

## How to prepare for CPGE English classes (Lycée Chaptal)

First of all, welcome to Chaptal! Here's some advice for working on your English over the summer...

### 1) General information

- ★ In CPGE, you will have 2 hours of English class per week + 1 colle every 2 weeks.
- ★ All the English exams are based on the press / current affairs, and you are expected to write and speak using precise English.
- ★ Types of exercise include: synthesis of a corpus of documents from the press / summary + commentary of a press article / translation of press articles and literary excerpts.

### 2) Current Affairs

- ★ **YOU MUST** read the following text-pack carefully. You'll be expected to master the notions in Sept.
- ★ **OPTION** If you want to go further, here are some good sources (It's not enough to read the news on social media.)

#### a) Reading

- ✓ Read articles online or download an app.

**BBC** (British news corporation)  
<http://www.bbc.com/> (free app)

**The Guardian** (British newspaper)  
<http://www.guardian.co.uk/> (free app)

**Straight Arrow News** (American news org)  
<https://san.com/> (free app)

**The New York Times** (US newspaper)  
<http://www.nytimes.com/> (subscription needed but some free content online)

**Wired** (US tech magazine)  
<https://www.wired.com/> (subscription needed but some free content online)

#### b) Listening

- ✓ Podcasts are a great idea

##### **BBC 6 Minute English**

If English is hard for you, start here.

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/learningenglish/english/features/6-minute-english>

##### **BBC Global News Podcast**

(Daily 30 min news show. You don't have to listen to the whole thing every time!)

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p02nq0gn/episodes/downloads>

##### **Today in Focus**

(The Guardian = takes a topical issue and discusses it in detail. You can choose topics that interest you as they're all relevant. This is my favourite news pod!)

<https://www.theguardian.com/news/series/todayinfocus>

### 3) Grammar

- ★ Revise basic grammar using your notes from *lycée* (even *collège*) and practise. Do exercises rather than just re-reading notes.
- ★ We'll tell you which textbook you'll need for classes in September.

### 4) Vocabulary

- ★ Get yourself a notebook to write new vocabulary in.
- ★ Revise basic everyday vocabulary using your notes from *lycée* and *collège*.

We're looking forward to meeting you and working with you in September.

Your future teachers,

*Magali De Block, Pierre Laurent, Jean-Marc Gourdon, Lucy Whiteley and Valérie Binet*

## COMPULSORY WORK

We expect you to read these articles / watch the videos carefully over the summer. That means:

- ★ Look up new vocabulary, note it down in your vocab notebook and learn it.
- ★ Make a list of the main ideas (in your own words, 4-5 main ideas per article).

There are 8 topics, and 8 weeks over the summer...so you can guess what we're suggesting, can't you?

### 1) Video: British politics for beginners

(YouTube - Jonas Laursen: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Urcw56iV3EI>)



- ★ Scan the video and enjoy!
- ★ Put the sub-titles on and press pause if you need to.
- ★ You can even click on the little cog icon (⚙️) on the lower right corner, choose “playback speed” and slow it down as much as needed!

📌 **Get your facts straight:** here is a list of recent British Prime Ministers:

Prime Minister	Party	Dates
Margaret Thatcher	Conservative	1979-1990
John Major	Conservative	1990-1997
Tony Blair	Labour	1997-2007
Gordon Brown	Labour	2007-2010
David Cameron	Conservative	2010-2016
Theresa May	Conservative	2016-2019
Boris Johnson	Conservative	2019-2022
Liz Truss	Conservative	September-October 2022
Rishi Sunak	Conservative	2022-2024
Keir Starmer	Labour	2024-present

### 2) Article: The ungovernable country? Why Britain keeps losing prime ministers

(Adapted from) Tom Clark, [The Guardian](#), 17<sup>th</sup> May 2026

Keir Starmer is not going to resign so easily, but overseas precedents for our political tumult are all there is, because British history can't provide them. There has “never been a period like the present,” said Anthony Seldon, author of [The Impossible Office?](#), which charts the 300-year story of the premiership.

Yes, there was a decade in each of the 18th (1760-1770) and 19th (1827-1837) centuries where we burned through prime ministers at a similar rate. But the six – and soon likely seven – PMs since 2016 rank as “unique”. There have also been eight chancellors and nine foreign secretaries.

Cameron, May, Johnson, Truss, Sunak, Starmer, and now, if he can prevail in a tough by-election, maybe Burnham: cast your mind over the list and the first thought is not of anything solid actually happening, just the simple fact of the frenzy. That is not a coincidence.

An obvious but underdiscussed consequence of changing prime minister is that a huge proportion of other ministers will automatically change too. And at the helm of the resulting team of novices will be an inexperienced leader – counselled by a new cabinet of advisers, mostly new to the workings of the centre of British power. [...]

Starmer is not wrong to warn there will be financial consequences from all the chaos. [...] Starmer's problem, however, is that he has ceased to be a credible answer to the chaos. Just like May's early promise of "strong and stable leadership," his vow to "end the chaos" has become a sour joke.

So what it is about 2020s Britain that has rendered the premiership an impossible office? The obvious explanation for the paralysis is economic. Stagnation since the financial crisis has, undoubtedly, made the arithmetic of public policy harsher. But many earlier generations have regarded the economic troubles of the country as particularly harsh. The inflation of the 1970s is one case, the unemployment of the 80s another. Yet back then, politics was remarkably stable.

What's changed, I think, is that the simple class divide of postwar society has been replaced by a variety of deep, overlaying cleavages: cultural divides like Brexit, values divides such as Gaza, and generational divides between older homeowners and younger tenants. Today, with all the enmities electrified by social media, summoning and then holding together a coalition together takes a blend of political talents.

Boris Johnson's levelling up agenda was one attempt, but he abjectly lacked the application to see it through. The great lack with Starmer has been in understanding and imagination. Now he appears to be finished, and doubts are setting in about whether anyone can assemble a governing coalition based on anything other than chauvinism [= *excessive support for one's own group*].

That, however, is too dark a conclusion. Margaret MacMillan, a historian, said the "need is to appeal to people's better natures", and be honest with the public about the need for effort, perhaps sacrifice, and above all, time to get great things done. She sees Mark Carney doing at least some of this in Canada, and notes that his popularity is holding up well.

✔ **Know your sources**

- ✔ The Guardian is a British daily newspaper founded in 1821. It is owned by the Scott Trust, a structure designed to protect its editorial independence. Politically, The Guardian sits on the centre-left of the British media landscape and has historically been sympathetic to the Labour Party. It is broadly progressive in outlook, championing causes such as civil liberties, environmental action, LGBT+ rights, and social equality.


📺 **Just for fun: FILM IDEA**

**The Queen** (Stephen Frears, 2006). After the death of Princess Diana, Queen Elizabeth II struggles with her reaction to a sequence of events nobody could have predicted, with the help of PM Tony Blair.

**1) Video: American politics for beginners**

(YouTube: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Nz1cStYSOGs>)



 **Get your facts straight:** here is a list of recent US presidents:

President	Party	Dates
John F. Kennedy	Democrat	1961-1963
Lyndon B. Johnson	Democrat	1963-1969
Richard Nixon	Republican	1969-1974
Gerald Ford	Republican	1974-1977
Jimmy Carter	Democrat	1977-1981
Ronald Reagan	Republican	1981-1989
George H. W. Bush	Republican	1989-1993
Bill Clinton	Democrat	1993-2001
George W. Bush	Republican	2001-2009
Barack Obama	Democrat	2009-2017
Donald Trump	Republican	2017-2021
Joe Biden	Democrat	2021-2025
Donald Trump	Republican	2025-present

**2) Article (The Executive branch): The World Cup is shedding new light on the pathology of the Trump regime**

Tue 9 Jun 2026, Zoe Williams, [The Guardian](#)

Whenever my kids and I are stationary in the same room, within five minutes they will have started talking about football. Imagine their surprise and delight, then, to discover that, on the eve of the World Cup – the first such epochal event for which the oldest child has authentic ID – I have an array of very strong views, complete with merch. I came home the other day with Football Against Fascism beer mats, hot off the press, to the inevitable queries about what the hell I know about football. I can still cheerfully say: ‘Absolutely nothing,’ but I know a thing or two about fascism. [...]

The US isn't a safe place to visit. This point was made vividly when the Swiss forward Breel Embolo was

denied an Esta visa waiver three hours before he was due to take off for the US last Tuesday. The Swiss authorities remained optimistic and careful in their language. In many ways, Embolo could thank his lucky stars that he was denied entry while still in Switzerland. Had he been denied entry on US soil, who is to say he wouldn't have spent six weeks in detention, as numerous tourists have?

What could border officials possibly have had against Switzerland's first-choice striker? Perhaps they misunderstood our European jargon and thought he was liable to go on strike, as is threatened by numerous US labour unions representing hospitality workers, worried about potential ICE raids of stadiums during the tournament.

Perhaps it was about Embolo's criminal conviction for an altercation in 2018, although that would lay some landmines, since he's not the only footballer to have one of those. Could it have been because he isn't white? In this pantomime, you're not really supposed to ask: you mention racism, the authority either denies it or stonewalls it, then it hangs in the air and it's your fault, because you summoned the word. Whoops, now it's Thursday and Embolo has permission to travel after all – the authorities were just checking that the incident for which he was convicted was nonviolent. Don't you look stupid?

Travelling fans, meanwhile, run the risk of having their social media trawled for anti-Trump sentiment – this may be what happened to a bunch of Scottish fans, whose Esta status suddenly changed to "travel not authorised" without explanation. But then again, how can you know for sure?

Pathocracy is a system of government in which a small pathological minority has taken control of a society of normal people. If we were going to go over again whether or not the US is one, we would definitely take in Pete Hegseth's D-day speech, in which he equated migrants and Nazis. But this is what a pathocracy does – it constantly tests your boundaries, looking for the point at which you'll say: "That is unacceptable."

International football is a great canvas for that: the stakes are so high; there's so much money involved; the imperative to play nicely and not ruin things is so strong. Governments and football's governing bodies the world over, it quickly transpires, will accept almost anything. But it's a canvas, too, for fans to name what is staring them in the face, starting with a beer mat.

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### **3) Article (The judicial branch): How the Supreme Court both checks and empowers Donald Trump** *It blocks his most blatantly illegal acts, but helps him in other ways*

The Economist, May 24th 2026

One of Donald Trump's most enduring legacies will be his imprint on the Supreme Court. In his first term he appointed three justices—Neil Gorsuch, Brett Kavanaugh and Amy Coney Barrett—creating a 6-3 conservative majority. The court has since delivered a series of landmark rulings cheered by the president and his supporters. The constitutional right to abortion is gone; affirmative action in university admissions has been curtailed; gun rights are more robust than ever before; and former presidents now enjoy broad immunity for acts undertaken in office. More recently the court has provisionally blessed Mr Trump's policies on spending, immigration and the restructuring of the executive branch. The president has made it clear he thinks the conservative justices' job is to advance his agenda; critics on the left accuse them of doing just that.

Yet a closer look at the court's current term—at both the decisions already handed down and those still to come—suggests a more complicated picture. On several occasions the justices have shown themselves willing to rule against the president when he has clearly crossed statutory or constitutional boundaries. At the same time, in cases that will shape the structure of American government and the conduct of politics, the court is moving to the right—often in ways that benefit Mr Trump. In effect, the court of Chief Justice John Roberts shows how difficult it has become to disentangle conservatism from Trumpism. That, in turn, is

making it harder for the court to sustain its reputation as an institution above politics.

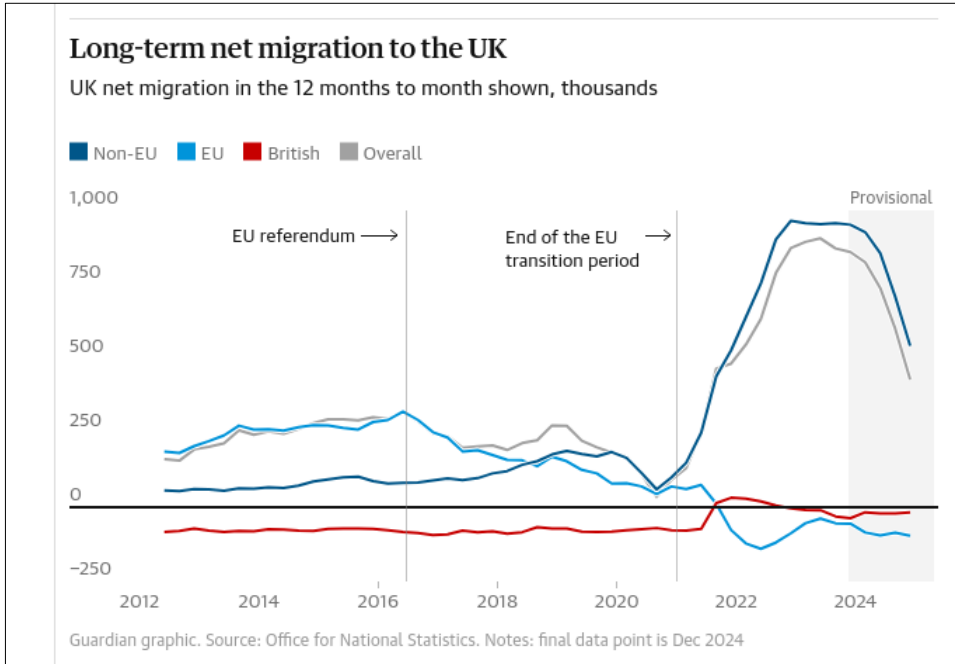
The court does not reliably rule in Mr Trump's favour. Earlier this term it delivered its most forceful check on the president, ruling 6-3 that his "Liberation Day" tariffs were not authorised under the International Emergency Economic Powers Act. Chief Justice Roberts pointed out that the act does not mention tariffs, and the constitution clearly gives the power to raise taxes to Congress, not the president. Mr Trump responded furiously. He called the ruling "a disgrace to the nation" and lashed out at the justices in the majority—including two of his own appointees—describing them "fools and lapdogs for the rinos ["Republicans in name only"] and the radical left Democrats". [...]

Consolation prizes: Still, even as the court rules against Mr Trump in cases where he pushes fanciful or strained interpretations of the law or the constitution, several of its forthcoming decisions this term are likely to please him. The conservative majority is expected to uphold bans on natal males in women's sports, loosen campaign-finance restrictions and allow the administration to revoke temporary protections for migrants from Haiti and Syria. [...]

Race to judgment: Chief Justice Roberts often pushes back against accusations that the court has become "politicised". However, decisions favoured by the conservative legal movement do often have political consequences that benefit Mr Trump and the Republicans. Perhaps the clearest example came on April 29th, when the court overturned a 40-year-old reading of a 1982 update to the Voting Rights Act (vra) in Louisiana v Callais. In a 6-3 ruling the conservative majority held that challenges to electoral maps must show not only racially discriminatory effects but also strong evidence of intentional discrimination. The decision had immediate partisan consequences, making it harder to create majority-black electoral districts while leaving both parties free to pursue partisan gerrymanders. The six conservative justices also agreed to fast-track the legal process to allow redistricting in Louisiana and Alabama, despite the court's usual reluctance to alter rules close to an election..

The court will probably continue to rule against Mr Trump when he crosses obvious red lines. But in many cases, as the court puts a conservative stamp on America's government and political order, the president stands to benefit. ■

📌 **Get your facts straight:** here are some statistics about migration to the UK



### 1) Article (the UK) Immigration remains at the forefront of British voters' minds

*The focus has shifted to asylum and small boats*

The Economist, May 28th 2026

“A drain on our resources”, says Josie from Heywood. “People are coming over here, we’ve no idea who they are, what they’ve done,” says Ed from Bury. “Giving them a hotel, it doesn’t make sense,” says Katie from Gravesham. Those are some of the responses from a focus group of right-leaning British voters, run by the pollster More In Common and commissioned by The Economist, when asked recently what concerns them about immigration.

Immigration has declined rapidly in recent years, but the topic remains at the forefront of voters’ minds. Each month Ipsos, another polling firm, asks a representative sample of adults: “What is the most important issue facing Britain today?” In May 41% responded “immigration”, seven percentage points higher than the second-most-mentioned term, “the economy”. A similar poll by More In Common has “cost of living” as the top issue, though concern about immigration has risen by five points over the past year. The government has acted but voters are still displeased. Why?

The public’s displeasure long precedes Labour. According to the “Immigration Attitudes Tracker”, published since 2015 by British Future, a think-tank, just 15% of Brits say they are satisfied with the way the government is dealing with immigration. That figure has never been higher than 20%. This ire could be aimed at several elements of migration, from the sheer volume of people coming into the country in a given year, to the perception of a lack of control around asylum-seekers, to concerns about the assimilation of newcomers. [...]

Then there are perceptions of migrants. [...] When people think of groups which they do and don’t like, says Sunder Katwala, of British Future, they latch onto four stereotypes: doctors and nurses working in hospitals (good); Polish plumbers (initially sceptical, now acceptable); Ukrainians fleeing war (fine); and men crossing the English Channel in dinghies (bad).

The Labour Party’s manifesto promised to “smash” the gangs that ferry people in small boats across the English Channel. Arrivals in the first 145 days of this year fell by 37% compared with the same period last year, but today’s 12-month total is still 15% higher than when Labour entered office in July 2024. That has

not escaped voters' attention: 64% of people who are dissatisfied with the immigration system say the government is not "doing enough to stop migrant crossings". As overall immigration shrinks—particularly if asylum applications remain steady and headlines like "Almost 1,000 migrants cross Channel over bank holiday" continue—perceptions of government impotence will grow.

Meanwhile Reform UK, a populist-right party, has further fuelled public perceptions of a chaotic migration system soft on asylum claimants. Attitudes towards migrants have soured over the past four years. The share of Britons who say they have "no sympathy at all" for small-boat migrants has risen from 18% to 28%. More broadly, the share who say migrants undermine British culture has risen from around one in eight to almost one in three. Among Reform voters it is nearly two-thirds.

Even so, most Britons, including those in the focus group, remain open to migration so long as it is "under control". Ask about specific occupations and a plurality say they would welcome more doctors, nurses, engineers and fruit-pickers into the country. Yet much as trust arrives on foot and leaves on horseback, people are unlikely to notice a dramatic decline in immigration overnight—but they will be discussing the sudden shock inflow of 2021-24 for years to come.

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### **3) Article (The US): The refugees Donald Trump wants are white and middle-class**

*Afrikaners are welcome. Pretty much no one else is*

The Economist, May 28th 2026

Some refugees flee from wars and end up in squalid tented camps. Others defy this stereotype. Consider the white hr executive from South Africa whose application for protection in America rested partly on her claim that she had not had a pay rise in nine years because of her skin colour. "It's a different type of persecution, but it's still persecution," says this newly minted refugee, who now enjoys the sunshine and safety of Florida. Of the roughly 6,000 refugees admitted to America since October, nearly all are white South Africans.

At the start of last year 130,000 people were in America's refugee pipeline. Then Donald Trump closed the programme to all except Afrikaners (white South Africans who speak a language related to Dutch) and other minorities from South Africa. Mr Trump has said that white South Africans face "genocide", which is nonsense. He also says they suffer "government-sponsored race-based discrimination", which is true, but complicated. On May 26th he raised their quota for this fiscal year by 10,000 places, to 17,500 (the Afrikaner population of South Africa is roughly 3m).

To qualify as a refugee you have to show a credible fear of persecution. Afrikaners note that they are often victims of violent crime. But so, unfortunately, are all groups in South Africa. They also cite laws requiring racial preferences for blacks in higher education, hiring and government contracting. These were supposed to redress the wrongs of apartheid—until 1994 blacks were not allowed to vote. More than half a million white South Africans have emigrated in the past two decades. But few imagined that the laws might allow them to claim refugee status. Now they do. "You don't have to lie and make up stories," says Melissa (not her real name), another recent arrival in America. You can also cite your fear of "future persecution", she adds.

Afrikaners present, in the words of one caseworker, a new "modality", which is NGO-speak for new questions—such as whether pets can come, too. They tend to be fluent in English and Facebook, where they gripe about America's threadbare social-safety net. "Managing expectations of resettled refugees is nothing new," says Erol Kekic of Church World Service, a resettlement agency. "But there are expectations and then there are expectations."

That Mr Trump axed cash handouts, food stamps and health-care subsidies for refugees just as the Afrikaners arrived is not lost on the newcomers. "We are the victims of that," says Melissa. "I don't think they thought this thing through very well." She runs a Facebook message board where she tells others that the scheme is not a fairy tale. It is a refugee programme, not a "travel opportunity" or a "let's see how it goes"

arrangement. “You are fleeing your country,” she reminds her group. “This requires a clean break.” Afrikaner-advocacy groups were not actually seeking refugee status when they embarked on an American media tour during Mr Trump’s first term. They just hoped that international pressure would make South Africa’s government ease up on affirmative-action policies. (...)

The refugee narrative has undermined these activists, says Carolyn Holmes of the University of Tennessee. “Everyone’s like, ‘If you’re going to leave, why should we bargain with you?’” It is even a little embarrassing. Afrikaners self-mythologise as voortrekkers: hardy pioneers who settled in the interior in the 19th century. Today they are called voetsekers, a play on the Afrikaans word for “get lost”.

✔ **Know your sources**

- ✔ The Economist is a British weekly news and analysis magazine founded in London in 1843, covering international politics, business, finance, science, and culture. It takes a broadly liberal, free-market editorial stance, supporting open economies, free trade, and internationalism.

## WEEK 4: MEDIA

- 📌 **Get your facts straight: Who owns the UK media and which are the most read news sources?**  
2025 Report (<https://www.mediareform.org.uk>)

Table 2: Top 15 newsbrands in the UK, March 2025

Newsbrand	Company	Audience (m)	Reach %
BBC	BBC	39.1	77%
Mail Online	DMG Media	21.2	41%
The Guardian	Guardian	21.1	40%
The Sun	News UK	20.6	40%
The Independent	Lebedev	19.3	36%
Yahoo!	Others	18.9	34%
Mirror	Reach Plc	18.5	36%
Sky News	Comcast	17.1	33%
Daily Express	Reach Plc	16.6	31%
The Telegraph	Telegraph	15.9	29%
Money Saving Expert	Others	15.2	28%
Metro	DMG Media	15.1	28%
ITV	ITV	14.2	29%
Good Food	Others	13.1	23%
Manchester Evening News	Reach Plc	12.3	24%

Source: Ipsos iris / Press Gazette<sup>2</sup>

### 1) Article (the UK): Prince Harry 'arrives in UK' ready for High Court battle

Rebecca Thomas, The Independent, Monday 19 January 2026

Prince Harry has reportedly arrived in the UK as he prepares to take on the Daily Mail's publisher ahead of a high-stakes legal battle with the British media giant. The prince's action against the paper's publishers, Associated Newspapers, will finally be heard at the High Court in London on Monday in what is set to be a nine-week trial.

The Duke of Sussex has a host of seven high-profile figures who have joined in his action, including Elton John, his husband David Furnish, actors Liz Hurley and Sadie Frost, and Baroness Doreen Lawrence, the mother of Stephen Lawrence, and former Liberal Democrat MP Simon Hughes. The claimants have accused the Daily Mail of hiring private investigators to place listening devices inside cars and homes, phone hacking, paying police for information, and even commissioning burglaries.

Associated Newspapers, which is owned by the Rothermere family, has vehemently denied any wrongdoing, dismissing the allegations as "preposterous smears" and part of a wider conspiracy. The stakes are high for all parties involved in the trial, with reputations on the line and legal costs anticipated to run into tens of millions of pounds.

Prince Harry reportedly arrived in London on Sunday and is due to give evidence on Thursday. A source close to Harry told The Telegraph he was feeling "confident and ready" for the court fight with Associated Newspapers. The 41-year-old has consistently expressed his deep resentment of the often aggressive tactics employed by British media, a stance frequently linked to the tragic death of his mother, Princess Diana, in a 1997 car crash while being pursued by paparazzi.

Prince Harry and his American wife, Meghan, have previously cited that media harassment was one of the main factors for their decision to step down from royal duties and move to California in 2020. This case against Associated Newspapers could prove to be Prince Harry's most significant legal challenge, following successful actions against Mirror Group Newspapers and Rupert Murdoch's News Group Newspapers (NGN), which resulted in damages, apologies, and admissions of wrongdoing.

In 2023, the prince won a high-court battle against the Mirror newspapers, in which a judge found "widespread and habitual" use of phone hacking at the newspapers. Prince Harry's claim against the Daily Mail publisher covers 14 articles that are alleged to have been obtained unlawfully, including stories about his relationships with former girlfriends Chelsy Davy, Cressida Bonas and Laura Gerard-Leigh, and an article concerning details of a party being planned by the two brothers after Princess Diana's memorial concert.

The trial comes after the closure of News of the World in 2011 over a phone hacking scandal which led to the jailing of its former editor Andy Coulson and a public inquiry.

✓ **Know your sources:**

- ✓ The Independent ran as a print newspaper from 1986 to 2016, and has been an exclusively online newspaper since then. Despite a centre-left stance, it sets itself apart from the Guardian with support for economic liberalism.

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## 2) Article (the US): The Ellisons are building a media empire. Trump keeps cheering them on.

Scott Nover, The Washington Post, March 17 2026.

President Donald Trump and Defense Secretary Pete Hegseth publicly celebrated the wealthy Ellison family's growing media empire in recent days, even as the Trump administration is reviewing Paramount Skydance's deal to buy Warner Bros. Discovery and its assets including CNN for \$110 billion. "The Ellison family, two great people, great people. It's a great family," Trump said Monday, in remarks ahead of a Kennedy Center board meeting that referenced CBS and its upcoming broadcast of a UFC event.

On Friday, Hegseth called Warner Bros.-owned CNN's coverage of the U.S.-Israeli war in Iran "fake news" after it reported that the administration had underestimated the risk of disruption to shipping through the Strait of Hormuz. "The sooner David Ellison takes over that network, the better," Hegseth said. A spokeswoman for CNN declined to comment on his remarks.

CNN, a longtime target of Trump's complaints about the media, is among the most prominent assets in Paramount's pending acquisition of Warner Bros., which requires approval from the Justice Department. [...] The administration's posture toward Paramount's proposed acquisition of Warner Bros. Discovery has drawn scrutiny since a bidding war erupted over the troubled media giant late last year.

After Netflix announced an \$83 billion deal in December to buy most of Warner Bros. Discovery and spin off CNN and other cable properties, Trump told reporters he would be "involved" in deciding whether to approve it, citing the streaming giant's market power as a potential concern.

Days later, Paramount launched a hostile bid for the entire company, including CNN, backed by a personal guarantee of more than \$40 billion from Larry Ellison. Netflix ultimately withdrew its offer last month after Paramount increased its bid, allowing it to strike a deal to merge with Warner Bros. The merger could reshape Hollywood and the news industry by placing two major Hollywood studios (Paramount Pictures and Warner Bros. Pictures), two major streaming services (HBO Max and Paramount+), and two major news brands (CBS News and CNN) under one roof.

William Baer, the Justice Department's antitrust chief under President Barack Obama, said the Trump administration appears to be seeking to influence a process that should be grounded in economics and consumer protection. [...] Daniel Crane, who teaches antitrust law at University of Michigan Law School, said Trump has bucked a half-century of precedent by involving himself in Justice Department and Federal Trade Commission antitrust reviews of mergers.

"Despite a bipartisan post-Watergate consensus that the agencies should be insulated from political interference, Trump has made it very clear that he views antitrust decisions as his to make," Crane said. [...]

Trump's fresh praise for the Ellisons comes as the president has spent weeks insulting the press over their coverage of the Iran war. On Sunday, Trump alleged without evidence in a Truth Social post that news organizations were running AI-generated Iranian propaganda and should be charged with "TREASON for the dissemination of false information." He also endorsed Federal Communications Commission Chairman Brendan Carr's threats to revoke the licenses of broadcasters whose coverage the agency deems to be "fake news."

✓ **Know your sources:**

- ✓ The Washington Post was founded in 1877. It boasts the most digital subscribers in the USA after the New York Times and The Wall Street Journal, and has won 76 Pulitzer Prizes. Originally liberal, it has regularly endorsed Democratic presidential candidates while still hosting conservative columnists. Critical of Trump during the 2016 election, it has then switched to the defense of "personal liberties and free markets" according

to its owner Jeff Bezos (since 2013.)

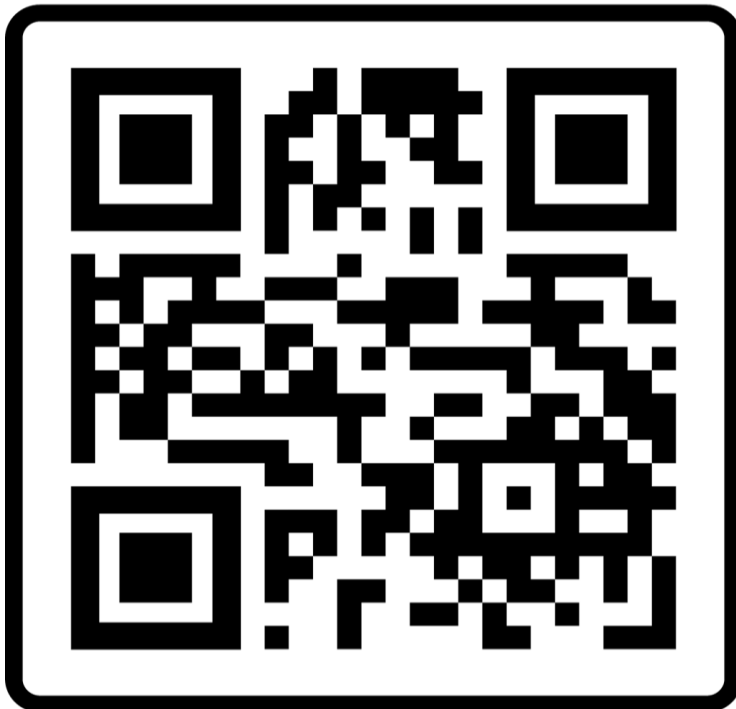
📌 **Just for fun: FILM IDEAS**

**The President's Men** (Alan J Pakula, 1976). "The Washington Post" reporters Bob Woodward and Carl Bernstein uncover the details of the Watergate scandal that leads to President Richard Nixon's resignation.

**The Post** (Steven Spielberg, 2017) A cover-up spanning four U.S. Presidents regarding the Pentagon Papers pushes the country's first female newspaper publisher and her editor to join an unprecedented battle between press and government.

**1) VIDEO: Space Law Explained**

(The Centre for International Governance Innovation; <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=NUCZt5OcszY>)



**2) Article: Data Center Operators Are Trying to Fix Their Water Use Problems**

Molly Taft, [Wired](#), 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2026

On Monday, SpaceX amended its initial public offering to state that water conditions—including water scarcity, regulations around water, and drought—could constrain data center development. It isn't the only tech company trying to assess how water scarcity might impact its business. Water use is emerging as one of the most contentious data center issues. A recent Gallup poll found that seven out of 10 Americans are opposed to data center development, with water scarcity ranking as the top resource concern. Facing increasingly fierce resistance, some tech companies are scrambling to assure the public that they're facing the issue head-on.

Data centers primarily use water to cool server racks, which throw off massive amounts of heat. One popular technique, known as evaporative cooling, uses fresh water to absorb the heat, which is then pumped to cooling towers where it evaporates outside.

Using more water can save money and reduce emissions for big tech companies by reducing the power needed for cooling that relies on energy-intensive pumps to recirculate water. But it can also come with a large water footprint: Google's facility in Council Bluffs, Iowa, for instance, which uses evaporative cooling, consumed more than 1 billion gallons in 2024.

Lawrence Berkeley National Laboratory predicted in a 2024 report that hyperscale data centers could consume up to 33 billion gallons of water by 2030 if they relied heavily on evaporative cooling. That's on par or even less than other thirsty industries, like agriculture or oil and gas—a single fracked well can use 1.5 to 16 million gallons of water—but it poses a risk in regions where water is already scarce. The risk is particularly acute in summer, when data center cooling needs tend to skyrocket at the same time as municipal water use. "Water is a highly local, highly regional issue," says Shaolei Ren, a professor of engineering at UC Riverside. "It's a limited resource, and we have to manage it very carefully."

Some tech giants, including Microsoft, OpenAI, and Oracle, have made statements in recent months indicating that they are moving away from evaporative cooling entirely in order to save water. That includes OpenAI and Oracle's massive Stargate expansion in a number of states, including a water-stressed region of Texas.

Most tech giants, including Google, have seen their carbon emissions skyrocket as a result of the AI boom. Totally avoiding evaporative cooling could increase emissions if data centers rely on dirty energy to keep facilities cool. Using less evaporative cooling could also mean more water used offsite for electric generation, depending on how data centers are getting their electricity.

Despite efforts to curb water use, tech companies are still struggling to do so—and it could eventually impact business. Even as Microsoft is moving away from evaporative cooling, The New York Times reported in February that the company's internal records indicate that its water use is set to skyrocket. In 2024, Google halted plans for a data center outside of Santiago, Chile, after a court partially revoked its permits over water concerns. (The permits for that data center were granted in 2020; Townsend says the company adopted its water scarcity framework for new locations a few years after that.)

In 2021, Google funded a lawsuit filed by a town in Oregon fighting a local newspaper to avoid disclosing how much water the tech giant would use for an expansion of its existing data center. The company began disclosing water use from specific data centers in annual reports in 2023.

✓ **Know your sources:**

- ✓ Wired is an American monthly magazine founded in San Francisco in 1993, focused on how emerging technologies and scientific developments intersect with culture, business, and politics. It has long been considered the bible of the tech industry.

📌 **Just for fun: FILM IDEA**

**Gattaca** (Andrew Niccol, 1997) Vincent, an "In-Valid," assumes the identity of a member of the genetic elite to pursue his goal of traveling into space with the Gattaca Aerospace Corporation. However, a week before his mission, a murder marks Vincent as a suspect.

1) Video: what is your smartphone doing to your mind and your body?

(Youtube: <https://youtu.be/W6CBb3yX9Zs?si=NabHXUPMTmX0Nqkz>)



2) Article: The Company Cell Phone Comeback: A Win-Win For Businesses & Employees

By Curt Steinhorst, [Forbes Magazine](#), May 08, 2024

Software companies are keenly aware that human attention is the digital economy's most precious commodity. Their applications are meticulously crafted to capture and hold our gaze, often at the expense of our productivity and well-being. As the public becomes increasingly aware of the addictive qualities of smartphones, there's a growing demand for a more ethical approach to technology.

The answer to how we can regain control over our attention might not rest with more software, but rather with the hardware itself. Unlike software giants such as Meta, Google, and Apple, whose business models depend on maximizing screen time, hardware manufacturers have the opportunity to serve as allies for customers. And a few are doing just that.

By embedding features that promote mindful engagement with digital devices — such as screen time management tools and notification filters — they are betting on empowerment over manipulation. These innovations represent a significant shift towards supporting users in navigating the digital landscape more mindfully.

You can see this shift from quantity of user experience to quality of the experience coming to fruition with technologies like the Light Phone. Their radically minimalist devices offer only calling and texting, serving as a refuge from the endless distractions of a traditional smartphone.

**Motorola's Case For The Company Cell Phone**

In a recent discussion with Sudhir Chadaga, Motorola's Global Head of B2B, it became clear that Motorola is laser-focused on work-specific smartphones. Chadaga emphasized that this strategic shift is designed to empower small and medium-sized enterprises by providing devices that enhance quality of time spent on them. He stated, "Our goal is not to consume more of your time, but to ensure that the time you spend is valuable."

As part of Motorola's commitment to this shift toward a more positive user experience, they commissioned a study to better understand the opportunities and challenges related to work phones. What they found revealed a growing gap between corporate norms and employee needs.

- 62% of employees agree that having work items on their personal smartphones makes it difficult for them to disconnect from work;
- 55% are often distracted by non-work-related notifications;
- Conversely, those equipped with a dedicated work cell phone experience a 64% increase in work-life balance and a 63% rise in task efficiency.

The case against bring-your-own-device (BYOD) is clear, yet BYOD adoption is now estimated at over 80% across industries. The use of personal phones at work has seen explosive growth due to a combination of factors including remote work during the pandemic, cost savings to business by not needing to purchase devices for the entire workforce, and employee preferences to use the devices they're familiar with.

For businesses, the shift towards providing company cell phones is a step forward that demonstrates how hardware solutions can foster a healthier digital environment.

✓ **Know your sources:**

- ✓ Forbes is an American business magazine, known globally for its influential lists such as the Forbes 400 richest Americans and its annual billionaires ranking. It covers topics including finance, industry, investing, and entrepreneurship.

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### 3) Article: Mobile phones to be banned in schools in England under new plans

Sally Weale, The Guardian, 26<sup>th</sup> April 2026

A ban on mobile phones in schools in England is to be introduced by the government to ensure that “critical safeguarding legislation” is passed. The government will table an amendment to the Children’s Well-being and Schools Bill in the House of Lords after the bill was held up by peers on opposition benches.

It will make existing guidance (*schools would have the choice*) on mobile phone bans in schools statutory (= *governed by law so schools have no choice*), a move that ministers have resisted until now.

The government had consistently argued that the vast majority of schools had already banned mobile phones, and that there was no need to add a legal requirement. They finally capitulated, however, describing it as “a pragmatic measure” to get the bill through.

Announcing the move on Monday, the education minister Jacqui Smith told the Lords: “We recognise the strength of feeling on this issue, both in this house and beyond. Notwithstanding the fact that we think the guidance we already have in place provides headteachers and schools with a range of approaches to be able to deliver the objective that we all share, we are committing to tabling an amendment in lieu which will place the existing guidance on a statutory footing on the face of the bill, creating a clear legal requirement for schools.”


The bill is regarded by many as the biggest piece of child protection legislation in decades and includes proposals for a compulsory register for children who are not in school, a crackdown on profiteering in children’s social care, and a “single unique identifier” to help agencies track a child’s welfare.

Pepe Di’lasio, the general secretary of the Association of School and College Leaders, said: “A statutory ban on mobile phones in schools doesn’t really change very much. Most schools already have policies in place under which pupils are not permitted to use mobile phones. What would really be helpful is for the government to make funding available to schools for the safe and secure storage of mobile phones, such as storage lockers or locked pouches.”

The education secretary, Bridget Phillipson, has previously written to headteachers in England to stress that schools should be phone-free throughout the entire school day, but the guidance has been non-statutory.

Research from the children's commissioner for England last year found that 99.8% of primary schools and 90% of secondary schools already had policies in place that limited or restricted the use of mobile phones during the school day. However, many headteachers, dealing with challenges from parents, will welcome the move, which will provide clarity in classrooms.

Ministers have only grudgingly agreed to it. A government spokesperson said: "The repeated attempts by the Conservatives and Liberal Democrats to kill off some of the most far-reaching child protection legislation is utterly abhorrent, and a dismal failure of some of the most vulnerable children in our country.

 **Get your facts straight:** here is a list of recent social media legislation

Country	Key Measures
<b>Australia</b>	Banned children under 16 from social media platforms (2024 law, one of the strictest in the world). Platforms face heavy fines for non-compliance.
<b>UK</b>	Online Safety Act (2023) requires platforms to protect minors from harmful content. Age verification obligations and bans on algorithmic promotion of harmful material to children.
<b>France</b>	Under-15s require parental consent to create social media accounts. A 2024 law also proposed a ban for under-15s without parental approval.
<b>USA</b>	No federal law, but several states have acted. Utah, Texas, and Florida have passed laws restricting minors' social media access or requiring parental consent. COPPA (1998) restricts data collection on under-13s.
<b>Norway</b>	Raised the age of digital consent to 15, requiring parental approval below that age. New legislation proposed in 2024 to raise it further to 18.
<b>China</b>	Strict screen time limits for minors; under-18s restricted to 40 minutes-2 hours daily depending on age. Platforms must use real-name verification.
<b>EU (broadly)</b>	GDPR sets 16 as the digital consent age (member states can lower to 13). The Digital Services Act requires platforms to limit targeted advertising to minors.

**1) Video: How Trump's second term reshaped US climate policy,**  
Reuters, Nov 15 2025 (<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=um-21C9rPUc>)



**2) Article (the US) : Trump announces \$700 million investment in coal plants and California export terminal**

Mary Cunningham, CBS News, June 4, 2026

The U.S. is stepping up its investment in coal as President Trump doubles down on his commitment to bolster the fossil fuel industry. During an event on Thursday, Mr. Trump announced that his administration would commit \$700 million in funding for coal plants and a new export terminal. [...]

Mr. Trump will invoke the Defense Production Act, a Cold War-era law that gives the U.S. president emergency authority over domestic industries, to distribute \$75 million for a new coal export terminal in Oakland, California, and \$425 million to support 13 existing plants across 10 states: West Virginia, Kentucky, North Carolina, Indiana, Tennessee, Arkansas, Arizona, Oklahoma, North Dakota and Wisconsin. "Our action will allow these facilities to invest in upgrades that will extend their operational lives for decades into the future, reinforce the reliability of our electric grid, which is really the biggest beneficiary, and most importantly, keep electricity prices very low for the American people," Mr. Trump said.

The Trump administration will also distribute \$200 million in Department of Energy grants to build two new coal plants in Alaska and West Virginia and to restart a coal plant in Maryland. The facilities in Alaska and West Virginia will be the first new coal plants built in the U.S. since 2013. A White House official told CBS News the initiative will create thousands of jobs for miners, railroad workers, engineers and construction workers and save consumers \$50 billion in energy generation costs. [...]

Mr. Trump has long championed the benefits of exploiting U.S. fossil fuel resources. Since returning as president for a second time in 2025, he has moved to expedite oil and mining projects and open new drilling sites. On Thursday, Mr. Trump said his administration has approved 76 new permits for "clean, beautiful coal" since he took office last year.

The Trump administration has also directed fossil-fueled power plants in Michigan, Indiana, Colorado and Washington state to continue operating past their retirement dates in order to meet rising electricity demand, all while scaling back investment in renewable energy. That comes as other countries ramp up their use of clean energy. In the first half of 2025, global solar generation grew by a record 31% while wind generation grew by 7.7%, according to a report by the energy think tank Ember, which analyzed data from 88 countries. At the same time, fossil fuel generation dipped, although only by less than 1%.

Environmental groups criticized Mr. Trump's coal plan ahead of its official release, noting it could drive up

pollution, raise electricity costs for Americans and prop up a declining industry. Coal provided 15% of energy production in 2024, down from 45% in 2010. Natural gas provides about 43% of U.S. electricity, with the rest rounded out by nuclear energy and renewables. "It is disgusting and reprehensible that the President of the United States is giving away our taxpayer dollars to deadly and expensive coal plants that will make Americans sicker and drive up electricity prices even more," the Sierra Club, an environmental group, said in a statement.

Kit Kennedy, managing director for power at the nonprofit Natural Resources Defense Council, also criticized the new initiative. "Propping up coal billionaires with taxpayer money is one more way for the Trump administration to put polluters first and put the rest of us at risk," he said.

✓ **Know your sources:**

- ✓ CBS News is the news division of the American television broadcaster CBS (Columbia Broadcasting System) which was founded in 1927. Although its European stations provided a counterpoint to Nazi propaganda during World War two, CBS has been accused of giving in to Trump and its editorial freedom has sometimes been questioned under the current leadership of David Ellison (see *The Media* section.)

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### **3) Article (the UK): River Wye granted rights in UK first that could help in fight against pollution**

Bethan McKernan, The Guardian, Sun 24 May 2026

The entire catchment of the River Wye has been formally recognised as a living ecosystem with intrinsic rights in a charter, a UK first that campaigners hope will help save the highly polluted river. [...] It includes the right to flow, to biodiversity, to be free from pollution, to be supported by a healthy catchment, to regenerate, and the right to be represented, described as a "significant step" towards protecting and restoring one of the UK's most beloved rivers.

Herefordshire and Powys county councils have already implemented the charter and it is expected to be adopted soon by Gloucestershire and Monmouthshire, covering the entirety of the Wye's 130-mile course from its source in the Cambrian mountains in mid Wales to Chepstow and the Bristol Channel.

Jackie Charlton, the county council's cabinet member for a greener Powys, said: "The River Wye is central to our environment, communities and heritage. By adopting this charter, we are making a clear statement that the river's health matters and must be protected. [...]"

The initiative, developed collaboratively across the river catchment, is part of a growing rights of nature movement worldwide. Rivers in Ecuador, Canada and New Zealand have been granted legal personhood in recent years, and the House of Lords is considering a proposal by the former leader of the Green party, Natalie Bennett, to change nature's legal status from objects, property and resources to subjects with inherent rights.

While much of the Wye, or Gwy in Welsh, is protected as a special area of conservation, and the rights in the charter are already recognised across existing legislation and regulatory frameworks, the river has suffered near ecological collapse over the past decade. Campaigners say excess nutrients from the rapid expansion of industrial chicken farming in the river's catchment area – aggravated by sewage spills – have caused algae, fungus and weed growth that has suffocated the ecosystem.

The Wye is now at the heart of the biggest ever environmental pollution claim to reach the high court: more than 4,500 people who live or work near the Wye and the nearby Lugg and Usk have joined a case against Avara Foods, one of the UK's largest chicken producers, and Dŵr Cymru (Welsh Water), demanding the companies clean up the rivers. [...]

Angela Jones, a campaigner from Symonds Yat, said she welcomed the new charter for the Wye, but "the reality is that this river now stands on the cliff edge of ecological collapse". She said: "The charter is an important and historic statement of intent. What is needed now is urgent action: stronger regulation of intensive poultry operations, meaningful limits on nutrient pollution, proper enforcement against offenders, and a fully funded restoration strategy for the entire catchment. Without immediate intervention, future generations may inherit a biologically dead river instead of the living Wye that so many of us have fought to protect." [...]

The Wye charter is the first for a river in Wales, and the first full river catchment charter in the UK. Last year, the Ouse, which runs through East and West Sussex, became the first river in the country to have its rights formally recognised, after Lewes district council agreed to adopt a charter to protect it.

- 🔗 **Get your facts straight:** here are some institutional references
- **The Environment Protection Agency** (the US)
  - Est 1970, headed by administrator Lee Zeldin
  - <https://www.epa.gov/>
- **The Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs** (the UK)
  - Formed in 2001, led by Secretary of State Emma Reynolds.
  - <https://www.gov.uk/government/organisations/department-for-environment-food-rural-affairs>

### 1) Article: The Global Wellness Industry Is Now Worth \$6.3 Trillion, Making It Bigger Than The Sports & Pharmaceutical Industries.

8 November 2024 by [Cavalé](#)

The global wellness industry was worth \$6.32 trillion in 2023, according to a new report from the Global Wellness Institute, a leading industry group. That's 25% larger than it was in 2019, making it bigger than the sports and pharmaceutical industries.

"Growth was even stronger than we predicted," says Katherine Johnson, one of the authors of the Global Wellness Economy Monitor. She added that the wellness industry was boosted by the focus on health and well-being as a result of the pandemic. Research from the nonprofit argues that trends such as an aging population, chronic disease and an increased focus on mental health are helping drive growth.

This staggering figure is partly due to the GWI's broad definition of wellness. For its purposes, wellness is "the active pursuit of activities, choices and lifestyles that lead to a state of holistic health." The report tracks spending across 11 sectors, including tourism, real estate and public health endeavors.

The largest of the 11 sectors is personal care and beauty, which the report values at \$1.21 trillion alone. The next two largest categories are healthy eating, nutrition and weight loss, which totals \$1.09 trillion, and physical activity, which is \$1.06 trillion.

Wellness real estate has shown substantial growth, becoming an appealing investment with both health benefits and significant property value impacts. Properties located near wellness amenities or integrated with wellness-focused facilities, like gyms, meditation rooms, and recovery centers, see a boost in value and demand. According to the Global Wellness Institute (GWI), wellness real estate has surged with an 18.1% annual growth rate, and properties integrated with wellness facilities can increase in value by up to 25% on average.

"Businesses and investors and consumers and people who build offices across the board are starting to recognise that if we want to shape people's wellness, we have to shape the environments that they're in," says Yeung. "There is very solid evidence that the physical environments and social environments that we live in are fundamental to our health."

Companies like Cavcorp are increasingly focusing on the wellness real estate market. The brand, which started off as a residential developer, has just released and almost sold-out of their wellness-lifestyle sky-homes, with home prices starting at \$5.7million.

"Once wellness starts to permeate your personal or consumer values, it starts shaping your purchasing decisions and just becomes a bigger and bigger share of your out-of-pocket spending," says the GWI's Johnson. The report predicts that as the sectors continue to recover from the pandemic, the wellness economy could reach nearly \$6.8 trillion by the end of 2024.

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### 2) Article: Should medical marijuana be less stringently regulated? A drug policy expert explains what's at stake

[The Conversation](#), 28<sup>th</sup> Jan 2026, Chris Meyers (Adjunct Professor of Philosophy, George Washington University)

Medical marijuana could soon be reclassified into a medical category that includes prescription drugs like Tylenol with codeine, ketamine and anabolic steroids. That's because in December 2025, President Donald Trump signed an executive order to reschedule marijuana to a less restricted category, continuing a process initiated by President Joe Biden in 2022.

Currently, marijuana is in the most restrictive class, Schedule I, the same category as street drugs like LSD, ecstasy and heroin. For years, many researchers and medical experts have argued that its current classification is a hindrance to much-needed medical research that would answer many of the pressing questions about its potential for medicinal use.

In January 2026, Republican Senators Ted Budd, of North Carolina, and James Lankford, of Oklahoma, introduced an amendment to funding bills trying to block the rescheduling, claiming that it "sends the wrong message" and will lead to "increased risk of heart attack, stroke, psychotic disorders, addiction and hospitalization." As a philosopher and drug policy expert, I am more interested in what is the most reasonable marijuana policy. In other words, is rescheduling the right move?

Broadly speaking, there are three choices available for marijuana regulation. The U.S. could keep the drug in the highly restricted Schedule I category, move it to a less restrictive category or remove it from scheduling altogether, which would end the conflict between state and federal marijuana laws. (As of January 2026, cannabis is legal in 40 of 50 states for medical use and 24 states for recreational use. Rescheduling would only apply to medical use.) Let's examine the arguments for each option:

**Option 1 - The status quo option:** Some policy analysts and anti-marijuana activists argue that marijuana should remain a Schedule 1 drug. A common objection to rescheduling it is the assertion that 1 in 3 marijuana users develop an addiction to the drug, which stems from a large study called a meta-analysis. [...] Yet, if the 1-in-3 figure were accurate, then marijuana would be more addictive than alcohol, crack cocaine and even heroin. This defies both common sense and well-established studies on the comparative risk of addiction.

**Option 2 - Moving marijuana to schedule III:** Moving marijuana to schedule III would make it legal at the federal level, but only for medical use. Recreational use would remain federally prohibited, even though it is legal in 24 states as of early 2026.

The most obvious benefit to rescheduling, noted above, is that it would make research on marijuana easier. The system of cannabinoid receptors through which marijuana confers its therapeutic and psychoactive effects is crucial for almost every aspect of human functioning. Thus, marijuana compounds could provide effective medicines for a wide variety of ailments.

Rescheduling could also improve medical marijuana guidance. Under the current system, medical marijuana users are not provided with accurate, evidence-based guidance on how to use marijuana effectively.

**Option 3 - Uncheduling marijuana:** The debate over rescheduling ignores a third option: that marijuana could be removed entirely from the Controlled Substances Act, giving states the authority to allow medical marijuana to be distributed without a prescription.

Some of the objections to rescheduling come from marijuana advocates. Given that marijuana is safer and less addictive than alcohol – which is not scheduled under the Controlled Substances Act – a case could be made for removing it entirely from the list of scheduled substances and allowing states to legalize it for recreational use, as many states have already.

Removing marijuana from the list of controlled substances would also decriminalize the drug. Over 200,000 Americans were arrested for marijuana in 2024, over 90% of them for mere possession. At the moment, the third option seems very unlikely. Although over 60% of Americans are in favor of full marijuana legalization, it lacks support in Congress. Medical marijuana rescheduling looks likely to occur in 2026. After all, it has

been proposed by both Biden and Trump. Whether it is the right move, only time will tell.

✓ **Know your sources:**

- ✓ The Conversation is an independent online news and analysis website founded in Australia in 2011, which has since expanded to editions in the UK, US, France, and several other countries. It publishes articles written by academic researchers and experts, edited by journalists, with the aim of making rigorous, evidence-based knowledge accessible to the general public.

***WELL DONE on finishing all this preparation work....see you soon!***