



Modern Studies

N5

National 5 Modern Studies helps pupils understand real-world issues and how decisions made in Scotland, the UK and globally affect their lives. It builds knowledge of politics, law, inequality, and international relations – all through the lens of current events. Pupils learn to form their own views, interpret different sources of information, and communicate effectively. The course encourages debate, independent thinking, and active citizenship. Modern Studies is one of the most up-to-date subjects in school. Pupils are assessed on real issues happening right now – from elections and crime statistics to inequality and global power. Keeping up with the news, recognising bias, and explaining different points of view are all core parts of the course. It helps young people become informed citizens, confident speakers, and thoughtful decision-makers.

Topics Covered

- ☐ Democracy in Scotland
- ☐ Social Issues: Crime and the Law
- ☐ World Power: The USA



Skills Gained

- ☐ Critical Thinking – Making balanced judgments and spotting bias in arguments
- ☐ Research Skills – Gathering, selecting and evaluating information from different sources
- ☐ Communication – Structuring written arguments and explaining ideas clearly
- ☐ Active Citizenship – Understanding how to influence political decisions and make change
- ☐ Data Handling and Numeracy – Interpreting graphs, charts and statistics
- ☐ Confidence and Debating – Presenting arguments and defending points of view.

Assessment Breakdown

Question Paper – 2hrs 20 minutes

80 marks – (80% of total grade.) One full set of questions from each topic. This includes extended knowledge questions and one source-handling task per topic

Assignment/Folio

20 marks (20% of total grade)

Pupils choose and research a current issue (e.g. policing, poverty, rights in the USA). Pupils gather evidence and write up a structured report under timed conditions.

Progression & Possible Career Paths

Progression:

- ☐ Higher Modern Studies
- ☐ Higher Politics
- ☐ NPA Criminology
- ☐ Higher History

Possible Career Paths:

- ☐ Police
- ☐ Emergency Services
- ☐ Journalism or media production
- ☐ Law
- ☐ Politics
- ☐ Civil Service
- ☐ Local Government

Entry Requirements and advice

N4 Modern Studies
N5 English
Previous experience in a social subject



