

WESTCLIFF HIGH SCHOOL FOR BOYS



A Level Summer Preparatory Work

2026

ART

Please use the PowerPoint shared to use as inspiration to complete your journal.

Key Skills to develop and refine	To develop and refine your observation drawing skills by looking more closely at things around you that you see every day, and to explore skills in creating drawings from imagination.
1.	Create a visual art journal which reflects aspects of your own life and personality in a small A5 sketchbook or altered book. Use a combination of drawings, paintings, and text/words to illustrate the suggested themes using a range of materials, techniques, and processes.
2.	To begin with you will need a sketchbook. You would have made or been given one in the taster session, but if you are using a ready-made sketchbook, try to use one that is no bigger than A5 in size to create your journal as this is a good size. Check out YouTube for ideas linked to handmade artist sketchbooks if you are feeling creative.
3.	We would like you to explore at least 10 of the themes in the PowerPoint, however you can explore more if you wish. Each double page will have a theme (we have given you 30 to start with) which should take you up to at least the Summer term. You can draw from direct observation, use your own photos, or find images on the internet as inspiration. Look at the slides below with artists who use sketchbooks and journals.

Biology

Key Skills to develop and refine	- To gain an understanding of biological theory in a number of key fields - To appreciate how our understanding of biology has changed over time with the contribution of new research - How a greater understanding of biology provides benefits to mankind and the environment
1. Visit the Natural History Museum online	The Natural History Museum website contains many articles and videos detailing the story of human evolution. The information provided ranges from material on Neanderthals to the recent discovery of fossil evidence. (https://www.nhm.ac.uk/discover/human-evolution.html)
2. Read a book	Genome by Matt Ridley. This is an excellent book with each chapter describing a newly discovered gene from each of the 23 pairs of human chromosomes.
3. Watch a lecture	Prof. Steve Jones: 'Nature or Nurture?' on YouTube. Prof. Steve Jones is a scientist, Royal Society Fellow and world-leading expert in genetics. He won the Royal Society Michael Faraday Prize for his numerous, wide ranging contributions to the public understanding of science in areas such as human evolution and variation and genetic manipulation. In this lecture on YouTube, he uses many interesting examples to answer one of the biggest questions in science: nature or nurture? (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1ksP34GYwbY)
4. Watch a lecture	Prof. Dame Sue Black is a Scottish forensic anthropologist, anatomist and academic who was awarded an OBE in 2001 for her work in war crimes investigations in Kosovo. She has been an innovator in developing techniques and building databases to confirm or disconfirm someone's identity. This lecture details how Forensic anthropology works to unveil the identity of a person from sparse evidence, be it the perpetrator or the victim in a crime. (https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9Jrd5kJ-vTU)
5. Watch a TEDTalks	Neuroscientist Professor Jim Fallon talks about brain scans and genetic analysis that may uncover the rotten wiring in the nature (and nurture) of murderers. He also shares a fascinating family history that makes his work very personal. (Exploring the mind of a killer Jim Fallon (youtube.com))
6. Complete a biology-related FutureLearn course	FutureLearn is a government-funded Open University project that connects learners to short university courses hosted online, some of which can be sampled for free. The course we have provided a link to allows you to explore the impact of biochemistry on bioenergy and health, discovering why graduates are in demand. (https://www.futurelearn.com/courses/biochemistry)
Compulsory task	You need to complete 4 of the 6 options listed above and write a 400-word commentary on each. In September, you will be requested to submit your work by your teacher.

Computer Science

Key Skills to develop and refine	• An ability to spot and correct a range of Syntax and Logic Errors in Python code • To create algorithms in Python that can solve simple problems including some common mathematical solutions. • Know your core GCSE Algorithms and be able to write them in Python, in particular Linear Search, Bubble Sort, Insertion Sort and Binary Search. • Be confident with decimal to binary conversions and aware of more complex representation of negative numbers and decimal numbers. • Have a broader knowledge of the social implications of Computer Science on wider society. • Have an awareness of how Computers have developed over the last 100 years.
1. Visit a Museum with Computer exhibits	There are a lot of options here, the most obvious being the National Science Museum in London. They have exhibits of some of Babbage's original designs for mechanical computers, a large section dedicated to the development of electronic communication and a good range of early computers. https://www.sciencemuseum.org.uk/ The next big option is Bletchley Park, famous for the code breaking work during the second world war and development of the first general purpose electronic computer. The park is a wonderful history and mathematics trip but if you go towards the back of the site there is a second museum 'The National Museum of Computing' with many of the earliest computers and a fun exhibit of old, working games consoles. https://bletchleypark.org.uk/ If you are in the Cambridge area, hidden away at the back of an industrial site is another hidden gem of a museum, 'Centre for Computing History.' This is a large single floor museum with lots of different computers ranging from some early examples of super computers to modern day machines with a lot of machines from in-between. I particularly like the numerous examples of machines that ran programs stored on rolls of paper punched with holes representing ASCII. http://www.computinghistory.org.uk/
2. Play a game	The best way to work on your basic binary conversion is to practice lots of calculations. Luckily, there is a surprisingly addictive game for this, the Cisco Binary Game. Sometimes called the Tetris of Network Engineers the game was originally developed to help trainee network engineers practice their 8-bit binary conversions as used when representing IPv4 addresses. The game is great fun. https://learningnetwork.cisco.com/s/binary-game (it is easy to google the link) Another game I enjoy is Terminus by MIT, this game lets you practice navigating a file space using only a command line interface.

	http://web.mit.edu/mprat/Public/web/Terminus/Web/main.html (for a shorter link try https://fuzy.uk/AMnYKt)
3. YouTube can be productive	There are many excellent resources for revising Computer Science on YouTube but the most consistent and best suited to the British education system are those produced by Craig and Dave. If there was any topics, you were unsure of from GCSE you should review the relevant video for the GCSE J277 spec. If you are looking forward, then the A-Level 7517 Specification Videos are excellent. I would recommend them for the key algorithms and as a first introduction to Floating Point numbers and 2's Complement, but all the videos are useful. AQA A-Level Computer Science Revision Craig 'n' Dave (Craig and Dave) (for a shorter link try fuzy.uk/8erF8n)
4. Read a book	This is very much down to personal preference I would recommend the Asimov robots series of books, though written many decades ago the concepts of robots and artificial intelligence and how they will impact on society are increasingly relevant to today.
5. Complete some coding tasks (main recommended task)	In preparation for the programming work, you will undertake in year 12 we have set a few warm-up coding challenges for you to try over the summer. We are very aware that different schools have taught very different levels of coding at GCSE so if your coding experience has been limited or if you are new to the Python programming language, please use these assignments to help you improve. Our coding work is done in an online environment called juicemind, you will first need to create an account in juicemind, please use a name that is recognisable to us. Once you have created your account, log in to it and then click the link below to join the class on juicemind. https://Juicemind.com Join the course using the following link. http://fuzy.uk/9zY3X4 You will then see several assignments in the juicemind class for you to work on, most of them should be quick to complete. There are input/output tests in juicemind (click on the tick icon to see them and then run them). Unfortunately, juicemind have been making a lot of changes recently so some tests might fail even though the code works as expected. Use your personal judgement and keep moving through the tasks. Consider the tests as an approximate rather than exact check. When you complete an assignment, or if you need help, please submit your assignment. I will provide feedback inside juicemind over the summer (although due to holidays, I will only look a few times, so please do not expect rapid feedback, the first two weeks and the last week of the holiday are when I shall be checking for feedback requests).

	The assignments are ordered from the simplest to the slightly more challenging, so work your way through them in order. We will spend the first week or two of term on coding and individual help will be given in those lessons and at lunchtime sessions. Other activities previous students have used can be found at the following https://codingbat.com/python https://projecteuler.net/
6. Watch a film / documentary	There are few realistic Computer Science movies but for those who enjoy a historical thriller the imitation game is an excellent and relatively accurate telling of the development of the Bombe at Bletchley Park, perhaps combine it with a visit to the park? The film is currently available on Netflix and Amazon Prime. There are several 'history of the development of the Internet' videos on YouTube you might want to try, a reasonable one can be found below but the internet is your oyster. For a BBC documentary on YouTube. https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=T3h1fiOC4AM
7. Personal Projects	One common feature we often see in A* A-level students is tendency to have several personal side coding projects. This ranges from single big projects that they have worked on for years to a range of small challenges. Your final year project will take the form of code that you develop independently so this would be good practice. The options are almost limitless, I have seen everything from working through various sorting algorithms to making a full virtual reality engine. If you have a task in mind working on it for fun will require you to solve a variety of problems and develop your coding skills. You do not need to limit yourself to Python either, why not try making a 3d game using Unity and C#?
<i>Compulsory task</i>	The only thing we require you to do is to do some coding. I would strongly recommend the other activities, but coding is the main required task. I expect everyone to try and access the repl.it course but if there are issues with joining the course, please contact Mr Steel via email to try and resolve them. Alternative evidence of coding will be accepted if you cannot access the course.

A Level Economics

Key Skills to develop and refine	• An understanding of economic concepts and theories through a critical consideration of current economic issues, problems and institutions that affect everyday life • How to apply economic concepts and theories in a range of contexts and to appreciate their value and limitations in explaining real-world phenomena • How to analyse, explain and evaluate the strengths and weaknesses of the market economy and the role of government within it • How to participate effectively in society as a citizen, producer, and consumer • How to develop your skills in written, visual, and symbolic communication and analysis using statistics and basic economic models • How to think analytically about the choices facing any organisation or individual.
1. Visit the Bank of England Museum and explore their website	The 'Old Lady' was founded in 1694 and is one of the oldest central banks in the world. The museum is open to the public and just a short walk away from Bank tube station. Exhibits focus on money (a small part of your course), inflation, monetary policy (significant parts of both A level and IB courses) and financial markets regulation (A level only). In addition, the Bank of England has an excellent site explaining everything from the role of central banks to inflation targeting. https://www.bankofengland.co.uk/education
2. Keep an Independent Study Folder – this is a compulsory task	This is something you will need to do as part of your study of A Level Economics and should be started over the summer holiday. Typical content would include a copy of the specification which can be found at: Edexcel AS and A level Economics A 2015 Pearson qualifications Other content should include a brief note on articles you have read. BBC News has a lot of Economics content, which provides invaluable application points for A Level Economics. Here is one example: The economic challenges facing the next prime minister - BBC News Exam papers may be printed with questions attempted and annotated using mark schemes and Examiner Reports.

3. Read a book	Tim Harford's 'The Undercover Economist' is an excellent introductory text available in all good bookshops and, most likely, your local library. Also recommended, is Kate Raworth's 'Doughnut Economics'. Dambisa Moyo's Dead Aid is also an excellent choice.
4. Read "The Economist"	Available in the School Library and online.
5. Listen to Radio 4	If you want to be amongst the best-informed Economists, you will make a habit of listening to R4 daily either live or streamed from BBC Sounds. The Department recommends you listen to PM each weekday evening at 5. https://www.bbc.co.uk/sounds/brand/b006qskw

English Literature Summer Work

Key Skills to develop and refine	• Evaluating accepted concepts in literature • Analysing texts in various forms • Knowing the literary timeline and having a consciousness of literary movements • Exploring how texts across time connect
Read the texts	As a MINIMUM: • Read <i>Othello</i>: https://www.sparknotes.com/nofear/shakespeare/othello/ • Type <i>Othello</i> into YouTube and watch at least 5 clips of various scenes and debates around the text. Make notes. • Read <i>The Great Gatsby</i>: https://www.gutenberg.org/files/64317/64317-h/64317-h.htm You could also • Read <i>The Handmaid's Tale</i> & Watch the series • Read <i>The Feminine Gospels</i> • Read <i>Cat on a Hot Tin Roof</i> & watch the film • Select some of our texts from the KS5 Reading List:
Familiarise yourself with some basic literary criticism	READ: <i>An Introduction to Critical Theory</i> by Terry Eagleton: https://www.amazon.co.uk/Literary-Theory-Introduction-Terry-Eagleton/dp/0631201882 WATCH: <i>An Introduction to Literary Theory</i> by Paul H Fry https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=4YY4CTSQ8nY&list=PLD00D35CBC75941BD LISTEN: <i>Read Learn Live</i> Podcast on Spotify/Apple Podcasts/Android
Watch informative documentaries	Search for the following videos to introduce yourself to topics studied in A Level Literature: <i>Shakespeare Uncovered</i>: BBC4 <i>Sincerely F</i> Scott Fitzgerald: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=cCfUsaX5FI0 <i>Othello: A Nadir Nadhi Documentary</i>: https://ett.org.uk/watch-and-listen/othello-a-nadir-nadhi-documentary/
Improve your writing of essays	Consider either drafting for practice, or even entering essay competitions such as: https://www.mindsunderground.com/oxbridge-competitions/overview

OPPORTUNITIES FOR GEOGRAPHICAL ENRICHMENT FOR PROSPECTIVE YEAR 12, JUNE 2025

Key Skills to develop and refine	There are many aspects of knowledge, understanding and skills that are required to be an excellent geographer at Sixth Form level and these are often honed outside of the classroom. For example, geographers need to be able to use evidence and examples to support the conclusions that they come to about geographical issues in exam answers. In addition, effective geographers should develop a 'sense of place' so that they can explain what makes any location unique or special. Good geographers also continually look at the world around them and apply what they see to the classroom setting. For example, as you go about exercising and walking you may see urban land use change, quality of life inequalities in urban areas and the interaction between people and their physical environment. You might also see the concept of microclimate in action: why is it raining in Shoebury but dry in Great Wakering? The tasks below are designed to encourage you to examine the wider world around you, to enjoy seeing geography at first hand and to help you develop geographical research skills whilst you are not in school to help prepare for studying Geography in the Sixth Form. CHOOSE AT LEAST ONE OPTION to complete before the start of term; doing these options will broaden your experience and knowledge as geographers. <u>The suggestions are particularly relevant to any of you intending to study geography at university – think ahead to your UCAS applications.</u>
Option 1 Books that you could read:	<i>Landscapes and Geomorphology: A Very Short Introduction</i> by Andrew Goudie; write 400+ words to explain the science behind landscape formation; <i>or</i> <i>Geography: Ideas in Profile</i> by Danny Dorling and Carl Lee; write 400+ words to explain the importance of studying geography in our modern world <i>or</i> <i>The Bottom Billion</i> by Paul Collier; write 400+ words to explain why the world's poorest countries are failing, <i>or</i> <i>Dead Aid</i> by Dambisa Moyo; write 400+ words to explain the argument that aid is holding back Africa's development <i>or</i> <i>Prisoners of Geography</i> by Tim Marshall: write 400+ words to explain how geopolitics is more important than ever.

Option 2 Museums that you could visit:	The Museum of London Docklands (London, E14 4AL) is a museum of the history and geographical development of London that includes exhibitions on the redevelopment of the Docklands area. [Whilst there, you could visit the Crossrail Place Roof Garden E14 5AB and see a range of exotic plants from around the world] The Natural History Museum (London, SW7 5BD) houses a world-class collection of artefacts such as rare rocks and gems as well as permanent displays on tectonic processes, resource use and geomorphological processes.
Option 3 Researching contemporary debates:	How should extreme poverty be tackled: more aid or fairer trade? <i>or</i> Is it too late to tackle global warming? <i>or</i> How many people can the world support? <i>or</i> How can we reduce plastic pollution in the oceans? <i>or</i> Research the geopolitical tensions over the South China Sea between China and the countries of Asia Pacific.
Option 4 Visiting an area of physical geography interest:	Visit a coastal, riverine or estuarine location and identify the ways that people interact with the natural environment - present this visually as a video or an annotated photo montage display board; <i>or</i> Visit a city and identify how human activity has modified the physical environment and the processes taking place (e.g. the impact on run-off, wildlife diversity and climate etc) – present this using presentation software e.g. Prezi or PowerPoint. <i>or</i> Visit an area that has been previously glaciated (e.g. Snowdonia, the Lake District, the Peak District National Park) and record the glacial landform features that you see photographically using photo presentation software e.g. Photosnack.com.
Option 5 Studying your local geography:	By looking at your local home area, consider this statement: human geography is more influential in determining the character of a place than physical geography. How could you find evidence to support your opinion? What research or fieldwork techniques would be appropriate?
Option 6 Watching the world	By watching documentaries and videos on YouTube, enjoy the wonder of the natural world. From the Grand Canyon to Antarctica, to the depths of the oceans, to the peaks of mountains, and to the plants that somehow grow through the cracks of the pavement and on buildings, consider this statement: “physical geography is worthy of more study than human geography”. How could you find

	evidence to support your opinion? What research or fieldwork techniques would be appropriate?
	Considering options 2, 3, 5 and 6, you could write a 400+ word assessment considering: 1. What drew you to this option? 2. What did you enjoy about carrying out this option? 3. Geographically, what did you learn from this activity?
Option 7 Reflecting on your geographical learning	One of the most important skills we can develop to make progress is the skill of reflecting. It might seem like an obvious thing to do but we don't always take the time to actually reflect on what we have done to figure out how to improve in the future. For this option, you could reflect on your study of geography, the skills you have developed and things you could still work on. Answer the following questions honestly: 1. Overall, how much do you think you have achieved through your study of geography? 2. List three things you accomplished over your two years of studying the subject at GCSE. 3. Which skills have you developed throughout your study of the subject? 4. Which three things could you still make improvements on? 5. What have you enjoyed most and least about your study of the subject? 6. Is there anything you wish you had done throughout your studies to help you progress that you didn't do at the time? 7. List three ways your study of geography can continue to help you in the future even if you don't plan to carry on studying the subject at A Level.
Option 8 Learning to write a good essay at Sixth Form	Writing a good essay is absolutely key to getting good grades in many subjects at Sixth Form level. Throughout your time studying geography you have been told to develop points, use more evidence or examples and state an evidence-based opinion. The higher you go in education the more elaboration you need to include. Below are two links to essay writing techniques in geography. Read the advice and then write answer to one of the questions in Option 3 above with the aim of achieving 20/20 marks: https://www.transkills.admin.cam.ac.uk/resources/geography/essay-writing-human-geography https://www.transkills.admin.cam.ac.uk/resources-students/geography/essay-writing-physical-geography
Option 9	Access these sites and watch the geographical videos, study the infographics or read the articles to broaden your view of the world:

Different perspectives on the world	Open University site on geography and environmental science https://www.open.edu/openlearn/society-politics-law/geography/geography-matters-collection Visual Capitalist site drawing on surveys of people around the globe https://www.visualcapitalist.com/globalization-by-country/ Leonardo DiCaprio's film on climate change https://www.beforetheflood.com/
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History

Key Skills to develop and refine	Research, analysis and evaluative skills
1.	Look at the A Level History 2026 28 Teams Page and contact Mr Jeffreys if you need to be added to this – this will provide some articles and some early information about the course.
2.	You <u>could</u> read a section of 'A People's Tragedy' by Orlando Figes, which introduces aspects of the Russia course, although this is entirely optional
3.	You <u>could</u> read a section of 'The Stuart Age' by Barry Coward, which introduces aspects of the Stuarts course, although this is entirely optional
4.	You <u>could</u> read a section of 'Civil War' by Peter Ackroyd, which introduces aspects of the Stuarts course, although this is entirely optional
5.	You <u>could</u> read a section of 'A History of Britain' by Simon Schama (volume 2), which introduces aspects of the Stuarts course in an easy-to-read way, although this is entirely optional
6.	You <u>could</u> think about what makes a successful ruler and what makes a poor ruler – think about what you have learned about British or Russian History so far and what the story is by 1625 or 1894. However please be assured that there is no need to know any of this at the start of the course.
7.	The most important thing that the History Department wants you to do over the summer is relax and re-energise, so that you can come back ready for a fabulous course of A Level study.

Music

Key Skills to develop and refine	• Understanding of the symphony • Understanding of music in the twentieth century • Skills of analysis • Skills of evaluation • Composition skills • Aural skills
1. Read a book	<i>Listen to This</i> by Alex Ross has several articles on different musical topics. A more substantial read, but more relevant to the course, is <i>The Rest is Noise</i> by the same author, which covers the development of music in the 20 th century. This is useful for AOSE in particular.
2. Familiarise yourself with the Symphony	Listen to various symphonies such as: Stamitz, <i>Symphony in D</i> Haydn, <i>Symphony 101</i> Beethoven, <i>Symphony No. 5 in Cm</i> Tchaikovsky, <i>Symphony No. 5</i> Mahler, <i>Symphony No. 1 'Titan'</i> Consider how they differ from one another, and how the changing times may have contributed to these differences.
3. Explore music podcasts	Listen to some music podcasts to explore assorted styles and theoretical ideas. An example is The Listening Service which can be found on BBC Sounds.
4. Watch informative documentaries	Search for the following videos on YouTube to introduce yourself to topics studied in A Level Music: Howard Goodall – Introduction to the symphony Howard Goodall – a deeper look at the symphony Howard Goodall – Debussy and Impressionism
5. Improve your writing of harmony and chordal texture	Go to www.ALevelMusic.com and use the resources in the "Chorale Worksheets" section of the site to develop your writing of typical cadences in western classical music.

PHYSICAL EDUCATION

Key Skills to develop and refine	To understand the different dimensions of Physical Education and Sport that impact wider societal issues. To develop the ability to read critically using a wide range of sources.
1. Review the specification	Highlight the areas you expect to be especially interested in. Write a one-paragraph summary explaining how studying A Level Physical Education may help to refine and improve your performance in your chosen sport.
2. Listen to some podcasts	Listen to the following episode of the High Performance podcast: E317 (Prof. Steve Peters: Meet The Secret Weapon Behind Elite Athletes & The Top 1%). In this episode, renowned psychiatrist and best-selling author of 'The Chimp Paradox', Prof. Steve Peters, shares his expertise on how the mind works and how to make the most of it.
3. Read an article	Read the article Why do governments invest in elite sport? A polemic by Grix Carmichael (2011), which was provided during the induction session. Use this to complete the compulsory task.
4. Watch a film	Icarus. Give your opinion of the film. What was the most thought-provoking element? Why? What solutions or sanctions do you think would help reduce doping in professional sport?
<i>Compulsory task</i>	Produce a mind map showing the reasons why the government might invest in both grassroots and elite sport. You should consider the following areas: economic, health, and social benefits.

Summer Preparation Work for A Level Physics

1. Ensure you have an account on <https://www.isaacphysics.org>. Use your WHSB email address if you have one. If you do not have a WHSB email address yet, use a personal email address – you can change it in September.
2. Click this link to join the appropriate group:
<https://isaacscience.org/account?authToken=BRQVD7>. The class code is BRQVD7.
3. Watch this playlist of videos:
https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PLmFthZ_IoSnc0YyUFTXr2Vv3KpalpwNJJ. Each video from the playlist is also linked below. I recommend spacing the work out over the summer.
4. Answer the questions from Isaac Physics. Make sure you are logged into Isaac Physics and are in the group using the link or code above before you answer these questions. The questions are also linked below, but will appear under “My Isaac > My Assignments” if you are correctly logged onto Isaac Physics.

Week 1: Vectors

 <https://youtu.be/aBQr3tcANHs?si=9fyqLpjzkHjVOY7>

 https://isaacphysics.org/gameboards?stage=all#pre_uni_maths_lvl2_4

Week 2: Algebra

 https://youtu.be/SLo_pJx-7ug?si=ckfP_3bEPGQzLeB4

 https://isaacphysics.org/gameboards?stage=all#pre_uni_maths_lvl1_1

Week 3: Logarithms

 <https://youtu.be/nDvJDQHiJ6E?si=V0VPWORGJYSGYbJY>

 https://isaacphysics.org/gameboards?stage=all#maths_book_gcse_ch3_13_hprob

Week 4: Dimensional analysis

 <https://youtu.be/LLO3r-uXwgY?si=IC5-b8TyiT-f7Zlw>

 <https://isaacphysics.org/gameboards#4fe3ed32-c2a3-47ea-b7f7-16956058d320>

Week 5: Graphing skills

 https://youtu.be/jMN_ipP7hfE?si=wG35TJqE1Ne9F4qL

 https://isaacphysics.org/gameboards?stage=all#phys19_a6

Week 6: Errors

 https://youtu.be/4gO6UrvNKKw?si=gUpKO6d467__r42Q

 https://isaacphysics.org/gameboards?stage=all#phys19_e3

Politics

Dear prospective Politics student,

The A level syllabus we follow is from Edexcel (2017). We do the US Politics Option for Paper 3, and our Optional Ideology is Feminism. You can download the specification at:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-a-levels/politics-2017.html>

The specification may not mean too much to you at the moment but you can at least see the main components: UK Politics (focusing on ideas such as Representation and Democracy or political parties and elections); UK Government (focusing on institutions such as Parliament and Cabinet); Core Ideologies (Liberalism, Conservatism and Socialism); Optional Ideology (the aforementioned Feminism); US Politics & Government (combining both the institutions of government with the practice of politics in the US) and Comparative Politics (comparing aspects of UK and US politics).

To give you a sense of how these topics might be approached, consider two recent news stories: Black Lives Matter (and in particular the protests in Bristol) and the House of Commons' decisions on procedures against sexual harassment and bullying within Parliament.

Black Lives Matter

Amongst the most repeated concepts on UK Politics are Representation, Participation, Accountability and Legitimacy. The argument is that if you are going to have a democratic system of government ("government of the people, for the people and by the people" according to Abraham Lincoln in 1863) then you need citizens to participate in your democratic processes; to have their views represented through those processes; and to have decision-makers accountable to them in some way (a core definition of democracy might include the ability of the people to change those who govern them by peaceful means).

Read the BBC coverage of the toppling of the statue of late 17th early 18th Century slave trader Edward Colston in Bristol at the start of June 2020. Make sure you follow the Related Topics at the bottom because they help to explain that this was a story that began several years ago (e.g., the "Who was Edward Colston..." article was originally written in February 2018).

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-bristol-52965803>

Also, look at the comments from Mayor of Bristol Marvin Rees:

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/jun/10/bristol-mayor-marvin-rees-edward-colston-statue-slavery>

<https://www.theguardian.com/uk-news/2020/jun/13/bristol-mayor-colston-statue-removal-was-act-of-historical-poetry>

The question we can then ask is, **was the Black Lives Matters protest in Bristol that included the toppling of the statue a triumph for democracy or a failure?** Was direct action by a group of citizens more successful in terms of political representation, participation, and accountability than the "normal" democratic process of elections? Or was the protestors' action an affront to political legitimacy (usually defined as the right and acceptance of an authority, usually a governing law or a regime)?

House of Commons procedures for dealing with sexual harassment and bullying

This may seem to be a narrower topic – how the House of Commons should deal with what are really quite normal workplace issues affecting every company or public body in the land – but it does raise some interesting questions about one of our key institutions of government. Part of the question revolves around the status of MPs as our elected representatives. Who should be able to remove an MP from their position and prevent them carrying out that representative function? Only the electorate, the House of Commons collectively or an outside agency in the form of an unelected tribunal or court?

Read the following articles and you will see that the government was trying to deal with an awkward constitutional situation (to expel an MP and thus negate a democratic choice by the electorate should not be in the hands of anybody except Parliament itself) whilst creating a complaints process that would be fair to both sides (given that politically motivated “false” accusations were at least conceivable, as well as politically motivated “defence” of a colleague).

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-53153004>

<https://www.theguardian.com/politics/2020/jun/23/rees-mogg-accused-of-wrecking-parliament-harassment-body> (Actually, if you watched the debate in the House of Commons, he did nothing of the sort).

The background to much of this can be found at:

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-politics-48935860>

Again, following the links to other stories, especial Dame Laura Cox’s Report is helpful.

You can even skim read Dame Laura Cox’s full Report (155 pages!) from 2018 that showed the worrying extent of sexual harassment and bullying with Parliament and the lack of faith employees had in the existing complaints procedure (she is a distinguished judge and former barrister):

<https://www.parliament.uk/mps-lords-and-offices/offices/commons/media-relations-group/news/statement-on-dame-laura-coxs-report-into-the-bullying-and-harassment-of-house-of-commons-staff-/>

The question we can ask ourselves is **should an unelected tribunal have the power to remove an MP from office?** On what basis do we set aside the decision of the electorate? Is the independence and sovereignty of Parliament actually more important than the need to have a robust complaints procedure to tackle what can be serious (though not unlawful) misbehaviour in the workplace in line with the expectation of every other worker in the UK?

Have a look at the Recall of MPs Act 2015 either on Wikipedia or the House of Commons Library. This might have provided an option so that MPs were not expelled directly but forced to seek re-election. However, neither the (then) Leader of the House, Jacob Rees-Mogg MP, or the House of Commons generally wanted to use this approach. Can you see why? Interestingly, there has been a case of an MP being found guilty of harassing an employee, but because it was the verdict of an Employment Tribunal and not a law Court, the MP could not be “recalled” under the terms of the Act. It looks as if the Recall of MPs act 2015 will need to be amended. The most recent case (an SNP MP) has ended up being seen as essentially an internal party matter, but the number of MPs being

accused of bullying and harassment is significant at 56 since the new procedure came in. This does not include the criminal investigations of a small number of MPs for rape, sexual assault, stalking and threatening behaviour.

What kind of student are you?

We expect our Politics students to have an interest in politics. That means listening to BBC Radio 4 *The Today Programme* in the morning, or reading a decent broadsheet newspaper, or following political journalism on-line or through magazines such as the New Statesman or The Spectator, watching *Newsnight* or a Sunday politics programme such as *Andrew Marr* or *Robert Peston* rather than switching channels. You do not need to do all these things every day/week, but each day should see you inform yourself about UK and US politics in some way at a reasonably high level.

It is great if you are aware of and willing to invest in relevant programmes on TV. Now, BBC are reshooting the excellent *Thatcher: A Very British Revolution* whilst Sky is showing the documentary *Hillary* which is great for US politics. BBC i-Player still has a series of excellent, short presentations by the political journalist Steve Richards which include *Why Parties Split* and *Great Prime Ministers* etc.

However, **one resource I want you all to look at** as it is designed for use with our A level course is at:

<https://www.prechewedpolitics.co.uk/>

We have an annual subscription that is set up to run through my account. That means that from every July that students – including you – can log-in using my details:

Username: stevensr@whsb.essex.sch.uk

Password: Learn@Home2021 [it is case sensitive, I think]

It is an excellent site and resource that I have used for 4-5 years. There are “video” programmes on important topics and accompanying handouts and worksheets. For UK Politics we always start with “Democracy and Participation” whilst for UK Government it is “The UK Constitution.”

Some ideas for wider independent reading/study are given below. Try giving one of the books by David Runciman or the *Yes Minister* TV programmes (certainly on YouTube) or an account of a General Election campaign a go:

Newspapers

Domestic news and editorial pages from a broadsheet and/or tabloid or a semi-regular basis

Internet

Conservative Party www.conservatives.com

Labour Party www.labour.org.uk

Liberal Democrats www.libdems.org.uk

Satirical, tittle-tattle and gossip parliamentary blog www.order-order.com

Political bookshop and portal site www.politicos.co.uk (you can get the books/DVDs etc. listed below...)

TV and Radio

Radio Four's *Today Programme*

BBC 2's *Newsnight*

Channel Four News

BBC1's *Question Time*

BBC Video/DVD

Yes Minister (also available in book by Anthony Jay and Jonathan Lynn)

Yes, Prime Minister (also available in book by Anthony Jay and Jonathan Lynn)

The Thick of It (bad language throughout – the BBC sign language department had to “invent” 4 new swear words in the first episode alone)

Light-hearted or provocative

How to be a minister by Gerald Kaufman

The Art of Political Lying by Peter Osborne

A Very Short Introduction to British Politics by Anthony Wright MP (an old favourite...)

Humorous anecdotal accounts (though dated!)

Diaries by Alan Clark (highly readable; quite irreverent and racy stuff but about the 1980s so dated from your point-of-view)

A View from the Foothills by Chris Mullin MP (a well-received diary from a self-confessed “failed” Labour politician with many good insights into the nature of government and politics)

Servants of the People by Andrew Rawnsley (quite humorously written but serious comment on the early days of New Labour. Again, this is rather “ancient history” for you, but it was a seminal moment in UK political history)

The End of the Party by Andrew Rawnsley (fascinating and in places quite vicious account of the second part of New Labour's period in office; particularly critical of Brown and the internal feuding)

Recent(ish) Political Campaigns

Why the Tories Won: The Inside Story of the 2015 Election by Tim Ross (good account of the “surprise” Tory victory in 2015 which came as no surprise to those inside the campaign. It is particularly good at explaining how the Tories were starting to make clever use of social media)

The British General Election of 2015 by Philip Cowley and Dennis Kavanagh

Betting the House: The Inside Story of the 2017 General Election by Tim Ross and Tom McTague

The British General Election of 2017 by Philip Cowley and Dennis Kavanagh (one of the best in a series of studies of British Elections from 1945 onwards)

The British General Election of 2019 by Robert Ford and others (Written by several UK academics this is recently published in paperback)

Unleashing Demons: The Insider Story of Brexit by Craig Oliver (a chief advisor to David Cameron)

Memoirs and Historical Accounts

The Downing Street Years by Lady Thatcher (not that readable, unfortunately. Again “ancient history” though Thatcher was a genuinely “historic” figure who changed Britain and British politics)

Prime Ministers: The Office and its Holders since 1945 by Peter Hennessy (well informed but a hefty tome; excellent Introduction. Superbly written)

The New Machiavelli by Jonathan Powell (difficult to categorise memoir by Blair’s Chief of Staff which seeks to salvage the reputation of both Blair and Machiavelli – see below!)

The Unfulfilled Prime Minister: Tony Blair’s Quest for a Legacy by Peter Riddell (a leading political journalist’s take on the hugely influential but not necessarily ultimately successful Prime Minister?)

British Prime Ministers by Robert Parker (short, accessible reviews which go up to Cameron in the 2013 edition)

Why we get the wrong politicians by Isabel Hardman (I do not really agree with Ms Hardman, but the opening chapters do explain the trials and obstacles in the way of becoming an MP)

The Prime Ministers We Never Had by Steve Richards (A very experienced journalist, Steve Richards produced several (25min) programmes for BBC Parliament channel on subjects such as “Turning Points” and “Prime Ministers” and the above title. You may be able to find them on YouTube or I-player)

Political Thought: Novels

Nineteen Eighty-Four by George Orwell

Animal Farm by George Orwell

Political Thought: Academic/General

How Democracy Ends by David Runciman (Professor of Politics at Cambridge; most of his books are worth reading because they are intended for the intelligent reader rather than academics – try *Where Power Stops*)

Political Thought: Heavyweight Literature

Politics by Aristotle (the invention of “political science” as it looks less towards the “ideal” state of, say Plato’s *Republic*, but more towards government as it exists. Not an easy read and Jonathan Barnes’ *Aristotle: A Very Short Introduction* is much more accessible)

Leviathan by Thomas Hobbes (a pessimistic look at “the state of nature” which advocates almost any political alternative to the horrors of anarchy. Again, not easy at all... Try Richard Tuck’s *Hobbes: A Very Short Introduction* instead)

Two Treatises for Government by John Locke (the foundation of 18th Century liberalism with ideas of government by consent and limited government; John Dunn’s *Locke: A Very Short Introduction* is very good)

The Social Contract by Jean-Jacques Rousseau (an optimistic look at “the state of nature” which sees society as a potentially corrupting influence if there are no safeguards; really for university politics courses)

On Liberty by John Stuart Mills (in many ways the key text for 19th Century liberalism)

The Road to Serfdom by Friedrich Hayek (hugely influential on many modern conservatives, written in 1944 it defended free market liberal economics and savaged socialism and fascism for their promotion of collective values over the freedom of the individual; some Y13 Politics & Economic students do tackle this...)

In Defence of Politics by Sir Bernard Crick (a little dated but intended for intelligent Sixth Former/undergraduate; Crick was the main driver for Citizenship to be taught in schools)

The Prince by Niccolo Machiavelli (problematic without some understanding of renaissance Italy; I tend to find Sixth Formers dive into this and get very little benefit)

The New Machiavelli: How to wield power in the modern world by Jonathan Powell (perhaps conceptually flawed but written by close confidant and advisor to Tony Blair; might work best with previous book and certainly readable)

Please work through the two questions I have posed on Black Lives Matters and the House of Commons vote on harassment procedures. You do not need to write anything but taking notes from the articles is actually very good practice. You should be able to see how our course tries to explore some of the concepts beneath the headlines. Questions such as how democracy can be made effective or meaningful; whether representative democracy (i.e., elections for mayor, councillor, MP etc.) is necessary and sufficient or whether it can be strengthened through other forms of political participation and representation etc.

Mr Stevens

Design and Technology: Product Design

Key Skills to develop and refine	- Designing aptitude using Solidworks 3D CAD package (or similar) - Graphic communication and accuracy of sketching skills - An appreciation of what is 'good design' based on Dieter Rams 10 Principles - Understand what it is like to work as an engineer for Dyson
1.	Practise your skills using Solidworks. Download details will be made available on Microsoft Teams page. Mac users will need to use alternative packages such as Fusion360 (free trial versions for education). Use some simple YouTube tutorials to develop your skills using this software.
2.	Using your sketch books, practise your sketching technique using an appropriate 3d drawing method. Look around your house for personal belongings and interesting pieces of furniture and replicate in perspective. Further your skills by adding appropriate render or shade.
3.	Using resources such as the Design Museum, investigate and explore Dieter Rams 10 Principles of Good Design. https://designmuseum.org/discover-design/all-stories/what-is-good-design-a-quick-look-at-dieter-rams-ten-principles
4.	The James Dyson Foundation provides some fantastic resources to further your understanding of the world of engineering and appreciate what it is like to be an engineer working for Dyson. Using the link below, explore some of the profiles, discussing their experiences working at Dyson. https://www.jamesdysonfoundation.co.uk/resources/other-engineering-resources/engineer-stories.html
Compulsory task	Using hand sketches and CAD software (as above – not SketchUp), produce a set (at least one page of A4) of possible ideas for a folding Angle-Poise desktop lamp. Drawings and model should be accompanied by construction details and annotation.

PSYCHOLOGY

Key Skills to develop and refine	• An understanding of how psychological research is conducted, including an analysis of effective ways to conduct research with human participants. • An understanding of psychological concepts including mental illness diagnostic criteria. • Real-life applications of psychological research in law and healthcare. • The process of conducting psychological research and publishing research that has been peer reviewed in academic journals.
1. Research Methods techniques used in Psychology	Using the Internet, look up some of the Research methods used by Psychologists. What are the strengths and limitations of using each to study human behaviour? 1. Experimental methods e.g. Laboratory experiment, Field experiment 2. Observational techniques e.g. Controlled observation, Naturalistic observation; Covert Observation, Overt Observation 3. Self-report techniques e.g. Interviews, Questionnaires 4. Case Studies 5. Correlations
2. Research the DSM and ICD	Using the Internet, look up how different conditions are diagnosed. Search for the Diagnostic and Statistical Manual of Mental Disorders (DSM-5) and the International Classification of Diseases (ICD-11). Look at the criteria for diagnosing any two disorders (you choose), what symptoms would an individual display?
3. British Psychological Society (BPS)	Access the BPS website 'Research Digest' https://digest.bps.org.uk/ Read two articles that interest you.
4. Read a full journal article using Google Scholar.	Access Google Scholar online https://scholar.google.com/ This will filter Google to give you published academic research studies. Search for a Psychological topic that interests you and read a published research study. Consider why it is important to verify or check the quality of research (peer review) before it is published.
Compulsory task	You must complete the tasks listed above labelled 1-3. Task 4 is optional. You should expect to discuss your preparation during an early Psychology lesson. What did you learn? What questions were left unanswered?

Religious Studies

Key Skills to develop and refine	• To think critically and analytically • To empathise with the views of others • To explore philosophical language and thought through significant concepts and the works of key thinkers. • To consider a range of ethical theories, both deontological and teleological, religious, and non-religious. • To explore how ethical language has changed over time
1. Read a Non-Fiction Book	Read at least one of these: • Think by Simon Blackburn • Ethics: A Very Short Introduction by Simon Blackburn • The Thinker's Guide to God by Peter Vardy and Julie Arliss • The Thinker's Guide to Evil by Peter Vardy and Julie Arliss • The God Delusion by Richard Dawkins These books might be a little trickier: • Christian Theology by Alister McGrath • The Puzzle of God by Peter Vardy • The Puzzle of Ethics by Peter Vardy • Language, Truth, and Logic by A.J. Ayer
2. Read a Fiction Book	• The Parable of the Sower by Octavia Butler • Purple Hibiscus by Chimamanda Ngozi Adichie • The Dispossessed by Ursula Le Guin • The Handmaid's Tale by Margaret Atwood • The Power by Naomi Alderman • The Color Purple by Alice Walker • Orlando by Virginia Woolf • Do Androids Dream of Electric Sheep by Philip K. Dick • The Brothers Karamasov by Fyodor Dostoyevsky • Animal Farm by George Orwell
3. Watch a Film	• The Truman Show • Eternal Sunshine of the Spotless Mind • Her • Being John Malkovich • Inception • Persepolis • Solaris • Blade Runner • Ex Machina • Invictus • Dead Man Walking • Cry Freedom • The Matrix
4. Play a Game	These games cover many issues particularly from the Ethics session of the course: • The Last of Us • The Bioshock Series

	• Mass Effect (particularly #2) • The Stanley Parable • The Talos Principle • Papers Please!
5. Email newsletters	Search for these online and sign up to their weekly newsletter delivered direct to your inbox: • Farnam Street's Brain Food: https://fs.blog/newsletter/ • Brain Pickings: https://www.brainpickings.org/newsletter/ • Alain de Botton's School of Life: https://www.theschooloflife.com/london/
6. Podcast	You should be able to find these through any podcast app, but you can also listen direct from their websites: • Philosophy Bites: http://www.philosophybites.com/ The PanPsyCast: www.thepanpsycast.com • Radio 4s 'In Our Time': https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qykl/episodes/player
7. You Tube Channels	• Crash Course Philosophy: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=1A_CAKYt3GY&list=PL8dPuuaLjXtNgK6MZucdYldNkMybYIHKR • Philosophy Tube: https://www.youtube.com/user/thephilosophytube
Compulsory task	You need to complete at least two of the seven options listed above and write a 400-word commentary using the following questions as prompts. Your work will be submitted via Microsoft Teams, and you should expect to discuss your preparation during an early RS lesson: 1. What led you to choose the task you did? Consider the factors that shaped your decision. 2. What did you enjoy about it? 3. What would you specifically recommend to others? 4. What did you learn about Religious Studies/Philosophy/Ethics? 5. What questions were left unanswered? Was there something you would like to explore further?