

## AQA A-Level Politics – Political Ideas (Unit 3) Knowledge Organiser

### Core Ideologies (Compulsory)

Liberalism • Conservatism • Socialism

### 1. Liberalism

#### Core Ideas

- **Individualism** – Individuals are rational and should be free to pursue their own goals.
- **Freedom/Liberty** – Negative liberty (freedom from restraint) vs positive liberty (freedom to flourish).
- **Rationalism** – Humans are capable of reason and cooperation.
- **Equality** – Foundational equality; equal rights protected by law.
- **The State** – Limited government; constitutionalism; rule of law.
- **The Economy** – Free-market capitalism with some regulation.

#### Key Thinkers

- **John Locke** – Natural rights; social contract; limited state.
- **Mary Wollstonecraft** – Women's equality; rationalism; education.
- **John Stuart Mill** – Harm principle; tolerance; individuality.
- **John Rawls** – Social justice; veil of ignorance; fairness.
- **Betty Friedan** – Legal equality; liberal feminism.

### 2. Conservatism

#### Core Ideas

- **Tradition** – Stability through continuity.
- **Human Imperfection** – Humans are flawed; need authority and order.
- **Organic Society** – Society as a living organism; hierarchy is natural.
- **Authority** – Necessary for social cohesion.
- **Property** – Encourages responsibility and stability.

#### Key Thinkers

- **Thomas Hobbes** – Strong state; order over freedom.
- **Edmund Burke** – Tradition; gradual change; organic society.
- **Michael Oakeshott** – Pragmatism; scepticism of rationalism.
- **Ayn Rand** – Objectivism; free markets; minimal state.

- **Robert Nozick** – Libertarianism; self-ownership; minimal state.

### 3. Socialism

#### Core Ideas

- **Collectivism** – Society over individualism.
- **Equality** – Social and economic equality.
- **Common Ownership** – Public ownership of key industries.
- **Class Conflict** – Class shapes politics and society.
- **Cooperation** – Humans are social and cooperative.

#### Key Thinkers

- **Karl Marx & Friedrich Engels** – Revolutionary socialism; class struggle.
- **Beatrice Webb** – Gradualism; state intervention.
- **Rosa Luxemburg** – Revolutionary democracy; anti-reformism.
- **Anthony Crosland** – Social democracy; managed capitalism.
- **Anthony Giddens** – Third Way; social investment state.

#### Optional Ideologies (Choose ONE)

**Feminism • Nationalism** • Anarchism • Multiculturalism • Ecologism

### 4. Feminism

#### Core Ideas

- **Patriarchy** – Systemic male dominance in society.
- **Sex and Gender** – Gender as a social construct.
- **Equality vs Difference** – Liberal vs radical approaches.
- **Intersectionality** – Overlapping identities shape experience.
- **Reform vs Revolution** – Debate over how to achieve equality.

#### Key Thinkers

- **Simone de Beauvoir** – “Otherness”; women shaped by society.
- **Kate Millett** – Patriarchy in culture, family, and sexuality.
- **Sheila Rowbotham** – Socialist feminism; capitalism and patriarchy linked.
- **bell hooks** – Intersectionality; race, class, and gender.
- **Charlotte Perkins Gilman** – Economic independence for women.

### 5. Nationalism

## Core Ideas

- **The Nation** – Shared identity, culture, language, history.
- **Self-Determination** – Nations should govern themselves.
- **Sovereignty** – Nation-state as the highest authority.
- **Unity** – Shared identity creates cohesion.
- **Varieties of Nationalism** – Liberal, conservative, expansionist, anti-colonial, cultural.

## Key Thinkers

- **Jean-Jacques Rousseau** – Sovereignty of the people; collective will.
- **Johann Herder** – Cultural nationalism; organic national identity.
- **Giuseppe Mazzini** – Unity; moral purpose of the nation.
- **Charles Maurras** – Integral nationalism; authoritarian unity.
- **Marcus Garvey** – Black nationalism; anti-colonial self-determination.

## 1. The 9-Mark Questions (Core Ideologies Only)

**Topics:** Liberalism, Conservatism, Socialism **Format:** Short essay, no introduction needed **Structure: 3 PEA paragraphs** (AQA explicitly rewards “three well-developed points”) **A01 + A02 marks:** Knowledge + explanation + analysis

### What AQA rewards (from mark schemes):

- **Accurate knowledge** of the ideology
- **Clear explanation** of the point
- **Use of key thinkers**
- **Internal divisions** (e.g., classical vs modern liberalism)
- **Direct focus on the question**
- **Mini-evaluation** within each paragraph

### What AQA penalises:

- Description with no analysis
- No thinkers
- Only one side of the ideology
- Repeating the same point
- Writing a long intro (wastes time)

### Perfect 9-marker formula (AQA-aligned):

**Point → Explain → Apply thinker → Mini-evaluate**

Example: "Classical liberals argue for negative liberty... Mill supports this through the harm principle... however modern liberals argue..."

## 2. The 25-Mark INTERPRETATION Question (Core Ideologies Only)

**Topics:** Liberalism, Conservatism, Socialism **Based on an extract A01 + A02 + A03** (knowledge, analysis, evaluation)

**What AQA rewards (from mark schemes):**

- **Direct engagement with the extract** (this is essential for Level 4)
- **Clear explanation of the ideology**
- **Use of key thinkers**
- **Debates within the ideology**
- **Evaluation of the extract's argument**
- **A clear, justified conclusion**

**What AQA penalises:**

- Ignoring the extract
- Only describing the ideology
- No evaluation
- No thinkers
- No structure

**AQA-aligned structure:**

1. **Intro** – Summarise what the extract argues
2. **Paragraph 1** – Agree with extract (use thinkers)
3. **Paragraph 2** – Challenge extract (use thinkers)
4. **Paragraph 3** – Internal divisions (e.g., classical vs modern)
5. **Conclusion** – Judgement on how convincing the extract is

## 3. The 25-Mark ESSAY Question (Optional Ideologies)

**Topics:** Feminism, Nationalism, Anarchism, Ecologism, Multiculturalism **No extract**  
**Pure essay A01 + A02 + A03**

**What AQA rewards (from mark schemes):**

- **Range of accurate knowledge**
- **Multiple key thinkers**
- **Clear comparisons and divisions within the ideology**

- **Debate and evaluation throughout**
- **A clear line of argument**
- **A justified conclusion**

### What AQA penalises:

- Only describing the ideology
- No thinkers
- No evaluation
- No structure
- Only one side of the argument

### AQA-aligned structure:

1. **Intro** – Define the debate
2. **Argument 1** – Thinker + explanation + evaluation
3. **Argument 2** – Contrasting thinker + evaluation
4. **Argument 3** – Internal divisions
5. **Conclusion** – Clear judgement

### Exam-Specific Tips for Each Optional Ideology

#### Feminism – AQA Exam Tips

- Compare **liberal vs radical** feminism (very common)
- Use **Millett** for patriarchy, **hooks** for intersectionality, **de Beauvoir** for gender
- Show divisions:
  - Equality vs difference
  - Reform vs revolution
  - Liberal vs radical vs socialist vs post-modern
- Use contemporary examples (representation, workplace equality)
- AQA rewards essays that show **feminism is not one movement**

#### Nationalism – AQA Exam Tips

- Liberal vs conservative nationalism is a **classic AQA question**
- Use **Herder** for cultural identity, **Mazzini** for unity, **Maurras** for authoritarianism, **Garvey** for anti-colonialism
- Show how nationalism can be:
  - Inclusive (liberal)
  - Exclusive (conservative, expansionist)

- |                                                                        |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| • Link to real-world examples (independence movements, decolonisation) |
| • AQA rewards essays that show <b>the diversity of nationalism</b>     |

|                                      |
|--------------------------------------|
| <b>Final Reminders (AQA-Aligned)</b> |
|--------------------------------------|

|                                              |
|----------------------------------------------|
| <b>To hit the top band in all questions:</b> |
|----------------------------------------------|

- |                                                                   |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------|
| • Use <b>key thinkers</b>                                         |
| • Show <b>internal divisions</b>                                  |
| • Use <b>precise ideological vocabulary</b>                       |
| • Evaluate throughout                                             |
| • Stay <b>focused on the question</b>                             |
| • For the interpretation: <b>engage with the extract directly</b> |