

AS Module...Post War Britain, 1951-94

Topic 1 The 1950s – the (C)conservative decade? (6 weeks)

CONTENT

1A 1945-51 The Post War Labour Govt & its legacy: building the New Jerusalem or preserving the Status Quo?

1B 1951 Election – turning point or start of a new consensus?

1C 1950s – Social, economic & cultural changes.

1D Conservative policies & achievements: why did the Conservatives dominate national govt throughout the decade?

1E Britain in the late 1950s – the Good, the Bad, & the Ugly!

1F Transitional times – the late '50s into the early 1960s – a new direction home?

KEY ISSUES

- How & why did the Conservatives regain power after their catastrophic defeat of 1945?
- What did the Conservatives achieve 1951-64, and why did they retain power between 1951 and 1964?
- Continuity & change between 1945 & 1964?
- To what extent was the 1950s a Conservative decade?
- How & why did Labour win the 1964 election?

SPECIFICATION CONTENT

- The Churchill, Eden, MacMillan, & Home ministries.
- Conservative social & economic policies.
- Foreign affairs & defence.
- Social & cultural changes.
- The comparative economic prosperity of the 1950s.
- Problems of the Labour Party.
- Conservative decline – scandals, economic problems, & foreign policy issues.
- The death of Gaitskell, the rise of Wilson, & Labour Party recovery.
- Historiographical debate.

KEY SKILLS

Working with others. Written & verbal communication. Problem solving. Information finding & retrieval, recording & assimilation. Basic numeracy & quantitative analysis.

ESSENTIAL READING

During Term 1 you must read:

Murphy, D (ed), Britain 1914-2000, 2000, chapters 1, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15.

Ideally, the whole book will be read, but the above is the bare minimum necessary to meet the demands of the course.

ADDITIONAL READING

- Adelman, P, Britain: Domestic Politics, 1939-64, 1994
- Birch, RC, The Shaping of the Welfare State, 1975
- Black, L, "Post War British Immigration", Modern History Review, Vol 15, No 4, April 2004.
- Boxer, A, Collapse of British Rule In Africa, New Perspective, Vol 4, No 3, March 1999, pp 29-32.
- Childs, D, Britain Since 1939: Progress & Decline, 1995.
- Dutton, D, "Change & Continuity: Labour & the Conservatives after 1945", New Perspective, Vol 7, No 2, Dec 2001.
- Goodland, G, "Thirteen Wasted Years", Modern History Review, Vol 13, No 2, Nov 2001.
- Hennessy, P., Having It So Good – Britain in the Fifties , 2006.
- Jeffreys, K, "Why did the Conservatives lose office in 1964?", New Perspective, Vol 7, No 2, Dec 2001.
- Marr, A., A History Of Modern Britain, 2007.
- Pearce, R, Topic Guide to British Govts 1945-64, New Perspective, Vol 11, No 3, March 2006, p 23.
- Porter, D, "Juggling with Welfare & Greatness: Britain Under the Tories, 1951-64", History Review, No 34, Sept 1999, pp 28-33.
- Rosen, A, "Material prosperity...growing social mobility...democratisation... at a price?", New Perspective , Vol 11, No 2, Dec 2005.
- Sked, A & Cook, C, Post-War Britain: A Political History, 1945-1992, 4th ed, 1993.
- Stark, H, "The Suez Crisis, 1956", New Perspective, Vol 10, No 1, Sept 2004, pp 20-21.

ASSIGNMENTS

General:

- Cliff Richard – symbol of a changing Britain?!
- "Newspaper reports" – eg on an election/ reasons for outcome (eg the "Television election", 1959; Why Conservatives lost in 1964...etc).
- Source based questions in Murphy – eg pp 314-5 (Conserv recovery post '45); cartoon based question, p 318 (Macmillan & '59 election); Cartoon based questions on scandals (CRH).

Representative essays:

1. Compare the importance of 3 reasons why the Conservatives retained power from 1951 to 1964. (AS Jan 2001)
2. Assess the success of the Conservative govts from 1951 to 1964 in implementing at least three domestic policies. (AS)
3. "The most important reason for Harold Wilson's victory in the 1964 General Election was the weakness of his opponents." How far do you agree? (AS June 2001)

4. How valid is the claim that “Britain never had it so good” in the 1950s? (AS Jan 2002)
5. “13 years of Tory misrule.” How accurate was Harold Wilson’s criticism in 1964 of Conservative policy after 1951? (AS June 2002)
6. To what extent was the weakness of the opposition the main reason for 13 successive years of Conservative government from 1951- 64? (AS June 2003)
7. How far had British society changed as a result of Conservative governments during the period 1951 – 64? (AS Jan 2003)
8. “Economic prosperity alone ensured the conservatives remained in power, 1951-64.” How far do you agree? (AS Jan 2004)
9. Why, after 1951, was Labour unable to win a General Election until 1964? (AS June 2004)
10. “Labour owed its 1964 election victory to Wilson’s leadership.” Do you agree? (AS Jan 2005)
11. To what extent was the success of the Conservative Government in maintaining itself in power, 1951-64, the result of weaknesses of the Labour Party? (AS June 2005)
12. “An age of stultifying conformity & conservative reaction.” Is this fair comment on Britain in the 1950s? (AS)
13. “Labour did not so much win the 1964 General Election; the Conservatives lost it.” Discuss. (AS)
14. What , if anything, were the greatest achievements of the “new consensus” politics of 1950s Britain? (AS)
15. Did scandals cause the downfall of the Conservative Government in the 1964 General Election? (AS)

AS Level Module... Post War Britain, 1951 – 94

Topic 2 – The White Heat of the Swinging Sixties? (6 weeks)

CONTENT

2A – Problems of the early ‘60s/ Conservative decline.

2B – 1964 General Election – Wilson swings it!

2C - Labour policies & govt – radical new directions or fateful compromise?

2D – 1960s Social & Cultural changes/ implications? Did sexual intercourse really begin in 1963? (ref P. Larkin)

2E – Britain at the end of the decade: Age of Aquarius/ New Age Dawning...or, a disaster waiting to happen? In particular, problems/ issues coming to a head in N Ireland.

2F – Foreign policy issues/ concerns, esp relations with Europe (to join or not to join, that is the question!) & the USA (esp re Vietnam/ SE Asia).

KEY ISSUES

- Why did Labour win the 1964 election?
- How successful were the Labour govts of 1964-70?
- How did Heath change the Conservative Party?

- Why did the Conservatives win the 1970 GE?
- What directions did British FP take during the 1960s?
- Just how radical & “permissive” was British society in the ‘60s?
- What problems/ difficulties were evident in British society & the economy by the late 1960s?
- Why were Enoch Powell & Roy Jenkins such important figures in this period?

SPECIFICATION CONTENT

- The appeal of Wilson as new Labour Party leader & prospective PM.
- Wilson as Prime Minister: econ problems & policies; relations with TUs; problems & divisions in the Labour Party.
- Heath & the reshaping of the modern Conservative Party: “Powellism” & “Selsdon Man”.
- Britain in the ‘60s – “The Swinging Sixties”? Social, economic & cultural changes: the contraceptive pill; end of censorship (Chatterley Trial); The Beatles/ Counter culture; legislation – eg drugs; end of capital punishment; homosexuality; abortion; anti race discrimination legis etc. Britain - the “Permissive Society”?
- Pressing issues in 1960s Britain – race/ immigration; drug use; the rise of youth & protest “counter cultures”; Civil Rights; Women’s Rights; Sexual liberation; “The Generation Gap”...etc
- Britain’s changing place in the World: Empire/ Decolonisation; Britain & the USA; Britain & Europe; NATO, Cold War etc..
- John Bull’s other island – problems in N Ireland: causes/ implications...
- Historiographical debate.

KEY SKILLS

Working with others. Verbal & written communication. Problem solving. Information finding & retrieval, recording & assimilation. Basic numeracy & quantitative analysis.

ESSENTIAL READING

Murphy, 2000 – chapters 1, 8, 9, 10, 11, 12, 13, 14, 15.

ADDITIONAL READING

Adelman, P, Britain: Domestic Politics, 1939-64 , 1994.

Marr, A, A History Of Modern Britain , 2007 – esp parts two & three.

ASSIGNMENTS

General:

- Collage – Britain in the 1960s: images & realities.
- “Newspaper reports” on key political events, social trends/ changes – eg Ulster; Anti Vietnam War demos; campaign for women’s rights...etc.

- Group annotated timelines: the 1960s – key social, economic, political & cultural events.
- Roy Jenkins – architect of the “Permissive Society” or simply a man in tune with his times? Debate/ presentations.
- “Case Studies” for discussion/ debate on radical ideas of the decade: to what extent was the decade a crucible of, for example, the present “environmental movement”?

Representative essays:

1. What were the most significant achievements of the Labour Governments of 1964-70?
2. Why did the Labour Government suffer an unexpected election defeat in 1970?
3. To what extent did Wilson’s Labour Governments, 1965-70, pursue exclusively British interests in its FP?
4. Compare the importance of 3 reasons why Labour lost the 1970 election.
5. To what extent did Wilson’s govts of 1964-70 enable the development of a “permissive society”?
6. Outline the most significant social & cultural changes evident in 1960s Britain; consider their implications, and explain which 3 were to have the greatest long term importance for British society.
7. Did Sixties Britain really “swing”?
8. What considerations shaped the FP of the Labour govts, 1964-70? Answer with specific reference to at least 3 of the following: Europe; USA; Africa; the Middle East; the Far East; Europe; Australasia.
9. Assess the success of the Labour govts of 1964-70 in implementing at least 3 domestic policies.
10. What were the long & short term causes of the post 1945 “Troubles” in N Ireland?
11. To what extent did the social, cultural & political changes of 1960s Britain have their origins in the immediate post WW2 period & the 1950s?
12. What, in your view, were the 3 most important social & political changes to result from the 1960s?
13. How far, and in what ways, did the post war consensus in British politics & government withstand the stresses imposed on it during the 1960s?
14. Was the 1970 Election really the “Housewives’ Election”? Compare the importance of 3 reasons why Heath won in 1970.
15. What, in your view, were the three most pressing issues facing Britain’s government by the late 1960s?

Topic 3 The 1970s – The decade that taste forgot?

CONTENT

- 3A Edward Heath & the Conservative Govt, 1970-74. The triumph of Selsdon Man?
- 3B Economic problems of Britain in the early/ mid 1970s – Sick Man of Europe?
- 3C Britain & Europe – entry to EEC etc.

3D N Ireland – “The Troubles”

5E James Callaghan’s premiership – “Sunny Jim” & “The Winter of Discontent”.

5 F The rise of Margaret Thatcher. The May 1979 General Election.

KEY ISSUES

- How & why did Heath win the 1970 General Election?
- How far was Heath’s Conservatism a departure from established Conservative traditions/ practice?
- What were the achievements of the Heath government of 1970-74?
- Did the miners bring down the Conservative Govt?
- Why were there 2 General Elections in 1974, and what does this reveal about Britain during the mid 1970s?
- How successful was the Labour government of 1974-79?
- How & why did N Ireland become such a major problem during the 1970s?
- How & why did M Thatcher become leader of the Conservative Party in 1975?
- Did the later 1970s see the breakdown of the post war consensus in British politics – the death of “Butskellism”?
- Was British society in crisis by the mid 1970s?
- Why did Labour lose the May 1979 General Election?

SPECIFICATION CONTENT

- Heath as party leader & PM – aims & policies; membership of EEC; economic measures (incl decimilisation); industrial relations; the miners’ strike.
- 1974 General Elections.
- Wilson & Callaghan as PMs.
- Economic problems & policies.
- Relations with the TUs (“In Place of Strife”).
- N Ireland – key issues for Unionists/ Loyalists & Nationalists; the IRA/ PIRA; Sinn Fein; SDLP; Unionism; protest & resistance; terrorists or freedom fighters? Internment. Bloody Sunday. Direct Rule. Conservative & Labour policies. Roy Mason as Sec State for NI.
- Mrs Thatcher & Conservative opposition – the breakdown of post war consensus politics?
- Keg bitter, Prog Rock, Disco, Punks and Tangerine Dreams... popular culture in the 1970s.
- 1979 General Election.
- Historiographical debate.

KEY SKILLS

Working with others. Written & verbal communication. Problem solving. Information finding & retrieval, recording & assimilation. Basic numeracy & quantitative analysis.

ESSENTIAL READING

Marr, A., A History Of Modern Britain, 2007 – esp Part Three.
Murphy, D (ed), Britain 1914-2000 , 2000, chaps 10-15.

ADDITIONAL READING (biography/ memoirs/ diaries etc, plus cultural studies...)

Benn, Tony, The Benn Diaries, 1996.
Crossman, RHS, The Diaries of a Cabinet Minister, vol 1, 1975
Haslam, D., Not Abba, 2005.
Healey, D., The Time Of My Life, 1989.
Heath, E., The Course Of My Life, 1998.
Heffer, S., Like the Roman, 1998.
Jenkins, R., A Life At The Centre, 1991.
Morgan, Kenneth O., Callaghan: A Life, 1997.
Pimlott, B., Harold Wilson, 1992.
Savage, J., England's Dreaming, 1991.
Ziegler, P., Wilson: The Authorised Life, 1993.

ASSIGNMENTS

General:

- Presentation: Who was “Selsdon Man”, & what did he represent?
- Collage – Britain in the 1970s: images...
- Critique from Labour/ Socialist perspectives of Wilson’s policies: betrayal?
- Biographies of leading politicians of 1960s/ ‘70s: who stands out & why?
- Critique from a Conservative perspective of Heath’s policies: where is “our man” going wrong?
- IMF appraisal of British economy early 1970s.
- “News reports” on “The Troubles” in N Ireland – key issues/ concerns/ notable events.
- Foreign Office “briefing papers” on aspects of British FP: what are we doing & why? What ought we to do, & why?
- Washington “State Dept” brief on Britain’s position re The Vietnam War, NATO/ European Defence, & the EEC: where are the Brits headed, & why?

Representative essays:

1. What were the 3 greatest achievements of the Labour govts of the 1970s?
2. What directions were taken in FP by British govts of the 1970s?
3. Why after winning a surprise victory in the 1970 General Election, did Heath’s Govt experience so many difficulties, 1970-74?
4. In what ways can Britain in the 1970s be regarded as the “sick man of Europe”?
5. What were the 3 biggest problems confronting British govts of the 1970s, and how effectively did they deal with them?

6. Why did the N Ireland “Troubles” prove so intractable during the 1970s?
7. What were the 3 most important causes of the N Ireland “Troubles”, and why were these so difficult to deal with?
8. Consider the relative importance of any 3 factors that determined British FP during the 1970s.
9. Did the 1970s see the collapse of the post-war “consensus” in British social, economic & political affairs?
10. Who governed Britain during the 1970s?
11. What were the most important social & cultural changes in 1970s Britain, and what were their economic & political implications?
12. “The social & cultural ‘revolution’ of the Sixties was not actually realised until the 1970s; its effect on British society was to destroy the post war ‘consensus’.” Discuss.
13. “Britain isn’t working.” To what extent was this a fair assessment of British economy & society in 1979?
14. Why did the Conservatives win the General Election of 1979?
15. To what extent did pragmatism & the “Special Relationship” influence British FP during the 1970s?

Topic 4 The 1980s – early 1990s: The Thatcher Revolution; end of the Cold War; Iron Lady or Mad Witch of Grantham?

CONTENT

- 4A Mrs Thatcher & her brand of Conservatism – something new, or recycling of old certainties?
- 4B Revolution or Reaction? Overview of the Thatcher premiership...Achievements & setbacks.
- 4C N Ireland
- 4D Britain/ Europe/ The Cold War/ NATO/ Thatcher & Reagan.
- 4E Gorbachev/ Glasnost & Perestroika/ Thatcher’s role in the fall of Communism.
- 4F The Major Years...

KEY ISSUES

- How successful were the Conservative govts, 1979-97?
- Why was Margaret Thatcher a controversial PM?
- To what extent did Thatcherism destroy the post war consensus?
- Just how radical was Mrs Thatcher?
- Why was Labour in the Doldrums throughout the 1980s and into the early 1990s?
- To what extent did British FP in the 1980s/ early ‘90s differ from that of previous decades?
- How did British-Irish relations evolve during the 1980s/ 1990s, & with what results?
- Was John Major incompetent, or simply unlucky?
- How did the Labour Party change during the 1990s?

SPECIFICATION CONTENT

- Conservative election victories.
- Thatcher & her ministers – the vegetables?
- Reasons for support of & opposition to Thatcher.
- Economic & social policies.
- Unemployment & the Trades Unions.
- The Miners’ Strike.
- British FP under M Thatcher, esp re Europe, USA, & the USSR.
- Thatcher’s fall, & Major’s rise.
- Majorism & Thatcherism – new initiatives?
- ERM crisis, & the recession of the early 1990s.
- The Revival of the Labour Party – Kinnock, Smith, Blair & Brown. Clause 4; OMOV etc..
- N Ireland – failure of power sharing; the Anglo-Irish Agreement (1985); Downing Street Declaration (1993); Loyalist & IRA declarations of ceasefires (1994).
- Historiographical debate.

KEY SKILLS

Working with others. Written & verbal comm.. Prob. Solving. Info finding & retrieval, recording & assimilation. Basic numeracy & quantitative analysis.

ESSENTIAL READING

Marr, A., A History Of Modern Britain, 2007, esp Parts Four & Five.

Murphy, D., Britain 1914-2000, 2000 – loc cit.

Walsh-Atkins, P. Thatcher, 2004.

ASSIGNMENTS

General:

- Party General Election “posters” – highlight key policy issues/ concerns.
- Collages – Britain in the 1980s.
- Biographies of key political figures of the 1980s – who stands out & why?
- Good Mrs Thatcher/ Bad Mrs Thatcher – the “Iron Lady” or “Mad Witch of Grantham”? -newspaper “editorials” either for or against Thatcher.
- Shocking “news reports” on “Loony Lefties” in British local govt! What issues concerned many voters in the 1980s, esp the electorally crucial C1s?
- “Why Labour are losers.” Analysis of the internal problems of the Labour Party in the 1980s.
- Analyses of each General Election outcome 1979-97: what does each indicate about British society & politics during the period?

Representative essays:

1. Did the Thatcher govts revolutionise British society?

2. What were the 3 greatest achievements of the Thatcher govts?
3. Why was Labour unelectable during the 1980s?
4. Who were the winners, and who were the losers in Thatcher's Britain?
5. Evaluate the relative importance of any three factors in Thatcher's fall from office.
6. "Truly radical, or just a throwback to an earlier age?" Why do some question whether Mrs Thatcher really changed anything in Britain?
7. "An essentially good & decent man; unlucky in government." Discuss this judgement on John Major.
8. Consider the reasons why the conflict in N Ireland appeared to have reached some degree of resolution by the mid 1990s.
9. What was the impact, short & long term, of "Thatcherite" policies on Britain's economy & society?
10. How & why did Mrs Thatcher defeat the miners?
11. What were the main strands of British FP during the 1980s & early 1990s?
12. What did "Thatcherism" contribute to the decline of Communism in Eastern Europe?
13. Examine critically any 3 aspects of British FP under Thatcher & Major.
14. " 'Thatcherism' never really existed as a coherent ideology; policies evolved in response to specific problems & circumstances." In the light of this comment, evaluate the successes & failures of any 3 domestic policies of the Thatcher govts..
15. Was Mrs Thatcher the greatest post war British PM?