



Hartismere College



History

A STUDENT'S GUIDE TO THE A LEVEL IN HISTORY

Welcome to the history department. History is a fascinating subject and the course is stimulating, challenging and fun.

It can provide either a stand-alone qualification or form part of a structured foundation for further study.

A study of A-Level History will encourage you to become more independent and analytical in the way you think.

The aim of this booklet is to provide you with the information you need about studying history in the sixth form. Should you wish to ask any other questions or clarify any detail you should speak to Miss Driscoll or any member of the History team who will be glad to help.

What do I need to know or be able to do before taking this course?

Some of the topics offered for study are developments from GCSE but there are also plenty of topics offered which are likely to interest most new students.

It is more important that you have an enquiring mind, a genuine interest in the past, its relevance to current affairs and an ability to communicate your ideas effectively.

It is not a requirement that you have studied history at GCSE in order to take an Advanced GCE course but a minimum grade 5 in English is required for these students.

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 Advanced GCE. These students will usually be required to have achieved at least a grade 5 in the subject.

At Hartismere, we study AQA A level History.

What kind of student is this course suitable for?

The course will appeal to students who:

- Have an interest in the way that the world has developed through the ages;
- Enjoy investigation and discovery;
- Enjoy debate and like putting forward a well-argued case;
- Want to improve their analytical skills;
- Want to study a subject which encourages them to consider evidence and make up their own minds;
- Want to keep their options open.

History can be a useful choice for a wide range of careers and be combined with a wide range of sciences, social science and humanities subjects.

What will I learn on this Advanced GCE course?

During your course you will learn:

- About the significance of events, individuals, issues and societies in history;
- How and why societies have changed over time;
- About the theories of historians and the language that they use to discuss their ideas;
- To understand the nature of historical evidence and the methods used by historians to analyse and evaluate it;
- To develop an understanding of how the past has been interpreted and represented;
- To express your own historical ideas confidently and effectively.

How is the course structured and what topics are taught?

Students taking the A-level will study three components and all three will be assessed in the same exam series at the end of two years of study. The components are:

- Component 1: Breadth Study
- Component 2: Depth Study
- Component 3: Historical Investigation (Personal Study)

Students who sit these examinations will be awarded an A-level qualification.

Year 12 topics

In year 12 you will study and be examined on two components:

Component 1: Breadth Study - 1C The Tudors: England, 1485–1603

This option allows students to study in breadth issues of change, continuity, cause and consequence in this period through the following key questions:

- How effectively did the Tudors restore and develop the powers of the monarchy?
- In what ways and how effectively was England governed during this period?
- How did relations with foreign powers change and how was the succession secured?
- How did English society and economy change and with what effects?
- How far did intellectual and religious ideas change and develop and with what effects?
- How important was the role of key individuals and groups and how were they affected by developments?

Part one: consolidation of the Tudor Dynasty: England, 1485–1547

Henry VII, 1485–1509

- Henry Tudor's consolidation of power: character and aims; establishing the Tudor dynasty
- Government: councils, parliament, justice, royal finance, domestic policies
- Relationships with Scotland and other foreign powers; securing the succession; marriage alliances
- Society: churchmen, nobles and commoners; regional division; social discontent and rebellions
- Economic development: trade, exploration, prosperity and depression
- Religion; humanism; arts and learning

Henry VIII, 1509–1547

- Henry VIII: character and aims; addressing Henry VII's legacy
- Government: Crown and Parliament, ministers, domestic policies including the establishment of Royal Supremacy
- Relationships with Scotland and other foreign powers; securing the succession
- Society: elites and commoners; regional issues and the social impact of religious upheaval; rebellion
- Economic development: trade, exploration, prosperity and depression
- Religion: renaissance ideas; reform of the Church; continuity and change by 1547

Component 2: Depth Study - 2N Revolution and dictatorship: Russia, 1917–1953

This option provides for the study in depth of the coming and practice of communism in Russia. It explores concepts such as Marxism, communism, Leninism, and Stalinism, ideological control and dictatorship. It also enables students to consider

issues of political authority, the power of individuals and the inter-relationship of governmental and economic and social change.

Part one: The Russian Revolution and the Rise of Stalin, 1917–1929

Dissent and Revolution, 1917

- The condition of Russia before the revolution of February/March 1917: the Tsar and political authority; the war effort; the economic and social state of Russia; discontent
- The February/March revolution of 1917: causes and course of revolution; issues of leadership and the Tsar's abdication; the establishment of Provisional Government and the Petrograd Soviet; the workings of the Dual authority
- Developments between the revolutions including: the return of Lenin; Lenin's ideology and the April Theses; the July Days; the Kornilov coup and the roles of both the Provisional Government and Trotsky; Lenin and the Central Committee of the Bolshevik Party
- The October/November 1917 revolution: causes, course and extent of revolution; leadership and the establishment of Bolshevik authority; Sovnarkom and decrees and actions to December

Bolshevik consolidation, 1918–1924

- The consolidation of the Communist dictatorship: the establishment of one-party control; the removal of the Constituent Assembly; the ending of involvement in the First World War
- The Civil War: causes and course; the role of Trotsky; the murder of the Tsar; the reasons for the Red victory; government and control in wartime
- Economic and social developments: state capitalism; social change; conditions in cities and countryside during the Civil War; war communism; the Red Terror: revolts of 1920–1921 including the Tambov revolt and Kronstadt rising; the NEP and its political and economic impact
- Foreign relations and attitudes of foreign powers: foreign intervention in the Civil War; Comintern; the Russo-Polish War; discussions leading to the Rapallo Treaty; official recognition and the repercussions of the 'Zinoviev letter'; Lenin's rule by 1924

Stalin's rise to power, 1924–1929

- The power vacuum and power struggle: ideology and the nature of leadership; Lenin's testament; divisions and contenders for power: character, strengths and weaknesses of Stalin, Trotsky, Bukharin, Kamenev, Rykov, Tomsy and Zinoviev
- Ideological debates and issues in the leadership struggle: NEP and industrialisation; 'permanent revolution' versus 'Socialism in One Country'; how and why Stalin became party leader and the outcome for the other contenders
- Economic developments: reasons for and impact of the 'Great Turn'; the economic shift; the launch of the first Five Year Plan and the decision to collectivise
- Government, propaganda and the beginning of the Stalinist cult; Stalin's attitude to foreign powers: China; Germany and the Treaty of Berlin; changes in the Comintern

Year 13 topics and examinations

In year 13 you will study and be examined/assessed on three components. Two are assessed through external examination and the other is assessed as a personal study (coursework).

Component 1: Breadth Study - 1C The Tudors: England, 1485–1603

Part Two: England: turmoil and triumph, 1547–1603

Instability and consolidation: 'the Mid-Tudor Crisis', 1547–1563

- Edward VI, Somerset and Northumberland; royal authority; problems of succession; relations with foreign powers
- The social impact of religious and economic changes under Edward VI; rebellion; intellectual developments; humanist and religious thought
- Mary I and her ministers; royal authority; problems of succession; relations with foreign powers
- The social impact of religious and economic changes under Mary I; rebellion; intellectual developments; humanist and religious thought
- Elizabeth I: character and aims; consolidation of power, including the Act of Settlement and relations with foreign powers
- The impact of economic, social and religious developments in the early years of Elizabeth's rule

The triumph of Elizabeth, 1563–1603

- Elizabethan government: court, ministers and parliament; factional rivalries
- Foreign affairs: issues of succession; Mary, Queen of Scots; relations with Spain
- Society: continuity and change; problems in the regions; social discontent and rebellions
- Economic development: trade, exploration and colonisation; prosperity and depression
- Religious developments, change and continuity; the English renaissance and 'the Golden Age' of art, literature and music
- The last years of Elizabeth: the state of England politically, economically, religiously and socially by 1603

Examination:

Written exam: 2 hours 30 minutes

- Three questions (one compulsory)
- 80 marks
- 40% of A-level

Questions:

Two sections:

- Section A – one compulsory question linked to historical interpretations (30 marks)
- Section B – two from three essays (2 x 25 marks)

Part two: Stalin's Rule, 1929–1953

Economy and society, 1929–1941

- Agricultural and social developments in the countryside: voluntary and forced collectivisation; state farms; mechanisation; the impact of collectivisation on

the kulaks and other peasants; the famine of 1932–1934; the success of collectivisation

- Industrial and social developments in towns and cities: Gosplan; the organisation, aims and results of the first three Five Year Plans; new industrial centres and projects; the involvement of foreign companies; the working and living conditions of managers, workers and women; Stakhanovites; the success of the Five Year Plans
- The development of the Stalin cult: literature, the arts and other propaganda; Socialist Realism
- The social and economic condition of the Soviet Union by 1941: strengths and weaknesses

Stalinism, politics and control, 1929–1941

- Dictatorship and Stalinism: the machinery of state terror; the NKVD; the early purges; Kirov's murder; the show trials; the Stalin constitution
- The Yezhovshchina: mass terror and repression at central and local levels; treatment of national minorities; the gulags; the end of the purges; the death of Trotsky; responsibility for and impact of the Terror and purges
- Culture and society: church; women, young people and working men; urban and rural differences; 'socialist man' and the impact of cultural change; similarities and differences between Lenin's and Stalin's USSR
- Stalin and international relations: co-operation with Germany; entry into the League of Nations; pacts with France and Czechoslovakia; intervention in the Spanish Civil War; reaction to Western appeasement and Japanese aggression; the Nazi-Soviet Pact and its outcome

The Great Patriotic War and Stalin's Dictatorship, 1941–1953

- The impact of the war on the Soviet Union: Operation Barbarossa and the Stalinist reaction; the course of the war; the USSR under occupation and the fight-back; the Soviet economy; mobilisation and evacuation of industry; foreign aid
- The defeat of the Germans: reasons and results; post-war reconstruction; industry and agriculture
- High Stalinism: dictatorship and totalitarianism; renewed Terror; the NKVD under Beria; Zhdanovism and the cultural purge; Stalin's cult of personality; the Leningrad affair; purges and the Doctors' Plot
- The transformation of the Soviet Union's international position: the emergence of a 'superpower'; the formation of a soviet bloc; conflict with USA and the capitalist West; death of Stalin and Stalin's legacy at home and abroad

Examination:

Written exam: 2 hours 30 minutes

- Three questions (one compulsory)
- 80 marks
- 40% of A-level

Questions:

Two sections:

- Section A – one compulsory question linked to primary sources or sources contemporary to the period (30 marks)
- Section B – two from three essays (2 x 25 marks)

Component 3: Non Examined Assessment (NEA)

Civil Rights in the USA c.1861-c.1968

The purpose of the NEA is to enable you to develop the skills, knowledge and historical understanding acquired through the study of the examined components of the specification.

Through undertaking the NEA you will develop an enhanced understanding of the nature and purpose of history as a discipline and how historians work.

The NEA contributes towards meeting the aims and objectives of the A-level specification. In particular, it encourages you to:

- Ask relevant and significant questions about the past and undertake research;
- Develop as independent learners and critical and reflective thinkers;
- Acquire an understanding of the nature of historical study;
- Organise and communicate your knowledge and understanding in a piece of sustained writing.

You will be required to submit a historical investigation based on a development or issue which has been subject to different historical interpretations.

Your work will:

- Be independently researched and written;
- Be presented in the form of a piece of extended writing of between 3000 and 3500 words in length;
- Draw upon your investigation of sources (both primary and secondary) which relate to the development or issue chosen and the differing interpretations that have been placed on this;
- Place the issue to be investigated within a context of approximately 100 years;

Assessment:

- 3500-4500 words
- 40 marks
- 20% of A-level
- marked by teachers
- moderated by AQA

How can I develop my full range of skills by doing this course?

As well as covering advanced level study of history, this course will enable you to develop some key skills which will be essential to you whatever you go on to do afterwards. The key skills you can develop during this course are:

- Communication;
- Information technology;
- Problem solving;
- Working with others;
- Improving your own learning and performance.

History A level offers you plenty of opportunities to acquire key skills. Opportunities will arise naturally during lessons. They might include presenting your ideas to the rest of your group, taking part in discussion, using a computer database for research or working in a small group to investigate a historical problem.

What could I go on to do at the end of my course?

Students who study Advanced GCE History have access to a wide range of career and higher education opportunities. By the end of your course you will have learned a variety of transferable skills including how to evaluate and analyse information, how to weigh up evidence and how to communicate complex ideas effectively.

These skills are in great demand and are recognised by employers, universities and colleges as being of great value. History combines well with a range of science, social science and humanities subjects to create an attractive portfolio of qualifications, enabling you to move on to university courses in such areas as business, economics, law, media, philosophy, languages and, of course, History.

Students who choose not to go on to higher studies will have well developed transferable skills that will allow them to explore a wide range of employment opportunities.

What work will I be expected to do?

In lessons you will be expected to take part in a wide range of activities which include the following:

- Research
- Note taking
- Discussion
- Group and individual presentations.

Outside lessons you will be expected to undertake at least 5 hours private study a week at home or in school. This may increase towards the end of both the year 12 and 13 programme of study when you will be preparing for exams.

What do I do if I feel as though the course is too hard or I am getting behind with my work?

The monitoring system in the sixth form is very efficient and difficulties should be identified quickly by teaching staff and the sixth form team. There will be individual tutorial sessions for all sixth form students to deal with precisely these kinds of issues.

You must be prepared to communicate – talk to your teachers. It is much better to tackle a problem early when a relatively simple solution is possible rather than let it grow into a large problem that is more difficult to deal with.

In the 6th form you will be able to access Google Classroom resources, subject reading in the Reading Room and have communication with your teachers via school email.

Summary

History is:

- Interesting, challenging and fun
- Easily mixed with a variety of other subjects
- Recognised as a subject that promotes transferable skills and valued by employers and institutions of higher education.

The Department is:

- Well organised and resourced
- Enthusiastic
- Committed to making sure your results are the best you can achieve.

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