

# A-level Government and Politics Bridging Work

The A-level Government and Politics Bridging Work is in two parts:

**Part 1:** This set of tasks is based on **pre-reading on note-taking**, which is required for Bridging Work tasks for the following A-levels: Business, Economics, Law and Government and Politics.

**Part 2:** These are the **Government and Politics tasks** and require you to **take notes** on a series of sources.

Work for **both parts** should be submitted in the first **A-level Government and Politics lesson** in September 2017.

## Part 1 – Pre-reading and Tasks on Note-taking

Please read the following introduction to note-taking and respond to the tasks that follow in Part 1.

### An Introduction to the Skill of Note-taking: Taking Notes and Making Notes

During your A-level studies, and indeed your degree, you will be expected to make sense of the many hours of teaching/lecturing you receive, and any further reading/research that you have completed. The best and most efficient way of coping with so much information is to **take notes** at the time, from which further (and better) **notes can be made** when they are needed (such as for **revision**).

There are many methods of taking notes and you must choose the style that best suits you. In the lesson/lecture there are many styles of note-taking available to students and these will largely be determined by the format of the presentations you receive. Many A-level teachers provide handout material to assist your note-taking (**‘guided notes method’**): such resources encourage active learning by providing a framework of headings for you to understand the main elements of the topic, whilst requiring you to fill in some of the details and examples as they are being explained.

In the absence of supporting materials, you need to develop a style that will best enable you to filter the most important points, explanations and examples from the session, whether that be in a **linear written form** (using shorthand, where necessary: see the following guide developed by the University of Portsmouth (<http://tinyurl.com/psu4cyt>) ) or through a **non-linear method**, perhaps including visual cues, such as mapping ideas as they develop. Whatever you choose, the method needs to capture the essential points of the lesson/lecture and filter out the digressions, anecdotes and asides that are not directly relevant to learning the topic.

### **Cornell method of note-taking**

This refers to a method popularised by Professor Walter Pauk at this American Ivy League university in the 1950s, which may be used for lessons/lectures but strikes me as especially useful for making sense of further reading and research, and building on earlier notes, to achieve a greater degree of understanding and synthesis of a topic. It involves **dividing the page into two columns**, with the one on the right much larger than the one on the left. The left is used for key words/terms/headings; the right is used for explanations and examples, in shorthand written form. The last few lines of the page are meant to be left blank for questions or for a short summary of the session – but I would reserve this for the end of your topic notes rather than for every page.

Notes should be frequently reviewed, added to and re-made in the important transformation process that has to take place during the revision process.

### **Note-taking: the top five tips**

- Remain active in lessons/lectures by taking detailed notes
- Adopt a style that best suits you – linear notes or non-linear mapping?
- Use shorthand where possible to increase the efficiency of your note-taking – and ensure that you capture everything you need
- Review, add to and re-make your notes
- Transform your notes for revision

## Introductory Tasks for Part 1

1. Find the note-taking resources on the P Drive (Student Drive), titled **P:\Bridging work for Business, Economics, Law and Gov Pol** and work through **ALL** the activities to get a feel for different note-taking methods. Start with the **Lesson 6 Powerpoint** and have a look at the brief notes, good notes and wordy notes to get **note-taking ideas**; and then try different styles of **note-taking** in response to the videos on Shakespeare and a range of other topics.
2. Visit the **University of Bradford's note-taking page** to find resources and specific guidance on the **Cornell method**:  
<http://www.bradford.ac.uk/academic-skills/writing/study/effective-learning/note/>  
Go back to one of the videos on the P Drive to practise this method.
3. Now complete the subject-specific Bridging Work tasks for A-level Government and Politics.

## Part 2 – Government and Politics Note-taking Tasks

Building on the Part 1 tasks, please read, watch and listen to the following items and take notes in a variety of **linear** (e.g. Cornell) and **non-linear** (e.g. diagrams, maps, arrows, visual) styles.

### Note-taking Task 1: 'Policy and Politics' Journal Article (June 12, 2017)

Please read the following article and take notes in a form of your choice.

#### **A seismic shift has occurred in British politics**

**By Matthew Flinders, Founding Director of the Sir Bernard Crick Centre for the Public Understanding of Politics, University of Sheffield, and President of the Political Studies Association of the UK**

The 2017 general election was a once-in-a-generation opportunity that the Tories fumbled and Labour exploited to remarkable effect. The Tories managed to spook older voters and thereby alienate a core constituency; Labour, meanwhile, both connected with younger people and somehow got them to actually vote in large numbers.

All political scholars should beware reaching too quickly for their pens, keyboards or quills; to adapt the old adage, “write in haste, repent at leisure”. Nonetheless, it strikes me that a seismic shift has occurred in British politics. It is now clear that Theresa May’s gamble has been a catastrophic failure. With a hung parliament, the UK’s negotiating position on Brexit looks to be in tatters. Theresa May asked the British public to show its support for a “hard” Brexit, but the public declined.

The Conservative Party looks guaranteed to be engulfed by internal warfare and blame games. The only question is when. That, in turn depends upon how long May attempts to stay on as leader. Can she survive as prime minister?

After running such a personalised – even presidential – campaign and having watched her authority drain away in recent days and hours, the future looks bleak. But if May goes, the Tory Party will be plunged into a leadership contest that will create even more instability.

The Labour Party, on the other hand, has an air of somewhat unexpected jubilation about it. From debates at beginning of the election over the possibility that the party might lose catastrophically – and even split – it now appears to be almost glowing. It’s even purring at its achievements in terms of shifting the terms of the debate.

The key to this was Corbyn’s decision to offer a bold and clear vision of a new left-wing politics instead of attempting to win back voters from the centre ground. In many ways Corbynism reached out to the anti-political, the disenchanted, the disconnected and elements of the “left behind”. But most importantly, the initial data suggests that the Labour Party made sure younger voters turned out once it had won their support.

As a new dawn breaks for British politics, the situation is one of fluidity and flux. A game is afoot – and it may well redefine a whole set of relationships, not least with Europe.

## **Note-taking Task 2: Video: episode of BBC’s Panorama**

Please watch and take notes in a form of your choice on the Panorama episode titled ‘Election 2017: What Just Happened?’, which can be accessed via BBC iPlayer at

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b08vg34h/panorama-election-2017-what-just-happened>

## **Note-taking Task 3: BBC News article on the post-election Conservative Party deal with the DUP**

Please use the Cornell note-taking method in providing a summary of the following article:

### **Conservatives agree pact with DUP to support May government**

**BBC News 26 June 2017 (abridged extract)**

An agreement has been reached which will see the Democratic Unionist Party back Theresa May's minority government. The deal, which comes two weeks after the election resulted in a hung Parliament, will see the 10 DUP MPs back the Tories in key Commons votes. There will be £1bn extra for Northern Ireland over the next two years.

DUP leader Arlene Foster said the "wide-ranging" pact was "good for Northern Ireland and the UK" but one critic said it was a "straight bung". Labour leader Jeremy Corbyn said the deal was "clearly not in the national interest", and Sinn Fein's Gerry Adams said it enabled a "Tory Brexit which threatens the Good Friday Agreement". It has prompted calls for matching public investment in Wales and Scotland.

A three page document outlining the terms of the agreement has been published in full. The DUP said it would apply for the lifetime of the Parliament, scheduled to last five years, but would also be reviewed at the end of the current session in two years' time.

There will be £1.5bn in funding - consisting of £1bn of new money and £500m of previously announced funds - to be spent over the next two years on infrastructure, health and education in Northern Ireland, money Mrs Foster said was needed to address the challenges from Northern Ireland's "unique history".

As part of the deal, the military covenant will be implemented in full in Northern Ireland, meaning more focus on the treatment of military veterans, while the triple lock guarantee of at least a 2.5% rise in the state pension each year, and winter fuel payments, will be maintained throughout the UK.

Other key points of the agreement include:

- The DUP will support the Tories on all Brexit and security legislation
- The UK's 2% Nato defence spending target will continue to be met
- Cash support for farmers will remain at current levels until the next election
- Both parties to adhere to commitments in Good Friday Agreement
- No Irish border poll without "consent of the people"

Mrs May shook hands with DUP leader Arlene Foster as she and other senior party figures arrived at Downing Street on Monday to finalise the pact. The two leaders then watched as Conservative chief whip Gavin Williamson and his DUP counterpart Jeffrey Donaldson signed the documents in No 10.

Speaking outside Downing Street, Mrs Foster said the agreement would bring stability to the UK government as it embarked on the Brexit process, "This agreement will operate to deliver a stable government in the United Kingdom's national interest at this vital time," she said. Welcoming the additional funding for Northern Ireland, she said it would benefit all communities. "Following our discussions the Conservative Party has recognised the case for higher funding in Northern Ireland, given our unique history and indeed circumstances over recent decades."

The UK prime minister said the pact was a "very good one" for the UK as a whole. "We share many values in terms of wanting to see prosperity across the UK, the value of the union, the important bond between the different parts of the UK," Mrs May said. "We very much want to see that protected and enhanced."

First Secretary of State Damian Green, a close ally of Mrs May's, said he hoped the extra money would help revive devolved government in Northern Ireland. "The money that is attached to this agreement is actually less than the money attached to the original Stormont agreement in 2014," he told the BBC. "We know Northern Ireland has particular needs, because of its history and difficulties." There are parts of the Northern Ireland infrastructure that needs particular help and that has been recognised on a continuing basis."

The BBC's political editor Laura Kuenssberg said most of the money being allocated to Northern Ireland would go to specific projects rather than general spending, meaning it would not necessarily impact on the Barnett formula which determines overall expenditure across the nations of the UK.

She said DUP sources pointed to the creation of a "coordination committee", suggesting this would give them a direct line in to government discussions and that this may prove particularly influential over the Brexit negotiations.

Northern Ireland has been without a devolved government since March.

Under the so-called "confidence and supply" arrangement, the DUP will line up behind the government in key votes, such as on the Queen's Speech and Budgets, as well as Brexit and security matters, which are likely to dominate most of the current Parliament.

On other legislation, the DUP's support is not necessarily guaranteed - although the Northern Ireland party is expected to back the majority of the government's programme for the next two years after many of its more controversial policies were dropped.

The support of the DUP will give Mrs May an effective working majority of 13, given that Sinn Fein do not take up their seven seats and Speaker John Bercow and his three deputies - two of whom are Labour MPs - do not take part in votes.

Several senior Tories had advised her to govern without any formal agreement with the DUP, arguing the unionist party would not be prepared to bring Mrs May down and run the risk of triggering a fresh election given their longstanding hostility to Jeremy Corbyn and other senior Labour figures.

Former PM Sir John Major warned that a formal association with the DUP could undermine attempts to restore power-sharing government in Northern Ireland while some MPs said the DUP's socially conservative stance on issues such as gay marriage and abortion could damage the party in the longer term.

Welsh First Minister Carwyn Jones suggested Mrs May was "throwing money at Northern Ireland while ignoring the rest of the UK", in what he called "cash for votes". "Today's deal represents a straight bung to keep a weak prime minister and a faltering government in office," the Labour politician said.

Mr Corbyn said public service cuts should be stopped "right across the UK, not just in Northern Ireland". He demanded to know where the extra money for Northern Ireland was coming from, and whether other parts of the UK would get a similar cash injection. "This Tory-DUP deal is clearly

not in the national interest but in May's party's interest to help her cling to power," he added.

Mr Adams, the president of Sinn Fein, said: "The Tory government has slashed more than £1bn from the block grant over the last seven years. "The allocation of additional funds could help to ease the enormous pressure on our public services. The devil is in the detail." On the plan to implement the military covenant in Northern Ireland, Mr Adams added: "Sinn Fein will resolutely oppose any attempt to give preferential treatment to British forces, either in terms of legacy or the provision of public services."

In the Commons, MPs from other parties lined up to criticise the new arrangements, with the SNP's Pete Wishart saying it was a "pathetic grubby little deal" and accusing the Tories and DUP of "pork barrel politics".

But Nigel Dodds, the DUP's Westminster leader, said his party could publish details of its correspondence with Labour and the SNP at the time of previous elections. "Some of the faux outrage we have heard is hypocrisy of the highest order," he said. Mr Dodds said the extra investment would be "for every section of the community in Northern Ireland".

### **Analysis by BBC political editor Laura Kuenssberg**

The Tories now face a bumpy day of criticism, about how the DUP have been bought off - £100m for each of their ten votes in Parliament. The other devolved nations will cry foul.

Some Tories too are deeply uncomfortable about the association with the DUP brand of unionism. And if the cuts are to be eased in Northern Ireland, what about other parts of the country?

But the money that's been found down the back of the Number 10 sofa for Northern Ireland may be worth it for Theresa May as the price of holding power, for now.

She now has her majority, whatever the cost, and a dividend could be the conclusion of a deal to get power sharing at Stormont up and running too.



## **Note-taking Task 4: BBC Radio 4 ‘The Moral Maze’**

Please listen to the episode of ‘The Moral Maze’ titled ‘The Morality of Generational Voting’ and take notes in a form of your choice. The episode is accessible via BBC iPlayer at

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b08tcrpf>

Thank you for completing the tasks for the A-level Government and Politics Bridging Work. We hope you have found a **note-taking style** that suits you and have enjoyed exploring some of the issues arising from the **General Election in June 2017**.

For further interest, you might wish to see **BBC’s post-election Question Time**, which includes a point made forcefully from the audience by our current Head Girl:

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/iplayer/episode/b08trnb1/question-time-09062017>

And see also:

Parliament website on the General Election:

<http://www.parliament.uk/about/general-election-2017/>

Parliament voting statistics on the General Election (including brilliant full report):

<http://researchbriefings.parliament.uk/ResearchBriefing/Summary/CBP-7979>

And for the very ambitious Politics student, a lecture by Professor John Curtice at the University of Glasgow on the 2017 General Election:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=sHQBfgvclnM&t=576s>

I look forward to seeing your notes, with a variety of styles on display, during the first Government and Politics lesson in September.

Mr Mitchell