



HISTORY

Entry Requirement: Grade 6 in GCSE English

Examination Board: EDEXCEL – Route F 9HI0

It is not a requirement that you have studied History at GCSE in order to take an A Level in the subject. All the topics studied are likely to be new to most students. It is more important that you have an enquiring mind, an interest in the past and its relevance to current affairs and an ability to communicate your ideas effectively. Those students who have studied History GCSE will find that the skills they have learned and the knowledge they have acquired will form a solid foundation for further studies at A Level.

Course Content and Assessment

Paper 1: Breadth Study with Interpretations

Option: 1F In Search of the American Dream: The USA, c1917-96

Students study the dramatic political, economic and social transformation of the USA in the twentieth century, an era that saw the USA challenged by the consequences of political, economic and social inequalities at home and of its involvement in international conflict. The focus of study is on developments and changes over a broad timescale but also contains a study in depth of the impact of the Reagan presidency on the USA in the years 1981–96.

Assessment: Written examination of 2 hours 15 minutes. Students answer three questions: two essays focusing on the whole period and one compulsory question on historical interpretations.

Paper 2: Depth Study

Option: 2F.2 South Africa, 1948-94: from Apartheid state to 'Rainbow Nation'

Students consider the transition of South Africa from white minority rule to the free elections of 1994, a long, and at times, dramatic process in which South Africa changed from an apartheid state into a multi-racial democracy. Students will gain an in-depth understanding of the creation and consolidation of the apartheid regime by the National Party and the response and methods used by their political opponents in the struggle to overthrow apartheid, as well social, economic and cultural changes that accompanied this process.

Assessment: Written examination, lasting 1 hour 30 minutes. Students answer two questions: one compulsory source and one essay.

Paper 3: Themes in breadth with aspects in depth

Option: 31 Rebellion and disorder under the Tudors, 1485–1603

Students explore the nature of rebellion and disorder under the Tudors and the way the various challenges were met, the nature of change in government over the period and the changing relationship between the Crown and key sections of society. The option enables students to explore the way in which, despite a shaky start, the Tudors were able to establish their dynasty as one of the most powerful England has seen.

Assessment: Written examination, lasting 2 hours 15 minutes. Students answer three questions: one compulsory source question, one depth essay and one breadth essay.

Coursework - Focus: The Cold War

Students develop skills in analysis and evaluation of interpretations of history as part of an independently researched assignment. The focus is on understanding the nature and purpose of the work of the historian. Students will be required to form a critical view and to analyse, explain and evaluate the interpretations of three historians. Our focus is likely to be the controversies surrounding the causes of the beginning or of the end of the Cold War, subject to approval. Students complete one essay of between 3500 and 4000 words.

Teaching and Learning Methods

A wide variety of teaching and learning methods are used, including class discussion and debate, research and presentation by individuals and groups. Students have a wide variety of sources which are used with directed assignments to prepare essay questions and topics for discussion and debate in class. Individual research and preparation is at the heart of study and student skills in note taking, essay preparation and writing, source evaluation, and examination technique are developed through the course. Homework is set regularly but dependent on the tasks set in the lessons. The nature and length of time spent on the assignments is variable.

Complementary Subjects

History combines well with Mathematics and science subjects to create an attractive portfolio of qualifications, enabling a student to move on to a university science-based course. Combined with English and a modern foreign language, it provides a good basis for an arts or languages-based degree. In addition, History combines well with any combination of the following subjects: Geography, Economics, Sociology, Politics etc.

Materials

Students must purchase their own copies of the recommended textbooks, under direction from staff. Other printed materials may be made available by the department for purchase by students. Students provide their own note paper.

Key Features

The course is designed to help students to build on their understanding of the past through experiencing a broad and balanced course of study, improve as effective and independent learners, and as critical and reflective thinkers with curious and enquiring minds. They will also develop questioning and research techniques and acquire an understanding of the nature of historical study.

The course will appeal to students who have an interest in the way that the world has developed through the ages and enjoy investigation and discovery. Debate and argument form a core part of the discussions and written tasks and so the course helps improve analytical skills. Students are encouraged to consider evidence and formulate judgements for themselves. It is also a useful subject for students who want to keep their options open. History is widely regarded as a useful qualification for a wide range of Higher Education or career choices.

Students who study History have access to a wide range of career and Higher Education opportunities. By the end of your course you will have learned how to evaluate and analyse information, how to weigh up evidence and how to communicate complex ideas effectively. These skills are recognised and valued by employers, universities and colleges. History provides an excellent foundation for a number of popular careers including journalism, law and business, the civil service and social services.