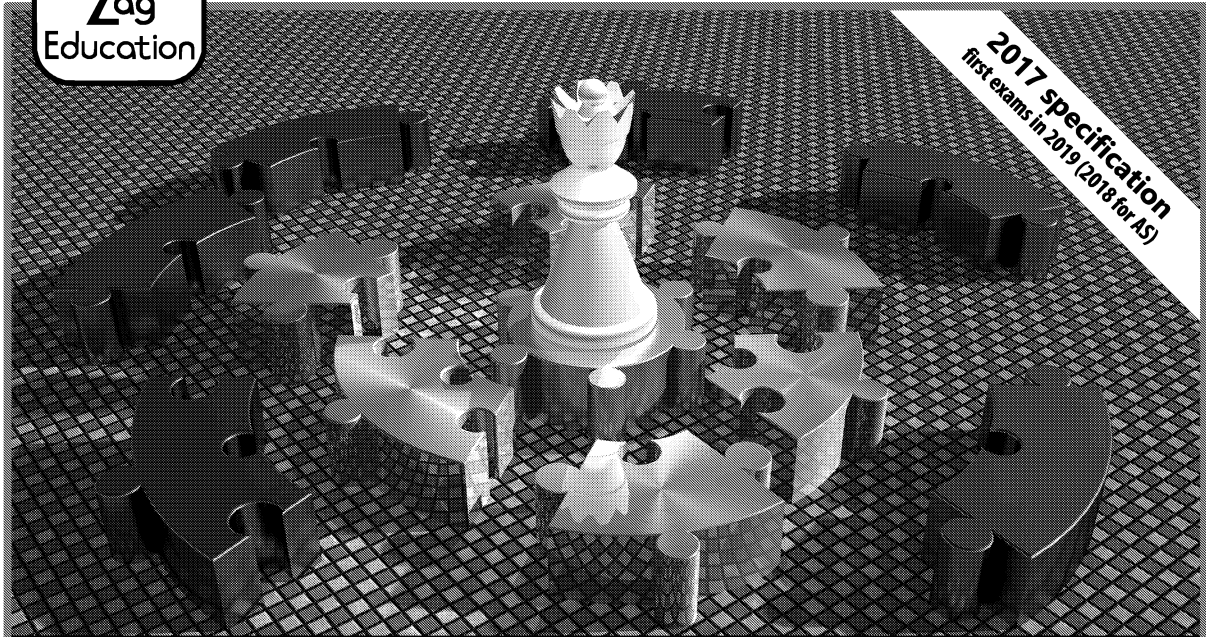




Politics

AS and A Level | Edexcel | 8PL0 / 9PL0



# Learning Grids for AS and A Level Edexcel

Component 2: UK Government  
and Non-core Political Ideas

*Relationships between Branches*

2022 Edition

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# Teacher's Introduction

The following learning grids cover the Relationships between the Branches module of the Edexcel A Level specification. These learning grids are designed to test the basic foundation of knowledge about the different branches of government and the power dynamics between them.

This set of learning grids is designed to help students develop their AO1 knowledge for the Relationships between the Branches 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.

The learning grids are split into four sections in line with the specification. The first section covers the UK Supreme Court (and by extension the wider judiciary) and their role in governing and legislating in Britain. The second section covers the relationship between the executive and Parliament, a subject made considerably more complicated because of the United Kingdom's Parliamentary system of governance. The third section is the role that the European Union has in determining the way the United Kingdom is governed. This section also has some detail on the wider EU institutions, and should test students' basic understanding of the European Union institutions. The location of sovereignty within the UK political system is the final section.

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 Government: Relationships between branches*, Murphy and Glover, 2022, ZigZag Education (MORE/11852)

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 Relationships between Branches, this includes (but is not limited to) the evolution of policy commitments, the advancement of debates around parliamentary sovereignty, executive dominance, the influence of European institutions and the role of the judiciary, 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). Minor updates also made to questions (pages 1, 12, 13, 14 and 24) and answers (pages 1, 4, 12, 13, 14, 21 and 24).

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\* resulting from minor specification changes, suggestions from teachers and peer reviews, or occasional errors reported by customers

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## **Selected Question and Answer Pages**

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

|   | <b>Questions</b>  | <b>Answers</b> |
|---|---|----------------|
| <b>The Branches of Government (cont.)</b> | How many ethnic minority members are there on the Supreme Court?  |                |
|   | What problem do the above three questions show about the composition of the Supreme Court?                              |                |
|   | Give one example of how the problem described above may affect the decision-making ability of the court.                |                |
|   | How are members of the Supreme Court chosen?  |                |
|   | How many years of experience must a Judge have to be considered for the Supreme Court?                                  |                |
|   | The selection panel has at least one member from Northern Ireland and one from Scotland. Why do you think they do this? |                |

|   | <b>Questions</b>   | <b>Answers</b>  |
|---|--|---|
| <b>The Branches of Government (cont.)</b> | <b>How many ethnic minority members are there on the Supreme Court?</b>  | None  |
|   | <b>What problem do the above three questions show about the composition of the Supreme Court?</b>                              | The court lacks diversity and does not accurately reflect the make-up of the nation and only focuses on a very narrow selection of the public.  |
|   | <b>Give one example of how the problem described above may affect the decision-making ability of the court.</b>                | There are lots of answers here.<br><br>Students should state that if an important women’s or minority rights issue was brought to the court, then the court would have trouble in protecting that group’s rights, particularly if they had no personal empathy with the rights being proposed.  |
|   | <b>How are members of the Supreme Court chosen?</b>  | A selection committee is put together with the president and deputy president of the Court, along with a member of the Judicial Appointments Commission (a body which selects judges at all levels) and members of the equivalent bodies for the non-English nations of the UK. The lord chancellor (a member of the cabinet) gets a chance to veto the appointment; if they do not, then it goes on to be confirmed by the prime minister, then the monarch. |
|   | <b>How many years of experience must a Judge have to be considered for the Supreme Court?</b>                                  | Be a qualified practitioner for 15 years<br><br>Or held a high judicial office for at least two years   |
|   | <b>The selection panel has at least one member from Northern Ireland and one from Scotland. Why do you think they do this?</b> | To ensure regional concerns are taken into consideration when   |





## Unit 4.4: The Location of Sovereignty



|  |   | Questions   | Answers |
|--|---|---|---------|
| <b>Legal and Political Sovereignty</b> |   | What is legal sovereignty? Which institution is legally sovereign according to the UK constitution? |         |
|  |   | What is political sovereignty?  |         |
|  |   | How can legal sovereignty be said to lie more with the executive than Parliament?                   |         |
|  |   | How did the sovereignty question feature in the EU referendum debate?                               |         |
|  | Explain the effect of the following changes on the location of sovereignty in the UK: | Devolution  |         |
|  | The Human Rights Act  |   |         |
|  | EU Membership   |   |         |
|  | Referendums   |   |         |



## Unit 4.4: The Location of Sovereignty



|  |  | Questions  | Answers   |
|--|--|--|---|
| <b>Legal and Political Sovereignty</b> |  | <b>What is legal sovereignty? Which institution is legally sovereign according to the UK constitution?</b>   | The highest level of legal authority. In the UK Parliament is legally sovereign, because it has ultimate legal authority in the UK.   |
|  |  | <b>What is political sovereignty?</b>  | The highest level of political authority. This is above legal authority. In the UK (as in all democracies) ultimate political sovereignty lies with the electorate.   |
|  |  | <b>How can legal sovereignty be said to lie more with the executive than Parliament?</b>   | Because the government (if they have a majority) through the use of the whip system, is able to control Parliamentary votes   |
|  |  | <b>How did the sovereignty question feature in the EU referendum debate?</b>   | The Eurosceptics claimed that the sovereignty of Parliament had been eroded by the political union of the EU.   |
|  | <b>Explain the effect of the following changes on the location of sovereignty in the UK:</b> | <b>Devolution</b>  | The transfer of power away from Westminster and towards new bodies. The devolved administrations have the power to make laws in some areas. The reason this should not be seen as a sharing of legal authority (such as in a federal system) is because Parliament can rescind the shared powers at any time, although this is unlikely due to public resistance. |
|  | <b>The Human Rights Act</b>  | The Human Rights Act 1998 has given the UK courts, and in particular the Supreme Court, more power to declare legislation incompatible with the act. However, although the courts can declare incompatibility, they are not able to compel Parliament to change the law. |   |
|  | <b>EU Membership</b>   | It can be argued that because of EU regulations, there has been a reduction in the power of Parliament. The European Court of Justice can make decisions that are binding on the UK.   |   |
|  | <b>Referendums</b>   | The increased use of referendums since the 1990s has issued a challenge to the sovereignty of Parliament. Referendums do not have any legal authority, but the people, they are politically sovereign.   |   |





## **Additional Selected Question Pages**

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## Unit 4.3: The EU in UK Government

|  | Questions   | Answers |
|--|---|---------|
| <b>The Aims of the European Union?</b> | What was the EEC? How is it connected to the European Union?  |         |
|  | What is the European Union?   |         |
|  | When was the EEC established? What was the name of the treaty that established it?                              |         |
|  | When did Britain join the EEC?  |         |
|  | When was the European Union formally established?   |         |
|  | What are the names of the two legislative branches of the EU?   |         |
|  | What is the name of the body which proposes legislation in the EU?  |         |
|  | What is the name of the court which interprets EU law and oversees its implementation across the member states? |         |
|  | Which of the European institutions is directly elected by European citizens?                                    |         |



|                           | Questions   | Answers |  |
|---------------------------|---|---------|--|
| <b>The European Union</b> | What are the four freedoms of the European Single Market? Explain each of them. |         |  |
|                           | What is the Schengen Agreement?   |         |  |
|                           | Why is the Schengen Agreement controversial?                                    |         |  |
|                           | Is the UK part of the Schengen Agreement?                                       |         |  |
|                           | What does the Schengen Agreement suggest about EU attitudes to immigration?     |         |  |

|                                   | <b>Questions</b>   | <b>Answers</b>  |
|-----------------------------------|--|---|
| <b>The European Union (cont.)</b> | What problems could the free movement of people bring to the UK? Name one and explain why it may be problematic.   |   |
|                                   | When were the European Central Bank and the euro introduced? Why?  |   |
|                                   | What is the name of the crisis that took place after 2009 in which the European Central Bank was used to bail out multiple nations including Greece and Spain? |   |
|                                   | How many member states were added to the EU between 2004 and 2013?   |   |
|                                   | Most of these added states had been under what system of government before the end of the Cold War?  |  |