

Extracts and provenance

Understanding provenance, particularly the 'who and why' something was written, is a key requirement when answering the extract question in AQA A-level politics exams. Extracts appear in all three exam papers, and while it tends to be a key thinker for Paper 3, papers 1 and 2 use extracts from a wide variety of sources

and you are expected to know and understand the significance of the most common sources. This is a nerve-wracking challenge for the average 17- or 18-year-old and yet it can be mitigated by careful preparation. Listed here are some of the most common sources you would be expected to know and understand.



Box 1 Right-leaning sources

Telegraph

By far the most right-wing of the broadsheet newspapers, the *Telegraph* has been such a strong supporter of the Conservative Party it is often nicknamed the *Torygraph*. Readership is declining but it sells somewhere in the region of 320,000 copies a day.

Daily Mail and Mail on Sunday

The *Daily Mail* and *Mail on Sunday* have become the UK's most right-wing newspapers and are increasingly influential. With a circulation of nearly 1 million copies a day, they are getting close to *The Sun* as the most widely-read newspaper.

The Sun and The Sun on Sunday

These papers are owned by Rupert Murdoch, who also owns *The Times* and media outlets in Australia and the USA, including Fox News. *The Sun* and *The Sun on Sunday*

are extremely right wing in their day-to-day reporting. *The Sun* has the largest circulation of any paper, and after the 1992 election claimed that 'it's *The Sun* wot won it' for the Conservatives. However, it switched allegiance to Blair's New Labour in 1997, and there is a strong debate as to whether it reflects or creates public opinion.

The Spectator

First published in 1828, *The Spectator* is a weekly news and current affairs journal, once edited by Boris Johnson and generally very right wing. It is owned by Frederick Barclay, who also owns the *Telegraph*.

The Times

The most moderate of the right-wing papers. Recent circulation figures put it at about 350,00 print copies, but every MP and their advisers receive a free digital copy – so the influence may be far greater than the circulation figures suggest.

Box 2 Central/neutral sources

Broadcast news channels

Unlike in America, where all news has a strong political bias, in the UK broadcast news outlets are required by law to be neutral.

BBC news and website

The BBC is closely monitored by the Labour and Conservative parties, both of which accuse it of supporting the other (even though it is legally required to be neutral). It is generally accepted as a reliable source of information.



The Independent

Now an online-only newspaper, *The Independent* tries to be what it says – independent.

Financial Times

Aimed at the financial and business world, the *FT* tries to stay out of party politics but is generally seen as favouring free trade and economic liberalism. It was strongly anti-Brexit.

The Economist

The UK weekly journal *The Economist* varies in its political stance, having recommended voting for all three major parties since 2010. It is supportive of free trade and economic liberalism and was highly anti-Brexit.

ACTIVITIES

Make notes and discuss as a class:

- 1 Why is provenance important when considering political information?
- 2 Do you agree with the required position of the BBC and other broadcast news in the UK? Explain why.
- 3 Consider some newspapers, magazines or journals not included on this page. Explain where they might be positioned and why.

Guiding AQA students through the challenges of getting to grips with 'provenance'

Box 3 Left-leaning sources

New Statesman

A UK weekly journal that is well respected for its integrity and detail. The *New Statesman* is left-leaning but will include articles written by right-wing politicians and sometimes has opinion columns supporting a right-wing view.

The Washington Post

While claiming not to have a party bias, the *Post* has supported the Democratic candidate in all recent presidential elections and has never backed a Republican for president. It is now owned by Jeff Bezos, owner of Amazon and one of the richest and most powerful men in the world.

The New York Times

Once seen as neutral in its news coverage, *The New York Times* has become increasingly a left-wing paper.

The Guardian and the Observer (its Sunday paper)

The only left-leaning broadsheet in the UK, *The Guardian* has a smaller circulation than *The Times* or *Telegraph*, at just over 100,000. It generally backs Labour but at times has supported the Lib Dems.

The Mirror and Sunday Mirror

Strongly left-wing, *The Mirror* and its Sunday paper have supported Labour consistently since 1945. *The Mirror* has the third-largest daily circulation after *The Sun* and the *Daily Mail* at around 300,000 copies a day.

POLITICSREVIEWExtras



Download this poster at

www.hoddereducation.co.uk/politicsreviewextras

Liz Salt is an experienced politics teacher, examiner and writer.