



Learning Grids for AS and A Level Edexcel

Component 2: UK Government
and Non-core Political Ideas

The Constitution

2022 Edition

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Teacher's Introduction

The UK Constitution can be a complicated thing for any student to learn about. Because the Constitution is not written in any one place, and because it is remarkably flexible compared to other international Constitutions, it is both hard to find out what the Constitution includes, and keep track of how it has changed. These learning grids will help students to understand the notoriously difficult UK Constitution.

This set of learning grids is designed to help students develop their AO1 knowledge for the UK Constitution module of the Edexcel A Level Politics specification. The questions and answers provided here should give the students a comprehensive grasp of the facts before moving on to the analysis and evaluation needed for AO2 and AO3 marks in the exams. These grids can be used as a revision of key facts after a lesson, as homework, or as a quick starter task.

The learning grids are split into four sections in line with the specification: the nature and sources of the UK Constitution, how the Constitution has changed since 1997, the role and powers of devolved bodies in the UK, and debates on further reform. There are 13 grids in total, and each one roughly covers one bullet point in the specification.

This resource is cross-referenced to:

- *Edexcel GCSE Politics AS and A Level Student Book*, Goodlad, Mitchell, Colclough, Levinson, Laycock, Schindler and Tomes, Pearson Education, 2017, ISBN 978-1292187020
- *UK Government and Politics for AS/A Level (Fifth Edition)*, Lynch, Fairclough, Cooper, Hodder, 2017, ISBN 978-1-4718-89233
- *UK Government and Politics for AS/A Level (Sixth Edition)*, McNaughton and Cooper, Hodder, 2021, ISBN 978-1-3983-1133-6
- *A Level Edexcel Course Companion: Comp 2: UK Govt: The Constitution*, Murphy and Glover, 2022, ZigZag Education (MORE/11851)

Second edition, April 2020

The second edition of these learning grids has been updated to reflect recent developments, contemporary debates and new political contexts that have emerged since their initial publication. In relation to The Constitution, this includes (but is not limited to) political developments since the 2017 general election, the evolution of policy commitments, progression in the ongoing process of devolution, and changes in the positions of prominent political figures. These changes have been made through the addition of new questions, activities and model answers.

Third edition, November 2022

Cross-referencing updated for Course Companions (ZigZag Education 2022) and added for additional Hodder textbook (2021). Amendments throughout to reflect changes to EU topics in specification issue 3 and other updates: question pages 2, 4–6, 8, 11, 13, 15 and 19, and answer pages 2, 4–6, 8, 11, 13, 15, 17 and 19.

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Selected Question and Answer Pages

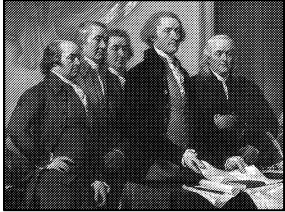
For demonstration only, the sample answer pages immediately follow their corresponding question pages

		Questions	Answers	
The Development of the Constitution		What caused the passage of the Bill of Rights in 1689?		
		What act decided the right of Parliament to determine the order of succession to the throne?		
		People from which religious group were banned from becoming monarch because of the Act of Settlement?		
		When were Scotland and England united? What was the name of the act that made this happen?		
		What effect did the Parliament acts of 1911 and 1949 have on the House of Lords?		
		Match the acts on the left to their effects on the right.	Magna Carta 1215	<div style="border: 1px dashed black; padding: 5px;"> <p>Gave Parliament the power to determine the line of succession to the throne, and prevented Catholics from taking the throne</p> <p>Reduced the powers of the House of Lords, including changing their veto over legislation into a delay</p> <p>Introduced the right to free trial and protection from unwarranted imprisonment</p> <p>United the kingdoms of Scotland and England under one Parliament in Westminster</p> <p>Limited the power of the monarch and introduced free elections and free speech in Parliament</p> <p>Codified the European Convention on Human Rights into UK law</p> </div>
			Bill of Rights 1689	
	Act of Settlement 1701			
	Acts of Union 1707			
	The Parliament acts of 1911 and 1949			
	Human Rights Act 1998			

		Questions	Answers	
The Development of the Constitution		What caused the passage of the Bill of Rights in 1689?	The Glorious Revolution of 1688 in which James II was forced out of office	
		What act decided the right of Parliament to determine the order of succession to the throne?	The Act of Settlement 1701	
		People from which religious group were banned from becoming monarch because of the Act of Settlement?	Roman Catholics	
		When were Scotland and England united? What was the name of the act that made this happen?	The Acts of Union 1707	
		What effect did the Parliament acts of 1911 and 1949 have on the House of Lords?	The acts reduced the power of the Lords to interfere with the Commons. Their power to veto legislation was reduced to a power to delay legislation.	
		Match the acts on the left to their effects on the right.	Magna Carta 1215	Gave Parliament the power to determine the line of succession to the throne, and prevented Catholics from taking the throne
			Bill of Rights 1689	Reduced the powers of the House of Lords, including changing their veto over legislation into a delay
	Act of Settlement 1701		Introduced the right to free trial and protection from unwarranted imprisonment	
	Acts of Union 1707		United the Kingdom of England and Wales with the Kingdom of Scotland under one monarch	
	The Parliament acts of 1911 and 1949		Limited the powers of the House of Lords and introduced the Parliament Acts	
	Human Rights Act 1998		Codified the rights of citizens into a single document	





		Questions	Answers
Further Reform of the Constitution		Which of the two pillars of the Constitution would having an entrenched Constitution challenge?	
		Why do some argue that the Human Rights Act should be entrenched?	
		Who would write a new constitution? 	
		What is one problem with the flexibility of codified and entrenched constitutions?	
		How many times has the US Constitution been amended?	
		Who do some people argue an entrenched constitution would give too much power to?	
		What likely effect would having a codified constitution have on public understanding of politics?	

	Questions	Answers
Further Reform of the Constitution	Which of the two pillars of the Constitution would having an entrenched Constitution challenge?	Parliamentary sovereignty
	Why do some argue that the Human Rights Act should be entrenched?	To protect it from being changed (and, therefore, rights being taken away). Entrenchment would make it more difficult to change the Constitution.
	Who would write a new constitution?	Nobody knows! It's a source of debate who would write a fully codified constitution.
		
	What is one problem with the flexibility of codified and entrenched constitutions?	It is possible that they may become too inflexible. It would become more difficult for Parliament to act quickly in times of crisis.
	How many times has the US Constitution been amended?	27
	Who do some people argue an entrenched constitution would give too much power to?	Judges. In the USA the Supreme Court is very powerful as the sole institution with the responsibility for interpreting the Constitution.
What likely effect would having a codified constitution have on public understanding of politics?	Having a codified Constitution would mean that the public could see how politics is operated. If it is all written in one place then citizens	



Additional Selected Question Pages

		Questions	Answers
The Reforms of 1997–2010	<p>What did the Constitutional Reform Act 2005 introduce?</p> 		
	<p>Who did the Supreme Court replace as the highest court of appeal? What did this mean for separation of powers in the UK?</p>		
	<p>What was the act that incorporated the European Convention on Human Rights into UK law?</p>		
	<p>How did the Human Rights Act strengthen the judiciary?</p>		
	<p>What was new about the Human Rights Act in the British Constitution?</p>		
	<p>How are the principle of Parliamentary sovereignty and the idea of human rights at odds?</p>		
	<p>What democratic mechanism was used to legitimise most large-scale Constitutional reforms?</p>		

Questions		Answers
Which party, a traditional supporter of Constitutional reform, joined in coalition with the Conservatives in 2010?		
What was the name of the act, introduced in 2011, which was designed to limit government control over when an election would be held?		
What online process did the coalition make more important for government?		
What reform – to do with boundaries – did the Liberal Democrats stop? And what Liberal-Democrat-supported proposal did Conservatives block?		
When was there a referendum on electoral reform? What was the result?		
What additional powers did the Scotland Act 2012 give to the Scottish Parliament?		
What alternative to the Human Rights Act was suggested in the Conservative manifesto of 2010?		
What was a referendum held on in Wales in 2011, and what was the result?		
What act was introduced that gave the public the ability to fire an MP under some circumstances?		

The Constitution after 2010

	Questions	Answers
Constitutional Reform since 2015	Which parties have won the most seats in England, Scotland and Wales in all three elections since 2015?	
	What is the name of the act that devolved further powers to Scotland in 2016 – among other things giving them the power to amend the Scottish Act itself in some specific circumstances?	
	What was the name of the act that established the Senedd and government as permanent and requiring a referendum before they can be abolished?	
	Other than devolving powers to the nations, what other policy has promoted decentralisation of power since 2015?	
	Why were the English votes for English laws procedures abandoned in 2021?	
	What role do referendums play in the British Constitution?	
	Why does Brexit pose a problem for the unity of the United Kingdom?	