

History

Awarding Body: Edexcel

Level: A-Level

Introduction

The History course at A-Level focuses on the themes of revolution, social change and civil rights. It provides an opportunity to build on your understanding of the modern era (studied at GCSE), but this time focusing in depth on both Russia and the United States of America. The theme of Revolution also includes the English Civil Wars and Revolution (1642-49), providing an opportunity to compare the early modern English Revolution (which the monarchy ultimately survived) and the modern Russian Revolution (in which the monarchy was destroyed). The American history unit covers black American civil rights in the USA from 1850-2009. You will learn to write evaluative essays on various issues as well as develop a keen awareness of historical sources and interpretations of the past.

Year one content

In Year 12, you will study one aspect of history in breadth (looking at various themes to do with the topic studied) and one aspect of history in depth.

- Breadth study: Britain, 1625-1701.
 - The quest for political stability; students need to understand the nature of Stuart and republican rule and the reasons why neither system provided a stable system of government in the given period.
 - The changing nature of religion in Britain; students should be aware of the diversity of religious beliefs and opinions during the given period. They should understand the significance of Catholic influence over the Stuart monarchs during the Restoration period to 1688.
 - The changing nature of British society; students should be aware of key changes in society and cultural life during the given period.
 - The changing nature of the British economy; students need to be aware of significant changes in agriculture and in trade.
 - How revolutionary was the Glorious Revolution? Students will need to understand the revolutionary ideals which led to the overthrow of James II and the growing importance of parliament in the years 1688–1701.
- Depth study; Russia, 1894-1924.

- The rule of Nicholas II, 1894-1905; students need to understand the nature of opposition to Tsarism and the different aims of opposition forces.
- The end of Romanov rule, 1906-1917; students need to understand the political changes in the years 1906–14, and the extent to which the Tsarist system of government had been modified.
- The Provisional government and its opponents, February-October 1917; students should understand the difficult situation which faced the Provisional government in February 1917, the extent to which it responded to the country's problems and the reasons for its overthrow.
- Defending the Bolshevik revolution, October 1917-1924; students should understand the extent of popular support for the Bolsheviks, and the ways in which they imposed their rule by force.

There are 2 written exams each in the July PPEs. The breadth study is 2hr 15 minutes long (3x 45 minute essays) and the depth study is 1hr 30 minutes (2x 45 minute essays).

These papers will be examined formally in the summer of Year 13 and equals 50% of the course (Breadth study – 30%, Depth study – 20%).

Year two content

In Year 13, you will study one more breadth/depth study and complete a piece of coursework evaluating the works of three historians.

- Breadth/depth study: Civil Rights and Race Relations in the United States of America, 1850-2009:
 - 'Free at last', 1865-1877; the focus of the topic is on the remarkable transformation in the legal position of most black Americans in these years starting with the Thirteenth Amendment abolishing slavery throughout the USA.
 - The triumph of 'Jim Crow', 1883-1900; the focus of the topic is on the steady erosion of political and social gains mainly in the 1890s throughout the southern states.
 - The New Deal and race relations, 1933-41; the focus of this topic is on the period of extensive reform in the USA, known as the New Deal.
 - 'I have a dream', 1954-68; the focus of this topic is on the most famous and dramatic period of change in race relations in the USA in the twentieth century.
 - Obama's campaign for the Presidency, 2004-2009; the focus of this topic is on the remarkable process which led to the arrival of the first black American in the White House in January 2009.
 - Breadth studies focussing on the changing geography of civil rights issues and the changing portrayal of civil rights issues in fiction and film; the main focus of the 'Aspects in breadth' is on the changing awareness of the white majority of the problems and lifestyle of the black minority.
- Coursework
 - An individual assignment on an historical debate of the student's choice. The chosen debate will be drawn from the unit Russian Revolutions 1894-1924 (studied in Year 12).

This paper will be examined formally in the Summer of Year 13 and is equal to 30% of the course. The coursework is completed during Year 13 and equals 20% of the course.

What you need

GCSE grade 5 in History and a 5 in English Literature.

A desire to read and write in detail.

Career and further study

History A-Level is highly valued by employers and academic institutions. It helps students to develop excellent communication, analysis and research skills. As well as further studies in History, students with this qualification go on to study degrees in Law, Journalism, Business and Politics. History also complements science subjects well and enhances applications for courses in Medicine and related studies.

Career options enhanced by a History qualification include: law, teaching, the media, business, medicine, the police, museum and heritage work, leisure and tourism and charity work, to name a few.

Trips and other costs

You are expected to purchase your own text books.