

Themes and Issues in British Politics since 1945
(PO52010)

Lecture 21

Revision: Key Themes and Issues

Dr Richard Grayson, Head of Politics

Britain since 1945



Britain since 1945



British Politics since 1945

Clement Attlee



Tony Blair



British Politics since 1945

Winston Churchill



David Cameron

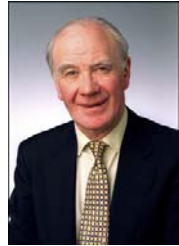


British Politics since 1945

Archibald Sinclair



Menzies Campbell



Key Themes

- Consensus:
 - Full employment
 - Mixed economy
 - Active government
 - Welfare
 - Conciliation of trades unions
 - Expertise

Key Themes

- Voters
 - In elections, Conservatives and Labour normally got 90% of vote in 1950-70, but in 1979, this fell to 80%.
 - Strong identifiers: 1964-79, Conservatives falls 48% to 23%, Labour is 45% to 27%.

Key Themes

- PM & Cabinet
 - Attlee as a Cabinet chair
 - Problems faced by Wilson & Callaghan
 - Thatcher (Wets & Dries)
 - Major as contrast to Thatcher
 - Blair as President

Key Themes

- Health
 - Continuity of funding through taxation
 - Structural reforms
- Education
 - Selection
 - Standards
 - Management

Sample Paper

1. How radical were the Attlee governments of 1945-51?
2. Did the Suez crisis of 1956 have any lasting effects on British politics?
3. Were the years 1951-70 really marked by 'consensus politics'?
4. What role did competing forms of nationalism play in the revival of the 'Ulster question' in the 1960s?
5. Why did the Liberal/SDP Alliance fail to "break the mould" of British politics in the 1980s?
6. Did Margaret Thatcher create a new political consensus in Britain?
7. Why was the issue of comprehensive education so contentious from the 1960s onwards?
8. "Tony Blair has continued many of John Major's most important policies." Discuss.
9. How successful has Labour been in government since 1997?
10. Has devolution made it more likely that the United Kingdom will emerge from the twenty-first century intact?

Sample Paper

1. How radical were the Attlee governments of 1945-51?
 - Intentions and outcomes
 - Radical compared to....
 - War years
 - Debates within Labour
 - Other parties

Sample Paper

2. Did the Suez crisis of 1956 have any lasting effects on British politics?
- Immediate effects
 - State of decolonisation and parties before Suez
 - Decolonisation
 - Party politics

Sample Paper

3. Were the years 1951-70 really marked by 'consensus politics'?
- Set out features of consensus debate
 - Examples of consensus – how significant?
 - Examples of non-consensual politics – how significant?
 - Overall assessment

Sample Paper

4. What role did competing forms of nationalism play in the revival of the 'Ulster question' in the 1960s?
- Define competing forms of nationalism
 - Explain why nationalism has been significant
 - Significance of other factors
 - Overall assessment

Sample Paper

5. Why did the Liberal/SDP Alliance fail to “break the mould” of British politics in the 1980s?

- Define “break the mould”
- External environment – other parties
- Internal factors – issues relating to Alliance
- Challenge premise of question for post-1980s?

Sample Paper

6. Did Margaret Thatcher create a new political consensus in Britain?

- Refer to pre-1979 consensus and idea that Thatcher broke it
- Thatcher's policies divisive in 1980s
- Major continues policy
- Continuities under Blair
- Changes under Blair

Sample Paper

7. Why was the issue of comprehensive education so contentious from the 1960s onwards?

- Timescale of issue, focused on changes in 1960s
- Issue contentious in itself
- Party ideology
- Link between education and economy
- Changes in government at key elections
- Signs of new consensus?

Sample Paper

8. "Tony Blair has continued many of John Major's most important policies." Discuss.
- Expectation of change in 1997
 - Continuity
 - Difference
 - Consider how far continuity or difference are structural or intentional

Note: This would not be on the same paper as question 6 on Thatcher.

Sample Paper

9. How successful has Labour been in government since 1997?
- How to define success?
 - Successes
 - Failures
 - How far were successes and failures structural or intentional

Sample Paper

10. Has devolution made it more likely that the United Kingdom will emerge from the twenty-first century intact?
- Intentions of devolution
 - Evidence of devolution delivering successful policies
 - Position and popularity of SNP and PC
 - Likely debates in future (rooted in evidence from current and previous policy)

Conclusions

- Read the question
- Answer the question
- Don't be afraid to challenge the question – while making sure you have done everything you can to answer it.
