



AQA Politics: Paper 2

3.2.1.1 The US Constitution and Federalism

Learning about this topic is important because:

Understanding the importance and significance of the US Constitution in the government and politics of the USA.

Synoptic/Comparative Links to other units include (i.e. this builds on):

3.1.1.1 UK constitution

3.2.1.2 The legislative branch of government: Composition and powers of the House and Senate

3.2.1.3 The executive branch of government: Constitutional powers and role of the president

3.2.1.4 The judicial branch of government: Judicial review and the constitution

3.2.1.5 US Democracy and participation: Elections and role of electoral college

3.2.1.8 Civil Rights: The role of the Bill of Rights

3.2.2.1 Constitutional arrangements: Comparison between UK and US Constitutions

This leads to:

3.2.2.1 Constitutional arrangements

3.2.1.2 The legislative branch of government: Congress

We will learn:

- The nature and significance of the US Constitution
- The significance of constitutional principles
- The framework of government laid down in the US Constitution
- The federal system of government
- Federal state relations
- The amendment process
- The debates concerning the importance of the US Constitution to the working of contemporary US government
- The role of the supreme court in interpreting the constitution.

We will develop/practise skills including:

Explanation: demonstrating knowledge and understanding of political events, concepts and ideas including the use of relevant examples.

Analysis: demonstrating understanding of the significance, causes, and effects of political ideas, events and concepts, as well as the relationship between them.

Comparison: Identifying similarities and differences between extracts, considering their significance and impact in a political context.

Evaluation: Making reasoned judgments about the strengths and weaknesses of an argument, concept, or theory in a statement or extract.

Some of the vocabulary that we will use includes:

Bill of Rights: The first 10 amendments to the US Constitution protecting civil liberties.

Checks and balances: The separation and sharing of power between the different branches of government that are designed to limit the power of government

Federalism: A system where power is shared between national and state governments

Judicial review: The power of the Supreme Court to review the constitutionality of laws and actions by the executive and legislative branches.

Loose constructionism: An approach to interpreting the Constitution that allows for broader interpretation of its provisions to address contemporary issues.

Separation of powers: The division of government into legislative, executive and judicial branches.

Strict constructionism: An approach to interpreting the Constitution based on its exact wording.

US constitution: A codified document outlining the structure and powers of US government.

Extended Reading/Listening/Viewing (You could learn more about this topic by):

- Visit: [C-Span Classroom](#)
- Politics Review: [Has the US Constitution stood the test of time? Issue 1, Volume 34 \(2024/2025\).](#)
- Politics Review: [The US Constitution: does it work in the twenty-first century? Issue 1, Volume 27 \(2017/2018\).](#)

Your teacher will assess your knowledge & understanding throughout the topic by looking at your work, questioning, discussion and giving you feedback in lots of different ways. The key pieces of work in this topic are:

End of unit knowledge assessment

Explain and analyse three principles of the US Constitution. (9 marks)

Analyse, compare and evaluate the arguments in the extracts over the extent to which it could be argued that the US Constitution still works today. (25 marks)



AQA Politics: Paper 2

3.2.1.2 US Congress

Learning about this topic is important because:

Understanding the role and effectiveness of Congress in the US Political system

Synoptic/Comparative Links to other units include (i.e. this builds on):

3.2.1.1 The US Constitution and Federalism: separation of powers, checks and balances, bipartisanship and co-operation, limited government

3.2.1.3 The executive branch of government and 3.2.1.4 The judicial branch of government: Relationship of President with Congress and Supreme Court

3.2.1.6 Political parties: Party system in Congress

3.2.2.1 Constitutional arrangements: Comparison between UK Parliament and US Congress

This leads to:

3.2.2.1 Constitutional arrangements

3.2.1.3 The executive branch of government: President

We will learn:

- 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.

We will develop/practise skills including:

Explanation: demonstrating knowledge and understanding of political events, concepts and ideas including the use of relevant examples.

Analysis: demonstrating understanding of the significance, causes, and effects of political ideas, events and concepts, as well as the relationship between them.

Comparison: Identifying similarities and differences between extracts, considering their significance and impact in a political context.

Evaluation: Making reasoned judgments about the strengths and weaknesses of an argument, concept, or theory in a statement or extract.

Some of the vocabulary that we will use includes:

Congress: The legislative branch of the US government, comprising of the Senate and House of Representatives.

House of Representatives: The lower chamber of the US Congress, consisting of 435 members who serve two-year terms and represent districts based on population.

Senate: The upper chamber of the US Congress, with 100 members, each state having two senators, serving six-year terms.

Oversight: The process by which Congress monitors the executive branch to ensure laws are implemented correctly.

Committee System: A system where Congress divides its work into specialised groups to review bills, hold hearings and make recommendations.

Extended Reading/Listening/Viewing (You could learn more about this topic by):

Read:

[Congress.gov](https://www.congress.gov)

Politics Review: Power and control in the US Congress, Issue 3, Volume 30 (2020/2021) ·

Politics Review: Congress vs the president, Issue 3, Volume 29 (2019/2020)

Politics Review: The 2024 US foreign aid package, Issue 2, Volume 34 (2024/2025)

Watch:

[Congressional Elections: Crash Course Government and Politics #6](#)

[Congressional Committees: Crash Course Government and Politics #7](#)

[The Bicameral Congress: Crash Course Government and Politics #2](#)

Listen:

The Rest is Politics US

Americast BBC Sounds

Your teacher will assess your knowledge & understanding throughout the topic by looking at your work, questioning, discussion and giving you feedback in lots of different ways. The key pieces of work in this topic are:

End of unit knowledge assessment

Explain and analyse... (9 marks)

Analyse, compare and evaluate the arguments in the extracts.../(25 marks)



AQA Politics: Paper 2

3.2.1.3 The executive branch of government: President

Learning about this topic is important because:

Understanding the role and effectiveness of the President and Executive in the US Political system.

Synoptic/Comparative Links to other units include (i.e. this builds on):

3.2.1.1 The US Constitution and Federalism: separation of powers, checks and balances, enumerated and implied powers

3.2.1.2 The legislative branch of government and 3.2.1.4 The judicial branch of government: Relationship of President with Congress and Supreme Court

3.2.1.6 Political parties: Party support for President and Executive in Congress

3.2.2.2 The executives: Comparison between UK Prime Minister and Cabinet and US President and Executive

This leads to:

3.2.2.2 The executives

3.2.1.4 The judicial branch of government

We will learn:

- sources of presidential power: selecting two relevant examples to demonstrate how these have been used by different presidents
- difference between formal powers and informal powers
- 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 e.g. 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
- Imperial versus Imperilled Presidency'

We will develop/practise skills including:

Explanation: demonstrating knowledge and understanding of political events, concepts and ideas including the use of relevant examples.

Analysis: demonstrating understanding of the significance, causes, and effects of political ideas, events and concepts, as well as the relationship between them.

Comparison: Identifying similarities and differences between extracts, considering their significance and impact in a political context.

Evaluation: Making reasoned judgments about the strengths and weaknesses of an argument, concept, or theory in a statement or extract.

Some of the vocabulary that we will use includes:

The President: The head of state and government in the US, responsible for enforcing laws, commanding the military and conducting foreign policy.

The Executive: The branch of government responsible for implementing and enforcing laws, led by the President.

Formal powers: Powers granted to the President by the US Constitution, such as vetoing bills, commanding the military and making treaties.

Informal powers: Powers not explicitly stated in the Constitution, like executive orders, influencing public opinion and leading political parties.

Imperial presidency: A term used to describe a President who exercises considerable power relatively unconstrained by constitutional checks and balances, often in foreign policy or military actions.

Imperilled presidency: A term used when a President's power is weakened or threatened, often due to political opposition or scandal.

Extended Reading/Listening/Viewing (You could learn more about this topic by):

Read:

Politics Review: Congress vs the President, Issue 3, Volume 29 (2019/2020)

Politics Review: Evaluating President Biden's single presidential term, Issue 3, Volume 34 (2024/2025)

Politics Review: Comparative politics: UK and US executives compared, Issue 2, Volume 28 (2018/2019)

Watch:

West Wing episodes (Channel 4.com)

[How Presidents Govern: Crash Course Government and Politics #14](#)

[Presidential Power: Crash Course Government and Politics #11](#)

[Presidential Powers 2: Crash Course Government and Politics #12](#)

Listen:

The Rest is Politics US

Americast BBC Sounds

[BBC Sounds - The Essay - Available Episodes](#)

Your teacher will assess your knowledge & understanding throughout the topic by looking at your work, questioning, discussion and giving you feedback in lots of different ways. The key pieces of work in this topic are:

End of unit knowledge assessment

Explain and analyse... (9 marks)

Analyse, compare and evaluate the arguments in the extracts.../(25 marks)



AQA Politics: Paper 2

3.2.1.4 The judicial branch of government

Learning about this topic is important because:

Understanding the role and effectiveness of the US Supreme Court in the US Political system

Synoptic/Comparative Links to other units include (i.e. this builds on):

3.2.1.1 The US Constitution and Federalism: separation of powers, checks and balances, judicial review

3.2.1.3 The executive branch of government and 3.2.1.2 The legislative branch of government: Relationship of Supreme Court with Congress and President

3.2.1.6 Political parties: Party system in Congress

3.2.2.3 The judiciaries: Comparison between UK and US Judiciaries

This leads to:

3.2.2.3 The judiciaries

3.2.1.5 The electoral process and direct democracy

We will learn:

- 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
- significance of the judiciary in shaping one area of public policy in terms of, for example, federalism, civil rights, race, gender, punishment.

We will develop/practise skills including:

Explanation: demonstrating knowledge and understanding of political events, concepts and ideas including the use of relevant examples.

Analysis: demonstrating understanding of the significance, causes, and effects of political ideas, events and concepts, as well as the relationship between them.

Comparison: Identifying similarities and differences between extracts, considering their significance and impact in a political context.

Evaluation: Making reasoned judgments about the strengths and weaknesses of an argument, concept, or theory in a statement or extract.

Some of the vocabulary that we will use includes:

Supreme Court: the highest court in the federal judiciary, serving as the final arbiter of law and the head of the judicial branch

Judicial activism: When judges interpret the Constitution in a way that influences policy decisions, often expanding rights or social change.

Judicial restraint: A philosophy that argues judges should limit their own power, deferring to the legislative and executive branches unless laws clearly violate the Constitution.

Judicial review: The power of the Supreme Court to review the constitutionality of laws and actions by the executive and legislative branches.

Strict constructionism: An approach to interpreting the Constitution based on its exact wording.

Loose constructionism: An approach to interpreting the Constitution that allows for broader interpretation of its provisions to address contemporary issues.

Extended Reading/Listening/Viewing (You could learn more about this topic by):

Read:

["Deadlocked: How America Shaped the Supreme Court" Equal Justice Initiative](#)

Politics Review: The US Supreme Court, Issue 1, Volume 32 (2022/2023)

Politics Review: The US Supreme Court: too powerful and too political? Issue 1, Volume 29 (2019/2020)

Politics Review: Does the US Supreme Court wield too much power? Issue 3, Volume 29 (2019/2020)

Politics Review: The US Supreme Court: power and politics, Issue 1, Volume 32 (2022/2023)

Politics Review: Who's calling the shots? The US Supreme Court, Issue 4, Volume 34 (2024/2025).

Watch:

[A multimedia judicial archive of the Supreme Court of the United States.](#)

Listen:

The Rest is Politics US

Americast BBC Sounds

[Strict Scrutiny - Podcast - Apple Podcasts](#)

Your teacher will assess your knowledge & understanding throughout the topic by looking at your work, questioning, discussion and giving you feedback in lots of different ways. The key pieces of work in this topic are:

End of unit knowledge assessment

Explain and analyse... (9 marks)

Analyse, compare and evaluate the arguments in the extracts.../(25 marks)



AQA Politics: Paper 2

3.2.1.5 The electoral process and direct democracy

Learning about this topic is important because:

Understanding the US electoral process and direct democracy in the US political system.

Synoptic/Comparative Links to other units include (i.e. this builds on):

3.2.1.1 The US Constitution and Federalism: views of Founding Fathers on representative democracy, electoral college

3.2.1.3 The executive branch of government and 3.2.1.2 The legislative branch of government: Relationship of President with Congress and Supreme Court

3.2.1.6 Political parties: Links between party and voters

3.2.2.4 Electoral and party systems: Comparison between UK and US Electoral Systems

This leads to:

3.2.2.4 Electoral and party systems

3.2.1.6 Political Parties

We will learn:

- the electoral systems used in the USA
- main characteristics of presidential and congressional elections and campaigns
- candidate selection and nomination: primaries; caucuses; national nominating conventions
- debates concerning the workings, outcomes and impact of the electoral college system on campaigns
- factors determining electoral outcomes: money; media; issues; leadership; the significance of incumbency
- debates about campaign finance
- direct democracy at state level: referendums, initiatives, propositions, recall elections and debates concerning their use
- voting behaviour and the main variables affecting the way people vote in the USA
- links between parties and their core voting coalitions
- factors in voting behaviour: issues, candidates
- the significance of recent (post 1980) and historic (e.g. 1932 and 1968) re-aligning elections can be used to illustrate arguments relating to factors influencing voting
- split ticket voting and high levels of abstention in US elections.

We will develop/practise skills including:

Explanation: demonstrating knowledge and understanding of political events, concepts and ideas including the use of relevant examples.

Analysis: demonstrating understanding of the significance, causes, and effects of political ideas, events and concepts, as well as the relationship between them.

Comparison: Identifying similarities and differences between extracts, considering their significance and impact in a political context.

Evaluation: Making reasoned judgments about the strengths and weaknesses of an argument, concept, or theory in a statement or extract.

Some of the vocabulary that we will use includes:

Electoral college: the indirect, constitutionally enshrined process (Article II, Section 1) used to elect the US President and Vice President, rather than a direct popular vote.

primaries: Elections held within a political party to choose its candidate for the general election.

Caucuses: local party meetings used to choose convention delegates, typically attracting more ideologically motivated voters than primaries

National nominating conventions: Events where political parties officially nominate their presidential candidate and announce their platform.

Direct democracy: A form of democracy where citizens vote on laws and policies directly, rather than through elected representatives.

Voting behaviour: The study of how and why people vote in ways, influenced by factors like age, income and party affiliation.

Popular vote: The total number of votes cast by citizens in an election, used to determine the results in many elections, though not directly in the US presidential race.

Extended Reading/Listening/Viewing (You could learn more about this topic by):

Read:

[Opinion Poll Analysis](#)

[Pew Research Center](#)

Politics Review: Should the US Electoral College be abolished? Issue 3, Volume 33 (2023/2024)

Politics Review: Direct democracy in the USA, Issue 4, Volume 31 (2021/2022)

Politics Review: America Decides, Explaining Trump's victory Issue 3, Volume 34 (2024/2025)

Watch:

[C-Span Classroom election coverage](#)

[2028 Presidential Election Interactive Map](#)

Listen:

The Rest is Politics US

Americast BBC Sounds

[BBC Sounds - Understand - Available Episodes](#)



AQA Politics: Paper 2

3.2.1.5 The electoral process and direct democracy

Split ticket voting: When a voter chooses candidates from different political parties for different offices in the same election.

Incumbency: The condition of currently holding a political office, often giving an advantage in elections due to name recognition, resources and experience.

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End of unit knowledge assessment

Explain and analyse... (9 marks) Analyse, compare and evaluate the arguments in the extracts.../(25 marks)



AQA Politics: Paper 2

3.2.1.6 Political parties

Learning about this topic is important because:

Understanding the role and effectiveness of US Political Parties in the US Political system

Synoptic/Comparative Links to other units include (i.e. this builds on):

3.2.1.1 The US Constitution and Federalism: bipartisanship and co-operation

3.2.1.3 The executive branch of government and 3.2.1.2 The legislative branch of government: Role of parties in Executive and Congress

3.2.1.5 The electoral process and direct democracy: Role of parties in election campaigns, party funding, polarisation

3.2.2.4 Electoral and party systems: Comparison between UK and US Electoral Systems

This leads to:

3.2.2.4 Electoral and party systems

3.2.1.7 US Pressure Groups

We will learn:

- the two main political parties: ideologies; values; policies; traditions; party organisation
- the ideological changes in both the Democratic and Republican parties making them more distinct and polarized
- factionalised nature of parties and internal divisions
- debates concerning party decline or renewal
- weakness of US parties
- the two-party dominance in US politics
- significance of third parties and independent candidates.

We will develop/practise skills including:

Explanation: demonstrating knowledge and understanding of political events, concepts and ideas including the use of relevant examples.

Analysis: demonstrating understanding of the significance, causes, and effects of political ideas, events and concepts, as well as the relationship between them.

Comparison: Identifying similarities and differences between extracts, considering their significance and impact in a political context.

Evaluation: Making reasoned judgments about the strengths and weaknesses of an argument, concept, or theory in a statement or extract.

Some of the vocabulary that we will use includes:

Factionalism: The division of a political party into smaller, competing groups that often have differing views on policies or leadership.

Party decline: The process in which political parties lose power, influence and voter loyalty, often due to internal divisions or shifting voter preferences.

Party renewal: The process of rejuvenating or re-establishing a political party's relevance and power

Party organisation: The structure of a political party, including its leadership, committees, staff and volunteers, responsible for carrying out party functions like campaigning in elections and policy advocacy.

Third parties: Political parties that are not one of the two major parties (Democratic or Republican) and often focus on specific issues or alternative ideologies.

Independent candidates: Candidates who do not belong to a political party and run for office without party affiliation, often appealing to voters dissatisfied with the major parties. abstention

Extended Reading/Listening/Viewing (You could learn more about this topic by):

Read:

Official party websites:

www.democrats.org

www.gop.com

[Pew Research Center reports on US partisanship](#)

Politics Review: Political parties in the USA, Issue 2, Volume 32 (2022/2023)

Politics Review: How polarised are US political parties? Issue 2, Volume 29 (2019/2020)

Politics Review: Political parties in Parliament and Congress, Issue 4, Volume 31 (2021/2022)

Watch:

[BBC](#) and [CNN](#) archives for convention and platform coverage

[America's Weird, Small Political Parties Explained - TLDR News](#)

[What if America had More Political Parties? - TLDR News](#)

[Why Third Parties Struggle in the US: Democratic and Republican Dominance in America - TLDR News](#)

Listen:

The Rest is Politics US

Americast BBC Sounds

[The Democrats Dilemma: Now What - BBC Sounds](#)

[The Interview - Elizabeth Neumann: The battle for the soul of the US Republican Party - BBC Sounds](#)

Your teacher will assess your knowledge & understanding throughout the topic by looking at your work, questioning, discussion and giving you feedback in lots of different ways. The key pieces of work in this topic are:

End of unit knowledge assessment

Explain and analyse... (9 marks)

Analyse, compare and evaluate the arguments in the extracts.../(25 marks)



AQA Politics: Paper 2

3.2.1.7 Pressure groups

Learning about this topic is important because:

Understanding the role and effectiveness of pressure groups in the US Political system

Synoptic/Comparative Links to other units include (i.e. this builds on):

3.2.1.3 The executive branch of government and 3.2.1.2 The legislative branch of government Influence of pressure groups on decision making and the legislative process

3.2.1.5 Elections and direct democracy: Election campaign finance

3.2.1.6 Political parties: relative power of parties and pressure groups

3.2.2.5 Pressure groups: Comparison between UK and US Pressure groups

This leads to:

3.2.2.5 Pressure groups

3.2.1.7 US Civil Rights

We will learn:

- the extent of political pluralism in the USA
- typologies of pressure groups
- methods and tactics used by pressure groups to influence decision making
- pressure group funding of elections: funding of Washington insiders; iron triangles; reinforcing incumbency; relative power of pressure groups vis-a-vis political parties
- debates concerning the power of pressure groups in the USA
- role and significance of Political Action Committees and Super PAC's regarding electoral finance.

We will develop/practise skills including:

Explanation: demonstrating knowledge and understanding of political events, concepts and ideas including the use of relevant examples.

Analysis: demonstrating understanding of the significance, causes, and effects of political ideas, events and concepts, as well as the relationship between them.

Comparison: Identifying similarities and differences between extracts, considering their significance and impact in a political context.

Evaluation: Making reasoned judgments about the strengths and weaknesses of an argument, concept, or theory in a statement or extract.

Some of the vocabulary that we will use includes:

Iron triangles: The close, mutually beneficial relationships between bureaucratic agencies, congressional committees and interest groups that influence policymaking in a specific area.

Political Action Committee (PAC): Groups that raise funds to support candidates and influence elections.

Promotional groups: Groups focused on promoting a particular cause or issue, such as environmental protection or human rights.

Interest groups: Groups that represent specific sections of society, such as trade unions or professional associations, advocating for their members' interests.

Political Pluralism: A system where multiple groups influence government decisions.

Electoral finance: the process by which electoral campaigns are financed.

Extended Reading/Listening/Viewing (You could learn more about this topic by):

Read:

[OpenSecrets.org – Data on lobbying, PACs, and Super PACs](https://www.opensecrets.org) Politics Review: Pressure groups and civil rights, Issue 4, Volume 30 (2020/2021)

Watch:

[C-SPAN hearings and congressional testimony archives](#)
[Interest Groups: Crash Course Government and Politics #42](#)
[How Lobbying Became A \\$3.5 Billion Industry](#)

Listen:

The Rest is Politics US
Americast BBC Sounds

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End of unit knowledge assessment

Explain and analyse... (9 marks)

Analyse, compare and evaluate the arguments in the extracts.../(25 marks)



AQA Politics: Paper 2

3.2.1.8 Civil rights

Learning about this topic is important because:

Understanding the protection and of US Civil Rights in US Political system

Synoptic/Comparative Links to other units include (i.e. this builds on):

3.2.1.1 The US Constitution and Federalism: Bill of Rights and other amendments

3.2.1.4 The judicial branch of government: Role of judicial review

3.2.1.7 US Pressure Groups: role of interest groups and promotional groups in promoting and supporting individual rights

3.2.2.6 Civil Rights: Comparison between UK and US of the protection and promotion of civil rights

This leads to:

3.2.2.6 Civil Rights

We will learn:

- protection of civil liberties and rights under: the constitution; Bill of Rights; subsequent amendments; landmark rulings of the Supreme Court
- the role of pressure groups in promoting and supporting rights
- the impact of salient political issues concerning civil rights and liberties on US politics eg in relation to one of: abortion; race; immigration; religion; freedom of speech; gender; sexual orientation; privacy; disability; the right to bear arms

We will develop/practise skills including:

Explanation: demonstrating knowledge and understanding of political events, concepts and ideas including the use of relevant examples.

Analysis: demonstrating understanding of the significance, causes, and effects of political ideas, events and concepts, as well as the relationship between them.

Comparison: Identifying similarities and differences between extracts, considering their significance and impact in a political context.

Evaluation: Making reasoned judgments about the strengths and weaknesses of an argument, concept, or theory in a statement or extract.

Some of the vocabulary that we will use includes:

Civil Liberties: Fundamental rights and freedoms protected by law.

Bill of Rights: the first 10 amendments to the US Constitution protecting civil liberties.

Landmark rulings: a significant Supreme Court decision that establishes a new legal principle, clarifies a vital area of law, or substantially changes the interpretation of existing law, often setting a precedent for future case

Supreme Court: the highest court in the federal judiciary, serving as the final arbiter of law and the head of the judicial branch

Civil Rights movement: a mass popular movement, largely by African Americans and allies, using non-violent direct action and legal challenges to end legalized racial segregation, discrimination, and disenfranchisement in the USA, securing equality under the law

Extended Reading/Listening/Viewing (You could learn more about this topic by):

Read:

[Equal Justice Initiative resources and reports](#)

[SCOTUS case summaries – Oyez.org](#)

Politics Review: Affirmative action in the USA, Issue 2, Volume 31 (2021/2022)

[Pew Research reports on race, gender, and equality in the USA](#)

Watch:

Listen:

The Rest is Politics US

Americast BBC Sounds

Your teacher will assess your knowledge & understanding throughout the topic by looking at your work, questioning, discussion and giving you feedback in lots of different ways. The key pieces of work in this topic are:

End of unit knowledge assessment

Explain and analyse... (9 marks)

Analyse, compare and evaluate the arguments in the extracts.../(25 marks)



AQA Politics: Paper 2

3.2.2.1 Constitutional arrangements

Learning about this topic is important because:

It builds an understanding of the foundational concepts behind rational, cultural, and structural theories to apply each theory appropriately to a comparison of the US and UK Constitutions; US Federalism and UK Devolution; and the US and UK legislatures.

Synoptic/Comparative Links to other units include (i.e. this builds on):

3.1.1.1 The nature and sources of the British Constitution: Fusion of powers, parliamentary sovereignty and rule of law, uncodified and flexibility

3.1.1.5 Devolution: Devolved government in the UK

3.1.1.2 UK The Structure and Role of Parliament: Legislative process in the UK

3.2.1.1 The US Constitution and Federalism: nature and sources, separation of powers, checks and balances, principles, amendment

3.2.1.2 The legislative branch: Congress: Legislative process in the UK

This leads to:

3.2.1.3 The executive branch

We will learn:

- Nature and sources of the US and UK constitutions
- Separation of powers vs fusion of powers
- Federalism in the US and devolved government in the UK
- Checks and balances in the US; parliamentary sovereignty and the rule of law in the UK
- The role and interpretation of constitutional principles
- Comparison of constitutional flexibility and reform
- Comparison of the US congress and UK parliament

We will develop/practise skills including:

Explanation: demonstrating knowledge and understanding of political events, concepts and ideas including the use of relevant examples.

Analysis: demonstrating understanding of the significance, causes, and effects of political ideas, events and concepts, as well as the relationship between them.

Comparison: Identifying similarities and differences between extracts, considering their significance and impact in a political context.

Evaluation: Making reasoned judgments about the strengths and weaknesses of an argument, concept, or theory in a statement or extract.

Some of the vocabulary that we will use includes:

Rational Theory: Individual self-interest, choice-based behaviour

Cultural Theory: Shared ideas, values and norms shaping behaviour

Structural Theory: Institutions and systems shaping outcomes

See **3.1.1.1 The nature and sources of the British Constitution**, **3.1.1.5 Devolution**, **3.1.1.2 UK The Structure and Role of Parliament** for key concepts and terminology relevant to this unit

See **3.2.1.1 The US Constitution and Federalism**; **3.2.1.2 The legislative branch: Congress** for key concepts and terminology relevant to this unit.

Extended Reading/Listening/Viewing (You could learn more about this topic by):

Read:

[Equal Justice Initiative resources and reports](#)

[SCOTUS case summaries – Oyez.org](#)

Politics Review: Affirmative action in the USA, Issue 2, Volume 31 (2021/2022)

[Pew Research reports on race, gender, and equality in the USA](#)

Watch:

[Comparing US and UK Constitutions](#)

[Comparing UK and US Legislative Branches](#)

Listen:

The Rest is Politics US

Americast BBC Sounds

Newscast BBC Sounds

Your teacher will assess your knowledge & understanding throughout the topic by looking at your work, questioning, discussion and giving you feedback in lots of different ways. The key pieces of work in this topic are:

End of unit knowledge assessment

Explain and analyse... (9 marks) Analyse and evaluate this statement. (25 marks)



AQA Politics: Paper 2

3.2.2.2 The Executives

Learning about this topic is important because:

It builds an understanding of the foundational concepts behind rational, cultural, and structural theories to apply each theory appropriately to a comparison of the US and UK Executives.

Synoptic/Comparative Links to other units include (i.e. this builds on):

3.2.1.1 The US Constitution and Federalism: separation of powers, checks and balances, enumerated and implied powers

3.2.1.3 The executive branch of government: Role and powers of the US executive

3.1.1.3 The Prime Minister and Cabinet: Role and powers of the UK executive

This leads to:

3.2.1.4 The judicial branch of government

We will learn:

- Powers and roles of the UK Prime Minister and Cabinet
- Powers and roles of the US President and the Executive Office
- Comparison of the heads of government: sources of power, accountability, constraints
- Role of the Cabinet and executive departments in policy-making

We will develop/practise skills including:

Explanation: demonstrating knowledge and understanding of political events, concepts and ideas including the use of relevant examples.

Analysis: demonstrating understanding of the significance, causes, and effects of political ideas, events and concepts, as well as the relationship between them.

Comparison: Identifying similarities and differences between extracts, considering their significance and impact in a political context.

Evaluation: Making reasoned judgments about the strengths and weaknesses of an argument, concept, or theory in a statement or extract.

Some of the vocabulary that we will use includes:

Rational Theory: Individual self-interest, choice-based behaviour

Cultural Theory: Shared ideas, values and norms shaping behaviour

Structural Theory: Institutions and systems shaping outcomes

See **3.1.1.3 The Prime Minister and Cabinet** for key concepts and terminology relevant to this unit

See **3.2.1.3 The executive branch of government** for key concepts and terminology relevant to this unit.

Extended Reading/Listening/Viewing (You could learn more about this topic by):

Read:

BBC and [C-SPAN](#) resources for contemporary examples and speeches

Watch:

[Comparing UK and US Executive Branches](#)

Listen:

The Rest is Politics US
Americast BBC Sounds
Newscast BBC Sounds

Your teacher will assess your knowledge & understanding throughout the topic by looking at your work, questioning, discussion and giving you feedback in lots of different ways. The key pieces of work in this topic are:

End of unit knowledge assessment

Explain and analyse... (9 marks) Analyse and evaluate this statement. (25 marks)



AQA Politics: Paper 2

3.2.2.3 The judicial branch of government

Learning about this topic is important because:

It builds an understanding of the foundational concepts behind rational, cultural, and structural theories to apply each theory appropriately to a comparison of the US and UK judiciary

Synoptic/Comparative Links to other units include (i.e. this builds on):

3.2.1.1 The US Constitution and Federalism: separation of powers, checks and balances, judicial review

3.2.1.2 The legislative branch of government: Role, functions and power of the US Supreme Court

3.1.1.4 The Judicial branch of government: Role, functions and power of the UK Supreme Court

This leads to:

3.2.1.5 The electoral process and direct democracy

We will learn:

- Nature and role of the UK Supreme Court vs the US Supreme Court
- Judicial independence and neutrality in each country
- Powers of judicial review and interpretation of law
- Impact of judicial decisions on public policy and rights protection
- Politicisation and the appointment process of senior judges
- Comparison of judicial power and constitutional roles in UK and US systems

We will develop/practise skills including:

Explanation: demonstrating knowledge and understanding of political events, concepts and ideas including the use of relevant examples.

Analysis: demonstrating understanding of the significance, causes, and effects of political ideas, events and concepts, as well as the relationship between them.

Comparison: Identifying similarities and differences between extracts, considering their significance and impact in a political context.

Evaluation: Making reasoned judgments about the strengths and weaknesses of an argument, concept, or theory in a statement or extract.

Some of the vocabulary that we will use includes:

Rational Theory: Individual self-interest, choice-based behaviour

Cultural Theory: Shared ideas, values and norms shaping behaviour

Structural Theory: Institutions and systems shaping outcomes

See **3.1.2.2 Elections and referendums**, **3.2.1.6 Political parties** for key concepts and terminology relevant to this unit

See **3.1.1.4 The Judicial branch of government** for key concepts and terminology relevant to this unit.

Extended Reading/Listening/Viewing (You could learn more about this topic by):

Read:

[Oyez.org](https://www.oyez.org/) for US case summaries and audio

Watch:

[UK Supreme Court website](https://www.supremecourt.gov/) for case briefings and videos
[Comparing UK and US Supreme Court and Rights](#)

Listen:

The Rest is Politics US
Americast BBC Sounds
Newscast BBC Sounds

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End of unit knowledge assessment

Explain and analyse... (9 marks) Analyse and evaluate this statement. (25 marks)



AQA Politics: Paper 2

3.2.2.4 Electoral and Party Systems

Learning about this topic is important because:

It builds an understanding of the foundational concepts behind rational, cultural, and structural theories to apply each theory appropriately to a comparison of the US and UK elections and party systems

Synoptic/Comparative Links to other units include (i.e. this builds on):

3.1.2.2 Elections and referendums: UK elections and direct democracy

3.2.1.6 Political parties: UK Party System

3.2.1.5 The electoral process and direct democracy: US elections and referendums

3.2.1.6 Political parties: US Party System

This leads to:

3.2.1.7: Pressure groups

We will learn:

- Comparison of major electoral systems in the US and UK: First-past-the-post in general elections; Electoral College in US presidential elections; Devolved and local electoral systems in the UK
- The nature of party systems: two-party dominance, third parties, independents
- Effects of electoral systems on party representation, governance, and outcomes
- Debates over electoral reform in both countries

We will develop/practise skills including:

Explanation: demonstrating knowledge and understanding of political events, concepts and ideas including the use of relevant examples.

Analysis: demonstrating understanding of the significance, causes, and effects of political ideas, events and concepts, as well as the relationship between them.

Comparison: Identifying similarities and differences between extracts, considering their significance and impact in a political context.

Evaluation: Making reasoned judgments about the strengths and weaknesses of an argument, concept, or theory in a statement or extract.

Some of the vocabulary that we will use includes:

Rational Theory: Individual self-interest, choice-based behaviour

Cultural Theory: Shared ideas, values and norms shaping behaviour

Structural Theory: Institutions and systems shaping outcomes

See **3.1.2.2 Elections and referendums**, **3.2.1.6 Political parties** for key concepts and terminology relevant to this unit

See **3.2.1.5 The electoral process and direct democracy**; **3.2.1.6 Political parties** for key concepts and terminology relevant to this unit.

Extended Reading/Listening/Viewing (You could learn more about this topic by):

Read:

[Electoral Commission \(UK\)](#) and [FEC.gov \(US\)](#)

[Pew Research and BBC analysis of turnout and electoral impact](#)

Watch:

[Comparing UK and US Democracy and Participation](#)

Listen:

The Rest is Politics US

Americast BBC Sounds

Newscast BBC Sounds

Your teacher will assess your knowledge & understanding throughout the topic by looking at your work, questioning, discussion and giving you feedback in lots of different ways. The key pieces of work in this topic are:

v



AQA Politics: Paper 2

3.2.2.5 Pressure groups

Learning about this topic is important because:

It builds an understanding of the foundational concepts behind rational, cultural, and structural theories to apply each theory appropriately to a comparison of the role and effectiveness of US and UK pressure groups in their relative political systems.

Synoptic/Comparative Links to other units include (i.e. this builds on):

3.1.2.4 Pressure groups: the role and effectiveness of US pressure groups

3.2.1.7 Pressure groups: the role and effectiveness of UK pressure groups

This leads to:

3.2.1.7 US Civil Rights

We will learn:

- The role and influence of pressure groups in the UK and USA
- Types of groups: Insider/outsider, cause/sectional
- Comparison of methods: lobbying, litigation, protests, political donations, media campaigns
- Relationship with political parties and government
- Regulation and transparency: lobbying laws and campaign finance
- Assessment of impact on democracy, representation, and policy

We will develop/practise skills including:

Explanation: demonstrating knowledge and understanding of political events, concepts and ideas including the use of relevant examples.

Analysis: demonstrating understanding of the significance, causes, and effects of political ideas, events and concepts, as well as the relationship between them.

Comparison: Identifying similarities and differences between extracts, considering their significance and impact in a political context.

Evaluation: Making reasoned judgments about the strengths and weaknesses of an argument, concept, or theory in a statement or extract.

Some of the vocabulary that we will use includes:

Rational Theory: Individual self-interest, choice-based behaviour

Cultural Theory: Shared ideas, values and norms shaping behaviour

Structural Theory: Institutions and systems shaping outcomes

See **3.2.1.7 Pressure groups** for key concepts and terminology relevant to this unit

See **3.2.1.7 Pressure groups** for key concepts and terminology relevant to this unit.

Extended Reading/Listening/Viewing (You could learn more about this topic by):

Read:

[OpenSecrets.org](https://www.opensecrets.org) (US) and [UK Parliament's lobbying register](https://www.parliament.uk)

Watch:

[US Politics Pressure Groups Revision Video 1: Introduction, political pluralism and typologies](#)
[UK Politics: Pressure Groups](#)

Listen:

The Rest is Politics US
Americast BBC Sounds
Newscast BBC Sounds

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End of unit knowledge assessment

Explain and analyse... (9 marks) Analyse and evaluate this statement. (25 marks)



AQA Politics: Paper 2

3.2.2.6 Civil rights

Learning about this topic is important because:

It builds an understanding of the foundational concepts behind rational, cultural, and structural theories to apply each theory appropriately to a comparison of US and UK Civil Rights.

Synoptic/Comparative Links to other units include (i.e. this builds on):

3.1.1.1 The nature and sources of the British Constitution: Protection and promotion of civil rights in the UK

3.2.1.8 US Civil Rights: Protection and promotion of civil rights in the US

This leads to:

3.3 Political Ideas

We will learn:

- Protection of civil rights in the UK and the USA
- Role of constitutions, courts, legislatures, and executives
- Importance of pressure groups, media, and public opinion
- Rights-based culture in both countries
- Contemporary challenges to rights protection (e.g. surveillance, protest laws, voting access)
- Comparison of effectiveness, accessibility, and scope of rights protection

We will develop/practise skills including:

Explanation: demonstrating knowledge and understanding of political events, concepts and ideas including the use of relevant examples.

Analysis: demonstrating understanding of the significance, causes, and effects of political ideas, events and concepts, as well as the relationship between them.

Comparison: Identifying similarities and differences between extracts, considering their significance and impact in a political context.

Evaluation: Making reasoned judgments about the strengths and weaknesses of an argument, concept, or theory in a statement or extract.

Some of the vocabulary that we will use includes:

Rational Theory: Individual self-interest, choice-based behaviour

Cultural Theory: Shared ideas, values and norms shaping behaviour

Structural Theory: Institutions and systems shaping outcomes

See **3.1.1.1 The nature and sources of the British Constitution** for key concepts and terminology relevant to UK civil rights.

See **3.2.1.8 US Civil rights** for key concepts and terminology relevant to US civil rights.

Extended Reading/Listening/Viewing (You could learn more about this topic by):

Read:

S. Lemieux, R. Hammal, P. Fairclough with A.J. Bennet AQA A-level Politics, 2nd Edition 2025

Watch:

[A Level Politics: Comparative Approaches for Component 3](#)

Listen:

The Rest is Politics US
Americast BBC Sounds
Newscast BBC Sounds

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End of unit knowledge assessment

Explain and analyse... (9 marks) Analyse and evaluate this statement. (25 marks)