics Review, April 2015, *Ministers & civil servants: a broken relationship?*

Politics Review, February 2014, *The cabinet: is it under threat?*

Politics Review, February 2013, *How powerful is a coalition prime minister ?*

Politics Review, November 2013, *Prime ministerial power : has it changed since 1997?*

Politics Review, April 2012, *Is Cabinet government back?*

## Sample Questions:

Spec 2 Q: Evaluate the view that the conventions of ministerial responsibility no longer adequately account for the actions of ministers. (30)

*In your answer you should draw on relevant knowledge and understanding of the study of Component 1: UK politics and core political ideas. You must consider this view and the alternative to this view in a balanced way.*

2019 Q: Using the source, evaluate the view that Prime Ministers have too much power. (30)

*In your response you must:*

- o compare and contrast the different opinions in the source*
- o examine and debate these views in a balanced way*
- o analyse and evaluate **only** the information presented in the source.*

### Feminism option

Feminism is an ideology based on the belief that society is characterised by unequal gender power and status. All forms of feminism are committed to advancing the social role of women, ensuring that the disadvantages they face can and should be overthrown.

There are three content areas for this option:

1. Feminism: ideas and principles
2. Different types of feminism
3. Feminist thinkers and their ideas.

Feminism Subject Content	Students should gain knowledge & understanding of:
<p><b>Feminism Key Terms &amp; Concepts:</b></p> <p><b>1 Feminism: ideas and principles</b></p> <p>Public sphere Private sphere Essentialism Gender stereotypes</p>	<p><b>Core ideas and principles of feminism</b> and how they relate to human nature, the state, society and the economy:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>sex and gender</b> – sex refers to biological differences between men and women, whereas gender refers to the different roles that society ascribes to men and women – to cover how feminists believe this distinction to be important in their analysis of society</li> <li>• <b>patriarchy</b> – society, state and the economy are characterised by systematic, institutionalised and pervasive gender oppression – to cover how patriarchy is understood by different feminists and how different feminists view its importance</li> <li>• <b>the personal is political</b> – the idea that all relationships, both in society and in private relationships, between men and women are based on power and dominance – to cover why feminists think this goes to the essence of patriarchy, and why some feminists believe this distinction is crucial and others believe it is dangerous</li> <li>• <b>equality feminism and difference feminism</b> – equality feminists seek equality for men and women in society, whereas difference feminists argue that men and women have a fundamentally different nature from one another – to cover the core differences between these two types of feminism and how significant they are</li> <li>• <b>intersectionality</b> – argues that black and working-class women’s experiences of patriarchy in state, society and the economy are different from white,</li> </ul>

Feminism Subject Content	Students should gain knowledge & understanding of:
<p><b>2 Different types of feminism</b></p> <p>Discrimination            Equality of opportunity            Political equality            Legal equality            Reserve army of labour            Gender equality            Cultural feminism            Reformist</p> <p><b>3 Feminist thinkers and their ideas</b></p> <p>Otherness            Equality and difference            feminism            Intersectionality</p>	<p>middle-class women – to cover the impact of this newer strand of feminism to wider feminist thinking.</p> <p><b>The different types of feminism:</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>liberal feminism</b> – sees individualism as the basis of gender equality</li> <li>• <b>socialist feminism</b> – believes that gender inequality stems from economics and that capitalism creates patriarchy</li> <li>• <b>radical feminism</b> – believes that the biggest problem facing society is gender inequality</li> <li>• <b>post-modern feminism</b> – argues that patriarchy manifests in different ways depending on a woman’s race, class etc.</li> </ul> <p><i>The key ideas of the following thinkers to exemplify the content from areas 1 and 2:</i></p> <p><b>Charlotte Perkins Gilman (1860–1935)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sex and domestic economics are hand in hand – for women to survive, they have to depend on their sexuality and body in order to please their husbands.</li> <li>• Societal pressure – young girls are compelled to conform in society and prepare for motherhood by playing with toys and wearing clothes that are specifically designed for and marketed to them.</li> </ul> <p><b>Simone de Beauvoir (1908–1986)</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Sex versus gender – ‘one is not born, but rather becomes, a woman’.</li> <li>• ‘Otherness’ – men are perceived as the ‘norm’ and women deviants from this norm.</li> </ul> <p><b>Kate Millett (1934– )</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Family – undoing the traditional family was the key to true sexual revolution.</li> <li>• Portrayal of women in art and literature – she showed how patriarchal culture had produced writers and literary works that were degrading to women.</li> </ul>

Feminism Subject Content	Students should gain knowledge & understanding of:
	<p><b>Sheila Rowbotham (1943– )</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Capitalism – women are forced to sell their labour to survive and use their labour to support their family under the capitalist system.</li> <li>• The family – not just an instrument for disciplining and subjecting women to capitalism but a place where men took refuge from alienation under a capitalist economy.</li> </ul> <p><b>bell hooks (1952– )</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <b>Women of colour</b> – she brought the cultural concerns of women of colour into the mainstream feminist movement.</li> <li>• <b>Intersectionality</b> – the mainstream feminist movement had focused mostly on the plight of white, college-educated, middle/upper-class women who had no stake in the concerns of women of colour.</li> </ul>

### Tasks

Reading and notemaking

Group research and presentation on ideas of key thinkers

Discussion on issues in feminism today

Sample essay question

### Key Reading:

*Political ideas for A Level*, Neil McNaughton and Richard Kelly, pps 120-147

*Politics Review*, Feb 2012, *Feminism: Why do radical feminists criticise liberal feminists?* Paul Graham

*Politics Review*, November 2014, *Socialist Feminism*, Jessica Hardy

### Extension Reading:

BBC *In Our Time* podcast October 2015 – *Mary Wollstonecraft* - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b00pg5dr>

BBC *In Our Time* podcast Jan 1999 – *Feminism* - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00545b0>

BBC *In Our Time* podcast October 2015 – *Simone de Beauvoir* - <http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b06j5ncn>

**Sample Questions:**

Spec 1 -Q 5 (a) To what extent is the disagreement within feminism about the nature of men and women significant to this political idea? (24)

*You must use appropriate thinkers you have studied to support your answer and consider any differing views in a balanced way.*

**OR** 5(b) To what extent do feminists disagree about the role of the state? (24)

*You must use appropriate thinkers you have studied to support your answer and consider any differing views in a balanced way.*

Spec 2 - Q5 (a) To what extent do feminists agree that gender distinctions are based on human nature? (24)

*You must use appropriate thinkers you have studied to support your answer and consider both sides in a balanced way.*

**OR** - 5(b) To what extent is feminism more divided than united? (24)

*You must use appropriate thinkers you have studied to support your answer and consider both sides in a balanced way.*

2019 Q5 (a) To what extent do feminists agree over human nature? (24)

*You must use appropriate thinkers you have studied to support your answer and consider both sides in a balanced way.*

**OR** 2019 5(b) To what extent do feminists disagree about the nature of the society they wish to create? (24)

*You must use appropriate thinkers you have studied to support your answer and consider both sides in a balanced way.*

## Topic 4 - Relations Between Branches of Government

Relations Between Branches Subject Content	Students should gain knowledge & understanding of:
<p><b>4. Key Terms &amp; Concepts:</b></p> <p>Supreme Court            Judicial neutrality            Judicial independence            Judicial review            Elective dictatorship            European Union (EU)            Four freedoms (EU)            Legal sovereignty            Political sovereignty            Ultra vires</p>	<p>4.1 The Supreme Court and its interactions with, and influence over, the legislative and policy-making processes.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The role and composition of the Supreme Court.</li> <li>• The key operating principles of the Supreme Court, including judicial neutrality and judicial independence and their extent.</li> <li>• The degree to which the Supreme Court influences both the Executive and Parliament, including the doctrine of ultra vires and judicial review.</li> </ul> <p>4.2 The relationship between the Executive and Parliament.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The influence and effectiveness of Parliament in holding the Executive to account.</li> <li>• The influence and effectiveness of the Executive in attempting to exercise dominance over Parliament.</li> <li>• The extent to which the balance of power between Parliament and the Executive has changed.</li> </ul> <p>4.3 The aims, role and impact of the <i>European Union</i> (EU) on UK government.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The aims of the EU, including the 'four freedoms' of the single market, social policy, and political and economic union and the extent to which these have been achieved.</li> <li>• The role of the EU in policy making.</li> <li>• The impact of the EU, including the main effects of at least two EU policies and their impact on the UK political system and UK policy making.</li> </ul> <p>4.4 The location of sovereignty in the UK political system.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• The distinction between legal sovereignty and political sovereignty.</li> <li>• The extent to which sovereignty has moved between different branches of government.</li> <li>• Where sovereignty can now be said to lie</li> </ul>

Relations Between Branches Subject Content	Students should gain knowledge & understanding of:
	in the UK.

### Tasks

Case studies of Supreme Court, UK Executive and EU powers – esp Brexit

Sample essay question

### Key Reading:

*UK Government & Politics*, Lynch, Fairclough and Cooper, Hodder Education 2017 – Chapters 3, 4, 5, 7 & 8

Politics Review, February 2015, *UK Constitution: is it a sufficient check on executive power?* Philip Norton

Politics Review February 2017, *Devolution in the UK: Has it been a success?* Jonathan Bradbury

Politics Review February 2010, *Sovereignty and Devolution: quasi-federalism?* Vernon Bogdanor

### Extension Reading:

### Sample Questions:

Spec 1 Q: Evaluate how far Parliament retains sole sovereignty within the UK political system. (30)

*In your answer you should draw on relevant knowledge and understanding of the study of Component 1: UK Politics and Core Political Ideas. You must consider this view and the alternative to this view in a balanced way.*

Spec 1 Q: Evaluate the extent to which the UK government's control over Parliament has reduced in recent years. (30)

*In your answer you should draw on relevant knowledge and understanding of the study of Component 1: UK Politics and Core Political Ideas. You must consider this view and the alternative to this view in a balanced way.*

Spec 2 Q1: Using the source, evaluate the view that judges should not exercise control over the power of government. (30)

*In your response you must:*

- o compare and contrast the different opinions in the source*
- o examine and debate these views in a balanced way*
- o analyse and evaluate **only** the information presented in the source.*

2019 – Q1(b) Using the source, evaluate the view that devolution is in danger of undermining the unity of the United Kingdom. (30)

*In your response you must:*

- o compare and contrast the different opinions in the source*
- o examine and debate these views in a balanced way*
- o analyse and evaluate **only** the information presented in the source.*

2019 – Q2 (a) Evaluate the view that membership of the EU undermined parliamentary sovereignty. (30)

*In your answer you should draw on relevant knowledge and understanding of the study of Component 1: UK Politics and Core Political Ideas. You must consider this view and the alternative to this view in a balanced way.*