

Politics Induction Task sheet

If you have any questions about A level Politics, please email r.humphreys@allsaints.sheffield.sch.uk

Task 1:

Being up to date with current political events is a really important part of your Politics course. Read one news article per week and keep a log of this on the table provided below. Make sure the article you're reading is about Politics (ideally British or American).

[illegible]

Task 2:

Find definitions for the following key words – these are words you need to understand and use confidently in your study of the course.

Parliament	
Government	
Constitution	
Codified	
Parliamentary sovereignty	
Individual rights	
Collective rights	
House of Commons	
House of Lords	
Cabinet	
Suffrage	
Democracy	

Task 3:

Read the following article and pick out the key arguments. Do you agree or disagree with the arguments? Come to your first Politics lesson ready to discuss.

The article is an opinion piece written by Liberal Democrat councillor, Michal Siewniak on Friday 31st May 2024. The article was published on a website called Liberal Democrat voice. The Liberal Democrats support extending the voting age to 16 and 17 year olds.

I find the whole election process fascinating. How do people vote? Do they vote in line with their conscience and political beliefs? Do they, to deselect the opponent, decide to support the "lesser evil", as we often say in Poland? Do we actually believe in what we hear? Do we trust our politicians?

These elections will be no different. They will, in my opinion, magnify the political polarization. We will inevitably be talking about the immigration, NHS, education, social care, the economy, and the very challenging geo-political landscape. I don't think that any of the main parties can offer a set of meaningful solutions to address a mountain of problems and issues that we face.

I was actually quite surprised when the Labour Leader suggested to potentially allow 16 and 17 years old to vote. It was one of the first policies that he announced. I actually like the idea. I think that it is really important to enable younger voters to shape our communities and their neighbourhoods. It is a no brainer, isn't it? If you are 16, you can work, open a bank account without parent's permission. If you are 17, you can hold a licence to drive a car.

To ensure that my opinion is evidence based, I asked this question to my daughter, who is currently taking her A-level exams, one of which is politics. I was actually surprised as my daughter thinks that it is too early for 16 year olds to vote. She also said that they can be easily influenced by their parents and in some cases, their schools. She also said that not all, but many teenagers are disconnected with the democratic process and therefore they are not "civically mature" to cast their vote. I disagreed and said that many adults might not be interested in the political process and often, their decisions are easily influenced by e.g. social media and/or by seeing a particular heading in one of the national newspapers. Do we, often enough, conduct our own research to determine and decide our political choices?

However, there is one point raised by my daughter, which I would fully support. Particularly today, when so many people are simply fed up with "ping-pong politics", negative campaigning, we need to do so much more to encourage healthy democratic debates. Our schools should teach, from a very early age, our children and grandchildren how politics tangibly affect lives. And it does! Some of these "civic values" should be strongly embedded in our curriculum so that we all understand the process behind making any informed decisions.

As a councillor, I try to encourage this as much as possible. Visiting schools, taking groups of children to Council Chambers, discussing the role of MPs, Parliament, to setting up specific workshops on issues, which impact the lives of young people e.g. youth provision etc. give me immense joy. This is how we build real Community Champions and Ambassadors for our town and cities. No one should be excluded from this process and therefore, the Central Government and the Local Authorities should be the enablers and creators of "laboratories for democracy".

Let's hope that, even when the times are tough, none of the political parties forget about the importance of setting good examples in relation to political dialogue, respect and authenticity. We must, at all costs, adhere to treating each other as we would have wanted to be treated.