

# To what extent was Tony Blair more aligned to the Conservative Party than the traditions of his own party? *Essay Planning*

**Introduction:** Clarify key terms, instruct the reader about the general debate, and state a quick summary of what you believe and why

- x3 {
- PEE:** A point/claim, backed up with detailed knowledge and explanation, linking it to the question
  - CEE:** That specific point's counter claim, backed up with detailed knowledge and explanation, linking it to the question
  - Evaluative comment:** Mini conclusion, forming a judgement about the above point and counter

**Conclusion:** Summing up what you have argued, giving a central thesis and justification

## Example of a PEE → CEE → Ev

**Point (claim):** Some people may argue that Tony Blair is more aligned to the Conservative Party than the Labour Party because, during his leadership, the party dropped Clause IV of their constitution, breaking with socialism. **Evidence (detailed knowledge):** Clause IV had committed the Labour Party to wider state ownership, and was an ideological underpinning of the Attlee Government, which nationalised vast swathes of industry such as coal and civil aviation, promoting state intervention over private property. **Explanation:** By dropping such a central component of Labour's mission, Blair could be viewed as divorced from the party's traditions and closer to the Conservatives'. This is particularly the case since his Government followed 18 years of extensive privatisation by the Conservatives.

**Counter (claim):** However, although this diverted Labour from this specific and potentially outdated aspect of socialism, Blair arguably held onto several other aspects of socialism. **Evidence (detailed knowledge):** For instance, the introduction of a National Minimum Wage – opposed by the Conservatives at the time – was a radical attempt to avoid workers' exploitation. Furthermore, government spending increased from £308 billion in 1997 to £549 billion in 2007. **Explanation:** These examples demonstrate that, under Blair, in many areas, Labour maintained connection with key socialist ideals. Increasing government spending ensured the disadvantaged received support while expanding state intervention. Along with the NMW, these arguably aligned Blair with Labour's tradition.

**EITHER:** As such, although Clause IV distanced Blair from some archaic aspects of socialist policy, he remained true to the traditions of socialist Labour, expanding welfare, supporting the poor, and promoting state activism, just in an economically viable way. **OR:** Although some aspects of Blair's Government were not wholly neoliberal, neither are Conservatives. Spending has increased under successive governments of all colours and NMW has increased under Conservatives, so this provides no evidence that Blair is more aligned to Labour's traditions than the Conservatives'. Dropping Clause IV distances Blair entirely from Labour's socialist roots.

## **Other potential points to look at:**

- Tony Blair sought support from Rupert Murdoch and the Sun etc. (traditionally supportive of the Conservatives)
- Tony Blair's Government actually decreased income tax over the decade, rather than increasing them to redistribute wealth
- Tony Blair's key ally, Peter Mandelson, said that New Labour was 'intensely relaxed about people getting filthy rich as long as they pay their taxes'
- Tony Blair's Government began partial privatisation of the NHS
- Tony Blair was very close on the international stage with Republican President, George W Bush