



## A Level History



### Introducing A Level History

#### Why study A Level History?

History is a compelling subject that helps us understand how past events, people, and ideas have shaped the world we live in today. It explores human experience in all its complexity — the choices individuals and societies make, the conflicts they face, and the forces that drive change over time. Studying History means engaging with real events, their causes, their consequences, and the many ways they are interpreted.

A Level History focuses on the 'big questions' that have defined nations and cultures. Why do political systems rise and fall? How do revolutions begin? What compels societies to fight wars or build peace? By exploring significant periods, from international conflicts in the Middle Ages to social reform in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, students learn to make informed judgements grounded in evidence, not assumption. In a world shaped by contested narratives, the ability to evaluate arguments and recognise bias is essential.

Historians are highly valued for their analytical skills. A Level History teaches students to interpret complex sources, assess differing viewpoints, build reasoned arguments, and communicate clearly — skills prized in fields such as law, politics, journalism, business, and beyond. Anyone choosing to study History at A Level will find it both challenging and inspiring, offering fresh perspectives on the past while helping them understand the world they will shape in the future.

# Specification Content

## Paper 1 – The Age of the Crusades, c1071 to 1204

- **The origins of conflict and the First Crusade, c1071–c1099:** Explores the motivation for the crusading ideal, looking at the social, political and economic features of Medieval Europe and near East. Research the events and consequences of the First Crusade.
- **The foundation of new states and the Second Crusade, c1099–1149:** Explores the ideas of colonialism as Western settlers move into the Near East as occupiers. Research the inevitable spiral to a Second Crusade.
- **The Muslim Counter-Crusade and Crusader states, 1149–1187;** The context of Islamic power in the Near East from 1149, the growth of jihad, Internal divisions within the Kingdom of Jerusalem, warfare and kingship, the rise of Saladin; the consequences of Saladin's capture of Jerusalem
- **The Third and Fourth Crusades, 1187–1204;** Richard the Lionheart and the Third Crusade, preaching and preparing for the Third Crusade, the impact of the Third Crusade; Saladin's power and prestige in the Muslim Near East. The origins of the Fourth Crusade, the Byzantine Empire; the role of Venice, the legacy of the Crusades by 1204 until modern times.

## Paper 2 – The Making of Modern Britain, 1951 to 2007

- For those of you interested in Politics, this is an ideal unit of study which marries excellently with the medieval history in Unit 1 as students can identify the long-term consequences of Western colonialism and war can be seen in this unit.
- **Building a new Britain, 1951–1979:** Social, economic and political developments of the: post-war boom, including changing social attitudes and tensions, the position of women, attitudes to immigration; racial violence; the emergence of the 'teenager' and youth culture, the Korean War.
- **The Sixties, 1964–1970:** Social and cultural change: the expansion of the mass media; growth in leisure activities; the impact of scientific developments, progress towards female equality; changes in moral attitudes; youth culture and the 'permissive society'; anti-Vietnam war riots; issues of immigration and race, the 'special relationship' with USA; attitudes to USSR and China
- **Modern Britain, 1979–2007:** The impact of Thatcherism, 1979–1987; Foreign Affairs: the Falklands; the 'special relationship' with USA; moves to end the Cold War; Thatcher as an international figure. The fall of Thatcher and her legacy; Major as leader; 'Black Wednesday' and its impact; political sleaze, scandals and satire; approach to Northern Ireland; Realignment of the Labour Party under Blair;. The 1997 election, The Balkan wars, the end of the Cold War
- **The Era of New Labour, 1997–2007:** Blair as leader, character and ideology; Northern Ireland and the Good Friday Agreement, 2001, 9/11 and the 'war on terror'; globalisation

## Non-examined Assessment (NEA)

- **Changes in Russia, 1855 to 1953.** Undertake your own research project on a area of Russian history where change was rapid and divisive. You will choose your own focus and then develop historical research methods, analytical and evaluative skills, and university-ready academic writing

# Teaching & Learning

Teaching is carried out by subject-specialists with History Degrees. You will be taught for 4 hours per fortnight with a teacher for each unit. For one hour per fortnight, you will be given lessons on how to approach the NEA. You will be assessed at least once per month with a full examination style question in each examined unit, it may be one essay/extract or could be the whole paper, depending upon the time of year. You will be given detailed feedback on these tasks that directly link to improving your exam technique and performance. You will also be assessed by knowledge tests and reading comprehension tasks, therefore you can expect some type of assessed work every two-week teaching cycle.

Wider reading is the absolute crux of success in A Level History; without it you will not succeed. It really is that simple. You will be provided with resource lists for both units, and we would recommend that over the course of the two years you try to get at least one 'academic' book in addition to your textbook. This could be for your birthday or Christmas perhaps. Second Hand bookshops and Amazon are also good places to look. And finally, don't forget to utilise your local library.

## A Level Assessment

Students will be assessed through formal exams and written assessment.

**AQA Exam Papers** - There are **two main exam papers**, each worth **40%** of the final A Level:

**Component 1: Age of the Crusades** — 2½ hours, 80 marks. Extract analysis and 2 essays.

**Component 2: Modern Britain** — 2½ hours, 80 marks. Source analysis and 2 essays.

Exams are designed to enable students to demonstrate understanding, analysis, and evaluation.

**Component 3: Non-Exam Assessment (NEA)** - This Independent Investigation and is worth **20%** of the final A Level. It's based on a student-chosen question or issue, within the context of Russia 1855 to 1953. The skills included are research, analysis, evaluation and sustained judgements built from a clear argument. It is 4500 words long. It is marked by teachers (using AQA's criteria) and then moderated by AQA.

## Subject combinations

A Level History pairs well with a wide range of other subjects, offering strong support for analytical thinking, evidence-based argument, and understanding human behaviour.

- **English Literature** – Both subjects involve close reading, interpretation, and the evaluation of different viewpoints. Studying literature alongside history helps students understand the cultural and social contexts behind major historical developments.
- **Politics AS Level Elective**– History provides essential background to political systems, ideologies, and institutions. When combined with Politics, students gain a deeper understanding of how governments evolve, why political conflicts arise, and how past events shape current affairs.
- **Economics** – Economic change is a key driver of historical events. Studying Economics alongside History strengthens students' understanding of industrialisation, global trade, economic crises, and the development of modern economies.
- **Geography** – These subjects complement each other through their focus on change over time: geography examining spatial and environmental change, and history exploring social and political developments. Together they help students make connections between place, people, and the past.
- **Psychology** – Psychology supports historical study by helping students analyse human motivation, group behaviour, and decision-making. This combination can enrich understanding of topics such as conflict, leadership, propaganda, and social change.

A Level History's versatility as a facilitating subject makes it an excellent partner subject, opening pathways into a wide range of academic fields and future careers.

# Progression Routes

A Level History offers a strong foundation for an impressive range of university courses and careers, thanks to its emphasis on critical thinking, research, and the ability to evaluate evidence and communicate convincingly.

## Popular university pathways include:

- History, Ancient History, Archaeology and Heritage Studies
- Politics, International Relations and Global Studies
- Law, Criminology and Public Policy
- English, Classics, Philosophy and Cultural Studies
- Sociology, Anthropology and Social Policy
- Journalism, Media, Communications and Film Studies
- Education, Museum Studies and Library/Archival Science

## Career opportunities span many fields in both the public and private sectors, including:

- Law, legal research and public administration
- Journalism, publishing, broadcasting and digital media
- Civil Service, diplomacy, intelligence and international development
- Museums, archives, heritage management and conservation
- Teaching, educational outreach and academic research
- Business management, consultancy, human resources and marketing
- Charity sector work, community development and campaign organisations

History cultivates high-level skills such as argumentation, source analysis, independent research and clear written communication, this means that it is highly valued by universities and employers. Its versatility makes it an excellent platform for academic study and a wide range of professional careers.

## Entry and skill requirements

What are the entry requirements for A Level History?

**GCSE History** – Grade 6

**GCSE English & Maths** – Grade 5

Students who did not do GCSE History can be successful at A Level history and will be considered using their grades in Geography and/or English Language and English Literature. Please speak with Mrs. Starkey or Mrs. Foster if you are interested in pursuing this route.

## What do our students think?

“I picked History because I enjoyed the stories, characters, and turning points we studied at GCSE, and I wanted to understand history on a deeper level. A Level has been challenging but in a good way — the breadth of topics has made me appreciate how interconnected historical events are. I particularly enjoyed the independent research project on Russia because it allowed me to focus on an area I was genuinely interested in. Through the course, I’ve developed my analytical skills, learned how to write more convincing essays, and become much more comfortable working with primary sources.”

“I chose History because it taught me how to think, not just what to learn. At GCSE I loved the debates and the sense of uncovering why people made certain decisions. At A Level, the course pushes you to dig deeper and question everything. I’ve enjoyed studying different time periods and seeing how interpretations of events can vary depending on historians’ viewpoints. My essay writing has improved massively, and I feel much more confident organising long-form answers and handling complex arguments — skills I know will be invaluable at university.”

## Contact us

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