



Government & Politics

Independent Summer
Learning

Introductory Assignment



Introduction



Over the course of studying A-Level politics for two years you will learn several different topics

The first topic that you will learn about is Democracy



Democracy Task 1



The debate around 16 year-olds having the vote is becoming a key theme on the debate of improving democracy in the UK in 2018.

Read the source and complete the following tasks that lead on from the source.



Democracy Task 1

the SOURCE

In the UK, the minimum voting age is 18, except in Scotland, where 16- and 17-year-olds have been given the right to vote in local and Scottish parliamentary elections. By and large, 16-year-olds haven't yet entered the world of home ownership, employment, tax or pensions but these economic issues are often at the forefront of election campaigns. The main argument against lowering the voting age is that a lack of experience in these matters prevents young people from making a considered judgement at the ballot box.

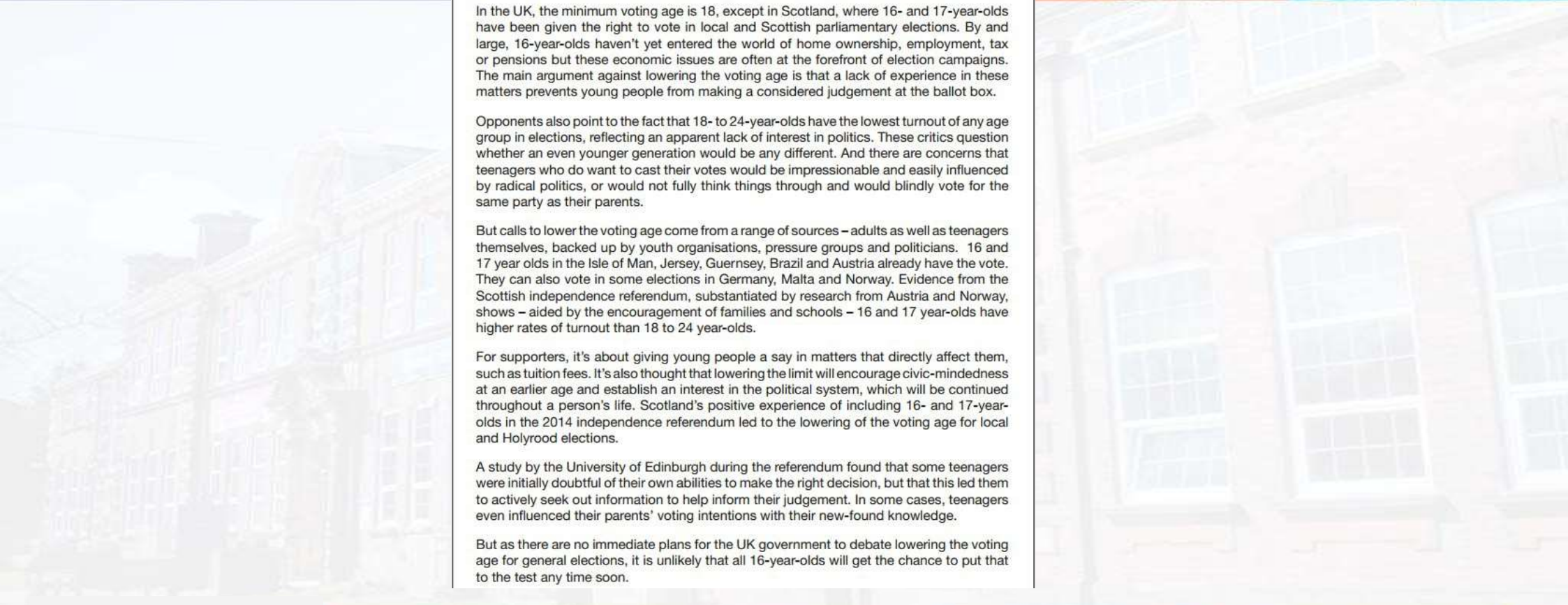
Opponents also point to the fact that 18- to 24-year-olds have the lowest turnout of any age group in elections, reflecting an apparent lack of interest in politics. These critics question whether an even younger generation would be any different. And there are concerns that teenagers who do want to cast their votes would be impressionable and easily influenced by radical politics, or would not fully think things through and would blindly vote for the same party as their parents.

But calls to lower the voting age come from a range of sources – adults as well as teenagers themselves, backed up by youth organisations, pressure groups and politicians. 16 and 17 year olds in the Isle of Man, Jersey, Guernsey, Brazil and Austria already have the vote. They can also vote in some elections in Germany, Malta and Norway. Evidence from the Scottish independence referendum, substantiated by research from Austria and Norway, shows – aided by the encouragement of families and schools – 16 and 17 year-olds have higher rates of turnout than 18 to 24 year-olds.

For supporters, it's about giving young people a say in matters that directly affect them, such as tuition fees. It's also thought that lowering the limit will encourage civic-mindedness at an earlier age and establish an interest in the political system, which will be continued throughout a person's life. Scotland's positive experience of including 16- and 17-year-olds in the 2014 independence referendum led to the lowering of the voting age for local and Holyrood elections.

A study by the University of Edinburgh during the referendum found that some teenagers were initially doubtful of their own abilities to make the right decision, but that this led them to actively seek out information to help inform their judgement. In some cases, teenagers even influenced their parents' voting intentions with their new-found knowledge.

But as there are no immediate plans for the UK government to debate lowering the voting age for general elections, it is unlikely that all 16-year-olds will get the chance to put that to the test any time soon.



Democracy Task 1

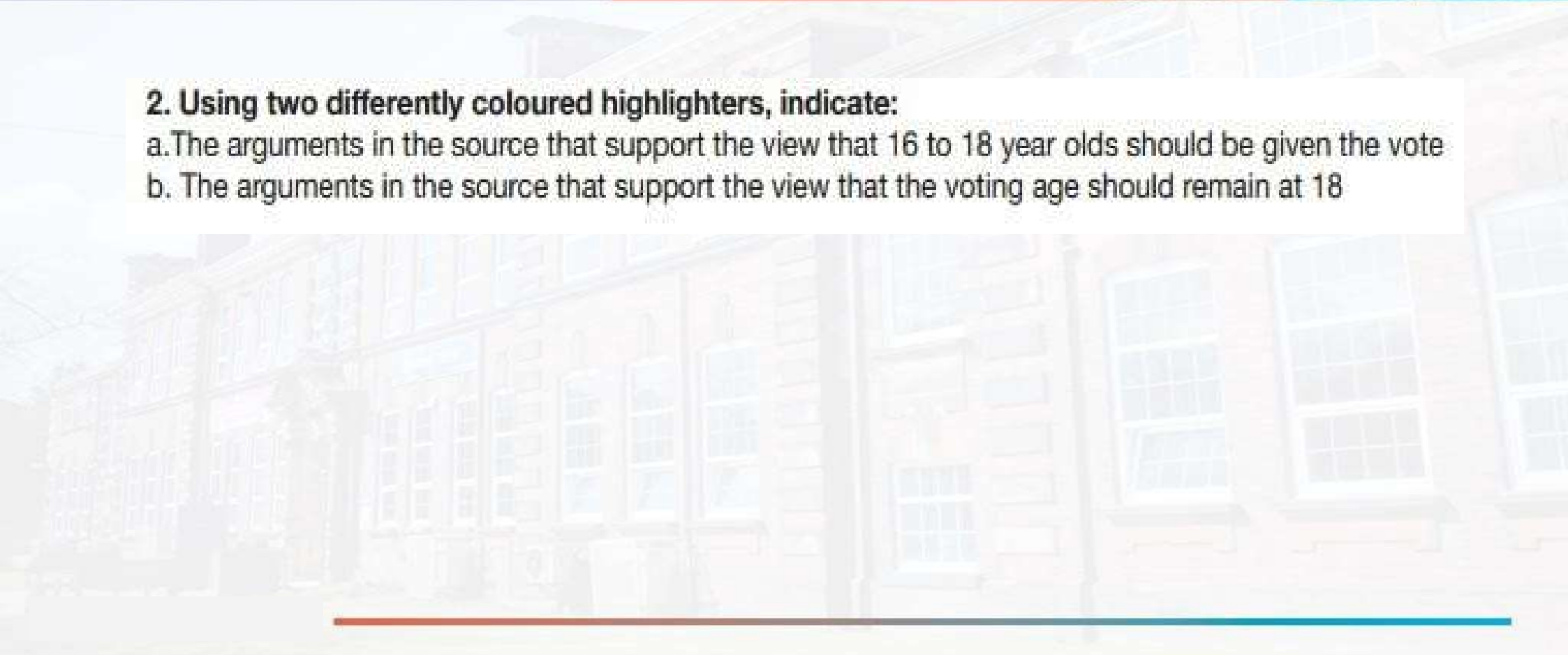
1. Define the following political and non-political terms from the SOURCE

A	Parliamentary elections	
B	Forefront	
C	Ballot box	
D	Turnout	
E	Impresisonable	
F	Radical politics	
G	Blindly	
H	Pressure groups	
I	Substantiated	
J	Tuition fees	
K	Civic-mindedness	
L	Referendum	
M	Holyrood	
N	Voting intentions	



2. Using two differently coloured highlighters, indicate:

- a. The arguments in the source that support the view that 16 to 18 year olds should be given the vote
- b. The arguments in the source that support the view that the voting age should remain at 18





3. Select 3 arguments from each side and add them to the balanced debate see-saw below.

WEAKER ARGUMENTS

1

2

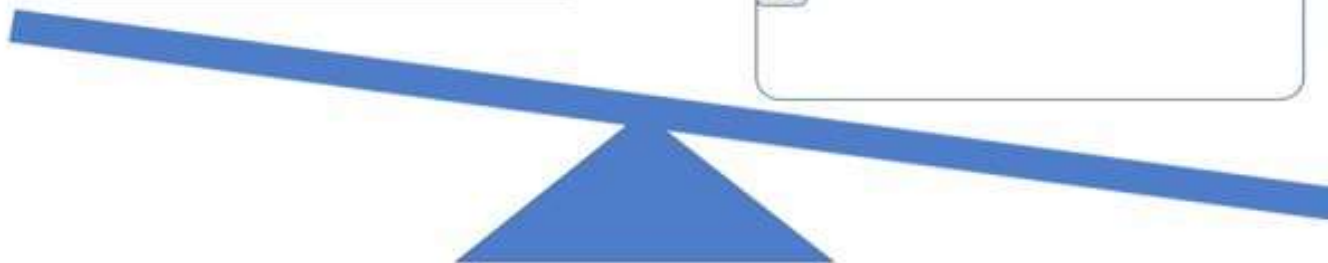
3

STRONGER ARGUMENTS

1

2

3



What do you know about British politics?- Task 2



Use Internet research to answer the following questions:

1. How many MPs sit in the House of Commons?
 2. What is the job of an MP?
 3. How many MPs do the following parties have in the House of Commons: Conservatives, Labour, Liberal Democrats, Scottish National Party (SNP), Plaid Cymru, Green Party, Sinn Fein, Social Democratic and Labour Party (SDLP), Democratic Unionist Party (DUP)?
 4. Sinn Fein do not take their seats in the House of Commons. Why?
 5. Who is the Leader of the Opposition? What is their name? What is their role?
 6. What majority does the Conservative Party currently have in the House of Commons?
 7. Who is the current Speaker of the House of Commons?
 8. What is the job of the Speaker?
 9. Who currently hold the positions of: Prime Minister, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Foreign Secretary, Home Secretary?
 10. What do the roles of Prime Minister, Chancellor of the Exchequer, Foreign Secretary, Home Secretary involve?
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Political Ideologies - Task 3

As part of your study of politics you will look at a number of *political ideologies* (theories and ideas about how the world works)...



Task 5 – Watch the short video for each ideology and identify the **key ideas, philosophers/thinkers** and **criticisms/challenges** of each of them – finally try to think of at least one **policy** (a law implemented by a government in the UK) that is based on the values of each ideology. Set this out in a table like the one below...

- 1. **Conservatism** - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=khzQ8iOuwgl>
- 2. **Liberalism** - <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=KO8OxfiVv8>
- 3. **Socialism** - https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z_TTYd6yIYI

	Conservatism	Liberalism	Socialism
Key Ideas			
Philosophers/Thinkers			
Criticisms/Challenges			
Policies in the UK			

