

Contents

Table of Cases	ix
Table of Legislation	xiii
Preface	xvii
Guide to the Companion Website	xix
1 Introduction	1
What is constitutional law	1
The aims of this book	2
Studying constitutional law	2
Finding constitutional law	5
Primary and secondary sources	6
Terminology	7
What approach does this book take?	8
Summary	9
Further reading	11
Companion website	11
2 Does the UK have a constitution?	13
Learning objectives	13
Introduction	13
What is a constitution?	14
Why have a constitution?	15
Rule of law	18
Separation of powers	19
The USA's Constitution	21
Why is the UK's constitution so different from the USA's?	27
Summary	27
Issues to think about further	27
Further reading	28
Companion website	28
3 Finding UK constitutional law	29
Learning objectives	29
Introduction	29
Legal and non-legal rules	29
Summary	38
Further reading	38
Companion website	38

4	Analysing the UK constitution	39
	Learning objectives	39
	Introduction	39
	Separation of powers – theory	39
	Separation of powers – reality	40
	The rule of law	42
	‘Traffic light’ theory	44
	Summary	45
	Further reading	45
	Companion website	46
5	Parliament’s functions and make-up	47
	Learning objectives	47
	Introduction	47
	The evolution of Parliament	48
	Parliament’s composition today – overview	51
	Parliament’s functions – legislating	52
	Scrutiny of primary legislation	54
	Relationship between the Commons and the Lords	54
	Scrutiny of delegated legislation	56
	Parliament’s functions: scrutinising the Government	57
	The House of Commons	57
	The House of Lords	63
	The Queen	65
	Summary	66
	Further reading	66
	Companion website	66
6	Parliamentary sovereignty	67
	Learning objectives	67
	Introduction	67
	What is sovereignty?	67
	What does Dicey’s definition of Parliamentary sovereignty mean?	68
	Parliament’s legislative competence	69
	No-one can challenge the validity of an Act of Parliament	70
	Parliament cannot limit future Parliaments	71
	Transfer of law-making powers to Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland	72
	Devolution – a legal limit, or a political limit?	74
	Membership of the European Union (EU) and EU law	75
	To what extent does EU law limit Parliamentary sovereignty?	76
	Possibility of express repeal of ECA	77
	The ECA’s impact on the doctrine of implied repeal	77
	Incorporation of the European Convention on Human Rights (ECHR)	78

Section 3, HRA 1998 – interpretative obligation	79
Section 4 HRA 1998 – declarations of incompatibility	81
Could Parliament entrench a constitutional statute?	83
Summary	85
Further reading	86
Companion website	86
7 Government’s relationship with Parliament	87
Learning objectives	87
Introduction	87
What is ‘The Crown’?	87
The structure of Government	89
The powers of Government	93
Conventions and Ministerial responsibility	99
Summary	100
Further reading	100
Companion website	101
8 Government and the courts	103
Learning objectives	103
Introduction	103
How are judges appointed?	103
Why does judicial independence matter?	104
The constitutional role of judicial review	106
Summary	118
Further reading	118
Companion website	118
9 The protection of civil liberties	121
Learning objectives	121
Introduction	121
The European Convention on Human Rights	121
The European Court of Human Rights	122
Human Rights Act 1998	126
Summary	141
Further reading	142
Companion website	142
10 Preparing for your examination	143
Learning objectives	143
Introduction	143
How to be prepared for essay questions on constitutional reform topics	143
Translating the question	145

Structuring your answer	146
Marking your work	147
Answering problem questions	148
Quality, not quantity	148
Planning your revision	148
House of Lords reform	149
Scottish independence?	151
A codified constitution?	152
Further reading	154
Companion website	154
Index	155