

3.1 Liberalism Liberal views.

Aspect: The impact of liberal ideas on global politics.

This unit covers the specification elements related to “the impact of liberal ideas on global politics”. It is designed to provide a background to the topic but is not inclusive of all potential material required for examination purposes. It concentrates on both the knowledge and analytical skills required for A2. It DOES NOT seek to prepare students directly in the skills and processes required for answering the end of year examinations.

Both teachers and students will also need to undertake their own research/reading in order to provide a fully comprehensive coverage “the impact of liberal ideas on global politics”. This additional research is especially important in updating current material on the topic, which was not known or available when this unit was prepared.

It is important that teachers read through this unit and explore the exercises prior to commencing. The unit can therefore be shaped best to the timings of the teacher and class concerned.

Aims and objectives

Aim:

The critical analysis of the impact of liberal ideas on global politics.

Objectives:

1. To examine key liberal concepts.
2. To illustrate the theoretical relationship between liberalism and global politics.
3. To determine why certain ideas are so important to liberals.
4. To identify areas of tension within liberalism concerning global politics.

WJEC Government and Politics Assessment Objectives

The following WJEC learning objectives areas are addressed:

A01 – The conceptual basis of liberalism.

A02 - The similarities, differences and connections between liberalism and other ideologies concerning particular concepts; the similarities, differences and connections amongst liberals concerning particular concepts.

A03 - To seek to order the importance of central reasons and arguments with respect to determining the importance of particular liberal concepts.

Further guidance

The session commences with a general introduction.

The teacher should let the students know that this study session provides an introduction to the relationship between liberalism and global politics.

The teacher should introduce the session by asking ‘how the acronyms – NATO, UN, IMF, EU, G20, ICJ, BRICs can be placed into different groups?’ Labels such as economic, political, military, judicial, geographical... can be used to help students. The teacher should then ask ‘which acronym is the odd one out?’ There is not a set answer for this question but a reason should be elicited.

Conclusion

Session concludes by teacher reminding the students that labels like classical liberals, modern liberals, neoliberals, republican liberals, cosmopolitans, multiculturalists are groupings that we put on individuals. While this may help us to understand and organise such thinking it may not be the case that those individuals would recognise themselves adhering to these categories. It is quite legitimate for other analysts to come up with different labels for such categories.

Exercise 1: The impact of liberal ideas on global politics



Guidance

Students don't have to do all the terms in one go. Students can be allotted a certain group of terms to complete, for instance half the class could complete the first eight terms while the other half matches the last seven. Students should undertake this exercise individually and then in pairs. They should then agree an answer before feeding back to the whole class.

The teacher should also let the students know that by matching the terms and definitions they are undertaking WJEC Assessment Objective AO1 – *Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of relevant institutions, processes, political concepts, theories and issues.*

The activity can be completed on a computer or tablet or on the printable worksheet included. It can also be returned to as a revision exercise.



Activity – The impact of liberal ideas on global politics - key terms and definitions

[Click to open activity](#)

[See Worksheet 1](#)

Students should match the key terms and definitions.

Key Term	Definition
Cosmopolitanism	The belief that all humans share a common morality that forms them into one community.
Free trade	The buying and selling of products and services between countries without the imposition of restrictions.
Globalisation	The process of international social, political and economic integration.
Human rights	A set of entitlements that are guaranteed by the fact that the holder is human.
Interdependence	The reliance of countries in one part of the world on countries in other parts of the world for their well-being and vice versa.
Internationalism	The rejection of the belief that people are naturally divided into nations.

Liberal democracy	A political system that seeks to uphold the will of the majority while guaranteeing individual rights.
Liberal interventionism	The belief in the justification of using force against another country in order to guarantee the liberal values of that country's citizens.
Liberal institutionalism	The belief in the benefit of global political organisations that seek to regulate the behaviour of individual countries.
Neoliberalism	The belief that state intervention hinders the global economy.
Republican liberalism	The belief in the superiority of liberal democracies due to their assumed peaceful natures.
Rule of law	A liberal democratic principle that it is the law that governs a country and all institutions in it.
Universalism	The belief that all humans possess the same value and status regardless of nation or race.
Zones of peace	Areas of the world dominated by liberal democracies where military conflict has become unimaginable e.g. Europe, North America, Australasia
Zones of turmoil	Areas of the world dominated by authoritarian governments where military conflict has become the norm e.g. Africa, Middle East



Notes

These terms, although not an exclusive list, are crucial to an understanding of the impact of liberal ideas on global politics. Students must start to familiarise themselves with them. It is not enough to understand and know these concepts but students will be expected to use them.

Extension tasks can focus on sorting these terms into several categories:

- Concepts and beliefs
- Concepts and beliefs connected to economics, politics, military or ethics

Teachers may wish to start highlighting divisions between liberal internationalism and liberal nationalism. Likewise, teachers may wish to introduce the debate about the impact of liberal ideas on globalisation.

Exercise 2: Neoliberal globalisation



Guidance

Students should undertake this exercise individually and then in pairs. They should then agree an answer before feeding back to the whole class. During feedback students should be asked to correct the false statements.

The teacher should also let the students know that by identifying the true and false statements they are undertaking WJEC Assessment Objective AO1 – *Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of relevant institutions, processes, political concepts, theories and issues.*

The activity can be completed on a computer or tablet or on the printable worksheet included.



Activity – Neoliberal globalisation - true or false

[Click to open activity](#)

[See Worksheet 2](#)

Students should note whether the facts regarding *neoliberal globalisation* are true or false.

	True	False
Governments of nation states see themselves as in economic competition with other countries.	X	
Governments of nation states increase regulation of their economies and increase taxation in order to attract transnational corporations.		X
The principle goal of nation states' economic policy is high inflation in order to remain competitive with other countries.		X
Public spending is curtailed in order to maintain high inflation.		X
Neoliberalism has dominated the global economy since the 1990s.	X	
Neoliberalism claims that economic interdependence has brought about peace and international law and order.	X	



Notes

The teacher should make the class aware that neoliberal globalisation has dominated the global economic agenda since the end of the cold war. Only a few states, such as China, have been able to resist economic globalisation by controlling their exchange rate.

Extension tasks can focus on the connections between neoliberal globalisation and classical liberal economics. The teacher should also let the students know that by discussing connections between neoliberal globalisation and classical liberal economics they are undertaking WJEC Assessment Objective AO2 – *Interpret and apply political information to identify and explain relevant similarities, differences and connections.*

Exercise 3: Three waves of Liberal democracy



Guidance

Students should undertake this exercise individually and then in pairs. They should then agree an answer before feeding back to the whole class. During feedback students should be asked to expand their answer by explaining why the key words deserve to be in that particular column.

The teacher should also let the students know that by identifying the different justifications they are undertaking WJEC Assessment Objective AO1 – *Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of relevant institutions, processes, political concepts, theories and issues.*

The activity can be completed on a computer or tablet or on the printable worksheet included.



Activity – Three waves of liberal democracy – Countries and democratic waves

[Click to open activity](#)

[See Worksheet 3](#)

Students match the country to the democratic wave (the period when they started to exhibit liberal democratic characteristics).

1828-1926	1943-1962	1974-2003
USA	West Germany	Greece
France	Italy	Argentina
UK	India	Spain
	Japan	Poland



Notes

The teacher should make the class aware that some liberals view the trend in favour of liberal democracy as irresistible. By 2003, 70% of the world's population lived in countries showing some characteristics of liberal democracy.

Extension tasks can focus on debating the causes of each wave. The teacher should also let the students know that by discussing the causes of these waves of liberal democracy they are undertaking WJEC Assessment Objective AO3 - *Analyse and evaluate the areas of government and politics studied to construct arguments, make substantiated judgements and draw conclusions.*

Exercise 4: Human Rights



Guidance

Students should undertake this exercise individually and then in pairs. They should then agree an answer before feeding back to the whole class. During feedback students should be asked to expand their answer by explaining why the key words deserve to be in that particular box.

The teacher should also let the students know that by identifying the different justifications they are undertaking WJEC Assessment Objective AO1 – *Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of relevant institutions, processes, political concepts, theories and issues.*

The activity can be completed on a computer or tablet or on the printable worksheet included.



Activity – Three generations of human rights

[Click to open activity](#)

See Worksheet 4

Students should match the key words to the correct box.

Civic and political rights	Economic, social and cultural rights	Solidarity rights
Life, liberty and property	Work	Self determination
Non-discrimination	Social security	Peace
Freedom from arbitrary arrest	Healthcare	Development
Freedom of thought	Education	Environmental protection
	Paid holidays	



Notes

The teacher should make the class aware that the liberal conception of human rights has had an ethical impact on global politics. With an increase in knowledge and understanding of events around the world, helped by technological developments, there is a growing conception that justice does not just apply within a state's legal jurisdiction.

Extension tasks can focus on researching key international documents, such as UN Declaration, International Covenants, Stockholm Convention on the Human Environment and Rio Summit. The teacher should also let the students know that by researching key international documents and different conceptions of rights they are undertaking WJEC Assessment Objective AO2 – *Interpret and apply political information to identify and explain relevant similarities, differences and connections.*

Exercise 5: Economic threats to neoliberal globalisation's dominance



Guidance

Students should undertake this exercise individually and then in pairs. They should then agree an answer before feeding back to the whole class. During feedback students should be asked to expand their answer.

The teacher should also let the students know that by identifying the different justifications they are undertaking WJEC Assessment Objective AO1 – *Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of relevant institutions, processes, political concepts, theories and issues.*

The activity can be completed on the printable worksheet included.



Activity – YouTube video analysis -

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=FgRDI4k-6Fg>

See Worksheet 5

Students watch the video clip and make notes on Martin Wolf's analysis of economic globalisation addressing these questions.

1. What has happened to globalisation since the financial crises of 2007?
2. What has happened to trade liberalisation?
3. Why did governments promote globalisation in the first place?
4. Why would governments be willing to sacrifice their sovereignty?
5. What causes globalisation?
6. Can governments close globalisation down?



Notes

The teacher should make the class aware that one of the challenges to neoliberal globalisation is from the nature of the global capitalist system, itself, and government protectionist responses to it. The capitalist tendency towards inequality is causing an array of oppositional forces to it.

Extension tasks can focus on researching a variety of oppositional forces to neoliberal globalisation. The teacher should also let the students know that by researching a variety of oppositional forces to neoliberal globalisation they are undertaking WJEC Assessment Objective AO3 - *Analyse and evaluate the areas of government and politics studied to construct arguments, make substantiated judgements and draw conclusions.*

Exercise 6: Global challenges to Liberalism



Guidance

Students should undertake this exercise individually and then in pairs. They should then agree an answer before feeding back to the whole class. During feedback, students should be asked to expand their answer by explaining why the key words deserve to be in that particular column.

The teacher should also let the students know that by matching the key words and columns they are undertaking WJEC Assessment Objective AO1 – *Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of relevant institutions, processes, political concepts, theories and issues.*

The activity can be completed on the printable worksheet included.



Activity – Global challenges to Liberalism - sorting exercise See [Worksheet 6](#)

Students should match the key words to the correct box.

Nationalism	Fundamentalism	Confucianism
Donald Trump	ISIS	China
Marie Le Pen	Al-Qaeda	Singapore



Notes

The teacher should make the class aware that in the 1990s there was a liberal optimism for the ideological future, notably outlined by Francis Fukuyama. However, the 21st Century has seen the development of a growing political diversity rather than a global domination by liberalism.

Extension tasks can focus on finding other examples of global challenges to liberalism. The teacher should also let the students know that by finding other examples of global challenges to liberalism they are undertaking WJEC Assessment Objective AO2 – *Interpret and apply political information to identify and explain relevant similarities, differences and connections.*