

A-LEVEL POLITICS @ ST JOHN'S



Summer Project Booklet

Name:



Welcome to your Summer Project for A Level Politics at St John's!

Welcome to your summer politics adventure at St John's! I'm so excited you'll be joining us to uncover how politics shapes our world — and how you, too, can make a difference. This booklet is yours to explore at your own pace over the holidays. Here are a few tips to help you get the most out of it:

- **Take it easy:** There's no rush! Dip into each section when you have a moment, mull over the questions, and jot down your thoughts.
- **Embrace the challenge:** If something feels tricky, lean in! That's where the best learning happens. Look for the 'Need a Hand?' hints if you get stuck, and try the 'Stretch & Challenge' extras when you're feeling bold.
- **Stay neat and tidy:** Write each answer beneath its question, label any diagrams clearly, and pop a date on your work so you can watch your progress bloom.
- **Connect the dots:** After each section, pause and ask yourself: 'How does this link to the bigger picture of British politics? Why does it matter today?'

I'll be checking my emails over the break (though replies might be a little slower than usual), so if you need anything, you can contact me via lbabutsali@stj.kent.sch.uk Enjoy your summer exploration — and get ready to dive into the ideas, people, and events that make politics both fascinating and vital. I can't wait to see what you discover!

WELCOME



Britain's Political System: From Votes to Government

Politics isn't just about debates in Parliament or headlines on the news — it's about the rules and systems that shape our everyday lives, from the schools we attend to the parks we play in and the hospitals we rely on. By getting to grips with how decisions are made, who makes them, and why they matter, you'll see that politics is a toolkit for change. Whether it's campaigning for better bus services in your town or understanding national climate targets, the ideas and skills you build now will help you become an informed citizen, and maybe even a leader, who can tackle the big challenges our country faces.

Links to your future studies

This Summer Project Booklet is designed to give you a head start on Component 1: UK Politics and Component 2: UK Government which you'll study from September. You'll explore democracy and participation, political parties, electoral systems, voting behaviour, and the media, building a foundation for Paper 1, while also diving into the UK constitution, Parliamentary law-making, the Prime Minister and Cabinet, and the balance of power between branches for Paper 2. The range of hands-on activities (like detective chests on first-past-the-post, pressure-group tactics, and the bill journey) mirrors exactly the AO1 knowledge you need and sharpens your AO2/AO3 analysis and evaluation skills.

By working through this booklet, you'll encounter and practise the key terms (eg 'collective ministerial responsibility', 'judicial review', 'constituent turnout') that form part of the official specification glossary. You'll also trace real-world examples to see how theoretical concepts play out in practice. Whether you're matching slogans to parties (Component 1: Political parties) or mapping the stages of a Bill (Component 2: Parliament), each task is an insight to what we will be doing in class, so you'll arrive confident, curious, and ready to hit the ground running!



Political news diary



In A Level Politics, we are expected to be as contemporary as we possibly can. In class, we will regularly discuss recent political developments, and I will always ensure that your learning is linked to recent examples. However, it is also expected that you will keep up with political news developments yourself. For **four** consecutive days, read on **UK politics** news story each day (eg from BBC News or The Guardian). Complete a section for each news story.

Day One

Date:

Headline:

Source:

In your own words, summarise the story:

Write down one question you have about why this story is important.

Day Two

Date:

Headline:

Source:

In your own words, summarise the story:

Write down one question you have about why this story is important.

Day Three

Date:

Headline:

Source:

In your own words, summarise the story:

Write down one question you have about why this story is important.

Day Four

Date:

Headline:

Source:

In your own words, summarise the story:

Write down one question you have about why this story is important.



Mini-Manifesto

In Component 1, we explore the role and purpose of a manifesto. A manifesto is a public declaration of policy and aims. Political parties publish them during elections to show voters what policies they would bring in if they were elected. They are useful for holding governing parties to account for that reason!

You need to choose one 'hot topic' from the list below and draft a mini-manifesto.

Your mini-manifesto needs to have:

Three policies relating to your chosen topic

A title for your manifesto and one campaign slogan

One poster advertising your policies

NHS funding
Housing
Climate and Environment

Use this space to brainstorm your ideas on your chosen issue. Think about what you would like to see happen in relation to that issue.

Issue Factfiles

NHS Funding

- **Current Situation:** The NHS budget is approximately £160 billion annually (10% of GDP). Waiting lists for elective treatment exceeded 7 million people at the end of 2024, with average waits over 22 weeks.
- **Key Challenges:** Staff shortages stand at around 110,000 vacancies (nurses, doctors, support staff). The ageing population increases demand for long-term care, and new expensive treatments (e.g., gene therapies) put further pressure on budgets.
- **Stakeholders:** Patients and their families, NHS staff, the Department of Health and Social Care, NHS England, private healthcare providers, and pharmaceutical companies.
- **Statistics and Data:** 1 in 5 patients waits over six months for treatment; NHS workforce sickness absence rose to 4.3% in 2024; estimated funding gap of £6 billion to meet rising demand.

Housing

- **Current Situation:** An estimated 8 million people in England are in housing need, including those on waiting lists, in temporary accommodation, or overcrowded homes. Average house prices have risen to 7.5 times the average wage — making home ownership out of reach for many young families.
- **Key Challenges:** There is a severe shortage of affordable housing; annual new-build rates (240,000 homes) fall below the estimated need of 300,000. Rents have increased by 20% in the last five years, and rough sleeping increased by 16% over the past two years.
- **Stakeholders:** Prospective home buyers, private renters, social housing tenants, local authorities, housing associations, developers, and mortgage lenders.
- **Statistics and Data:** 275,000 households currently in temporary accommodation; average private rent at £1,200 per month; regional gaps — London asking prices average £515,000, Yorkshire £180,000.

Climate and Environment

- **Current Situation:** The UK has committed to net-zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2050. Emissions are currently around 40% below 1990 levels, thanks to reduced coal use and increased renewables.
- **Key Challenges:** Transport (27% of UK emissions) and home heating (20%) remain the largest sectors. Investment in green infrastructure (e.g., electric vehicle charging, home insulation) is rising but still below the level needed to meet targets.
- **Stakeholders:** Central and local government, energy companies, transport sector, homeowners, environmental NGOs, and international partners.
- **Statistics and Data:** 60% of UK electricity from renewables in 2024; only 15% of homes have adequate insulation; transport emissions have plateaued despite growth in electric vehicles.

Mini-Manifesto Plan



The issue I have chosen is...

I believe that this issue is important because...

Use this space to research and formulate your policy ideas.

The three specific policies my manifesto will propose are:

- 1.
- 2.
- 3.

Use this space to formulate your manifesto title and slogan. Your slogan should be 5 - 7 words long.

For inspiration, search for the manifestos of other political parties.

The title of my manifesto is:

My slogan is:

Title:

Slogan:

Policy 1:

Include the title of your policy and an explanation of what the policy is, what it intends to achieve, and why people should support it.

Stretch and Challenge: Include an evaluative sentence for this policy.

Policy 2:

Include the title of your policy and an explanation of what the policy is, what it intends to achieve, and why people should support it.

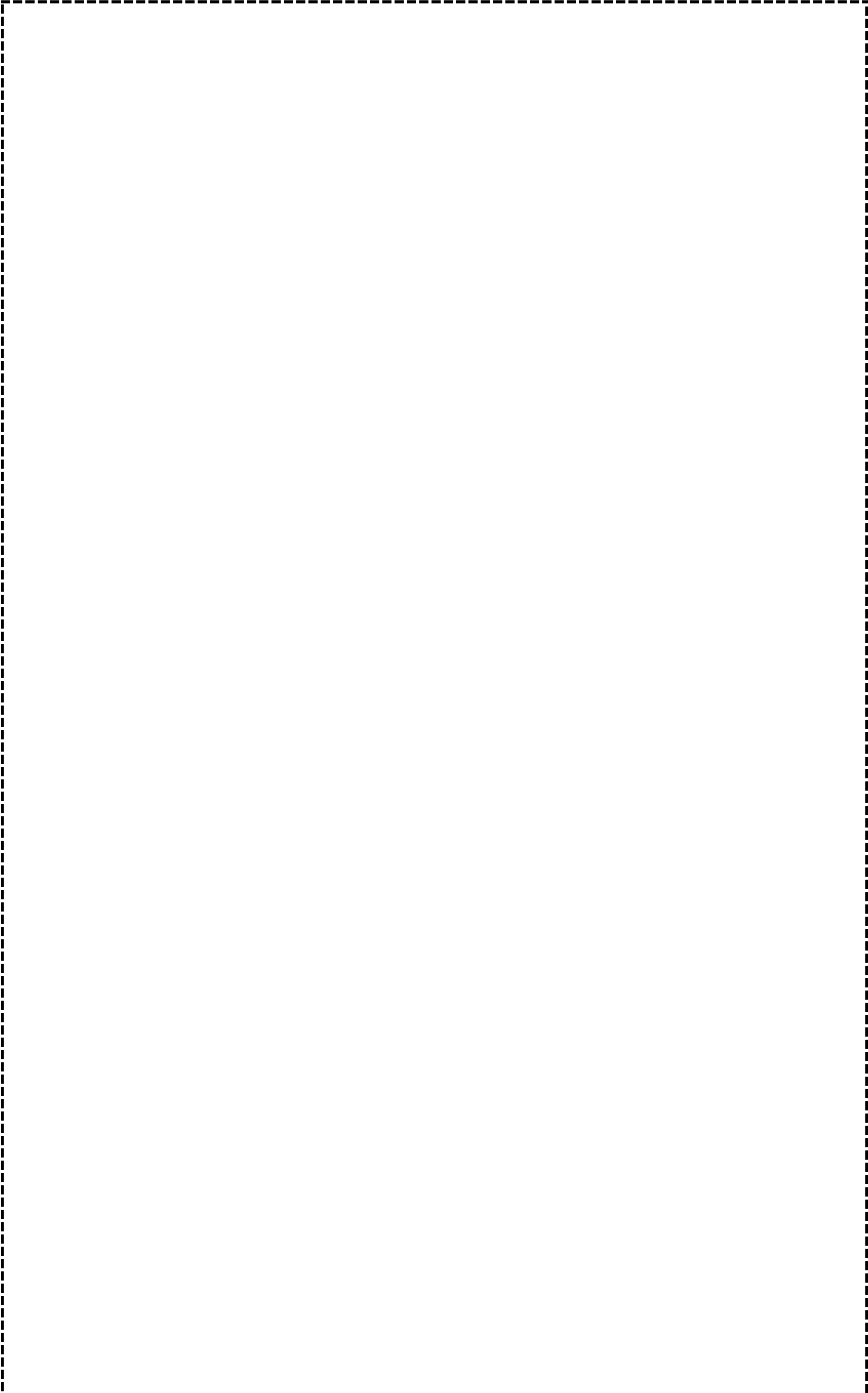
Stretch and Challenge: Include an evaluative sentence for this policy.

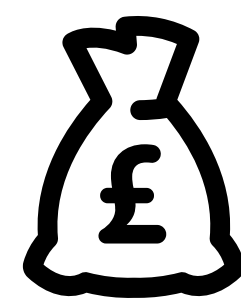
Policy 3:

Include the title of your policy and an explanation of what the policy is, what it intends to achieve, and why people should support it.

Stretch and Challenge: Include an evaluative sentence for this policy.

Use this page to either hand draw your poster or stick a printed copy if you complete it on the computer.
You could use Microsoft Office or Canva.





Budgeting and Feasibility

Review the budget cheat-sheet below. For each policy, choose a cost category: Low (£0 - £1bn), Medium (£1bn - £5bn), High (£5bn+).

Write down one sentence per policy on a potential downside. For example, 'This will raise debt by X%'.

Department	Annual Spend	Examples of Low/Medium/High Cost
Health	£160 billion	Low (<£1bn): new clinics Medium (£1bn - £5bn): regional hospitals High (>£5bn): nationwide health programme
Housing and Communities	£50 billion	Low (<£1bn): local housing trusts Medium (£1bn - £5bn): regional builds High (>£5bn): national social housing
Environment	£10 billion	Low (<£1bn): park conservation Medium (£1bn - £5bn): renewable grants High (>£5bn): national green infrastructure
Transport	£20 billion	Low (<£1bn): bus service improvements Medium (£1bn - £5bn): rail upgrades High (>£5bn): major rail lines

Cost band explanation: How much money will the policy cost the department.

- **Low cost (<£1bn):** Policies involving small-scale projects or limited funding (eg community grants, pilot schemes).
- **Medium cost (£1bn - £5bn):** Policies requiring significant but manageable investment (eg hundreds of new staff, regional infrastructure upgrades).
- **High cost (>£5bn):** Large-scale national programmes or long-term spending commitments (eg nationwide housing schemes, major transport networks).

Budgeting and Feasibility



Policy 1:

Cost category:

One potential downside:

Policy 2:

Cost category:

One potential downside:

Policy 3:

Cost category:

One potential downside:

Need a hand?



If you are struggling to write your policies down, use this template and word bank.

Introducing your policy	'Our first policy is to...' 'We propose that the government should...' 'The main aim of this policy is to...'
Explaining why it matters	'This will help by...' 'As a result, ...' 'Therefore, ...'
Showing impact or benefit	'One important benefit is...' 'This leads to...' 'Consequently, ...'
Adding detail or example	'For example, ...' 'Specifically, ...' 'In particular, ...'

Word Bank			
Nouns	Verbs	Adjectives	Connectives
Government	Improve	Effective	And
Funding	Support	Sustainable	Or
Infrastructure	Reduce	Efficient	But
Education	Provide	Accessible	Therefore
Healthcare	Increase	Affordable	However
Economy	Create	Reliable	Consequently
Sustainability	Ensure	Equitable	For example
Policy	Manage	Vital	In addition
Investment	Protect	Crucial	As a result
Regulation	Monitor	Significant	Specifically



Political Detective: Democracy

You've been recruited by the UK's undercover Political Intelligence Unit. Your first assignment: solve six secret chests containing clues about how our democracy truly works. Complete all six to earn your 'Political Detective' badge — and get a head start on A Level Politics!

Chest 1: The Voting Booth Mystery

Imagine you arrive at two neighbouring constituencies, Northville and Southport, on Polling Day. Three candidates stand in each:

- Red (Major Party A)
- Blue (Major Party B)
- Green (Minor Party C)

Voters cast their single vote—no ranking.



Constituency	Red Votes	Blue Votes	Green Votes	Winner
Northville	4,800	4,200	1,000	
Southport	5,100	5,000	1,900	

Fill in the 'Winner' column for each constituency. The winner is the candidate who received the highest number of votes.

Calculate how many votes there were against the winning candidate (add together the number of votes won by the other two candidates). What do you notice?

How many seats did each party win?

Even though Green got 2,900 votes in total, how many seats did they win?

Why do you think First-past-the-post makes it so hard for minor parties to win any seats, even when they attract thousands of voters?

How might that push voters toward only choosing Red or Blue in future elections?

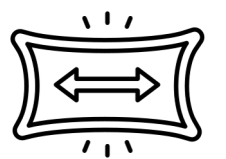
Chest 2: Party Line Puzzle

A list of slogans has been scrambled. First, you need to decode the slogan and then match each one to its party



Many the Not, Few For the Decoded slogan: Political Party:
Done Brexit Get Decoded slogan: Political Party:
Back Build Better Decoded slogan: Political Party:

Stretch and Challenge: Create a **new slogan** for one party that captures its core idea.



Chest 3: Constitution Codebreak

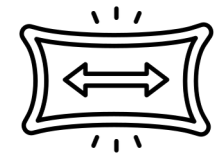
A paragraph hides the sources of the UK constitution. You need to read the paragraph and underline, circle, or highlight each of the sources. Once you have located the sources, you need to complete the definition table.



The UK's constitution isn't contained in a single written document but is built from a mix of sources: statute law (laws passed by Parliament, like the Parliament Acts); common law (legal principles set by judges in court decisions); conventions (unwritten but widely followed rules, such as the requirement that the Prime Minister maintain the confidence of the Commons); works of authority (respected texts like Erskine May that guide parliamentary procedure); and international treaties and—formerly—EU law (agreements that, once ratified by Parliament, become part of domestic law). This patchwork approach makes the UK constitution both stable and adaptable, helping explain how some rules can change quickly while others demand extensive debate.

Constitutional Source	Definition

Stretch and Challenge: The UK's constitution is unmodified - this means that it is not a written document but instead is made up of many different sources. Explain one issue you can see with this.



Chest 4: Bill Journey Map

Before a Bill becomes an Act of Parliament, it has to go through the **legislative process**. On the next page is a blank flow chart. Place the seven stages a Bill passes into the flowchart to track the process.



Lords and Royal Assent	Green Paper	Report and Third Reading
White Paper	Committee	First Reading
Second Reading		



Chest 5: Prime Minister's Profile

Four mini-bios of Prime Ministers are missing their names. You need to read through the bios and match each bio to the correct Prime Minister.



Bio	Prime Minister
A former 'Iron Lady' who served through the 1980s.	
Won landslide victories after promising 'New Labour'.	
Called a referendum on EU membership in 2016.	
Steered the country through COVID-19 as PM from 2019 – 2021.	

Prime Ministers:
Boris Johnson
Tony Blair
David Cameron
Margaret Thatcher

Write down three major policies/events from each Prime Minister's time in office.

Margaret Thatcher:

Tony Blair:

David Cameron:

Boris Johnson:

Chest 6: Pressure Group Pursuit

You've intercepted a secret briefing listing six major UK pressure groups. Your task is to match them to their main campaigning tactic, explain each tactic's impact, and then attempt a deeper challenge.



Group Name	Over v iew
Greenpeace	An independent global environmental network campaigning on issues like climate, oceans, and forests using non-violent direct action and public outreach.
Just Stop Oil	A British climate-action group founded in 2022 aiming to end new fossil-fuel licensing, notorious for disruptive protests like road blockades and artwork vandalism.
Stop HS2	A grassroots campaign opposing the High Speed 2 rail project, best known for legal challenges and court cases to halt construction.
Stonewall	The UK's largest LGBTQ+ rights charity, lobbying ministers and producing research to shape inclusive laws and policies.
People's Vote Campaign	Cross-party movement launched in 2018 to demand a second Brexit referendum, famous for mass digital petitions and large-scale marches.
Friends of the Earth	A UK environmental federation founded in 1971, organising consumer boycotts and local community events to pressure businesses and government.

Match each group to its tactics by filling in the table.

Group	Tactic
Greenpeace	
Just Stop Oil	
Stop HS2	
Stonewall	
People's Vote Campaign	
Friends of the Earth	

Tactics		
Non-violent Direct Action and Public Stunts	Digital Petitions and Mass Email Campaigns	Litigation and Judicial Review
Lobbying and Policy Briefings	Consumer Boycotts and Community Outreach	Mass Marches and Street Demonstrations

Explain in one sentence how each tactic influences government policy

Group	How do the tactics of this group influence government policy?
Greenpeace	
Just Stop Oil	
Stop HS2	
Stonewall	
People's Vote Campaign	
Friends of the Earth	

Need a hand?



Direct Action and Public Stunts	High-visibility disruption
Digital Petitions and Mass Emails	Show voter demand online
Litigation and Judicial Review	Force legal change through courts
Lobbying and Policy Briefings	One-to-one influence with MPs
Consumer Boycotts and Outreach	Use public purchasing power and local events
Mass Marches and Demonstrations	Visible shows of public support on the streets

