

BGE S1-S3

Modern Studies



**Third and
Fourth Levels**

Sandy Radford



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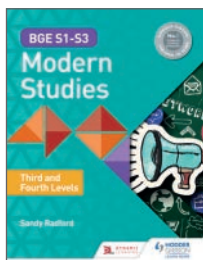
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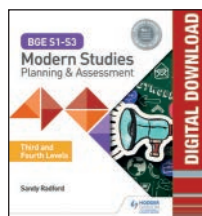
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For assessment:

- ▶ At least two worksheets per unit (ideal for classwork or homework) and 6 end-of-unit assessments

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Introduction

► What is Modern Studies?

Modern Studies is the study of people and societies. When using this book, you'll compare societies and ideas, analyse different systems of government, and develop your understanding of cultures and values. Modern Studies is a subject that looks at the world around us and asks: 'Why?'

>> How to get the most from this book

This book covers the BGE benchmarks for **Social Studies: People, Society and Business** at Third and Fourth Levels.

The book has six topic sections, each of which covers a topic relevant to the world you live in and information that you will need to know. If you take Modern Studies at National level, you may study some of these topics, and the information in this book will provide a solid foundation for further learning.

The topics also include activities that will support your literacy, numeracy, and health and wellbeing, as well as addressing key issues around Learning for Sustainability and Global Citizenship.

Each stand-alone chapter contains a series of lessons designed to bring breadth and depth to each topic area. Each lesson allows you to explore different issues and develop your skills through a variety of activities and research opportunities. The lessons can be completed individually or as part of a scheme of work.

At the end of the book, you will find a glossary defining all key words. Check key words as you go through the book to build up your Modern Studies vocabulary.

In the associated *Planning and Assessment Pack*, teachers will find the following items to accompany each lesson:

- a planning sheet outlining the aims of each lesson, resources required, assessment opportunities and the associated experiences, outcomes and benchmarks
- home-learning materials and worksheets
- end-of-topic tests to assess achievement of Third and Fourth Levels for each unit of work in the book.

► 3.4 Privilege

Privilege is a word used to describe not having to consider the problems of other people because they don't affect you. Almost everyone is privileged in some way, even if they don't realise it. An example of this is **economic** privilege; many people who have enough money to live on don't realise just how hard it is to live in poverty. This might make them think more negatively about people living in poverty than is fair. There are lots of different types of privilege and it is important to recognise them.

Learning intentions

- Describe different types of privilege.
- Explain why it is important to recognise privilege.

» White privilege

In the UK, people of colour make up about thirteen per cent of the population. Many people of colour face discrimination on an everyday basis that white people don't encounter. This might be in the form of racist comments or being treated differently for doing the same thing that a white person did. Because most white people do not experience this, they may not realise that it is happening.



▲ Figure 3.7 A stop and search being carried out by Metropolitan Police officers in London

An example can be seen in London where the Metropolitan Police asked for more powers to stop people in the street and search them. Many white politicians said that this was essential to stop knife crime. What they didn't realise, however, was that the police were stopping ten times as many black people as white people. The politicians didn't realise this because they had never experienced discrimination on the basis of their skin colour by the police; they had white privilege.

» Male privilege

Women are often treated differently to men by the media, politicians and the public. Because the top positions in government and in the biggest companies and organisations are still mainly held by men, this means that policies and laws might not take women's situations into account.

One example is that there is no maternity leave policy for Members of Parliament. This has meant that women MPs have been unable to represent their constituents in the late stages of pregnancy and in their babies' first few months of life. The system hasn't changed because the people in a position to change it are men and it doesn't affect them. They didn't realise it was a problem; they had male privilege.



▲ Figure 3.8 Labour MP Tulip Siddiq (seen here in a wheelchair) was supposed to have a caesarean section on the day of an important vote in January 2019 but, because there is no maternity leave for MPs, had to delay her operation to be able to vote.

>> Ability privilege

People with disabilities are often excluded from events, jobs and opportunities that people without disabilities take for granted. This is especially true for people with 'hidden disabilities' (disabilities that aren't obvious, like having hearing problems or a long-term illness). If an event uses flashing images, then many people with epilepsy might not be able to attend it. If a teacher uses a video that doesn't have subtitles, a student with hearing difficulties might not be able to understand it. Because people without disabilities consider themselves to be 'normal', they don't realise that not everyone has the same opportunities and needs as they do. This is ability privilege.

An example is that of the 270 London Underground stations, only 78 of them have step-free access, meaning that people in wheelchairs can't use 72% of the Tube. Transport for London is slowly attempting to improve this, but only after sustained pressure from activists with disabilities. Most people without disabilities don't even realise that it is an issue.



▲ **Figure 3.9** Many people don't realise that including flashing lights in a performance might mean that people with epilepsy are excluded.

>> Recognising privilege

Almost everyone is privileged in some way and that's OK! The important thing is that people recognise their privilege and try their best to think about people who do not have the same privileges. When decisions are being made that affect a particular group of people, they should be involved in the decision; privileged people shouldn't just assume that they know how people without those privileges feel.

Activities

- 1 What is privilege?
- 2 Why is it important to recognise privilege?
- 3 For each of the forms of privilege covered, explain how it works and give an example.
- 4 Write down three ways that you might be privileged.
- 5 What might be the negative consequences of politicians and leaders not recognising privilege?
- 6 Look at the three statements below. For each one, explain why it demonstrates a form of privilege:
 - a) 'Just because I have three homes doesn't mean I don't know about life [in poverty].' Robert Jenrick, MP
 - b) 'Overwhelmingly, America is a Christian country, so Jews shouldn't complain about schools doing too much Christian stuff. If you are really offended, you gotta go to Israel then.' Bill O'Reilly, former host of Fox News, USA
 - c) 'I get that they're allowed to have a wheelchair ramp by law, but couldn't they have it in the garage rather than outside their house?' A neighbour of the Gieseigh family in Fountain, Colorado, complaining about their 'ugly' wheelchair ramp



► 3.5 What are human rights?

Human rights are the rights that everyone should have simply because they are human. You shouldn't have to do anything to earn your human rights and they shouldn't be taken away from you for any reason.

Learning intentions

- Describe the 30 rights in the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.
- Explain the history of human rights.



The Universal Declaration of Human Rights

- 1 Right to equality.
- 2 Freedom from discrimination.
- 3 Right to life, liberty and personal security.
- 4 Freedom from slavery.
- 5 Freedom from torture.
- 6 Right to be accepted as a person by the law.
- 7 Right to be treated equally by the law.
- 8 Right to justice.
- 9 Freedom from unfair arrest or exile.
- 10 Right to a fair trial.
- 11 Right to be considered innocent until proven guilty.
- 12 Right to privacy.
- 13 Right to move around and between countries.
- 14 Right to protection in another country.
- 15 Right to a nationality and the freedom to change it.
- 16 Right to marriage and family.
- 17 Right to own property.
- 18 Freedom of thought, belief and religion.
- 19 Freedom of opinion and information.
- 20 Right to peacefully protest and gather in groups.
- 21 Right to take part in government and elections.
- 22 Right to have your basic needs met by the government.
- 23 Right to fair working conditions.
- 24 Right to rest and leisure.
- 25 Right to a decent standard of living.
- 26 Right to education.
- 27 Right to participate in the cultural life of community.
- 28 Right to a world where rights are respected.
- 29 Responsibilities to others.
- 30 Freedom from interference in these human rights.

»» The history of human rights

Human rights have a history spanning right back to early humans. For as long as there have been people, there have been certain behaviours that people understand are wrong, like murder or theft. Many ancient societies had lists of rights like the Code of Hammurabi, which was published in Mesopotamia in around 1780BCE, or the Charter of Medina, written by Muhammad in 622. Magna Carta was a document written in 1215 in England which guaranteed that the people had certain rights. It still forms part of the UK constitution today.

The modern movement to guarantee rights to every human started after the Second World War, with the founding of the United Nations (UN). In 1948, the UN published a list of rights that every country in the UN believed that every person should have, no matter what. This is called the Universal Declaration of Human Rights.

Case study: Human rights in the UK

The UK has signed up to the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (UDHR) and so people in the UK should have all their rights protected by law. In the UK, it is illegal for the government to violate people's privacy and companies are held to higher standards on this than in places like the USA. The UK has a minimum wage and clear laws on employee rights. The UK has introduced new laws to protect people from modern slavery and set up the Equality and Human Rights Commission to deal with issues relating to human rights.

The UK has, however, been criticised for not following the UDHR in certain cases. People have their right to vote taken away from them while they are in prison and the UN has criticised the UK for not meeting the needs of people in poverty. In June 2017, 72 people died as a result of the Grenfell Tower fire in London. The local council was criticised for not making sure that the tower was safe enough for people to live in. The UK has also refused to accept its 'fair share' of refugees, according to human rights organisation Amnesty International.



▲ **Figure 3.10** Former first lady of the USA, Eleanor Roosevelt, chaired the committee responsible for drafting the Universal Declaration of Human Rights after the Second World War.

Activities

- 1 What are human rights?
- 2 Where are your human rights listed?
- 3 Write down the three human rights that you think are the most important. Explain why you picked these three.
- 4 Create a timeline showing the history of human rights.
- 5 Use the information in the text to identify at least three human rights that you think are protected in the UK. Explain why you picked these rights.
- 6 Use the information in the text to identify at least three human rights that you think are abused in the UK. Explain why you picked these rights.
- 7 Do you think that the UK does enough to protect people's human rights? Explain your answer.
- 8 Create a poster explaining people's human rights to them. You might want to include illustrations of each right or focus on a few key rights. Make sure that your poster is clear, engaging and accurate!



► 5.2 The US Government

When the United States was created after the Revolutionary War, the founders decided that they wanted the young country to have a written constitution. This is a document that sets out how the country is run and what the government looks like. The United States Constitution sets out a three-part government comprising:

- the president and the Executive Branch
- Congress
- the Court System.

Each part is supposed to have equal power.

Learning intentions

- Compare and contrast the different parts of the US Government.
- Evaluate how effective the system is at meeting the founders' goals.

»» The president and the Executive Branch

The president runs the Executive Branch of the government. Their job is to carry out the laws and to run the country. The Executive Branch includes organisations like the FBI and the National Park Services. The president is elected to office every four years and almost everyone in America gets to vote. A person is only allowed to run for president twice. This was added to the constitution to make sure that a president did not try to hold on to power forever and become a king. Of the first 45 presidents, 44 were white men, with only one African-American man (Barack Obama) and no women.



▲ **Figure 5.2** Richard Nixon was president from 1969 to 1974. He had to resign after the Watergate Scandal, when it was found that he and his campaign cheated in the 1972 election.

»» Congress

The United States Congress is the equivalent of the UK Parliament. Congress writes the laws that the Executive Branch carries out. Congress is made up of two different parts: the House of Representatives and the Senate. The entirety of the United States is split up into 435 'congressional districts', each one containing roughly 700,000 people. Each one of these districts elects one person to the House of Representatives. These representatives are called 'congressmen' and 'congresswomen'. This means that big states have many representatives, while small states have very few. California has 53 representatives to Wyoming's one!



▲ **Figure 5.3** Tammy Duckworth was elected as a senator for Illinois in 2016. She served in the Iraq War as a pilot before she had to have both legs amputated after her helicopter was shot down. She is a member of the Democratic Party.

Each state, no matter how big or small it is, elects two people to represent itself in the Senate. These 100 representatives are called 'senators'. The US political system is made up of a lot more men than women; in the 2019–21 Congress there were only 25 female senators and 102 congresswomen. Members of the House of Representatives are elected every two years and senators are elected every six years.

Activities

- 1 What are the three parts of the US Government?
- 2 What is the job of each part of the US Government?
- 3 Roughly how many people live in each congressional district?
- 4 What percentage of members of the 2019–21 Congress were women?
- 5 Why are Supreme Court judges appointed for life?
- 6 The founders of the United States had some key goals. Copy the table below into your jotter and use the information in the text to complete it.

Goal	Evidence of success	Evidence of failure
Make sure that no one state is more powerful than another		
Make sure that no one part of government gets too much power		
Make sure that people are represented fairly		

- 7 Do you think that the US Government has succeeded in meeting the goals of the founders? Explain why, or why not.



>> The Court System

The US Court System is designed to make sure that the laws that Congress writes and the actions that the president takes are in line with the original aims of the founders. If someone thinks that Congress or the president are breaking the rules set up in the constitution, they can take them to court and a judge will decide. If one side is unhappy, they can appeal to a higher court. The highest court is called the Supreme Court of the US, which has nine judges. Any decision made by the Supreme Court is final and everyone must follow it.

Supreme Court Justices are appointed by the president and have their jobs for life. This is to try to stop them being influenced by having to run for election or the threat of being fired. Of the first 114 Supreme Court Justices, 108 were white men, two were black men, three were white women and one was a Hispanic woman.



▲ **Figure 5.4** Sonia Sotomayor was appointed to the Supreme Court in 2009. She served as a judge for 18 years before becoming the first Hispanic woman to sit on the Supreme Court.

► 5.3 The powers of the president

The US **Constitution** says that the president is a 'co-equal branch' of the government, no more powerful than Congress or the Supreme Court, but many previous presidents have been called 'the most powerful man in the world'. US presidents enjoy more individual power than almost any other world leader and recent attempts to restrict this by Congress have had limited success.

» Veto power

The president can **veto** any law that Congress passes. This means that even if both parties in Congress support it and the public are overwhelmingly behind it, the president can single-handedly stop it becoming a law. Congress can overrule the president's veto, but this requires two-thirds of both houses to vote to override the veto. Given that Congress is usually split around 50/50 between the two parties, this means that a lot of the president's own party would have to vote against them, so veto overrides almost never happen. President Obama vetoed several attempts by the Republican Party to destroy his healthcare law and none of these were overridden. Since 1998 there have been fewer than ten veto overrides!

Learning intentions

- Explain the powers of the president and their limitations.
- Analyse whether the checks on the powers of the president are effective.



▲ **Figure 5.5** The president is responsible for either signing a bill into law or vetoing it.

» Nominating officials

The president is the head of the Executive Branch of the government. The Executive Branch carries out all the laws that Congress passes and employs more than four million people, so this makes the president very powerful. When a new president takes office, they pick around 1200 people to take on the top jobs in the Executive Branch. These people are called '**nominees**'. This means that the president can select people for these different jobs who agree with them and



▲ **Figure 5.6** Presidential nominees like Neil Gorsuch, who was nominated for the Supreme Court in 2017, have to go before the Senate to be asked questions on their qualifications and suitability for the job.

Example

President Donald Trump struggled to find qualified nominees who supported his extreme policies. Four years into his presidency, he had still failed to fill over 250 key positions. Many of his nominees were rejected or had to withdraw from the process after scandals came out about them.

will do what they want. Before they can get these jobs, though, they must be confirmed by the Senate. This means that senators will interview the nominees and then vote on whether they should get the job. Usually nominees get confirmed by Congress very quickly, but sometimes there can be some hold-ups, especially if the Senate is controlled by a different party to that of the president.

>> Executive orders

The president can go around the laws set up by Congress by using an executive order. This is an order to the 4 million members of the Executive Branch to do their job in a particular way. Executive orders can be very broad and can achieve a great deal. There is not much that Congress can do to stop them, but the Judiciary can declare them unconstitutional and stop them from coming into effect. A new president can also cancel any executive orders put into place by a previous president. Executive orders have been used by presidents to change **immigration** rules, to alter laws on healthcare and to introduce new initiatives to deal with poverty in certain areas. The most famous executive order was the 'Emancipation Proclamation', issued by Abraham Lincoln in 1863, which changed the status of all enslaved African Americans in the US to free.



▲ Figure 5.7 US President Donald Trump has made extensive use of the powers of the president.

Case study

US President Donald Trump

In his first term, Donald Trump used more of the powers of the president than any previous office-holder. When his chosen nominees were rejected, he appointed people to 'acting positions' who would do what he wanted until he could find a permanent appointment. When Congress refused to fund a wall on the US–Mexico border, he used an executive order to declare a State of Emergency and build one anyway. When Congress passed a law demanding the US stop supporting Saudi Arabia in a war with Yemen, he vetoed it.

Activities

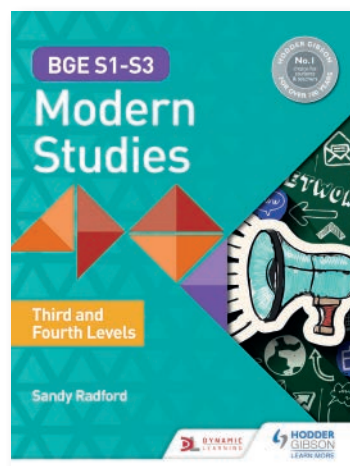
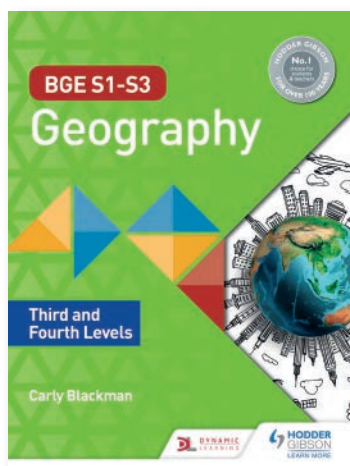
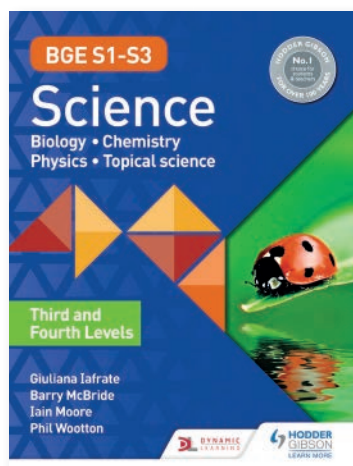
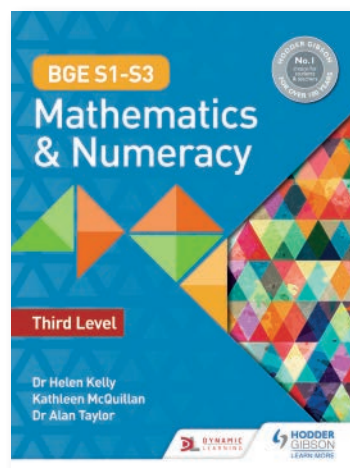
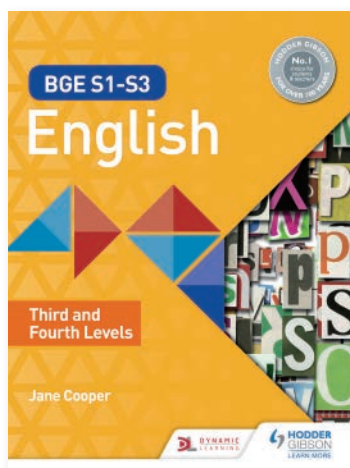
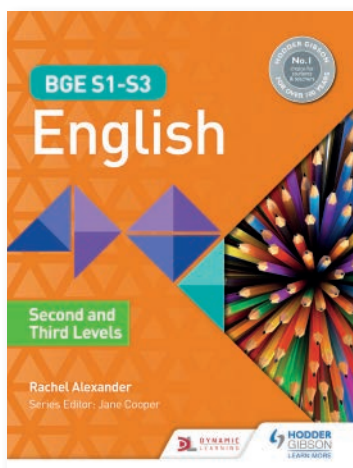
- 1 How can the president stop a law from being passed?
- 2 How many government officials are nominated by the president?
- 3 What is an executive order?
- 4 Copy the table below into your jotter and use the information in the text to complete it.

Power	Powerful because ...	Not powerful because ...	Used by Donald Trump to ...
Veto power			
Nominating officials			
Executive orders			

- 5 Which power do you think is the most powerful? Give reasons for your answer.
- 6 Do you think that the US president is too powerful? Give reasons for your answer.



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Sandy Radford has been teaching Modern Studies for over ten years and is an experienced SQA marker. He is also the Global Citizenship Coordinator for his school and has worked on projects with ScotDec, the British Council, the EU, Learning for Sustainability Scotland and the Scottish Parliament. He has presented his work in Poland, Slovakia and Tanzania.

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