

GCE

AS and A Level Specification

Government and Politics

For exams from June 2014 onwards

For certification from June 2014 onwards



Contents

1	Introduction	2
1.1	Why choose AQA?	2
1.2	Why choose Government and Politics?	2
1.3	How do I start using this specification?	3
1.4	How can I find out more?	3
2	Specification at a Glance	4
3	Subject Content	5
3.1	Unit 1 GOVP1 People, Politics and Participation	5
3.2	Unit 2 GOVP2 Governing Modern Britain	7
3.3	Unit 3A GOV3A The Politics of the USA	9
3.4	Unit 3B GOV3B Ideologies	11
3.5	Unit 4A GOV4A The Government of the USA	13
3.6	Unit 4B GOV4B Political Issues: Ideologies in Action	15
4	Scheme of Assessment	17
4.1	Aims	17
4.2	Assessment Objectives (AOs)	17
4.3	National Criteria	18
4.4	Prior Learning	18
4.5	Synoptic Assessment and Stretch and Challenge	18
4.6	Access to Assessment for Disabled Students	19
5	Administration	20
5.1	Availability of Assessment Units and Certification	20
5.2	Entries	20
5.3	Private Candidates	20
5.4	Access Arrangements and Special Consideration	21
5.5	Language of Examinations	21
5.6	Qualification Titles	21
5.7	Awarding Grades and Reporting Results	21
5.8	Re-sits and Shelf-life of Unit Results	21
	Appendices	22
A	Performance Descriptions	22
B	Spiritual, Moral, Ethical, Social and other Issues	25
C	Overlaps with other Qualifications	26
D	Key Skills	27

Vertical black lines indicate a significant change or addition to the previous version of this specification.

1 Introduction

1

1.1 Why choose AQA?

It's a fact that AQA is the UK's favourite exam board and more students receive their academic qualifications from AQA than from any other board. But why does AQA continue to be so popular?

- **Specifications**

Ours are designed to the highest standards, so teachers, students and their parents can be confident that an AQA award provides an accurate measure of a student's achievements. And the assessment structures have been designed to achieve a balance between rigour, reliability and demands on candidates.

- **Support**

AQA runs the most extensive programme of support meetings; free of charge in the first years of a new specification and at a very reasonable cost thereafter. These support meetings explain the specification and suggest practical teaching strategies and approaches that really work.

- **Service**

We are committed to providing an efficient and effective service and we are at the end of the phone when you need to speak to a person about an important issue. We will always try to resolve issues the first time you contact us but, should that not be possible, we will always come back to you (by telephone, email or letter) and keep working with you to find the solution.

- **Ethics**

AQA is a registered charity. We have no shareholders to pay. We exist solely for the good of education in the UK. Any surplus income is ploughed back into educational research and our service to you, our customers. We don't profit from education, you do.

If you are an existing customer then we thank you for your support. If you are thinking of moving to AQA then we look forward to welcoming you.

1.2 Why choose Government and Politics?

AQA's GCE Government and Politics will enable students to develop a wide range of skills including the ability to comprehend, synthesise and interpret political information; analyse and evaluate political knowledge; identify connections, similarities and differences between the areas studied; select relevant material and construct and communicate arguments clearly and coherently using appropriate political vocabulary.

At AS Level, candidates will develop a broad knowledge and understanding of the political system of the UK.

This will be followed by further specialisation at A2, through a number of optional units. These units do not follow prescribed routes and offer teachers the flexibility to select the areas of study which are of greatest interest.

At AS, the specification concentrates on People, Politics and Participation as well as Governing Modern Britain, retaining much of the content from the previous specification.

At A2, the specification retains the popular options from the previous specification, including US Politics and US Government and Ideologies. New options have also been introduced, including Political Issues: Ideologies in Action, providing further choice for teachers.

1.3 How do I start using this specification?

Already using the existing AQA GCE Government and Politics specification?

- Register to receive further information, such as mark schemes, past question papers, details of teacher support meetings, etc, at **<http://www.aqa.org.uk/rn/askaqa.php>**. Information will be available electronically or in print, for your convenience.
- Tell us that you intend to enter candidates. Then we can make sure that you receive all the material you need for the examinations. This is particularly important where examination material is issued before the final entry deadline. You can let us know by completing the appropriate Intention to Enter and Estimated Entry forms. We will send copies to your Exams Officer and they are also available on our website **http://www.aqa.org.uk/admin/p_entries.html**

Not using the AQA specification currently?

- Almost all centres in England and Wales use AQA or have used AQA in the past and are approved AQA centres. A small minority are not. If your centre is new to AQA, please contact our centre approval team at **centreapproval@aqa.org.uk**

1.4 How can I find out more?

Ask AQA

You have 24-hour access to useful information and answers to the most commonly-asked questions at **<http://www.aqa.org.uk/rn/askaqa.php>**

If the answer to your question is not available, you can submit a query for our team. Our target response time is one day.

Teacher Support

Details of the full range of current Teacher Support meetings are available on our website at **<http://www.aqa.org.uk/support/teachers.html>**

There is also a link to our fast and convenient online booking system for Teacher Support meetings at **<http://events.aqa.org.uk/ebooking>**

If you need to contact the Teacher Support team, you can call us on 01483 477860 or email us at **teachersupport@aqa.org.uk**

2 Specification at a Glance

AS examinations

Unit 1 – GOVP1

People, Politics and Participation

50% of AS, 25% of A Level

1 hour 30 minutes written examination

80 marks

Two structured, source-based topics from a choice of four.

Available in June only

Unit 2 – GOVP2

Governing Modern Britain

50% of AS, 25% of A Level

1 hour 30 minutes written examination

80 marks

Two structured, source-based topics from a choice of four.

Available in June only

AS
Award
1151

A2 examinations

Unit 3 – either **GOV3A The Politics of the USA** or **GOV3B Ideologies**

25% of A Level

1 hour 30 minutes written examination

80 marks

Two topics from a choice of four.

Available in June only

Unit 4 – either **GOV4A The Government of the USA** or **GOV4B Political Issues: Ideologies in Action**

25% of A Level

1 hour 30 minutes written examination

80 marks

Two topics from a choice of four.

Available in June only

A Level
Award
2151

$$\boxed{\text{AS}} + \boxed{\text{A2}} = \boxed{\text{A Level}}$$

3 Subject Content

3.1 Unit 1 GOVP1 People, Politics and Participation

This unit focuses on the theme of political behaviour in the UK. It explores how people's different patterns of participation can be explained and the forms of participation in a democracy. The importance of voting behaviour, the influence of electoral systems in communicating political opinion and the controversies surrounding the use of referendums are crucial topics for analysis. The principal institutions through which people's participation is achieved: political parties and pressure groups, are explored in terms of communicating views, shaping people's political ideas and the acquisition of resources which are likely to make them more powerful within the wider political system.

Students must study all four topics of this unit. There are no optional topics within this unit. This unit will form the basis for later study and students will need to cover all topics as they may need to make reference to them in synoptic questions at A2.

Participation and Voting Behaviour

Issues, debates and processes to be addressed	Key Concepts	Content and amplification
The nature of participation in the political process	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Politics Democracy Pluralism Electorate Political apathy Turnout 	<p>A knowledge of different forms of political involvement: who participates and how in terms of gender, class, ethnicity, age and region.</p> <p>Reasons for non-participation.</p>
Participation through the ballot box	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Voting behaviour Changing patterns of voting Mass media Partisan and class alignment/dealignment 	<p>Theories and debates concerning the long- and short-term determinants of voting behaviour including partisan and class identification; stability and volatility; influence of issues; campaigns; party and leaders' images.</p> <p>By-elections.</p>

Electoral Systems

Issues, debates and processes to be addressed	Key concepts	Content and amplification
The role of elections in a democracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Majoritarian and proportional electoral systems Representation Electoral reform 	<p>Strengths and weaknesses of electoral systems used in the UK.</p> <p>Likely effects of electoral system on party system.</p> <p>Majority and coalition governments.</p>
The nature of representation	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Direct and indirect (representative) democracy Referendums 	<p>Nature and use of referendums within the UK.</p> <p>Arguments for and against greater use of referendums within the UK.</p>

Political Parties

Issues, debates and processes to be addressed	Key concepts	Content and amplification
The role of political parties in a democracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Party system • Party competition • 'Catch-all' parties • Ideology 	<p>Role and function of major parties: how do parties and the party system work?</p> <p>Changing ideologies: how far do political ideas shape parties?</p> <p>Party structure: parties at local, national and EU levels.</p> <p>Programmes, policies and manifestos.</p> <p>Candidate and leader selection.</p> <p>Membership: internal party democracy.</p> <p>Campaigning.</p> <p>Minority parties.</p>

Pressure Groups and Protest Movements

Issues, debates and processes to be addressed	Key concepts	Content and amplification
The importance of pressure groups to political communication and policy making in a democracy	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sectional/cause • Insider/outsider • Social movements 	<p>Factors likely to affect the political influence of groups including membership and resources.</p> <p>Links with parties and government, including the EU.</p>
Pressure group behaviour	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lobbying • Access points • Direct action • Political networks/communities • Internal pressure group democracy 	<p>The impact of groups and movements in influencing policy and changing values.</p> <p>Role of the media in pressure group politics.</p> <p>Do pressure groups strengthen or weaken democracy?</p> <p>Possibility of some citizens being excluded from pressure group politics.</p>

3.2 Unit 2 GOVP2 Governing Modern Britain

This unit focuses on the process of governing the UK, with power dispersed from local to European levels. The extent to which Britain's unique constitution regulates the process of government and maintains the balance between individual rights and the power of the state is explored. The role of Westminster in providing a democratic element in government is examined as well as the degree to which power rests in the hands of unelected bureaucrats. The direction which government takes is analysed at the very apex of power in arrangements within the core executive.

Academic controversies are assessed in terms of the focus on the key issue of how Britain is governed.

Students must study all four topics of this unit. There are no optional topics within this unit. This unit will form the basis for later study and students will need to cover all topics as they may need to make reference to them in synoptic questions at A2.

The British Constitution

Issues, debates and processes to be addressed	Key concepts	Content and amplification
The nature and sources of the British constitution	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Written/unwritten • Codified/uncodified • Entrenched • Unitary/federal • Rigid/flexible 	<p>A knowledge of the main sources of the British constitution: statute case law, conventions, treaties, constitutional change.</p> <p>How far the British constitution influences and limits the powers of government.</p>
The judiciary and its relationship to other 'powers' of government	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judicial independence • Separation of powers • Judicial review 	<p>The relationship of the judiciary to the executive and legislature.</p> <p>Judicial appointments.</p> <p>The impact of the Human Rights Act and European Court of Human Rights upon the British political system.</p>

Parliament

Issues, debates and processes to be addressed	Key concepts	Content and amplification
The role of parliament in the political system	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Representation • Parliamentary sovereignty • Mandate 	<p>The composition and main roles and functions of Parliament: representation, legislation, scrutiny.</p> <p>The relative powers of the House of Commons and House of Lords.</p> <p>Parliamentary sovereignty in theory and practice.</p>
Parliament and government relationships	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Accountability • Executive dominance • Elective dictatorship • Bicameral 	<p>The roles of the House of Commons and House of Lords in scrutinising legislation and holding the government to account.</p> <p>The influence of backbenchers, frontbenchers, whips and the Opposition.</p>

The Core Executive

Issues, debates and processes to be addressed	Key concepts	Content and amplification
<p>Relations within the core executive</p> <p>The prime minister and the cabinet system</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Prime ministerial and cabinet government • Coalition government • Presidentialism • Collective responsibility 	<p>The prime minister: main roles, powers and resources.</p> <p>The Cabinet system: composition, roles and functions of Cabinet, Cabinet Committees and Cabinet Ministers.</p> <p>The Cabinet Office.</p> <p>Prime ministerial and presidential systems: a brief comparison.</p> <p>Do we have prime ministerial government in Britain?</p>
<p>Policy making and implementation</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bureaucracy • Political neutrality • Anonymity • Permanence • Individual ministerial responsibility 	<p>Ministers and civil servants: main characteristics, roles, resources and relationships.</p> <p>Special advisers.</p> <p>Government departments.</p>

3

Multi-level Governance

Issues, debates and processes to be addressed	Key concepts	Content and amplification
<p>Elected local and devolved government in the UK</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Elected representatives • Local democracy • Devolution 	<p>The main powers of elected local government, the Scottish Parliament and Welsh Assembly.</p> <p>Relations between the Westminster Parliament and elected local and devolved government.</p> <p>Debates on the nature and extent of devolved power.</p>
<p>The European Union</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Supranational • 'Democratic deficit' 	<p>The composition and main powers of the European Parliament, the European Council and Council of Ministers, the Commission.</p> <p>Where does power lie? Is there a 'democratic deficit'?</p>

3.3 Unit 3A GOV3A The Politics of the USA

At A2 there is a requirement for synoptic assessment and, in this unit, it is expected that students will draw upon and extend the political knowledge, skills and conceptual understanding gained from their AS studies and make the necessary connections between the areas studied. In the assessment of this unit credit will be given for appropriate references to contemporary developments, issues and debates in the areas covered.

Students should study **one** of the Unit 3 options: either this unit, or Unit 3B Ideologies.

The Electoral Process and Direct Democracy

Key concepts	Content and amplification
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Open, closed and 'invisible' primaries • The caucus system • Balanced ticket • Candidate and issue-centred campaigns • Momentum • Soft and hard money • Negative campaigning • Insider and outsider candidates • Fixed terms • Swing states 	<p>The main characteristics of presidential and congressional elections and campaigns and the main influences on their outcomes.</p> <p>Candidate selection and nomination through the primary and caucus system and the role of the national nominating conventions.</p> <p>Debates concerning the workings and outcomes of the Electoral College and its impact on campaigns.</p> <p>The significance of money as a factor in electoral success and the impact of the media on campaigns and candidates.</p> <p>Direct democracy at State level through the use of referendums, initiatives, propositions and recall elections, and debates concerning their use.</p> <p>Comparisons with the UK electoral process to illustrate arguments.</p>

3

Political Parties

Key concepts	Content and amplification
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liberalism • Conservatism • Big tent parties • Internal coalitions • Neo-Liberal and Neo-Conservative • New right • Religious right • Compassionate Conservatism 	<p>The two main political parties and their differing ideologies, values, policies and traditions.</p> <p>The factionalised nature of the parties: the reasons for, and consequences of, their internal divisions.</p> <p>Party organisation.</p> <p>Recent changes to the parties and reasons for these changes.</p> <p>Debates over party decline or renewal.</p> <p>Debates concerning the weakness of US parties.</p> <p>Reasons for two-party dominance and the significance of third parties and independent candidates.</p> <p>Comparisons with UK political parties to illustrate arguments.</p>

Voting Behaviour

Key concepts	Content and amplification
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Partisanship • Alignment and de-alignment • Gender gap • New Deal Coalition • Democratic overload • Differential abstention • Ticket splitting • Swing voters 	<p>Consideration of the main variables affecting the way people vote in the US and their relative importance.</p> <p>The long-term determinants of American electoral behaviour including socio-economic status, gender, age, race and ethnicity, region and religion.</p> <p>The significance of partisan alignment and de-alignment.</p> <p>Links between the parties and their core voting coalitions.</p> <p>Recency factors in voting behaviour including differing issues and candidates at different elections and their relative importance.</p> <p>Factors causing change in voting behaviour.</p> <p>The causes and consequences of split ticket voting and high levels of abstention.</p> <p>Comparisons with UK voting behaviour to illustrate arguments.</p>

Pressure Groups

Key concepts	Content and amplification
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pluralism • Elitism • Lobbying • Access points • Single issue groups • Corporate power • Direct Action • Iron Triangles • Clientelism 	<p>The meaning of political pluralism and debates about its extent in the US.</p> <p>Types and classification of pressure groups including economic, moral, environmental, ethnic, gender and issue based groups.</p> <p>Sectional and cause groups.</p> <p>Debates concerning the methods and tactics used by pressure groups to influence decision making and the reasons for success or the lack of it.</p> <p>The relative power of pressure groups vis-à-vis political parties.</p> <p>Controversies over the extent of pressure group power in the US.</p> <p>The role and significance of Political Action Committees, especially regarding electoral finance.</p> <p>Comparisons with UK pressure groups to illustrate arguments.</p>

3.4 Unit 3B GOV3B Ideologies

At A2 there is a requirement for synoptic assessment and, in this unit, it is expected that students will draw upon and extend the political knowledge, skills and conceptual understanding gained from their AS studies and make the necessary connections between the areas studied. In the assessment of this unit credit will be given for appropriate references to contemporary developments, issues and debates in the areas covered.

Students should study **one** of the Unit 3 options: either this unit, or Unit 3A The Politics of the USA.

Liberalism

Key concepts	Content and amplification
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Human nature, individualism, natural rights, tolerance • Democracy, social contract, freedom, justice, equality • Libertarianism, utilitarianism, pluralism • Capitalism, welfare 	<p>The meaning of liberalism, particularly liberal ideas and values concerning the individual, capitalism and welfare.</p> <p>Liberal views on human nature and the State.</p> <p>Differing views and tensions within liberal ideology with particular regard to classical liberalism and modern (New/Progressive) liberalism.</p> <p>Neo-Liberalism and its relationship to the New Right.</p> <p>The impact of liberal thinking on the actions and policies of political parties and movements (including examples outside the UK).</p>

3

Socialism

Key concepts	Content and amplification
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fraternity, class-conflict, social justice, social exclusion, freedom • Utopianism, communism, democratic socialism, gradualism, revisionism, social democracy • Private property and public ownership, co-operation, collectivism, wealth redistribution, equality 	<p>The contested definitions of socialism.</p> <p>Socialist values concerning human nature, community and the State.</p> <p>Class analysis and Marxism, and debates relating to co-operation, egalitarianism and public ownership.</p> <p>The differences between revolutionary and parliamentary (democratic) socialism.</p> <p>The debate within socialism about ends and means.</p> <p>The impact of socialist thinking on the actions and policies of political parties and movements (including examples outside the UK).</p>

Conservatism

Key concepts	Content and amplification
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hierarchy, elites, individualism, inequality • Organic society, nationalism, patriotism, authority, paternalism • Pragmatism, opposition to ideology, inclusiveness • Libertarianism and authoritarianism • Economic liberalism, protectionism, private property, mixed economy 	<p>Debates about the nature of Conservatism.</p> <p>Conservative views and attitudes towards human nature, authority and private property.</p> <p>The different strands of Conservative thinking in both the UK and elsewhere.</p> <p>The significance of Conservative attitudes towards government, the free market, the State and the individual.</p> <p>The impact of Conservative thinking on the actions and policies of political parties and movements.</p>

Fascism

Key concepts	Content and amplification
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Rationalism and romanticism/ mythology • Totalitarianism • The organic state • Nationalism, racialism and Social Darwinism • Elites • The 'cult of personality' • Corporatism 	<p>The importance of the State and national struggle.</p> <p>The role of leadership and race (nazism) in fascist values.</p> <p>The emotional and class appeal of fascism.</p> <p>An understanding of corporate economics.</p> <p>Fascism's rejection of rationalism.</p> <p>Fascist political organisations and activity in the UK and elsewhere and the influence of fascist ideas in contemporary politics.</p>

3.5 Unit 4A GOV4A The Government of the USA

At A2 there is a requirement for synoptic assessment and, in this unit, it is expected that students will draw upon and extend the political knowledge, skills and conceptual understanding gained from their AS studies and make the necessary connections between the areas studied. In the assessment of this unit credit will be given for appropriate references to contemporary developments, issues and debates in the areas covered.

Students should study **one** of the Unit 4 options: either this unit, or Unit 4B Political Issues: Ideologies in Action.

The Constitutional Framework of US Government

Key concepts	Content and amplification
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Fundamental Law • Codified constitution • Limited government • Flexibility/rigidity • Federalism • De-centralisation and States' Rights • Constitutional sovereignty • Entrenched rights • Constitutional interpretation 	<p>The nature and significance of the US Constitution and the framework of government that it lays down.</p> <p>The importance of the constitutional principles of the separation of powers and checks and balances to the operation of government and the way that these apply in practice today.</p> <p>The significance of the Bill of Rights.</p> <p>The amendment process.</p> <p>The federal system of government and its implications.</p> <p>Relationship between the federal government and the states.</p> <p>Constitutional change and its causes and effects.</p> <p>Debates concerning the importance of the US Constitution to the working of US government today.</p> <p>The Supreme Court and the Constitution.</p> <p>Comparisons with the UK's uncodified constitution and unitary system to illustrate arguments.</p>

3

The Legislative Branch of Government: US Congress

Key concepts	Content and amplification
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Bicameralism • Gridlock • Presidential veto and congressional override • Impeachment • Advice and consent powers • Pork-barrelling • Filibuster 	<p>The constitutional role and power(s) of the US Congress.</p> <p>The composition of Congress and the different terms of office.</p> <p>The differences between the House and the Senate and the relationship between the two houses.</p> <p>Debates concerning the functions, powers and effectiveness of Congress in legislation, oversight and the power of the purse.</p> <p>The importance of both the party system and the Committee system within Congress.</p> <p>The representative role of Senators and Representatives.</p> <p>Debates concerning the social composition of Congress.</p> <p>The relationship of Congress with the Executive Branch of government and the Supreme Court.</p> <p>Comparisons with the Westminster Parliament to illustrate arguments.</p>

The Executive Branch of Government

Key concepts	Content and amplification
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presidential executive • Imperial Presidency • Imperilled Presidency • Veto • Power to persuade • Bureaucratic power • Iron triangles • Spoils system • Clientelism 	<p>The Constitution and the executive branch of government.</p> <p>Debates concerning Presidential power, both formal and informal, and the ability to actually exercise it in both domestic and foreign policy.</p> <p>Limitations and constraints on executive power from the Constitution, Congress and the Supreme Court.</p> <p>Debates concerning the main determinants of Presidential/Congressional relations. The ebb and flow of power.</p> <p>The nature of the exercise of power within the executive branch.</p> <p>Debates concerning the relative power and influence of the Cabinet and the Executive Office of President.</p> <p>The role of the federal bureaucracy and the federal agencies.</p> <p>Comparisons with the UK Executive to illustrate arguments.</p>

3

The Judicial Branch of Government: The Supreme Court

Key concepts	Content and amplification
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constitutional interpretation • Judicial review • Original intent • Judicial activism and judicial restraint • Judicial independence • Strict and loose constructionism • Judicial power • Entrenched rights 	<p>The constitutional role of the Supreme Court and the nature of judicial power.</p> <p>The Supreme Court's role as guardian of the Constitution through constitutional interpretation.</p> <p>The Supreme Court's power of judicial review from 1803.</p> <p>Debates and controversies surrounding the selection and appointment process of Supreme Court Justices.</p> <p>The political significance of the Supreme Court and the impact of its landmark judgments.</p> <p>The protection of citizens' rights by the Supreme Court.</p> <p>Relationship of the Supreme Court with the other branches of government.</p> <p>Comparison with the senior judiciary in the UK to illustrate arguments.</p>

3.6 Unit 4B GOV4B Political Issues: Ideologies in Action

At A2 there is a requirement for synoptic assessment and, in this unit, it is expected that students will draw upon and extend the political knowledge, skills and conceptual understanding gained from their AS studies and make the necessary connections between the areas studied. In the assessment of this unit credit will be given for appropriate references to contemporary developments, issues and debates in the areas covered.

Students should study **one** of the Unit 4 options: either this unit, or Unit 4A The Government of the USA.

Ethnicity and Gender

Key concepts	Content and amplification
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Equality of opportunity Race relations Asylum and immigration Racism/discrimination/prejudice Multiculturalism/integration/assimilation Exclusion Sexism/gender/patriarchy Feminism Women's movement Rights Political correctness 	<p>Liberal and radical approaches to equal opportunities.</p> <p>Ethnicity and society.</p> <p>Social cohesion and social justice.</p> <p>Positive discrimination/affirmative action and quotas.</p> <p>Institutional racism.</p> <p>Politics of citizenship and identity.</p> <p>Major legislation concerning immigration and race relations together with significance of EU membership and the Equality and Human Rights Commission.</p> <p>Women in society.</p> <p>Variety of ideological approaches to feminism including 'new' feminism – significance of issues such as abortion and rape.</p> <p>Politics of the women's movement.</p> <p>Major legislation concerning equal opportunities.</p> <p>Changing public attitudes and political symbolism of language in the vocabulary of ethnicity and gender.</p>

3

The Environment

Key concepts	Content and amplification
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustainability and economic growth Quality of life Ecology and environmentalism Green thinking: local and global 'Greening' of parties and pressure groups International treaties Targets Political agenda – the five stages Parties and pressure groups 	<p>Political responses to the challenge of the environment.</p> <p>Quality of life: GDP wealth and green consumerism.</p> <p>The dilemma posed by the US and China regarding climate change.</p> <p>The principles of environmentalism: world approach, sufficiency, conserve economy, decentralisation and democratisation.</p> <p>Ideological divisions within the environmental movement including 'light' and 'dark' green thinking.</p> <p>Major developments including Rio and Kyoto initiatives; main environmental legislation; important initiatives on agriculture, transport, energy and the role of the EU.</p> <p>'Joined-up' government.</p> <p>Green issues in electoral politics and the role of parties and pressure groups in shaping the political agenda.</p> <p>The role of the Environment Agency.</p>

Education

Key concepts	Content and amplification
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Education • State and private provision • Curriculum • Progressive and traditional teaching methods • Meritocracy and equality • Manpower planning/social engineering • Stakeholders • Competition • Standards • Targets • League tables 	<p>Education, social class and society.</p> <p>Contested views on the purpose of education.</p> <p>Left and Right preferences regarding educational excellence, education as preparation for pupils' future roles in the economy and education to change society.</p> <p>The significance of the 1944 Education Act for differing types of schooling.</p> <p>The educational and social consequences of selective education.</p> <p>Comprehensive schools and progressive education: supporters and opponents.</p> <p>The 'great debate' on education and significant legislative changes.</p> <p>Control moved from 'producers' to 'consumers'.</p> <p>Competition in education: national curriculum, testing, open enrolment and league tables.</p> <p>Diversity and choice for consumers.</p> <p>Vocational education.</p> <p>Inspections and 'failing' schools.</p> <p>Significance of the private sector.</p> <p>Importance of education in electoral politics.</p>

The Economy

Key concepts	Content and amplification
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Management • Keynesianism • Monetarism • Public spending • Privatisation • Inflation • Unemployment • Economic cycle • Public and private debt • Taxation • Globalisation, capitalism and open economy • The euro 	<p>Government intervention in the economy: ownership, taxation and base rates.</p> <p>Different political approaches to 'demand-led' and 'supply-side' management.</p> <p>Public/private sector.</p> <p>The significance of the two economic 'evils' of unemployment and inflation.</p> <p>Economic factors and electoral politics.</p> <p>Party reputations for economic competence.</p> <p>The role of welfare spending and taxation.</p> <p>Government borrowing.</p> <p>Private debt and consumer growth.</p> <p>Flexible labour and the minimum wage.</p> <p>Britain's open economy: foreign ownership and inward investment, and global relocation of manufacturing.</p> <p>Attempts to take politics out of economic management.</p> <p>Britain's economy: US-style free market or EU-style regulated market.</p> <p>Implications for Britain and the euro.</p>

4 Scheme of Assessment

4.1 Aims

This specification aims to encourage students to:

- develop a critical awareness of the nature of politics and the relationship between political ideas, institutions and processes;
- acquire knowledge and understanding of the structures of authority and power within the political system of the United Kingdom, and how these may differ from those of other political systems;
- acquire knowledge and informed understanding of the rights and responsibilities of the individual;
- develop an interest in and engagement with contemporary politics.

4.2 Assessment Objectives (AOs)

The Assessment Objectives are common to AS and A Level. The assessment units will assess the following Assessment Objectives in the context of the content and skills set out in Section 3 (Subject Content).

- AO1 Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of relevant institutions, processes, political concepts, theories and debates.
- AO2 Analyse and evaluate political information, arguments and explanations, and identify parallels, connections, similarities and differences between aspects of the political systems studied.
- AO3 Construct and communicate coherent arguments making use of a range of appropriate political vocabulary.

Quality of Written Communication (QWC)

In GCE specifications which require candidates to produce written material in English, candidates must:

- ensure that text is legible and that spelling, punctuation and grammar are accurate so that meaning is clear
- select and use a form and style of writing appropriate to purpose and to complex subject matter
- organise information clearly and coherently, using specialist vocabulary when appropriate.

In this specification QWC will be assessed in all units where extended writing is required. Marks for QWC will be awarded as part of the total mark for each question, as part of Assessment Objective 3.

These Assessment Objectives apply to the whole specification, although Assessment Objective 2 has a higher weighting at A2 than at AS.

Weighting of Assessment Objectives for AS

The table below shows the approximate weighting of each of the Assessment Objectives in the AS units.

Assessment Objectives	Unit Weightings (%)		Overall weighting of AOs (%)
	Unit 1	Unit 2	
AO1	25	25	50
AO2	15	15	30
AO3	10	10	20
Overall weighting of units (%)	50	50	100

Weighting of Assessment Objectives for A Level

The table below shows the approximate weighting of each of the Assessment Objectives in the AS and A2 units.

Assessment Objectives	Unit Weightings (%)				Overall weighting of AOs (%)
	Unit 1	Unit 2	Unit 3	Unit 4	
AO1	12.5	12.5	10	10	45
AO2	7.5	7.5	10	10	35
AO3	5	5	5	5	20
Overall weighting of units (%)	25	25	25	25	100

4.3 National Criteria

This specification complies with the following:

- The Subject Criteria for GCE AS and A Level Government and Politics
- The Code of Practice for GCE
- The GCE AS and A Level Qualification Criteria
- The Arrangements for the Statutory Regulation of External Qualifications in England, Wales and Northern Ireland: Common Criteria

4.4 Prior Learning

There are no prior learning requirements.

4.5 Synoptic Assessment and Stretch and Challenge

Synoptic assessment is included within the A2 units for GCE Government and Politics, requiring candidates to demonstrate that they have developed an understanding of the subject which is holistic. In order to be able to demonstrate the level of expertise required, candidates are expected to be able to interrelate areas of content and address the requirements at A2 using appropriate concepts, knowledge and skills developed throughout the course.

GCE Government and Politics, as a subject, is inherently synoptic. There is a natural progression from AS to A2 and, at A2, the political concepts, behaviours and institutions studied in the AS course are re-visited and applied to new contexts.

Furthermore, in both A2 units, the 30-mark questions are particularly synoptic, requiring candidates to draw on and synthesise the knowledge, understanding and skills gained throughout the course.

At A2, the questions have been designed to test understanding and connectivity, and to require significantly more extended writing. This provides greater stretch and challenge for all candidates and enables the performance of the most able candidates to be identified through the Grade A*.

4.6 Access to Assessment for Disabled Students

AS/A Levels often require assessment of a broader range of competences. This is because they are general qualifications and, as such, prepare candidates for a wide range of occupations and higher level courses.

The revised AS/A Level qualification and subject criteria were reviewed to identify whether any of the competences required by the subject presented a potential barrier to any disabled candidates. If this were the case, the situation was reviewed again to ensure that such competences were included only where essential to the subject. The findings of this process were discussed with disability groups and with disabled people.

Reasonable adjustments are made for disabled candidates in order to enable them to access the assessments. For this reason, very few candidates will have a complete barrier to any part of the assessment.

Candidates who are still unable to access a significant part of the assessment, even after exploring all possibilities through reasonable adjustments, may still be able to receive an award. They would be given a grade on the parts of the assessment they have taken and there would be an indication on their certificate that not all the competences have been addressed. This will be kept under review and may be amended in the future.

5 Administration

5.1 Availability of Assessment Units and Certification

After June 2013, examinations and certification for this specification are available in June only.

5.2 Entries

Please refer to the current version of *Entry Procedures and Codes* for up-to-date entry procedures. You should use the following entry codes for the units and for certification.

Unit 1 – GOVP1
Unit 2 – GOVP2
Unit 3A – GOV3A
Unit 3B – GOV3B
Unit 4A – GOV4A
Unit 4B – GOV4B
AS certification – 1151
A Level certification – 2151

5.3 Private Candidates

This specification is available to private candidates.

As we are no longer providing supplementary guidance in hard copy, see our website for information and guidance on taking exams and assessments as a private candidate:

www.aqa.org.uk/exams-administration/entries/private-candidates

5.4 Access Arrangements and Special Consideration

We have taken note of equality and discrimination legislation and the interests of minority groups in developing and administering this specification.

We follow the guidelines in the Joint Council for Qualifications (JCQ) document: *Access Arrangements, Reasonable Adjustments and Special Consideration: General and Vocational Qualifications*. This is published on the JCQ website (<http://www.jcq.org.uk>) or you can follow the link from our website (<http://www.aqa.org.uk>).

Access Arrangements

We can make arrangements so that candidates with disabilities can access the assessment. These arrangements must be made **before** the examination. For example, we can produce a Braille paper for a candidate with a visual impairment.

Special Consideration

We can give special consideration to candidates who have had a temporary illness, injury or indisposition at the time of the examination. Where we do this, it is given **after** the examination.

Applications for access arrangements and special consideration should be submitted to AQA by the Examinations Officer at the centre.

5.5 Language of Examinations

We will provide units in English only.

5.6 Qualification Titles

Qualifications based on this specification are:

- AQA Advanced Subsidiary GCE in Government and Politics and
- AQA Advanced Level GCE in Government and Politics.

5.7 Awarding Grades and Reporting Results

The AS qualification will be graded on a five-point scale: A, B, C, D and E. The full A Level qualification will be graded on a six-point scale: A*, A, B, C, D and E. To be awarded an A*, candidates will need to achieve a grade A on the full A Level qualification and an A* on the aggregate of the A2 units. For

AS and A Level candidates who fail to reach the minimum standard for grade E will be recorded as U (unclassified) and will not receive a qualification certificate. Individual assessment unit results will be certificated.

5.8 Re-sits and Shelf-life of Unit Results

Unit results remain available to count towards certification, whether or not they have already been used, as long as the specification is still valid.

Each unit is available in June only. Candidates may re-sit a unit any number of times within the shelf-life of the specification. The best result for each unit will count towards the final qualification. Candidates

who wish to repeat a qualification may do so by re-taking one or more units. The appropriate subject award entry, as well as the unit entry/entries, must be submitted in order to be awarded a new subject grade.

Candidates will be graded on the basis of the work submitted for assessment.

Appendices

A Performance Descriptions

These performance descriptions show the level of attainment characteristic of the grade boundaries at A Level. They give a general indication of the required learning outcomes at the A/B and E/U boundaries at AS and A2. The descriptions should be interpreted in relation to the content outlined in the specification; they are not designed to define that content.

The grade awarded will depend in practice upon the extent to which the candidate has met the Assessment Objectives (see Section 4) overall. Shortcomings in some aspects of the examination may be balanced by better performances in others.

AS Performance Descriptions for Government and Politics

	Assessment Objective 1	Assessment Objective 2	Assessment Objective 3
Assessment Objectives	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of relevant institutions, processes, political concepts, theories and debates.	Analyse and evaluate political information, arguments and explanations, and identify parallels, connections, similarities and differences between aspects of the political systems studied.	Construct and communicate coherent arguments making use of a range of appropriate political vocabulary.
A/B boundary performance descriptions	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) demonstrate full and accurate knowledge of political institutions and processes and a sound understanding of political concepts, theories and debates b) produce answers that deploy relevant knowledge to answer the question c) demonstrate clear contextual awareness d) use relevant evidence and, where appropriate, contemporary examples to illustrate points made. 	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) provide analyses that display a sound awareness of differing viewpoints and a clear recognition of issues b) evaluate political institutions, processes and behaviour, applying appropriate concepts and theories c) make valid comparisons. 	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) construct and communicate clear, structured and sustained arguments and explanations b) use accurate political vocabulary.
E/U boundary performance descriptions	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) demonstrate a basic knowledge of political institutions and processes and begin to show some understanding of political concepts, theories and debates b) make a limited attempt at answering the question c) produce at least one piece of relevant evidence, which may be drawn from source material provided. 	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) show some basic awareness of differing viewpoints b) attempt simple evaluation of political institutions, processes and behaviour c) make simple comparisons. 	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) attempt to communicate and develop an argument or explanation b) use basic political vocabulary.

A2 Performance Descriptors for Government and Politics

	Assessment Objective 1	Assessment Objective 2	Assessment Objective 3
Assessment Objectives	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of relevant institutions, processes, political concepts, theories and debates.	Analyse and evaluate political information, arguments and explanations, and identify parallels, connections, similarities and differences between aspects of the political systems studied.	Construct and communicate coherent arguments making use of a range of appropriate political vocabulary.
A/B boundary performance descriptions	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) demonstrate accurate, detailed and comprehensive knowledge of political institutions and processes, and a competent understanding of political concepts, theories and debates, incorporating the relevant specification content b) produce answers which fully address the requirements of the question c) demonstrate good contextual awareness d) provide accurate evidence and, where appropriate, contemporary examples are deployed to illustrate points made. 	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) provide analysis that synthesises political concepts, theories or issues b) evaluate political information clearly and fully, using appropriate supporting evidence that may be drawn from the whole specification c) make effective comparisons, explaining parallels, connections, similarities or differences. 	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) construct and communicate cogent and coherent arguments and explanations b) illustrate a clear sense of direction and, where appropriate, culminate in a coherent conclusion which flows from the discussion c) use a range of relevant evidence and appropriate political vocabulary.
E/U boundary performance descriptions	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) demonstrate an outline knowledge and understanding of political institutions and processes, political concepts, theories and debates, with evidence of some relevant specification content b) make a limited attempt at answering the question c) demonstrate some basic contextual awareness d) provide some relevant evidence or examples. 	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) offer limited analysis that shows some awareness of differing ideas b) attempt a simple evaluation of political institutions, processes, behaviour, arguments or explanations, and make some comparisons c) outline basic concepts and theories d) demonstrate some recognition of basic parallels and connections or similarities and differences. 	<p>Candidates characteristically:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a) construct and communicate some arguments and explanations with a structure that is narrative or descriptive b) illustrate a sense of direction and, where appropriate, offer a conclusion, though relationship to the preceding discussion may be tenuous or implicit c) use some relevant evidence and some appropriate political vocabulary.

B Spiritual, Moral, Ethical, Social and other Issues

The study of Government and Politics provides opportunities to develop students' understanding of moral, ethical and social issues. Students should be aware that society is made up of a range of different groups from varied social, cultural and religious backgrounds. Political decisions are influenced by the ethics and moral and cultural values of the groups and their governments. Students should also be encouraged to develop an understanding that differing values and attitudes exist, and to reflect on these and their own beliefs within society.

European Dimension

AQA has taken account of the 1988 Resolution of the Council of the European Community in preparing this specification and associated specimen units.

Environmental Education

AQA has taken account of the 1988 Resolution of the Council of the European Community and the Report "Environmental Responsibility: An Agenda for Further and Higher Education" 1993 in preparing this specification and associated specimen units.

Avoidance of Bias

AQA has taken great care in the preparation of this specification and specimen units to avoid bias of any kind.

C Overlaps with other Qualifications

There are limited points of overlap in terms of the knowledge required in GCE Government and Politics and GCE Citizenship Studies. The perspective

required and the context in which the knowledge is applied are distinctly different in Government and Politics.

D Key Skills

Key Skills qualifications have been phased out and replaced by Functional Skills qualifications in English, Mathematics and ICT from September 2010



GCE Government and Politics (2150) For exams from June 2014 onwards

Qualification Accreditation Number: AS 500/2481/4 - A Level 500/2480/2

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Every specification is assigned a discounting code indicating the subject area to which it belongs for performance measure purposes.

The discount codes for this specification are:

AS EA

A Level 4830

The definitive version of our specification will always be the one on our website, this may differ from printed versions.

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