



A Level History

Why study History?

History is an exciting and academic discipline that nurtures curiosity, hones our thinking and promotes the development of important skills. Studying A Level History provides an environment to communicate and wrestle with historical controversy. While exploring the nature and complexity of history as something beyond that of 'the past', we are able to understand and appreciate the world in which we live, where we have come from, and where we may go.

What is the course structure?

Exam Board OCR

Unit 1 England 1485-1558: The early Tudors (Enquiry topic: Mid Tudor crisis 1547-1558)

Unit focus: British period study and enquiry

From the establishment of the Tudor dynasty that brought to a close the long-term period of unrest during the Wars of the Roses, students will trace the political, domestic, foreign and religious changes that underpinned 'Monarchy' across the early Tudor period until 1558.

Assessment:

Written exam : 1 hour 30 minutes

Candidates will be required to answer two questions, the first is a source based question, and the second is an essay based question.

Skill tested:

Students will be required to track change and developments across time, make substantiated judgements and study significant individuals, societies, events and issues. Students will critically use evidence in investigating and assessing historical questions, problems and issues.

The unit is worth 25% of the total A Level.

Unit 2 The Cold War in Europe 1941-1995

Unit focus: Non-British period study

International relations in the second half of the 20th century were dominated by the emergence of two superpowers, the USA and the USSR. Despite the bid for a peaceful co-existence following the end of the Second World War, the establishment of what has been described as a 'bi-polar world' tested international relationships to the brink of nuclear destruction. Students will study the origins of the Cold War to 1945, the key developments between 1946-1984 and explore the reasons for the end of the Cold War between 1984-1995.

Assessment:

A Level exam: 1 hour (a two-part exam: the first comparing the relative importance of two factors in order to make a judgment, the second will be an essay focusing on a different part of the period studied)

Skill tested:

Exploring a range of historical perspectives across a non-British period of study. Students are expected to demonstrate abilities to explain, assess, analyse and consider relationships between key features of the period studied in order to reach substantiated judgements.

The unit is worth 15% of the A Level.

Unit 3 From Colonialism to Independence: The British Empire 1857-1965

Unit focus: Thematic study and historical interpretations

This unit focuses on the changing nature of the British Empire over the period 1857-1965. Students will study developments across the whole of the Empire, including Asia, North Africa and the Middle East, East and West Africa, South Africa, the Caribbean, Canada and Australia/New Zealand.

Assessment:

Written exam: 2 hours 30 mins

Candidates will be required to answer 3 questions worth 80 marks in total.

Skill tested:

Students will trace developments over a period of 100 years. The thematic element will focus on making links and comparisons between different aspects of the topics studied and of testing hypotheses before reaching a judgement. The depth study element will require students to analyse and evaluate the ways in which the past has been interpreted by historians.

The Unit is worth 40 % of the total A Level.

Unit 4 Historical Enquiry- topic based essay

This is a non-examined unit that consists of an independently researched essay of 3000-4000 words in length, marked by the centre and moderated by the exam board.

The essay will include an explanation and analysis of different perspectives on a historical issue, drawing on a range of primary and secondary material.

Assessment (internally assessed) 3000-4000 word essay 40 marks.

The unit is worth 20% of the total A Level.

Which activities will I be engaged in during the course?

The course is structured to promote and nurture your interest in the subject and support you in the vital thinking and practical skills that are fundamental to learning History at A Level. We want to give you the best possible opportunity to actively participate in lessons and engage in historical debate both inside and outside the classroom. These opportunities will be explored in a number of ways:

- Asking interesting and purposeful questions and undertaking lines of enquiry that will help you answer them. Using various points of reference to complete independent research. These might include school and public libraries, local and national records offices, museums, websites and communication with people.
- Entering in to debate which will involve substantiating opinions and challenging others.
- Reading around the topic at home as well as academic materials provided as part of the course.
- Keeping precise notes and a weekly learning log to help you keep a record of your research and review your own work regularly.
- Working with various source materials whether written, oral or physical. You will be asked to cross reference materials in order to spot themes, trends and conflicts of opinion.
- Using media resources to help consolidate your learning of a particular time period or explore interpretations of the past. A full list of websites, podcasts, documentaries and films will be provided.

Subject Entry Requirements: Grade 5 in History or Grade 5 in English

Further information: Jo Mackintosh, Head of History and Politics