



An Roinn Oideachais  
agus Scileanna

# Politics and Society

## Curriculum Specification

**LEAVING CERTIFICATE**  
Ordinary and Higher Level

**UPDATED 2019**

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# 1

## Senior cycle

Learners in senior cycle are approaching the end of their time in school and are focusing on the directions they would like to take in their future lives. Senior cycle plays a vital role in helping learners to address their current needs as young adults and in preparing them for life in a changing economic and social context.

Senior cycle is founded on a commitment to educational achievement of the highest standard for all learners, commensurate with their individual abilities. To support learners as they shape their own future, there is an emphasis on the development of knowledge and deep understanding; on learners taking responsibility for their own learning; on the acquisition of key skills; and on the processes of learning. The broad curriculum, with some opportunities for specialisation, supports continuity from junior cycle and sets out to meet the needs of learners, some of whom have special educational needs, but who all share a wide range of learning interests, aptitudes and talents.

Curriculum components at senior cycle promote a balance between knowledge and skills, and the kinds of learning strategies needed to participate in and contribute to a changing world where the future is uncertain. For an overview of senior cycle, see Figure 1 on p. 5.

Assessment in senior cycle involves gathering, interpreting and using information about the processes and outcomes of learning. It takes different forms and is used for a variety of purposes. It is used to determine the appropriate route for learners through a differentiated curriculum, to identify specific areas of difficulty or strength for a given student and to test and certify achievement. Assessment supports and improves learning by helping learners and teachers to identify the next steps in the teaching and learning process.



# 2

## The experience of senior cycle

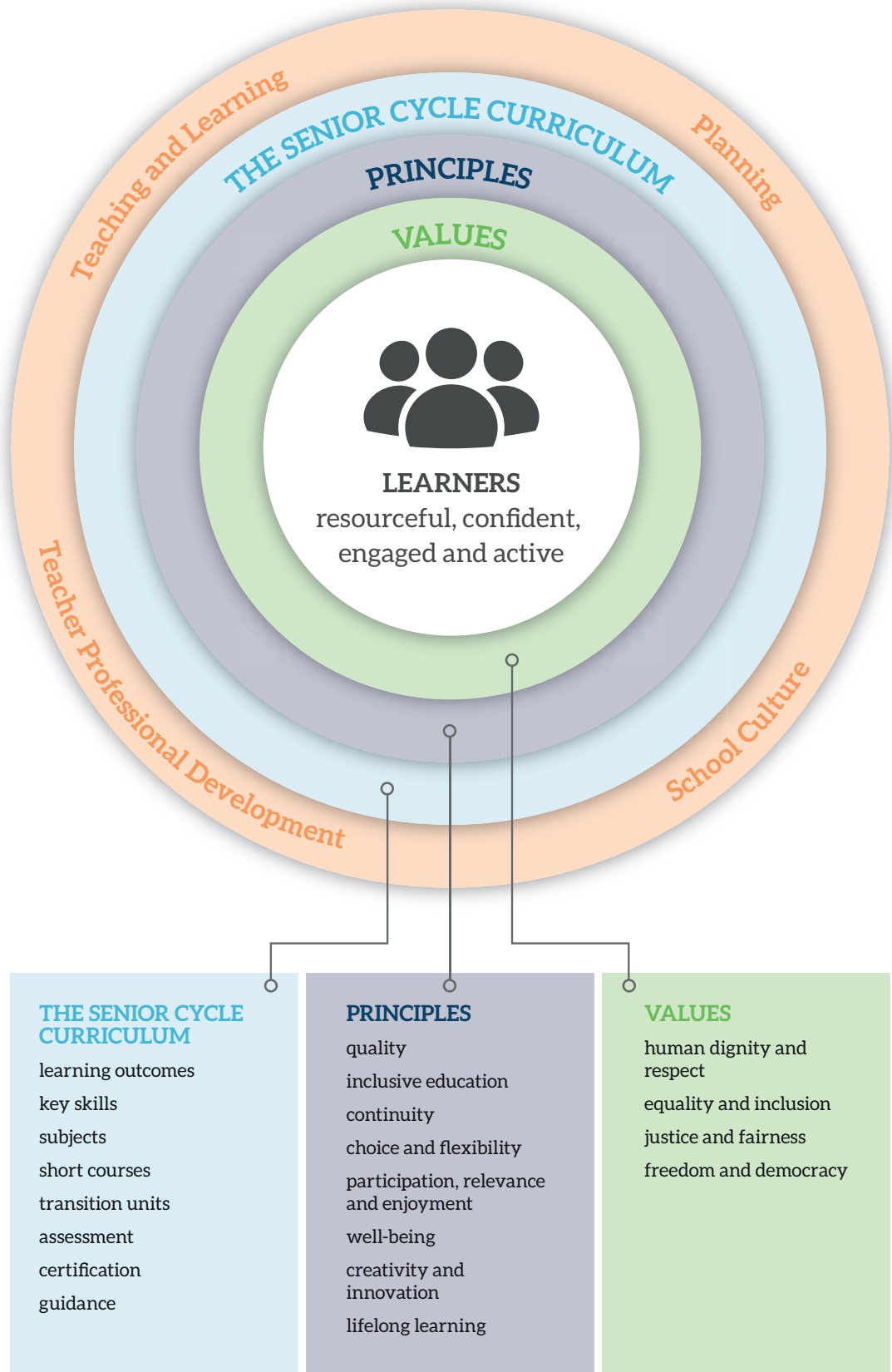
The vision of senior cycle education sees the learner at the centre of the educational experience. That experience will enable learners to be resourceful, to be confident, to participate actively in society, and to build an interest in learning throughout their future lives.

This vision of the learner (Figure 2 on p. 6) is underpinned by the values and principles on which the senior cycle curriculum is built. The curriculum, including subjects and courses, embedded key skills, clearly expressed learning outcomes, and diverse approaches to assessment is the vehicle through which the vision becomes a reality for the learner.

At a practical level, the provision of a high quality educational experience in senior cycle is supported by

- ▶ effective curriculum planning, development, organisation and evaluation
- ▶ teaching and learning approaches that motivate and interest learners, that enable them to progress, deepen and apply their learning, and that develop their capacity to reflect on their learning
- ▶ professional development for teachers and school management that enables them to lead curriculum development and change in their schools
- ▶ a school culture that respects learners, that encourages them to take responsibility for their own learning over time, and that promotes a love of learning.

**Figure 1:** Overview of senior cycle



**Figure 2:** The vision of the learner



# 3

## Politics and Society

### Rationale

Politics and Society aims to develop the learner's capacity to engage in reflective and active citizenship, informed by the insights and skills of social and political sciences.

The changing local, national and global environment presents many challenges and opportunities for young people. It also requires of them a range of skills, knowledge, values and attitudes so that they can achieve their goals in this environment. These include:

- ▶ skills in critically assessing information and its sources and in gathering and processing information
- ▶ intercultural skills to enable them to communicate and work with people from diverse backgrounds in employment and in other settings
- ▶ an understanding of the processes of globalisation and individualisation and their opportunities and challenges
- ▶ the imagination to think creatively and to propose new and alternative futures
- ▶ a willingness to play an active role in their society
- ▶ a disposition towards taking responsibility for the outcomes of their actions.

Drawing in particular on the skills of critical thinking and imagination and on the content knowledge of sociology, anthropology, political studies and philosophy, Politics and Society can, in collaboration with students' learning outside school, in home and community contexts, provide an opportunity for students to develop the above skills, knowledge, values and attitudes. The distinctive analytical frame of reference of these subjects can also help to develop critical analysis skills that enable people to make an informed, considered and effective contribution to their society. The content of these subjects can support the development of an understanding of equality, inequality and diversity in a range of areas of human life, including gender, ethnicity and social class. In this way, Politics and Society can contribute to the development of active and participatory citizenship through education. It can play a key role in informing people as to how social and political institutions operate at local, national, European, and global level, and of the importance of political and social institutions in shaping our society.

Through active and participatory learning and through the experience of learning in the wider community, Politics and Society can enable young people to develop the skills appropriate for active and thoughtful participation in the life of their communities.

## Aim

Leaving Certificate Politics and Society aims to develop the learner's capacity to engage in reflective and active citizenship, informed by the insights and skills of social and political sciences.

## Objectives

The objectives of Leaving Certificate Politics and Society are to develop

- ▶ an understanding of the social systems within which people act: locally, nationally and more widely
- ▶ an understanding of concepts which underpin contemporary systems of government and of the diverse models for making these concepts operational
- ▶ an understanding of and a respect for human rights and responsibilities, for human dignity and for democratic modes of governance
- ▶ an understanding of and a respect for sustainable development
- ▶ a commitment to and a capacity for active participation in the learner's social and political worlds
- ▶ a commitment to and a capacity for critical, discursive and independent thinking
- ▶ a commitment to and a capacity for engagement in peaceful and democratic means of resolving conflicts
- ▶ a sense of care for others and a respect for and a valuing of diversity in all areas of human life within the parameters of human rights principles
- ▶ the capacity to analyse and interpret qualitative and quantitative social and political research data, and to use such data carefully in forming opinions and coming to conclusions.

## Related learning

### EARLY CHILDHOOD

Children learn, often through play, the skills of successful interaction, and to apply in rudimentary form concepts like fairness and rights. In coming to decisions they learn to quantify and to use information.

### PRIMARY SCHOOL

Social issues arise throughout the Primary School Curriculum and children will have had opportunities to develop understandings of diversity, of human rights and of sustainable development through subjects such as history, geography and through their use of and study of languages, English and Gaeilge. Social, Personal and Health Education in particular provides opportunities to further develop their understandings of themselves in relation to other people, particularly through the strand 'Me and the wider world'.

### JUNIOR CYCLE

Learners continue to develop their understanding of their place in the world through the statements of learning which provide the basis for planning a new junior cycle. Of particular relevance are

- ▶ **Statement of learning 7:** The student values what it means to be an active citizen, with rights and responsibilities in local and wider contexts.
- ▶ **Statement of learning 9:** The student understands the origins and impacts of social, economic, and environmental aspects of the world around her/him.



- ▶ **Statement of learning 10:** The student has the awareness, knowledge, skills and values to live sustainably.

While schools can choose to provide for these statements of learning through a range of subjects and short courses, the short course in Civic, Social and Political Education (CSPE) integrated into the Wellbeing programme, provides a foundation in the knowledge, skills and attitudes required for studying Politics and Society at senior cycle as do other curriculum areas including history, geography, languages and religious education. The active and participatory methodologies used in Politics and Society will complement the student-centred and skills-rich teaching and learning approaches of the new junior cycle.

### SENIOR CYCLE

The focus of Politics and Society, in part, corresponds to that of other senior cycle subjects, notably geography, home economics, history, and religious education, and, to a lesser extent, economics (in the areas of economic systems and economic thought); English (in relation to social and media literacy); mathematics (in relation to the ability to interpret and analyse data) and technology (in relation to technology and society). These correspondences arise from the fact that different disciplines share an underlying concern with core aspects of human life. The areas of study have been chosen to ensure that there is minimal overlap between the content of Politics and Society and the content addressed in other senior cycle subjects. On the few occasions where such overlaps exist, Politics and Society differs from other subjects in the perspectives, methods and modes of analysis that it brings to bear. Notwithstanding this difference in content and in approach, however, there will be significant opportunities for learners to relate and integrate their learning between Politics and Society and these other subject areas. There will also be resonances between the areas addressed in Politics and Society and some of the topics and themes addressed throughout Transition Year. The active and participatory methodologies used in Transition Year will also provide a grounding for some of the methodologies used in Politics and Society.

### FURTHER LEARNING

Politics and Society provides an opportunity to link into social, scientific and philosophical subjects in further and higher education. Such subjects are currently offered in higher education in the form of programmes in sociology, political studies, philosophy and anthropology, as well as in social studies programmes (often linked to professional development in areas such as social work, social care and human resources management). They are also usually included in interdisciplinary programmes such as international relations, women's studies, development studies and equality studies.

### COMMUNITY AND SOCIETY

Politics and Society is centrally concerned with learning that can be utilised and made relevant in everyday life. Learners will have opportunities to use and further develop their skills in communication, in working with others and in analysing and drawing conclusions from information in social settings and through participation with groups and initiatives in their community. They will have opportunities to apply the concepts and ideas discussed in Politics and Society to everyday decisions as to how to act ethically. In this way their school-based learning will be applicable to and deepened by active and reflective citizenship throughout their lives.

The skills, knowledge, values and attitudes that they will develop through Politics and Society will be of value to learners and applicable by them throughout their lives, in their engagement with political processes, and in decisions they will make in their work and personal lives.

# 4

## Overview

### Structure

Politics and Society is organised in four strands, each structured around key concepts. These are:

<b>STRAND 1</b> Power and decision-making	<b>STRAND 2</b> Active citizenship
<b>STRAND 3</b> Human rights and responsibilities	<b>STRAND 4</b> Globalisation and localisation

**Strand 1** addresses foundational concepts in the study of Politics and Society and should be studied first.

**Strand 2** has a strong focus on some of the key skills relevant to Politics and Society: skills in coming to reflective and informed decisions through debating and discussing ideas with other people and skills in being an effective active citizen. These skills will need to be explicitly taught, and time should be allocated for teaching them. At the same time, they will also be developed through on-going application and so they should continue to be practised through the learning activities selected for teaching in all four strands. Many of the skills addressed in strand 2 will be developed and applied through the learner's engagement in a citizenship project. This project is a central opportunity for learning in Politics and Society and also forms part of the assessment of the subject. The skills developed in this project will primarily be those identified in strand 2. However the project will also provide an opportunity for application of some of the key concepts addressed in strands 1, 3 and 4.

**Strands 3 and 4** provide opportunities to apply the foundational concepts and skills of Politics and Society in increasing depth.

A number of features also permeate these strands. They are:

- ▶ the discussion of the local, national, European and global dimensions of the issues studied
- ▶ the exploration of the similarities and differences in social and political practices around the world
- ▶ the analysis and interpretation of qualitative and quantitative social and political research data
- ▶ the use of active, participatory, democratic and discursive practices in teaching and learning.

Politics and Society is characterised by an exploration of different ideas about the most appropriate means and ends of human participation in civic, social and political life. Learners take certain issues and look at them in their own local context, then also consider them in a broader context: through this they engage in comparative study. Over the course of their studies, learners will engage with a balance of national, European and wider-world contexts and with both qualitative and quantitative data.

This means that many of the topics addressed in Politics and Society follow a common structure:

- ▶ learners can begin to engage with a topic through exploring how it applies to their own lives or to a context that is meaningful to them

- ▶ they can then explore this topic in more detail through applying a range of different arguments to their context
- ▶ in doing this they can develop their skills of discussion and debating and of analysing information; using these skills, they can come to conclusions
- ▶ they can compare their own context to another context at national, European or global level
- ▶ they can explore how various activists and thinkers have contributed to the development of some of these key ideas.

While this structure does provide a logical order for addressing these topics, the decisions as to the most appropriate sequence and structure for learning will need to be made by the teacher in light of their own knowledge of the learners in their class.

One of the features of Politics and Society is that learners will engage with the ideas of a range of thinkers, activists and writers on social and political issues. The writers selected in the specification include women and men from Ireland, from Europe and from the wider world. Contemporary writers are included as well as more historical figures. It is not intended that these would be regarded as the definitive selection of great thinkers in the field. Rather it is intended that they would demonstrate some of the diversity of, and ongoing change in, thinking on social and political issues. The study of recognised thinkers beyond those named in the specification is encouraged.

#### **TIME ALLOCATION**

Politics and Society is designed to be taught in 180 hours. It is recommended that a double class period is allocated each week to facilitate engagement in participatory learning activities and in undertaking project work.

It is envisaged that the facilitation of the citizenship project will take in the region of 30 hours. As such, the specification is designed so that each of the strands could be taught with an initial engagement of 30 hours, with a further 7.5 hours per strand for revision and reinforcement of learning.

## **Literacy and numeracy**

Literacy and numeracy skills are embedded across each of the four strands and in the learning outcomes. The students' oral literacy skills are supported through the strong emphasis on discussion, debate and argumentation throughout the learning. They will develop their reading, comprehension and writing skills when they research, examine, compare and critique different theories, case studies and information. Their digital and media literacy skills are developed as they use technology for research and presentation purposes. Politics and Society also helps students develop political literacy as they gain the vocabulary and skills to discuss events and issues affecting them and they learn how to articulate informed views on the political structures that operate at local, national and global levels.

Politics and Society facilitates students in using mathematical understanding and skills to help analyse complex issues related to the real world and its problems. Over the course of their studies, students will engage with both qualitative and quantitative data in order to examine local, national, European and wider-world issues. They develop numeracy skills as they access and interpret social research data, examine evidence and reach conclusions. Students also use mathematical reasoning as they examine the patterns, trends and relationships between different political, social and environmental issues and make links between those issues and events (for example, LO 5.3: 'Students... describe patterns of diversity which exist on the island of Ireland').

The written examination also promotes the development of literacy and numeracy through its focus, not only on examining knowledge and understanding, but also on examining

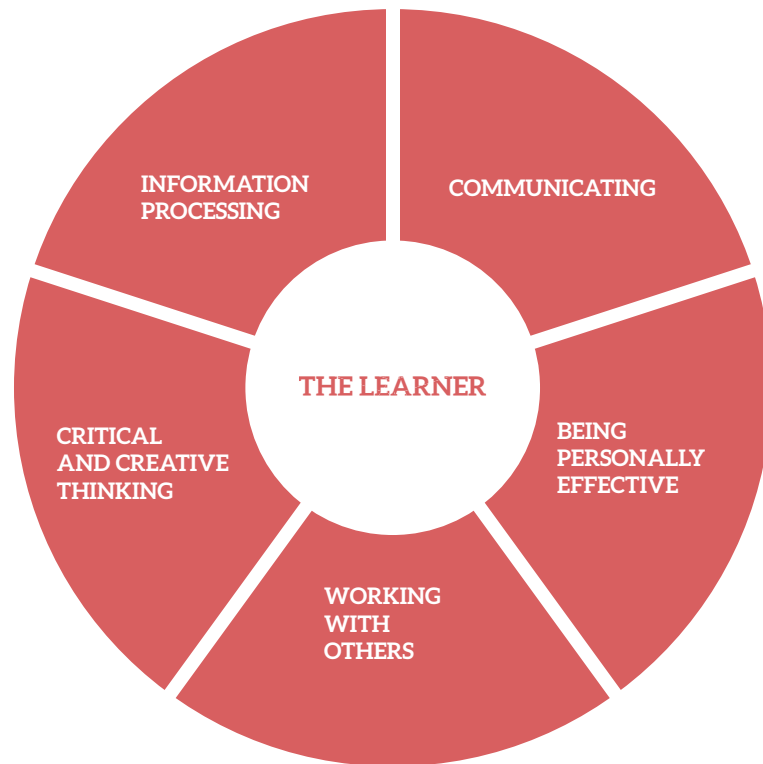
- ▶ the skills of analysis and interpretation of qualitative and/or quantitative social and political data
- ▶ the capacity to form a reasonable and logical argument – clarity and coherence in argument and management of ideas.

## Education for sustainable development

*The National Strategy on Education for Sustainable Development 2014-2020* highlights the need to integrate Education for Sustainable Development (ESD) in the curriculum from pre-school up to senior cycle. The National Strategy aims to ensure that education contributes to sustainable development by equipping learners with the relevant knowledge (the 'what'), the key dispositions and skills (the 'how') and the values (the 'why') that will motivate and empower them throughout their lives to become informed active citizens who take action for a more sustainable future.

This Politics and Society specification supports education for sustainable development through the key skills of senior cycle that are integrated throughout the four strands. The knowledge and skills developed through all four strands: Power and decision-making; Active citizenship; Human rights and responsibilities and Globalisation and localisation are all integral to education for sustainable development. In addition, topic 8, Sustainable development provides excellent opportunities for students to engage with this important area of learning.

## Key skills



In senior cycle, there are five key skills identified as central to teaching and learning across the curriculum. These are information processing, being personally effective, communicating, critical and creative thinking and working with others. The key skills are embedded within the learning outcomes of Politics and Society and are assessed in the context of those learning outcomes.

The following aspects of Politics and Society contribute to the development of key skills.

### LEARNING OUTCOMES

Learning outcomes are statements of the skills, knowledge, values and attitudes which it is expected learners will be able to demonstrate as a result of the learning associated with the topic. Key skills such as information processing and critical and creative thinking are well represented in the learning outcomes through the focus on the use of diverse sources of information, on understanding different positions and on evaluating the evidence that supports or contradicts these positions. Skills related to being personally effective and working with others are also clearly articulated in the learning outcomes in the Active citizenship strand.

### TEACHING AND LEARNING

The focus on active and participatory learning which is central to Politics and Society means that learners can be engaged in learning activities that most directly match their own needs and ways of learning. Politics and Society involves engaging in democratic deliberation and in debating and interpreting diverse perspectives and positions on sociological and political issues. This requires the active engagement of learners with the material. As such, a wide range of participatory and enquiry-focused teaching and learning activities are appropriate for Politics and Society. These activities facilitate a focus on developing key skills.

## ASSESSMENT

The clarity of the learning outcomes will enable teachers to assess the learning of students on an ongoing basis and to provide clear and supportive feedback as to how they can further develop their skills and capacities. The active, discursive approach to learning in the course provides opportunities for formative assessment practices which promote the development of the five key skills. The assessment arrangements envisaged for this course will require learners to present material which has been generated in part as a result of their involvement with key skills. In particular, the report on the citizenship project will draw on the key skills of working with others and of being personally effective. The case study section of the terminal examination will allow a focus on the key skills of information processing and critical and creative thinking. The skills of information processing, and critical and creative thinking as well as effective communication can also be assessed through all other elements of the assessment.

## Teaching and learning

Effective engagement with the subject will need classrooms where

- ▶ the classroom environment is experienced by learners as an open and caring environment in which students can express their opinion honestly and where trying things, making mistakes and learning from them is welcome
- ▶ clear learning goals are communicated to learners and they can clarify these goals for themselves through application and feedback
- ▶ learners have opportunities to make learning meaningful to themselves by applying concepts and ideas to different real-life contexts and through working with peers to develop and apply their understanding of ideas
- ▶ learners receive feedback which tells them clearly what learning goals they have achieved, what areas they need to work on, and how they might work on those areas
- ▶ there is a focus on learning how to learn, and on students taking control of and responsibility for their own learning.

Such an environment can often be built upon assessment for learning approaches, which are essentially about using assessment in the classroom as a tool to improve students' learning, and are characterised by activities such as

- ▶ sharing learning intentions with learners
- ▶ helping learners to recognise standards they are aiming for through providing clear criteria for success or exemplification
- ▶ involving learners in assessing their own learning
- ▶ providing feedback which helps learners to recognise what they must do to reach the desired standards
- ▶ communicating to every learner a sense of confidence that they can improve
- ▶ adjusting teaching to take account of the results of assessment.

While a wide range of participatory and enquiry-focused teaching and learning activities are appropriate for Politics and Society, a number of specific methodologies may prove particularly valuable for supporting learning. These include discussion and debate, the use of a variety of contemporary media, data collection and analysis, portfolios and reflective journals.

## DISCUSSION AND DEBATE

Central to Politics and Society is the idea that learners should be exposed to competing ideas about their world, have an opportunity to apply these ideas and to evaluate them in light of the evidence that is available, and to come to conclusions. As a consequence, discussion, deliberation and debate are important learning methodologies for Politics and Society. More generally, the ability to constructively engage in debate as a means of coming to reflective and informed positions is a central skill for democratic participation.

At their most basic, debates are a series of formal spoken arguments for and against a definite proposal. While debates can be valuable for developing skills of analysis, critical awareness and appreciation of differing points of view, the development of these skills will be dependent upon the way in which the debate is structured and upon the broader classroom environment within which debates happen. It is sometimes valuable to distinguish between the method of debate and its end goal. In Politics and Society the method will involve different learners in forming arguments that are supported by data, listening to and critiquing the arguments of others and responding to those arguments constructively. The end goal should be for everyone to move towards a more reflective and informed conclusion (rather than for one side to 'win' and for the other side to 'lose'). It is important to remember that cooperative learning approaches have a greater positive impact upon student learning than competitive learning; therefore debates should be structured within the context of a cooperative learning environment. Discussions also create the possibility for different ideas to compete with each other. However they typically do so in a less-structured context than is used for debate. Like debate, discussions should also take place within a cooperative learning environment.

The skills needed to participate in discussion and debate are the same as those for communicating with others outlined in strand 2. Such skills will often need to be demonstrated to learners and practised by them, and small-group settings are often ideal for enabling all learners to participate in debate, to practice their skills and get feedback on them. Mixed-ability small groups can be particularly effective in supporting a range of abilities within a class. When learners work in groups, the tasks set should be devised so as to ensure that successful completion of the task will require input and participation from all group members. This will encourage participation of all group members and will also highlight the importance of listening skills to group members.

## USE OF A VARIETY OF CONTEMPORARY MEDIA

Learners will gather information about their social and political world from a variety of media, including print media (such as books, newspapers and magazines), broadcast media (television and radio) as well as a range of other digital media, such as websites, social media and online publications. These categories are not mutually exclusive in that print and broadcast media locally and from around the world can be accessed through digital media. One of the key concerns of Politics and Society is that the learner develops the ability to identify different perspectives that underpin arguments presented in such media. Learning outcomes specifically related to this goal are found in sections 2.6 and 4.4 and more generally throughout the specification. The use and analysis of the messages presented in a wide variety of media also enables teachers to select current issues and contexts in which the ideas and concepts of Politics and Society can be explored.

Learners can engage with a variety of contemporary media in a number of ways, including:

- ▶ the analysis of the images, messages, perspectives and assumptions about social and political issues that are found in different media
- ▶ the critical analysis of how evidence and data are used to support particular arguments in such media
- ▶ the generation of their own media content (for example newsletters, blogs or wikis) in order to come to understand the process through which media content is generated
- ▶ consideration of the bias of media

- ▶ the use of communication technologies as a medium for discussing and coming to understand concepts and ideas from Politics and Society (such as through online discussion forums, the collaborative development of presentations, the development of wikis or the use of social media)

ICT can be used to support other approaches to learning. For example, portfolios or reflective journals can be kept and managed in electronic format while data collected during small research projects can be analysed using spreadsheets or word-processing software.

### **DATA COLLECTION AND ANALYSIS**

Developing in learners the skills of analysing and interpreting data is an important objective of Politics and Society. In this regard, Politics and Society will build upon the skills of collecting and analysing data that students develop through the study of mathematics. An experience in collecting and analysing both qualitative and quantitative data can enable learners to understand the use of data in social and political sciences from the inside. A small research project on one of the concepts or ideas in Politics and Society will also enable learners to relate the idea to concrete contexts with which they are familiar and so enhance their learning. Such a small research project might then form the basis of a learner's citizenship project for assessment towards the Leaving Certificate.

The development of a small research project will typically move through a number of stages:

- ▶ Design stage, in which the learners will identify the ideas they are to study, clarify them, decide how to make them operational, develop a mechanism for collecting data (such as a survey for quantitative data or an interview schedule or observation protocol for qualitative data) and apply a mechanism for identifying research subjects/participants (for example by random sampling for quantitative data or by key informant selection for qualitative data).
- ▶ Data collection stage, in which learners will collect data (such as by administering a survey, by carrying out interviews or observations).
- ▶ Data analysis stage, in which learners will collate their evidence, draw conclusions from it, and rigorously check the extent to which their data and research design supports such conclusions.
- ▶ Write-up stage, in which learners will decide on key points to be communicated and will then present their findings using text, images and basic statistics in a way that communicates these findings effectively.

By participating in this type of small research project, learners will gain an understanding of some of the key issues that impact on the quality of conclusions that can be drawn from data. This will, in turn, support them in being able to critically evaluate a piece of research that they have not previously seen, making reference to the quality of the evidence and the conclusions drawn from the study (a learning outcome that is referenced in sections 2.5; 6.1; 7.5 and 8.2 of the strands of study).

### **REFLECTIVE PRACTICE**

Reflective practice is important for both students and teachers. Reflection on learning can be supported through the use of portfolios and/or journals. In addition to supporting formative assessment, these can also help in preparation for summative assessment.

### **PORTFOLIOS**

Skills development is an integral part of Politics and Society. Skills such as communicating, working with others, and working with and analysing information from social scientific research are central to Politics and Society. Such skills may be related to, but at the same time distinct from, the way in which people already use such skills in everyday life. For example, while people may communicate within groups in everyday life, they might not do so in a way which shows a capacity to listen carefully to other points of view, to develop empathy and see alternative perspectives and to express emotion in appropriate ways. In order to be clear about the precise meaning of the skills being developed through



Politics and Society a precise set of learning outcomes for each of these skills is clearly laid out in the senior cycle key skills framework. This will allow learners to be clear about what is expected of them.

In order to develop such skills, learners will need opportunities to practice them. Such practice will often initially happen in classroom contexts. Teachers may clarify the skill that is to be learned, demonstrate it to learners, and provide an opportunity for guided practice of the skill and for formative feedback. Ultimately, learners will need to practice such skills independently in their life outside of the Politics and Society classroom.

Portfolios provide a structured approach for learners to identify how the skills, concepts and ideas of Politics and Society can be related to their own life. As such they are related to, but are often more structured than, reflective journals. A portfolio could include a selection of the learning outcomes for Politics and Society as well as spaces for learners to document how they are demonstrating in practice the skills described in the Politics and Society learning outcomes; what they are learning about how to develop these skills; and the extent to which these skills are improved and perfected over time.

Such a portfolio can be an invaluable tool in enabling learners to plan their own learning (for example, through identifying what skills they still need to develop and using this to choose an activity that will allow them to demonstrate the skills), to monitor their own learning and to evaluate their own learning. The skills of planning, monitoring and evaluating their own learning are strongly associated with developing the ability to learn how to learn, one of the goals of senior-cycle education more generally.

Portfolios can play an important role in enabling each learner to collect evidence about their own learning, and may be used, for example, as a way of documenting their learning of the skills of working with others and of being personally effective when working in communities; skills that will ultimately be assessed as part of the citizenship project.

Consideration may be given to maintaining ePortfolios where students have access to technology.

### **REFLECTIVE JOURNAL**

Politics and Society aims to enable learners to apply the concepts and ideas of social and political sciences when engaging in active and reflective citizenship in communities. In this way, ideas that appear on a superficial viewing as abstract—such as power, democracy, identity and human rights—should come to be seen to have a direct bearing on the lives and everyday decisions of the learner. This is sometimes referred to as developing the ability to see ‘the general in the particular’.

Learners will learn to apply these concepts to their everyday life by being given the opportunity to do so. Politics and Society has been structured as an exploration of ideas from social and political sciences in the context of young people’s own lives. Many of the contexts chosen for attention (decision-making in schools, government policies that impact upon young people, decisions as to what is and is not in their curriculum, what young people buy and how they engage in charity or volunteering work and so on) will allow young people to start by looking at their own experience and then applying concepts and ideas to that experience.

In practice, this can mean learners starting by reflecting upon and documenting their own experiences in a reflective journal. This journal may be incorporated into the portfolio. This can be seen by taking the example of one of the learning outcomes addressed in section 1.1, ‘Students should be able to describe the processes of power and decision-making in their school... in relation to one aspect of school rules related to safety, for example policies on fighting or bullying’. Engagement with the topic may begin with learners reflecting upon a situation in which personal safety was an issue for them in school, and on who was involved in making decisions about the rules that related to that situation. Learners can then relate back to this when trying to apply the ideas and concepts about power and participation in decision-making that are developed throughout topic 1. Entries in the reflective journal may be revised and reviewed by learners as they further develop their understandings of relevant concepts, ideas and data.

In Politics and Society learners will sometimes be dealing with issues that are personal to them. This means that whatever the methodology employed, there is a need for attention to be paid to creating an environment of safety within which learners can engage with issues. Learners will learn the skills of creating a safe and constructive working group environment throughout this course and particularly in strand 2 of Politics and Society. In the case of reflective journals, it would be appropriate from the outset to discuss and agree the boundaries of what is shared in such journal entries. These might include:

- ▶ learners recognising how much they want to share and their right not to be asked to share more than they wish to
- ▶ learners being respectful in relation to each other's reflections
- ▶ learners being able to challenge assumptions and perspectives in each other's reflections in a constructive way.

An awareness of such boundaries will often form the basis of working in a whole range of subjects that raise personal issues for learners (religious education, English and Social, Personal and Health Education for example) and is closely linked to ensuring that the classroom environment is experienced by learners as a warm and caring environment where presenting different ideas is accepted and in which trying things, making mistakes and learning from them is welcome.

## Differentiation

Differentiation in teaching and learning, in the specification and in related assessment arrangements, is essential in order to cater for and meet the needs of all learners.

Politics and Society provides numerous opportunities for teachers to teach the subject and select content so that it directly meets the needs and interests of all learners. The focus on active and participatory learning which is central to Politics and Society means that learners can be engaged in learning activities that most directly match their own needs and ways of learning.

Differentiation can also be applied to the content addressed in class. The content matter of the course is specified in broad terms to allow the selection and exploration of topics in ways that are of most interest and relevance to the lives of the learners.

In common with other specifications, Politics and Society will be assessed at both Higher and Ordinary levels.

## Assessment

Assessment for certification in Politics and Society will be carried out through two assessment components:

1. Report on a citizenship project (20% of the total marks).
2. Written examination (80% of the total marks).

Assessment will be based on the aims, objectives and learning outcomes as outlined in the specification.

- ▶ The citizenship project will be based on a brief issued annually by the SEC. The brief will outline a number of topics, from which students will choose one for their citizen project. The brief will also outline the parameters for the project and for the report which will be submitted to the SEC for assessment.
- ▶ The report on a citizenship project will assess the ability to use the knowledge and concepts of Politics and Society to make judgements as to how to be active in communities, and the student's capacity to reflect upon and evaluate what they have learned or achieved from being an active participant in civil, social and political life.
- ▶ The terminal written examination will assess the ability to apply the knowledge and concepts of Politics and Society to make arguments about political and social issues and the skills of analysing and interpreting qualitative and quantitative data on social and political issues.



# 5

## Strands of study

### Strand 1: Power and decision-making

Topic 1 Power and decision-making in school

Topic 2 Power and decision-making at national and European level

### Strand 2: Active citizenship

Topic 3 Effectively contributing to communities

Topic 4 Rights and responsibilities in communication with others

### Strand 3: Human rights and responsibilities

Topic 5 Human rights and responsibilities in Ireland

Topic 6 Human rights and responsibilities in Europe and the wider world

### Strand 4: Globalisation and localisation

Topic 7 Globalisation and identity

Topic 8 Sustainable development

## Strand 1: Power and decision-making

Many of the basic ideas and arguments of social and political sciences, anthropology and political philosophy are concerned with how the maintenance of social order can enhance people's lives and with who wins and loses from the different ways of organising societies. This includes debates and discussions on the ways in which people are interdependent; the roles of rules, laws, norms and values in ensuring order; the way in which the weak can be protected by and from the strong; who wins and who loses under the rules and laws of contemporary societies; and on the most appropriate ways of bringing about change in society. Underpinning all of these ideas and arguments lies a concern for 'power' and an interest in who has and can use power: to get people to act in ways they might otherwise not act; to establish and enforce rules and practices and to shape ideas and beliefs.

While there are many avenues through which these ideas could be explored, in this strand they are addressed through looking at who participates in decision-making and on what basis they participate. This strand explores these foundational ideas in social and political sciences through two contexts: decision-making in the school and decision-making in democratic institutions at local, national and European level.

Topic 1 starts with an exploration of participation in decision-making in schools. In doing so it allows learners to look at the debates and issues about power and decision-making in a context where the issues are very real and meaningful for them. This will enable them to see the ideas, debates and data of social and political science as directly relevant to their lives. The debates addressed in this topic focus on

- ▶ why or if we need rules/laws
- ▶ who should be involved in making these rules/laws and why
- ▶ whether rules/laws should be limited to a focus on personal safety or whether we need a broader set of rules
- ▶ who benefits from the way the rules/laws are designed
- ▶ who enforces rules/laws and how they do so.

Ultimately, through engaging in these debates, learners will develop an understanding of the different dimensions of power in social and political life.

Topic 2 focuses on decision-making in democratic institutions at a national and European level. There are numerous different branches of government and different institutions through which decision-making could be explored. This topic focuses particularly on the way in which people are represented within the executive branch of government in Ireland, and, for comparison purposes, in Northern Ireland and in the European Union. Such a comparison retains the focus on institutions which are directly meaningful to people's lives in Ireland while at the same time allowing learners to better understand that any form of political organisation is a result of choices which are made.

The media plays a particularly important role in contributing to and shaping the nature of debate in democratic societies. In addition to a focus on the executive branch in government, therefore, topic 2 also contains a particular focus on the role of the media in democracies.

By the end of strand 1 learners will have been exposed to many of the foundational ideas and concepts of Politics and Society. These include power, representation, democracy, social class and gender. Later strands will provide opportunities to further apply and deepen the understanding of these concepts. Learners will also have begun to use evidence and data in coming to reflective judgements on foundational questions in social and political life.

**TOPIC 1: POWER AND DECISION-MAKING IN THE SCHOOL**

STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT	STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO
<p>1.1 processes of power and decision-making in their school</p>	<p>describe the process of decision-making and the roles of different groups such as teachers, the principal, parents, students, the student council, the management body, the patron, statutory bodies, the government, in relation to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ one aspect of school rules related to safety, for example policies on fighting or bullying</li> <li>▶ one aspect of school rules not related to safety, for example school uniform rules</li> </ul> <p>drawing on these examples, come to a conclusion as to which of these people or groups have the most and least influence on school rules</p>
<p>1.2 arguments concerning the need for rules</p>	<p>apply in their own words and to their own environment the following arguments about rules and the process of making rules:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ rules provide protection for weaker members of the community from stronger members and provide a framework for orderly engagement in learning at school</li> <li>▶ those who have the most knowledge and wisdom should play the strongest role in making rules</li> <li>▶ there should be very few rules and then only concerned with keeping people safe; any more than that is an infringement on people's freedom</li> <li>▶ those who have the most power or influence can make rules that suit their own interests and not the interests of everyone in the community</li> <li>▶ there is a danger of those with power enforcing rules arbitrarily</li> <li>▶ it is compliance to norms and values, not</li> <li>▶ enforcement of rules, that maintains a sense of order</li> </ul> <p>engage with different viewpoints and, where appropriate, evaluate and use evidence to come to a conclusion as to which of these arguments are most supportable</p> <p>identify which of these arguments would be associated with a 'left-wing' position, which would be associated with a 'right-wing' position, and which could be associated with either</p>
<p>1.3 ideas underpinning these arguments</p>	<p>illustrate the following dimensions of the concept of power with respect to their own environment:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ getting people to act in ways they would not otherwise act in</li> <li>▶ being able to set rules or practices that bring benefit to some groups over others</li> <li>▶ being able to shape ideas so that people think of a particular way of doing things as the best or only way (ideology)</li> <li>▶ power can be exercised by a range of people or groups in a society, including those who appear institutionally 'powerless'</li> </ul>

**TOPIC 1: POWER AND DECISION-MAKING IN THE SCHOOL**

**STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT**

1.4 evidence concerning the effects of rules and rule-making processes

**STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO**

summarise research evidence on the extent to which some groups are, or are not, under-represented in decision-making processes in schools

engage with different viewpoints and models of participation and evaluate and use evidence to come to a conclusion about whether decision-making processes in schools are appropriate

**TOPIC 2: POWER AND DECISION-MAKING AT NATIONAL AND EUROPEAN LEVEL**

STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT	STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO
2.1 the making of national policy	<p>describe the process of decision-making at national level and how this relates to a policy that impacts upon young people, making reference to the roles of</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ civil society bodies or groups</li> <li>▶ statutory bodies</li> <li>▶ the civil service</li> <li>▶ the social partnership process</li> <li>▶ the relevant minister and the government</li> <li>▶ political parties</li> <li>▶ the Houses of the Oireachtas</li> <li>▶ the European Union</li> <li>▶ supranational agreements such as the United Nations Convention on the Rights of the Child</li> </ul>
2.2 how the executive branch of government is selected	<p>present an overview of the operation of the executive, the legislative and the judicial branches of government</p> <p>describe the voting systems for the Houses of the Oireachtas, including eligibility for and limitations to voting franchise</p> <p>describe the way in which the Taoiseach and the government are selected, and their roles</p> <p>describe the way in which the Northern Ireland Executive is selected, and the ministers' roles</p> <p>describe the way in which the European Commission is selected, the way in which the European Parliament is selected, the way in which the Council of the European Union (Council of Ministers) is constituted, and their respective executive roles</p> <p>describe the way in which the executive is put in place in an example of a non-democratic country</p> <p>compare these four approaches for selecting an executive, identifying the strengths and weaknesses of each</p>
2.3 social class and gender as important social categories	<p>define what is meant by 'social class'</p> <p>illustrate the view that, in capitalism, social class is an important way of categorising who has and who has not got power</p> <p>critically evaluate the view that in capitalism, social class is an important way of categorising who has and who has not got power</p> <p>define what is meant by 'patriarchy' and illustrate the view that, in a patriarchy, gender is an important way of categorising who has and who has not got power</p> <p>critically evaluate the view that modern Irish society is a patriarchy</p>
2.4 arguments concerning representation	<p>identify to what extent the arguments and ideas discussed in topic 1.2 and 1.3 are relevant at national level</p>



**TOPIC 2: POWER AND DECISION-MAKING AT NATIONAL AND EUROPEAN LEVEL**

STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT	STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO
2.5 evidence about the effectiveness of representation	<p>summarise research evidence on the effectiveness of the Irish system of elections in representing the will of all the Irish people</p> <p>engage with different viewpoints and evaluate and use evidence to come to a conclusion as to whether the Irish system of government is effective in representing the will of all the Irish people</p> <p>critically evaluate a piece of qualitative or quantitative research—that they have not previously seen—on an aspect of representation in decision-making, making reference to the quality of the evidence and of the conclusions drawn in this study</p>
2.6 traditional and new media in a democracy	<p>explore the changing nature of contemporary media, identifying</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ the characteristics of different types of media</li> <li>▶ the control of information in different types of media</li> <li>▶ the challenges for regulators of media</li> </ul> <p>describe what is meant by ‘the freedom of the press’ and ‘the social responsibility of the press’ and ‘the accountability of the press’</p> <p>identify the roles which these three concepts are thought to play in a democratic society</p> <p>drawing on the ideas outlined in 1.3, describe the power of various types of media with respect to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ ownership and control of media</li> <li>▶ the role of advertising in media</li> <li>▶ the power of those who work in the media</li> <li>▶ the targeting strategies adopted by the media</li> <li>▶ the origination of media content</li> <li>▶ the global reach and influence of the media</li> </ul>
2.7 participants in these debates	describe in brief and general terms the contribution of Thomas Hobbes, John Locke, Robert Nozick, Sylvia Walby, Karl Marx, Kathleen Lynch and Noam Chomsky to the discussions in this strand and the contexts in which they made their contributions

## Strand 2: Active citizenship

Strand 1 deals with the concepts and ideas which are foundational to Politics and Society. It also addresses some of the foundational skills of analysing and interpreting evidence and data. Strand 2 deals with a range of other skills which are also foundational to active and reflective citizenship. These include the skills of effectively contributing to communities and the skills of deliberating and coming to decisions when working with others.

One way in which learners are enabled to bring their learning from across the strands of Politics and Society together is through a citizenship project, which will be undertaken in relation to one of the themes of the subject. This project will enable learners to evaluate opportunities for taking action in communities, to justify the activity they choose to undertake and to evaluate their own learning from being an active participant in civic, social and political life. While learners will draw on learning outcomes from all strands in undertaking this project, the learning outcomes identified in strand 2 are most directly associated with the project. The project will be allocated a weighting of 20% in the marks for the final assessment of Politics and Society.

Topic 3 focuses on being an active participant in a dimension of civic, social and political life. It reflects the key skill of 'being personally effective'. Topic 3 begins with a focus on different forms of action possible within social and political life, before moving on to explore the skills that enable someone to be effective in the actions they choose to undertake.

Topic 4 addresses the skills involved in working with others in groups and in broader democratic society. It reflects the key skill of 'working with others'. By beginning with a focus on the rights and responsibilities related to communication it provides a link to strand 3: Human rights and responsibilities.

While strands 1 and 2 are presented sequentially, in practice the skills that are reflected in strand 2 will often be taught alongside the concepts and ideas addressed in strand 1. They will also continue to be practised and applied throughout the approaches to teaching and learning chosen for all four strands.

**TOPIC 3: EFFECTIVELY CONTRIBUTING TO COMMUNITIES**

STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT	STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO
<p>3.1 people who have made positive contributions to their social context</p>	<p>describe in general terms the way in which people, from Ireland and the wider world, have sought what they saw as a positive impact on their society, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ someone who has engaged in charity, voluntary or community work</li> <li>▶ someone who has run for political office</li> <li>▶ someone who has chosen to work in public service such as a teacher, nurse or social worker</li> <li>▶ someone who used the law</li> <li>▶ someone who used civil disobedience such as Gandhi</li> <li>▶ someone who proposed the use of violence against an undemocratic state such as Nelson Mandela</li> </ul> <p>critically evaluate the appropriateness of the strategy these individuals adopted</p> <p>identify the personal qualities which are associated with being effective in having a positive impact on society</p>
<p>3.2 becoming involved in, or starting an initiative, group or organisation</p>	<p>make contact with initiatives, groups or organisations that are involved in politics, human rights, cultural diversity or sustainable development</p> <p>gather information relevant to their own participation in the organisation, group or initiative</p>
<p>3.3 the range of means of taking action at local, national or international level</p>	<p>undertake a form of action agreed with an initiative, group or organisation that is involved in politics, human rights, cultural diversity or sustainable development or develop a new initiative, group or organisation working in one of these areas</p> <p>justify the form of action which they have chosen to undertake in light of available alternatives</p>
<p>3.4 identifying, evaluating and achieving personal and collective goals, including developing and evaluating action plans</p>	<p>set realistic personal and collective goals and targets to be achieved within a time frame</p> <p>construct action plans to help reach the targets and identify methods for monitoring how well the plans are working</p> <p>cooperate with other members of the group to identify collective goals</p> <p>cooperate with group members to identify how different roles can contribute to the overall goals</p> <p>communicate ideas and needs within the group</p> <p>identify any help and resources that will be needed</p> <p>to implement the plans and reach the targets</p> <p>within a specific time frame, evaluate the extent to which the targets have been reached and engage in personal reflection on the process of setting goals and targets</p>

**TOPIC 3: EFFECTIVELY CONTRIBUTING TO COMMUNITIES**

<b>STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT</b>	<b>STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO</b>
3.5 developing personal qualities that help in new and difficult situations, such as taking initiatives, being flexible, being reliable and being able to persevere when difficulties arise	recognise that new situations are likely to be uncertain and present personal challenges  take the initiative on some occasions and not always leave it to others  be flexible and be prepared to try a different approach  be reliable in following through with tasks and undertakings
3.6 appraising oneself, evaluating one's own performance, receiving and responding to feedback	set time aside to take stock of current achievements and, with the help of others, to engage in an honest appraisal of their strengths and weaknesses  show resilience to receive and make sense of feedback

**TOPIC 4: RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN COMMUNICATION WITH OTHERS**

STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT	STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO
<p>4.1 rights to freedom of expression in small-group contexts</p>	<p>describe their rights to express their views and be heard on matters that affect them (article 12) to seek, receive and impart ideas and information (article 13 and article 17) as per the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child</p> <p>summarise research evidence on whether these rights are enjoyed equally by everyone in Ireland</p> <p>engage with different viewpoints and evaluate and use evidence to come to a conclusion as to whether these rights are enjoyed in Ireland equally by everyone</p> <p>identify that they are both a right holder and a duty bearer in relation to these rights, and that skills in listening, communicating and in accessing and evaluating information can play a role in ensuring everyone can realise these rights</p>
<p>4.2 developing skills in listening and communicating</p>	<p>participate in a 'small group' process through being able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ make points clearly and succinctly</li> <li>▶ listen carefully to other points of view</li> <li>▶ develop empathy and see alternative perspectives</li> <li>▶ express emotion in appropriate ways</li> <li>▶ help others to feel included in the group</li> <li>▶ help motivate the group to persist in the face of difficulties</li> <li>▶ celebrate the achievements of the group</li> </ul>
<p>4.3 acknowledging differences and negotiating and resolving conflicts</p>	<p>deal with conflict in the group through being able to</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ respect the rights and views of others in the group</li> <li>▶ develop empathy by imagining the situation from other people's point of view</li> <li>▶ separate personal and relational issues from the issue under discussion</li> <li>▶ use techniques to help explore alternative solutions and options such as brainstorming, visualisation, listing positive/negative/interesting attributes</li> <li>▶ identify areas of agreement and disagreements among the different positions</li> <li>▶ make suggestions about possible compromises and alternative ways forward</li> <li>▶ predict the likely consequences of options and alternatives and systematically examine the pros and cons of each</li> <li>▶ recognise the impact of real-world constraints</li> <li>▶ evaluate outcomes of solutions and decisions both in the short and long term</li> <li>▶ appreciate the likely bias in analysing in 'hindsight'</li> <li>▶ agree ways to resolve conflict</li> </ul>

**TOPIC 4: RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN COMMUNICATION WITH OTHERS**

<b>STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT</b>	<b>STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO</b>
4.4 seeking and evaluating information and ideas	seek and evaluate ideas and information received from traditional media, new media and directly from other people in a reasoned way, through being able to <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>▶ access information from a range of contemporary media, and to identify appropriate people to ask</li><li>▶ elicit opinions, views and emotions from others through the appropriate use of questioning and responding strategies</li><li>▶ understand the difference between opinion, reasoned judgment and fact</li><li>▶ judge the credibility of an information source using criteria such as authorship, currency, potential bias</li><li>▶ recognise components of an argument such as assumptions, reasons, counter-arguments and conclusions</li><li>▶ be sufficiently open-minded and curious to engage in speculation and argument</li><li>▶ recognise the effects of using emotive words in arguments</li><li>▶ recognise the role of emotion as well as logic in swaying people's judgements</li><li>▶ evaluate their own written and verbal communications on the basis of these criteria</li></ul>
4.5 relating democratic practices in small groups to the sorts of practices that are appropriate for citizens in wider society	identify how the skills of democratic participation in small groups could be appropriately used in local, national, European and wider-world contexts

### Strand 3: Human rights and responsibilities

While strands 1 and 2 outline the foundational concepts, ideas and skills of Politics and Society, strands 3 and 4 provide an opportunity to apply and practice these in more detail.

An understanding of and a respect for human rights and responsibilities and for human dignity is a key objective of Politics and Society. Strand 3 addresses this objective directly. As with other strands and topics, it begins with a focus on a context which is directly relevant to young people's lives, that is, their right to education. Learners will also be able to refer back to their earlier treatment of rights and responsibilities related to communication. Together, these different rights provide learners with a range of different experiences and issues to relate to their study of rights and responsibilities.

Through an exploration of the different ways in which their rights to education and communication are framed, learners will gain an understanding of a selection of key instruments for articulating rights. There are many different human rights instruments that could be addressed as part of such a study: in topic 5 the Irish constitution and the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child are selected for particular study. Together they provide learners with an opportunity to understand the different sorts of instruments that exist and the sorts of impacts they can have. Learners will also gain an opportunity to explore human rights concepts and the limitations to and constraints upon applying human rights concepts. The concept of equality of rights is also explored and evidence in relation to equality is examined and evaluated.

Topic 6 broadens the focus to look at human rights and responsibilities in a European and wider-world context. It introduces a further selection of rights, including the right to survival and development, the right to freedom of thought, conscience and to have and manifest religion or beliefs, the right to protection from physical or mental violence, injury, neglect or abuse and the right to rest, leisure play and recreation. It also introduces a number of further relevant human rights documents: the European Convention on Human Rights and the UN Declaration on the Right to Development. It broadens the debate on human rights issues to include an exploration of the interplay between human rights and culture and it enables learners to further develop and use their skills of data interpretation in relation to human rights.

**TOPIC 5: HUMAN RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN IRELAND**

STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT	STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO
5.1 some of the rights of young people	<p>identify their rights to education as described in <i>Bunreacht na hEireann</i></p> <p>identify their rights to education (articles 28 and 29), as per the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child</p> <p>identify the relationship between the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child and the Universal Declaration on Human Rights</p> <p>identify in this context what is meant by the terms 'rights holder' and 'duty bearer'</p> <p>using the concepts of 'immediate obligation' and 'progressive realisation', identify what it means for states to agree to act to implement rights 'to the maximum extent of their available resources'</p>
5.2 human rights principles	<p>explain what it means to see human rights as being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ universal</li> <li>▶ inalienable</li> <li>▶ indivisible</li> </ul> <p>distinguish between</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ civil and political rights</li> <li>▶ economic, social and cultural rights</li> </ul> <p>explain what it means for a right to be seen as being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ absolute</li> <li>▶ limited</li> <li>▶ qualified</li> </ul> <p>explain what it means for a right to be seen as being</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ a negative right</li> <li>▶ a positive right</li> </ul>
5.3 the idea of equality in relation to rights	<p>describe what it means for people to be entitled to rights without distinction of any kind, such as race, colour, sex, language, religion, political or other opinion, national or social origin, property, birth or other status</p> <p>describe the nine grounds under which discrimination is illegal in Irish law (gender, family status, marital status, sexual orientation, religion, age, disability, race, membership of the Traveller community) and the role of the equal status acts in prohibiting discrimination</p> <p>making reference back to the ideas addressed in 1.3, illustrate the distinction between direct and indirect discrimination</p> <p>describe patterns of diversity which exist on the island of Ireland, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ ethnic diversity and membership of the Traveller community</li> <li>▶ language diversity</li> <li>▶ religious diversity</li> <li>▶ diversity of sexual orientation</li> <li>▶ diversity of ability and disability</li> </ul>



**TOPIC 5: HUMAN RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN IRELAND**

STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT	STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO
5.4 arguments about rights	<p>apply in their own words and to their own environment the following arguments about human rights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ rights provide a framework that protects us all from powerful groups in society</li> <li>▶ rights provide a basis for ensuring equality in society</li> <li>▶ positive rights are unfair as they make some people pay to implement the rights of other people</li> <li>▶ sometimes the rights of the individual have to be set aside to protect the rights of the majority</li> <li>▶ rights don't go far enough because they only provide equality of access and opportunity, not equality of outcome</li> </ul> <p>engage with different viewpoints and, where appropriate, evaluate and use evidence to come to a conclusion as to which of these arguments are supportable</p> <p>identify which of these arguments would be associated with a 'left-wing' position, which would be associated with a 'right-wing' position, and which could be associated with either</p>
5.5 state bodies for human rights	discuss the roles and functions of human rights bodies in both jurisdictions on the island of Ireland
5.6 evidence on the right to education	<p>summarise research evidence on whether the right to education is enjoyed equally by everyone in Ireland</p> <p>engage with different viewpoints and evaluate and use evidence to come to a conclusion as to whether the right to education is enjoyed equally by everyone in Ireland</p>
5.7 participants in these debates	describe in brief and general terms the contribution of John Locke, Robert Nozick, Paulo Freire, Martha Nussbaum and Kathleen Lynch to the discussions in this topic and the contexts in which they made their contributions

**TOPIC 6: HUMAN RIGHTS AND RESPONSIBILITIES IN EUROPE AND THE WIDER WORLD**

STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT	STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO
6.1 rights in the wider world	<p>summarise research evidence on the extent to which the following rights outlined in the UN Convention on the Rights of the Child are implemented around the world:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ the right to survival and development (article 6)</li> <li>▶ the right to freedom of thought, conscience and to have and manifest their religion or beliefs (article 14)</li> <li>▶ the right to protection from physical or mental violence, injury, neglect or abuse (article 19)</li> <li>▶ the right to rest, leisure, play and recreation (article 31)</li> </ul> <p>summarise the main rights outlined in the European Convention on Human Rights, and the mechanisms through which people can seek to have these rights implemented</p> <p>critically evaluate a piece of qualitative or quantitative research, that they have not previously seen, on the implementation of human rights, making reference to the quality of the evidence and of the conclusions drawn in this study</p>
6.2 arguments about rights in the wider world	<p>identify to what extent the arguments and ideas discussed in topic 5.2 are relevant in the wider world</p> <p>in addition, apply in their own words the following arguments about human rights:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ human rights are a western idea, and imposing this idea upon non-western countries is a form of cultural imperialism</li> <li>▶ political rights can be set aside for a period in order to enable a country to develop so that it can provide for its citizens</li> </ul> <p>engage with different viewpoints and, where appropriate, evaluate and use evidence to come to a conclusion as to which of these arguments are supportable</p>
6.3 international cooperation and human rights	<p>identify what it means for states to agree to implement economic, social and cultural rights within the framework of international cooperation</p> <p>identify the main elements of the UN Declaration on the Right to Development</p>

## Strand 4: Globalisation and localisation

Globalisation concerns the interconnectedness of the diverse parts of the globe through increased and higher-speed communications, through the increased integration of local economies and national political strands into a more global economic and political context, and through the cultural exchange that arises from these processes. Although it can be regarded as an abstract idea, globalisation can be seen to have an enormous impact upon people's lives today, for example in the changing social and cultural make-up of contemporary societies, in the use of communication technology, in the jobs that people do and the ones they will do in the future, in the impact of international political institutions upon people's lives, in the changing nature of civil society organisations, and in the capacity of people to impact upon national and international political institutions.

It is sometimes argued that, alongside an increased focus on the 'global' the contemporary world is equally marked by an increased focus on the 'local'. This is reflected in a growing interest in 'identity' and in the politics of identity, in a growing recognition of diversity within countries and communities, and in a growing recognition of the ways in which the 'global' has impacts which are 'local', and the ways in which the 'local' has impacts which are 'global'.

There are many ways in which globalisation and localisation can be explored in contemporary societies. This strand looks at two of them: a focus on identity and diversity and a focus on development that is sustainable.

One of the impacts of globalisation has been an increase in travel and migration around the globe. This has led to contemporary societies being increasingly diverse. Globalisation is also associated with an increased focus on identity and on the politics of identity. Both these ideas are represented in topic 7 which looks at the diversity that is a characteristic of contemporary societies. Building on the learners' understanding of diversity and of cultural difference developed in strand 3, it provides them with an opportunity to think about the ways in which other cultures are characterised within their own culture, and to discuss the appropriate relationship between different cultures. In this context, learners will have the chance to examine a number of alternative perspectives on the relationship between 'western' culture and other cultures.

Other impacts of globalisation can be seen in the inter-related areas of global inequalities in wealth and poverty, and global environmental impacts of human activity. In topic 8, learners can explore the different ways in which people see the linkages between the local and the global in the processes of sustainable development. This allows them to explore the idea that interdependence and inter-linkages between different parts of the globe, such as through multinational companies or through trade links, is a positive force for global development in that it provides employment opportunities to developing countries as well as opportunities for them to learn from more developed countries and economies. Learners also explore the alternative view, that these inter-linkages simply provide opportunities for strong, wealthy economies to exploit poorer economies. Processes of development—intended to bring industry and employment to an area—can also have environmental impacts which are felt across the globe. Topic 8 also explores how different ideas on environmental sustainability can be related to ideas on the processes of global development.

**TOPIC 7: GLOBALISATION AND IDENTITY**

STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT	STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO
7.1 representations of national identity made available to young people	Summarise research evidence and engage with different viewpoints on the ways in which Irish identity is formed within Ireland, North and South
7.2 diversity and cultural change	<p>draw on examples from their own environment and from qualitative and quantitative research data to illustrate the idea that cultures are the product of a process of mixing and adaptation and that they do not stay static across time</p> <p>draw on examples from their own environment and from qualitative and quantitative research data to explore the role of information and communication technology and of the media in the process of cultural mixing and adaptation</p> <p>draw on examples from their own environment and from qualitative and quantitative research data to explore the role of migration and travel in this process of cultural mixing and adaptation</p>
7.3 diversity in the European Union	<p>examine the significance of ethnic and cultural diversity within the European Union including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ ethnic diversity within states and within the European Union</li> <li>▶ language diversity</li> <li>▶ religious diversity</li> </ul>
7.4 understanding identity	<p>apply in their own words and to their own environment the following arguments about culture and identity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ national groups and ethnic groups are those that share a common culture (which implies common values, beliefs, ways of doing things, and may imply a common history and language)</li> <li>▶ national groups and ethnic groups are ‘imagined communities’: social constructs which involves the imagining of an ‘us’ and a ‘them’, something which can have significant consequences for how people understand and interact with those seen to be in the ‘other’ group</li> </ul> <p>engage with different viewpoints and evaluate and use evidence to come to a conclusion as to which of these arguments are supportable</p> <p>identify the positive and negative effects of developing a sense of ethnic identity, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ the benefits associated with achieving a secure and confident sense of one’s own ethnic identity</li> <li>▶ the risks related to an insecure or threatened sense of ethnic identity</li> </ul>

**TOPIC 7: GLOBALISATION AND IDENTITY**

STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT	STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO
<p>7.5 understanding interaction between western and non-western culture</p>	<p>apply in their own words, drawing on evidence from the wider world, the following arguments about culture and identity in the wider world:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ the west has historically constructed itself ('us') in opposition to the non-western world ('them') and, in doing so, has imagined itself to be rational, civilised and mature and has imagined the non-western world as irrational, depraved and child-like</li> <li>▶ processes of globalisation such as travel, commerce and ICT are breaking down national cultures and identities and creating a cosmopolitan culture and a cosmopolitan identity</li> <li>▶ there are a number of major civilisations in the modern world that are culturally fundamentally different and are in competition with each other</li> <li>▶ if the west does not protect its culture of human rights and rational thought from other world civilisations then western culture will be wiped out</li> </ul> <p>engage with different viewpoints and, where appropriate, evaluate and use evidence to come to a conclusion as to which of these arguments are supportable</p> <p>critically evaluate a piece of qualitative or quantitative research, that they have not previously seen, on cultural change or identity, making reference to the quality of the evidence and of the conclusions drawn in this study</p>
<p>7.6 globalisation and political power</p>	<p>critically examine the role of intergovernmental/supranational bodies, (including, where appropriate, the International Monetary Fund, World Trade Organisation, World Bank and the United Nations Development Programme) in the process of decision-making in relation to a policy that impacts upon young people</p> <p>evaluate the argument that power is moving from national governments to supranational bodies</p>
<p>7.7 participants in these debates</p>	<p>describe in brief and general terms the contribution of Thomas Hylland Eriksen, Kwame Anthony Appiah, Benedict Anderson, Edward Said and Samuel Huntington to the discussions in this topic and the contexts in which they made their contributions</p>

**TOPIC 8: SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT**

STUDENTS LEARN ABOUT	STUDENTS SHOULD BE ABLE TO
8.1 actions that address sustainable development	<p>Consider the role of each of the following in achieving sustainable development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ individual and local community efforts</li> <li>▶ corporate/ business sector</li> <li>▶ civic society groups, including trade unions</li> <li>▶ governments</li> <li>▶ international agreements</li> </ul>
8.2 arguments concerning sustainable development	<p>apply in their own words the following arguments about sustainable development:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>▶ underdevelopment is caused by people in less developed countries not having the knowledge, technology and industry of people in developed countries</li> <li>▶ underdevelopment is caused by unfair terms of trade imposed by the west in collaboration with local leaders in developing countries</li> <li>▶ underdevelopment is caused by corrupt local elites in less-developed countries</li> <li>▶ industrialisation in less-developed countries has driven women, who were the traditional environmental stewards in societies, into a position of powerlessness and poverty and has damaged the environment</li> <li>▶ technology and the laws of the free market will solve our environmental problems</li> <li>▶ development in harmony with nature requires a move away from big industries and urbanisation and towards small scale, self-reliant communities using renewable resources</li> </ul> <p>engage with different viewpoints/development theories and evaluate and use evidence to come to a conclusion as to which of these arguments are most supportable</p> <p>identify which of these arguments would be associated with a 'left-wing' position, which would be associated with a 'right-wing' position, and which could be associated with either</p> <p>critically evaluate a piece of qualitative or quantitative research, that they have not previously seen, on development, making reference to the quality of the evidence and of the conclusions drawn in this study</p>
8.3 participants in these debates	describe in brief and general terms the contribution of André Gunder Frank, Vandana Shiva and Seán McDonagh to the discussions in this topic and the contexts in which they made their contributions

# 6

## Assessment

Assessment for certification in Politics and Society is based on the aims, objectives and learning outcomes in this specification. Differentiation at the point of assessment will be achieved through examinations at two levels, Ordinary level and Higher level. There are two assessment components:

1. Report on a citizenship project (20%)
2. Written examination (80%).

### 1. Report on a citizenship project

The inclusion of the report on a citizenship project in the Leaving Certificate examination arises from the nature of the subject. Candidates are afforded an opportunity to engage in research, analysis and extended reflection. The report will assess the candidate's ability to use the knowledge, concepts and skills of Politics and Society to make judgements as to how to be active in communities, as well as the student's capacity to reflect upon and evaluate what they have learned or achieved from being an active participant in civil, social and political life. While the skills of reflective and informed decision-making, of planning and evaluating actions, and of working with others can be developed throughout all the learning in this course, these skills will be explicitly developed and applied through the student's engagement in a citizenship project. The learning outcomes in strand 2 set out the specific skills that the citizenship project addresses.

The citizenship project will be based on a brief issued annually by the SEC. The brief will outline a number of topics from which students will choose one for their citizen project. The brief will also outline the parameters for the project and for the report which will be submitted to the SEC for assessment.

In the case of a group project, each candidate will submit a separate report. While the candidates in such cases will refer to group aims and actions to some extent, the main focus of each candidate's report will be on their own individual role, aims, actions, learning, development, and reflection.

The report will consist of 3 sections:

#### **SECTION A: RATIONALE AND RESEARCH (3.2, 3.3, 3.4)**

This will set out the rationale for the citizenship project the learner has chosen to undertake and a summary of the research undertaken. It should include:

- ▶ a rationale which makes clear how learning from the course impacted upon the course of action taken. The rationale should include a justification of the action chosen in light of available alternatives.
- ▶ a clear account of the aims of the citizenship project and an action plan setting out the means chosen to achieve those aims
- ▶ a summary of the research undertaken including the key research outcomes which underpinned the action taken and informed the student's decisions in relation to the action taken
- ▶ the sources of information that were used in deciding on a project and those which informed the work, such as web-based materials, literature, interviews, discussions and other sources.

## **SECTION B: EXECUTION OF CITIZENSHIP PROJECT (3.4, 3.5)**

It should provide:

- ▶ a summary of the processes undertaken by the candidate (individually and collectively) in applying the knowledge and concepts of Politics and Society in carrying out the action project
- ▶ a description of the outcomes of the project
- ▶ a critical analysis of the various elements of the action plan (e.g. roles, resources, targets, timeframes), including as appropriate any challenges encountered and how these challenges were dealt with.

## **SECTION C: REFLECTIONS ON THE KNOWLEDGE GAINED AND SKILLS DEVELOPED DURING THE PROJECT**

It should describe:

- ▶ the knowledge gained and skills developed, including judgement and decision-making skills, through engagement in the citizenship project, with particular reference to working with others and being personally effective
- ▶ the roles their own reflection, feedback from others and their learning from the course played in this learning
- ▶ what helped their learning of these skills
- ▶ what made learning of such skills difficult
- ▶ specific examples to illustrate these points.

## **GENERAL ASSESSMENT CRITERIA FOR THE CITIZENSHIP PROJECT REPORT**

The assessment of the report will be based on the following criteria:

- ▶ capacity to provide a clear rationale for the group/initiative/organisation chosen/formed and for the activity undertaken
- ▶ evidence of good planning and research which is informed by sources relevant to the subject
- ▶ capacity to use the knowledge and concepts of Politics and Society to make judgements as to how to be active in communities
- ▶ evidence of knowledge and understanding of what constitutes effective citizen action
- ▶ capacity to demonstrate learning gained from the project and personal insights gleaned from taking part in the project
- ▶ capacity to provide a clear account of skills learned while undertaking the project and the use of evidence to support this.

A high level of achievement is characterised by thorough and personal responses to the task. The candidate's report provides clear rationale for the activity undertaken and an excellent capacity to reflect upon the experience and evaluate the outcomes. The report is purposeful and clear. The narrative outline is sufficiently detailed to provide concrete evidence of the candidate's experience but moves beyond a mere re-telling to focus on insights and learning gained. The candidate demonstrates an excellent ability to plan, research and use the knowledge and concepts of Politics and Society to make judgements as to how to be active in communities. Where the project was carried out by a group, the report will focus clearly on the role or part played in the process by the candidate. The candidate shows a clear capacity to reflect on how the learning has influenced the student's skills, attitudes, opinions and/or behaviour.



A moderate level of achievement in the citizenship project report presents a good personal response to the task. A rationale is provided for the activity undertaken and there is evidence of good research and planning and a good ability to use the knowledge and concepts of Politics and Society to make judgements as to how to be active in communities. There is some evidence of a candidate's ability to reflect upon the experience and evaluate the outcomes. The narrative is clear and, in the main, provides evidence of the candidate's experience and some insights on the learning gained. Where the project was carried out by a group, the report will focus clearly on the role or part played in the process by the candidate. There is some evidence of a capacity to reflect on how the learning has influenced the student's skills, attitudes, opinions and/or behaviour.

A low level of achievement in the citizenship project report is characterised by a basic response to the task. While the candidate provides some rationale for the activity undertaken there are few personal insights or evidence of a capacity to reflect upon the experience and evaluate its outcomes. The report provides a summary of the project but the candidate demonstrates a limited ability to plan, research and use the knowledge and concepts of Politics and Society to make judgements as to how to be active in communities. Where the project was carried out by a group, the candidate's personal role or part played in the process is not clear. There is limited evidence of a capacity to reflect on how the learning has influenced the student's skills, attitudes, opinions and/or behaviour.

More detailed information may be found at [www.curriculumonline.ie](http://www.curriculumonline.ie).

## 2. Written examination

The written examination will be available at Ordinary and Higher level and will examine the following:

- ▶ knowledge and understanding
- ▶ analysis and interpretation of qualitative and/or quantitative social and political data
- ▶ capacity to form reasonable and logical argument—clarity and coherence in argument and management of ideas.

The percentage of total marks allocated to this component is 80%. The written examination will be two and a half hours long and will have three sections, arranged according to question type.

QUESTION TYPE	OPTIONS	RESPONSE FORMAT	WEIGHTING ORDINARY LEVEL	WEIGHTING HIGHER LEVEL
1. Short answer questions	Set number of questions	Completed on paper	20%	10%
2. Short answer and extended response questions on data-based case study	Set of unseen questions	Constructed response	30%	30%
3. Discursive essays	Number of topics given	Essay	30%	40%

**Section 1** (Short answer questions) allows for the knowledge of the candidate to be assessed in relation to power and decision-making, active citizenship, human rights and responsibilities and globalisation and localisation.

**Section 2** (Short answer and extended response questions on a data-based case study) allows the candidate to be assessed in relation to their skills of thinking critically and independently; of analysing and interpreting qualitative and quantitative social and political research data; and of using such data carefully in coming to conclusions. Those being assessed at Higher level will also be assessed on their capacity to come to conclusions by drawing on their wider knowledge from the study of Politics and Society of power and decision-making, active citizenship, human rights and responsibilities and globalisation and localisation.

**Section 3** (Discursive essays) allows for the knowledge of the candidate to be assessed in relation to power and decision-making, active citizenship, human rights and responsibilities and globalisation and localisation as well as their skills in critical, discursive and independent thinking and in using qualitative and quantitative data carefully in coming to conclusions.

### GENERAL ASSESSMENT CRITERIA FOR THE WRITTEN EXAMINATION

A high level of achievement in the written examination is characterised by a thorough knowledge and understanding of Politics and Society facts, concepts and methods from the whole specification and with few significant omissions. Candidates consistently apply their knowledge and understanding of Politics and Society to both familiar and new contexts. They accurately analyse and evaluate qualitative and quantitative data from different sources where appropriate; manipulation of data, where appropriate, will be almost flawless. Candidates present logical arguments and ideas which are clearly based on evidence.

A moderate level of achievement in the written examination is characterised by a good knowledge of Politics and Society facts, concepts and methods from many parts of the specification. Candidates apply their knowledge and understanding of Politics and Society to familiar contexts and in some new contexts. They carry out adequate levels of analysis and evaluation on qualitative and quantitative data from different sources where appropriate; much of their manipulation of data will be correct. Candidates present arguments and ideas which, in the main, are based on evidence.

A low level of achievement in the written examination is characterised by a limited knowledge and understanding of Politics and Society facts, concepts and methods. Candidates select appropriate facts, concepts and methods to apply to familiar contexts. They carry out basic manipulation of data correctly. Candidates present explanations which are referenced to some evidence, often from familiar contexts.

## Differentiation at the point of assessment

In common with other specifications, Politics and Society is assessed at Higher and at Ordinary level.

In the case of the report on a citizenship project, differentiation will be effected at the point of assessment through the application of separate Higher and Ordinary level marking schemes. The scheme to be used will be determined by the level at which the candidate takes the written examination.

In the case of the written examinations, separate Higher and Ordinary level papers will be provided.

## Reasonable accommodations

Politics and Society is intended to be inclusive of all students. In this way the subject contributes to equality of opportunity, participation and learning experiences for all. The scheme of reasonable accommodations, operated by the State Examinations Commission, is designed to assist candidates in the Leaving Certificate who have physical/medical/sensory and/or specific learning difficulties.

While reasonable accommodations are designed to remove as far as possible the impact of a disability on a candidate's performance, so that he or she can demonstrate in an examination his or her level of achievement, they are not designed to compensate for a potential lack of achievement arising from a disability.

Applications for reasonable accommodations are considered within a published framework of principles (Expert Advisory Group Report, January 2000) and are submitted by the school which a candidate attends on prescribed application forms. Applications are normally invited one year in advance of the examination concerned.

