

## History FAQs



### **Why should I choose History?**

Just as history has made our world what it is, history can also be a key part of your future. Studying history informs the present and gives you the skills you need to prepare for the future.

Apart from being very interesting, history is useful for a host of different careers, and life too! In fact, history is very practical and teaches you vital skills that employers want, because it involves:

- Learning about people
- Learning to locate and sift facts – In today's internet-based, information overloaded world, employers really appreciate someone who can interrogate the evidence to find the vital information – a skill that history is better placed than any other subject to help you develop.
- Handling evidence to make informed decisions – to identify truth and recognise myth, propaganda and downright lies.
- Communicating your ideas and thoughts in a way that makes sense to others – whether that be verbally or in essays, graphs or illustrated reports – and having the confidence to defend your findings. These skills are vital for arguments and presentations in a range of careers.

### **What skills will it add to my CV?**

Some other skills you should have picked up include:

- good oral and written communication
- ability to put together a logical argument
- critical thinking
- objectivity regarding 'right' and 'wrong'
- gathering, investigating and assessing material
- condensing or expanding facts, ideas and arguments
- using different types of sources to cross-reference
- basing conclusions on statistical research
- organising material in a logical and coherent way
- presenting information literally, orally and visually
- an interest in culture

### **Who do we want to study History?**

Students with an interest and passion to learn about the history we are studying. They will need to be independent learners and intrinsically self-motivating with clear goals for their post-Plymstock lives. You will need a Grade 6 History GCSE and a proven ability in GCSE English.

### **How is the A Level different to my GCSE?**

The A Level and GCSE's have a natural progression in terms of the application of skills. We do not duplicate content from GCSE to A Level directly, though certain themes like the role of government and war will be familiar to GCSE students.

### **Is there coursework?**

Yes. Unit 4 in Yr13 is a coursework where you can choose from a variety of pre-approved titles or possibly enquire into getting your own approved to write.

### **Do I need to know about the A Levels topics before studying them?**

No, we assume no prior knowledge before starting the course. We will however, set pre-course reading to be undertaken by students planning to start the course.

### **Can I study the A Level without having studied the GCSE?**

It is not very common for this to happen, but we have accepted students onto the A Level with a strong performance in other Humanities subjects and English. Normally those students without the GCSE grounding will have to work more on their source analysis skills.

### **Is A Level History only for students planning to go to university?**

No, most A Level students do elect to go down this route, but increasingly more look towards employment and apprenticeships.

### **How much extended writing is there?**

A lot. History is a highly literate subject where you will be asked to undertake a lot of extended writing through essays and source interpretation. Extended essays responses will take up to 45 minutes to write. The skills required however, are the ones developed throughout Years 7-11, so you will revisit familiar skills whilst constantly improving your craft.

### **How much reading is there?**

Our current A Level curriculum is in its fifth year of teaching and we want our students to learn the content the way your teachers did when writing the course. This will involve a considerable amount of independent, academic reading which we expect students to undertake outside the classroom, to consolidate their learning and prepare their subsequent studies. Wider academic reading is essential to the learning of the subject and a proven ability will be very attractive to potential university admission tutors and employers.

Examples of wider reading are:

- Paper 1: Andrew Marr – The History of Modern Britain
- Paper 2: David Reynolds – Empire of Liberty
- Paper 3: Ben Wilson – Empire of the Deep

### **Would it be an advantage to read the approved textbooks before the course begins?**

You will be reading them anyway throughout the course, so any early head start would be an advantage. Consolidating your knowledge in class is better than learning it for the first time.

### **Are there textbooks to borrow?**

The Department has a growing number of used textbooks donated by ex-students that we issue on a first come first served basis.

### **How much homework is there?**

Regular homework will be set. It may be essay writing, source analysis, wider reading, watching our presentation preparation. Please expect several hours a week.

### **Can I access the syllabus online?**

Yes. The information can be found at:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-a-levels/history-2015.html>

## **Are there approved student support and revision guides?**

There are several examples which can be viewed from the links to Amazon at:

<http://www.historynetwork.co.uk>

as well as materials produced by the History Department placed on the School Shared Area. These can be accessed using the guidance film below:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=IOHuZWSSC4k>

Please go to the A Level Revision file.

## **How should I go about planning to revise for my A Level in History?**

We will be encouraging students to view revision as an ongoing process, as with their GCSE's, and have produced the following guidance film to illustrate a way in which student scan approach their work as they progress through their A Levels

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JjZCGaLowmk&t=132s>.

We also provide extension materials to allow students to gain access to the highest levels while regularly timetabling support sessions to allow students to catch up and consolidate their learning.

## **Contact**

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