

## How can I prepare myself to study A-Level Politics?

At the induction sessions we normally ask students to keep a news diary over the summer months – at the moment that will be dominated by coronavirus! However, after a period of ‘unity’ when all politicians were supportive of measures being taken in the UK, questions are beginning to emerge about how the government has handled the outbreak:

- The provision of PPE to frontline workers
- The level of testing for Covid-19 compared to other countries
- The impact of funding cuts on the NHS in the years before the virus outbreak
- Should Britain have gone into lockdown earlier?
- The role of Boris Johnson – his absence from COBRA meetings in the run-up to lockdown and his slightly ‘gung-ho’ attitude at the beginning (continuing to shake hands on hospital visits etc.)
- The exit plan from lockdown – divisions are beginning to emerge in the Cabinet on how and when to do this
- Have a look at the role of social media in spreading fake news during the outbreak – especially the 5G conspiracy theory

Parliament has returned to consider these questions and has had to adapt to social distance rules and will be doing a lot of its work online – you can follow this on the BBC Parliament channel.

In America (the focus of the course in Year 13), we are in the run-up to a Presidential election in November 2020 – this will be between Donald Trump (Republican) and Joe Biden (Democrat). This has meant that the debate around the response to coronavirus has quickly become a political battle. As Trump can’t hold campaign rallies, he is using the daily coronavirus update briefings for this purpose – it is well worth watching clips of these as some of the things he does and says are quite unbelievable (even by his standards)! Things to focus on in America:

- The election campaign between Trump and Biden
- The argument between Trump and state governors on when to re-open – America is a federal country which means each state has its own governor (in effect the president of each state) and they have a considerable amount of power over what happens
- The protests against lockdown restrictions by right-wing groups – normally framed about ‘liberty’ and ‘freedom’. Much of small-town America (which supports the Republicans) have not been badly affected by the coronavirus (at the moment) so are arguing the lockdown isn’t necessary (Trump is ‘helping’ matters by tweeting ‘Liberate Michigan’ – it is well worth spending some time reading his twitter feed)
- Spend some time watching Fox News – you will get a very different experience than the BBC (and might start wondering what all the fuss about coronavirus is!)

In both the UK and US it will be interesting to see how politicians balance the needs of the economy (normally the key to winning elections) and public health measures
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### Other activities

- Take a virtual tour of Parliament – <https://www.parliament.uk/visiting/virtualtour/>
- Watch some of these videos explaining key political concepts:  
<https://www.youtube.com/user/drfeegg288/playlists>
- Follow UK and US politicians on social media platforms – how do they engage with people?