

Talking History

Welcome to the **sixth issue** of the Talking History newsletter.

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www.ocr.org.uk/history

We're very keen to make sure that OCR History should captivate your students and develop a desire within them to continue learning beyond the confines of the classroom.

We've never thought there's any one 'correct' approach to History as a subject. History is too valuable, and simply too massive, to be limited to a mere handful of approved options. There's no core content: there cannot be and our view is that the logical extension of this is that you should have as much professional freedom as possible to approach the subject in your chosen valid way. Centres should have the opportunity to deliver the history of pre-colonial non-western civilisations and peoples, for example, as well as British history, and should be able to do so with confidence. Variety is, therefore, a key influence on our vision.

Quality is the key, so we've set high minimum standards for the content of our specifications. They'll contain innovative and exciting concepts and ideas for teaching in the classroom, which will be supported by new or high-quality existing resources. We'll also be developing different ways to support you in delivering the content. These will include online platforms, face-to-face INSETs, traditional published resources and also adaptable electronic ones. We'll aim to support and facilitate the good practice we know is already going on in the History teaching community.

We're determined too that the assessments must be clear – mark schemes unambiguous, and the key terms defined. Too often abstract terms are used without sufficiently clear definition or exemplification, and this can lead to confusion. That's why one of our key aims is to produce straightforward questions, tasks and mark schemes.

OCR History will provide a fantastic curriculum for your students to ignite and engage their passions and interests. Our content will aim to create independent learners, critical thinkers and decision-makers – all personal assets that can make them stand out as they progress to higher education and/or the workplace.



Meet the team

Michael Goddard



After completing a master's degree in Modern History at UCL, I worked for an educational publisher for several years before joining Cambridge Assessment. I was appointed Subject Officer for A Level History for OCR in 2007, and I feel privileged to have such an interesting and challenging job. I'm also proud that OCR offers the widest and most innovative range of History qualifications of any awarding body. I'm currently leading the redevelopment of our History A Levels and GCSEs, for first teaching in 2015 and 2016 respectively, and I think there are real opportunities not only to preserve and protect the very good practice that we know is out there, but also to refresh certain areas of the syllabus by adding new and exciting topics. I'm determined that when we do so we ensure that schools and colleges, and the needs of teachers and students, are at the forefront of our plans. We're working closely with publishers and other partners, and we're setting ourselves high standards for customer support, to make sure that we can help you deliver the best History qualifications available.

Clare Trevatt



I've been at OCR for just over a year now, and I'm really enjoying the opportunities and challenges the subject specialist role presents. I particularly enjoy talking to centres and gathering feedback on the implementation of our qualifications in the classroom. Before working at OCR, I spent a few years at the Department for Education and in the non-departmental public body the Young People's Learning Agency. My work there was mainly focused on Entry Level qualifications and a lot of my time was spent working with independent private providers.

I've always loved History. When I was younger, I was obsessed with the story of Anastasia and the Romanov family – the legend of the disappearance of Anastasia, the claims of Anna Anderson and later the DNA testing on the graves in Yekaterinburg. As I moved through university though my interests centred around the study of migration and displaced persons. My dissertation was on the move of a large proportion of the Jewish population back to Palestine in the inter-war years, and how this had an impact on medicine and agriculture in the area.

Grant Robertson



I joined OCR in February 2014 after nearly ten years of teaching in schools and as a head of department in Kent and Surrey. I felt the time was right to use what I've learned, the many successful practices I developed, and turn that into helping and supporting others. History has been a passion since I was a young boy, listening to tales of wartime Britain from my grandparents. I've always loved the stories that it weaves and the emotions it can elicit. Learning about history at school only served to enhance that and I was very fortunate to be taught by a range of passionate teachers, who inspired me to continue it further. Although I love all of history, there are two periods in particular that I would class as 'favourites'. 19th century German and Italian history is the first. I always saw them as romantic tales about two nations struggling to find themselves and forge a legacy of their own from the ashes of their pasts. South Africa in the 1900s is also a fascinating study, one of courage and resilience in the face of almost insurmountable odds, a fantastic story that continues to this day as the nation rebuilds and reinvents itself for the 21st century.

We're here to support you

We'll be on hand to help answer any questions you might have while at the same time developing new resources and new initiatives you can use in your planning and delivery of the subject. We hope you enjoy this issue of Talking History. Our contact details are at the end,

along with some of the commonly asked questions from the past few months.

What are you interested in?

If there's anything you'd like to see in the next issue of Talking History, please let us know as we'd love your feedback.



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On 24 March, we held a special event at the National Army Museum focusing on key aspects from the First World War.

There were four sessions throughout the day, presented to us by Professor Mark Connelly and Professor David Welch from the University of Kent, and from Tristan Langlois of the National Army Museum.

The day began with an insight into the origins of the First World War, delivered by Mark Connelly, outlining traditional views and exploring different theories and perspectives, from the well-known MAIN (militarism, alliance, imperialism, nationalism) causes through to Leninist and Capitalist theories as well as how views and interpretations changed over time.

From here, David Welch took the rein and the focus shifted to looking at propaganda and mobilising public, patriotic support. These sessions considered the different methods of attracting support to the war cause, in particular the mobilisation of manpower (and female power!). After lunch, delegates had the opportunity to look at some of the material on display at the museum with Tristan Langlois, from the weapons and equipment used, through to re-creations of conditions on the Western Front. This was rounded off by a focused tour of the First World War exhibit.

Finishing the day, Mark and David jointly presented a lecture on the end of the First World War. Here we looked at the immediate and long-term effects on Europe, which included the impact on social cohesion, on living standards and on British politics as a whole before concluding with a look at the origins of the Second World War as a consequence of the First World War.

Comments from the day include:

"The level of subject knowledge was very high and interesting issues and debates were raised."

"Great focus on content and issues which reignited my enthusiasm and encouraged revisiting my teaching and learning in a more meaningful way ..." Adam Rule, Whitley Bay High School

"Giving angles and ideas about how to teach WW1 and all age groups but also order pupils with the new A Levels"
Dr Stephen Smith, Stockport Grammar School

If you want to find out more about our CPD opportunities, please register on the CPD Hub (www.cpdhub.ocr.org.uk) to get more information about our events.



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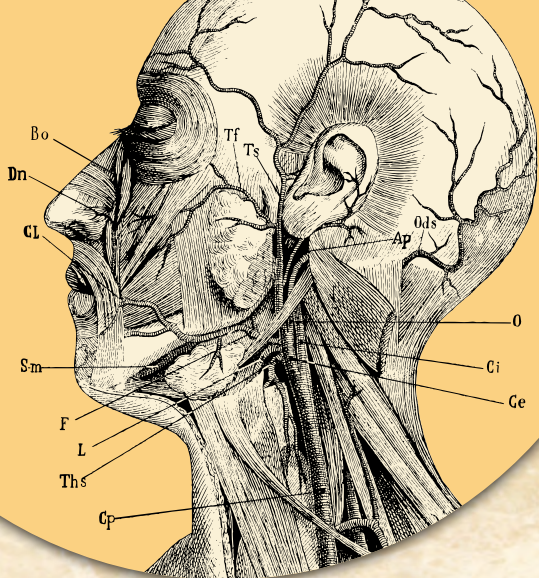


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Focus on A955/21 and 22 – Public Health and Protest, GCSE SHP



Why did we make changes to the specification?

All awarding bodies were asked to strengthen their GCSE History qualifications by the regulator, Ofqual. The requirement was focused on the following areas:

- A requirement for a substantial (a minimum of 25%) and coherent element of British history and/or the history of England, Scotland, Ireland or Wales
- More comprehensive coverage of the specified content and change and/or development over a period of time sufficient to demonstrate understanding of the process of change, both long and short term
- Greater use of AO1 (recall, select, use and communicate knowledge and understanding)
- Greater transparency of mark schemes.

Our approach

Two principles have guided our approach to strengthening this specification. Firstly, we've kept the changes to a minimum to make sure that centres' existing resources and expertise can still be used. Secondly, where changes were necessary, we've taken the opportunity to improve the specification.

Let's take a look at the four areas in a bit more detail.

A substantial ... and coherent element of British history

We've addressed this requirement by creating two new units entitled 'A Study in British History: Public Health in Britain 1800–1914' and 'A Study in British History: Protest and Reaction in Britain 1800–1914'. Both elements will be assessed primarily through the use of sources.

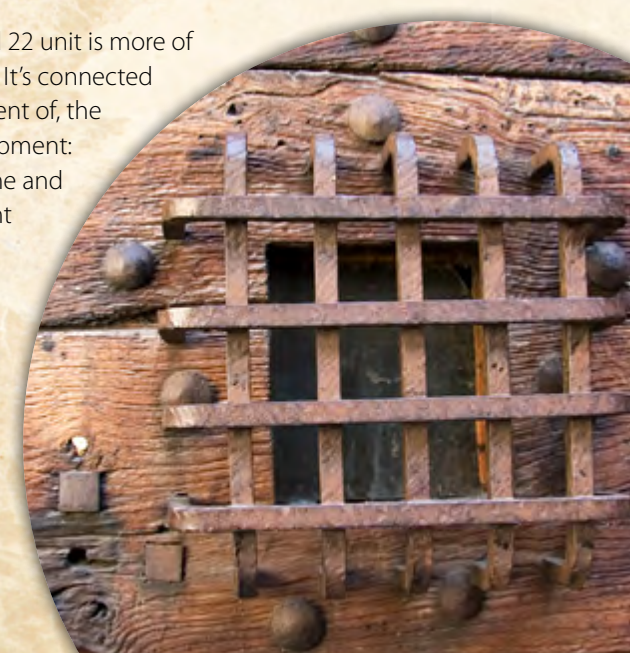
To keep changes to a minimum, we've based the units on content in the previous specification but to create a full and coherent story, we've also added new content.

More comprehensive coverage of specified content and change and/or development over a period of time sufficient to demonstrate understanding of the process of change, both long and short term

In the past, the topic for the Historical Source Investigation question paper has been based on a case study taken from the Study in Development: Medicine and/or Crime and Punishment unit A951 (now A954).

The case study hasn't been assessed as part of a study in development.

The new A955/21 and 22 unit is more of a development study. It's connected to, but also independent of, the A954 Study in Development: Medicine through Time and Crime and Punishment through Time unit. It is, in effect, a study of development within a larger study in development.



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Greater use of AO1

We've met this requirement while at the same time largely preserving the fundamental nature of the question paper as a source investigation. We've achieved the requirement in two ways.

Firstly, Questions 1–4 will be asked in such a way as to ensure that students need good knowledge of the historical context of the sources to produce a good answer.

Secondly, Question 5 will focus primarily on contextual knowledge and will demand knowledge of the development of public health across the whole period. It will be achieved by basing this question on one of the issues in the development of public health listed in the specification, and discussed in Section 2.

To allow students time to respond to Question 5 adequately, we've reduced the total number of questions from six to five.

Greater transparency of mark schemes

While we've always prided ourselves on the clarity and appropriateness of our mark schemes, there's now a requirement to recognise the different Assessment Objectives tested in each question in a more explicit way.

To achieve this, we've designed mark schemes that identify the requirements for each relevant Assessment Objective in each level. You can see how this works in practice in the mark scheme for the specimen paper.

New content

A955/21 – Public Health

The topics to be studied are:

- **The state of public health in the first half of the 19th century**
- **Demands for reform and reaction to these demands**
- **The beginnings of reform**
- **The need and pressures for further reform**
- **The Liberal welfare reforms of 1906–1912.**

The topic of Public Health 1800–1914 needs to be understood as a coherent topic in its own right, as well as a part of the larger story of the development of medicine. Students should end up with an overview (a mental map) of the period 1800–1914.

It's important to consider:

- *What were the different causes of reform? How important were individuals, scientific discoveries and the role of government? Did the causes of reform change over the period?*
- *Which parts of the period saw the most rapid reform? Why was there more reform in some parts of the period than in others?*
- *How different were the reforms? Were some reforms more effective than others? Why was it necessary to have a second wave of reform? How far did the nature of the reforms change over the period?*
- *How significant were the reforms for different groups? Were some reforms more significant than others?*
- *Why did some individuals and organisations oppose reform? Did their reasons change over the period? How effective was the opposition?*



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A955/22 – Protest

The topics to be studied are:

- **The Luddites 1811–1817**
- **The Tolpuddle Martyrs 1833–1836**
- **The Rebecca Riots 1839–1844**
- **The Match Girls Strike 1888**
- **The Suffragists and Suffragettes 1897–1914.**

We've selected these examples because they provide a range of different protests and reactions. The specification states that the context, causes, types, aims, methods, membership, effectiveness and significance of, and reactions to, each protest should be studied and compared.

For each protest, it's important to consider:

- *The context and causes of the protest – What circumstances and events brought the protest about? Were these long or short term? What were the grievances of the protestors? How did they affect the people involved? What did the protestors want to achieve?*
- *The events of the protest – Who were the protestors and what methods did they use? How much support did they have? Why did the authorities react in the ways they did? How and why did the protest end?*
- *The outcomes of the protest – What did it achieve? How successful were the protestors? How significant was the protest?*

You can find more information, as well as more detailed guidance, by clicking on the following links.

For public health: www.ocr.org.uk/Images/163143-unit-a955-21-overview.pdf

For protest: www.ocr.org.uk/Images/163144-unit-a955-22-overview.pdf





Spotlight on ... Solomon Northup

Following the recent success of the Steve McQueen-directed epic 12 years a slave, the name 'Solomon Northup', while familiar to most teachers and students of History, has now entered the public eye.

So, in case you don't know his story, who was he?

Solomon Northup was born a free man in July 1808 in New York State. As an adult, he gained a reputation as an excellent 'fiddler' in addition to working in a variety of industries, from the railroads to carpentry. It was in 1841, when Solomon was aged 32, that he was drugged by two men, claiming they had an offer of work as a musician in a circus. When he awoke, he was in chains and was about to be sold into a life of slavery. In his own words he said: *"From that moment I was insensible. How long I remained in that condition – whether only that night, or many days and nights – I do not know; but when consciousness returned I found myself alone, in utter darkness, and in chains."*

He fought against his bonds, but to no avail. He was beaten and shipped to the South to be bought by a preacher called William Ford. He was a kindly man who, despite being a believer in the slave trade, was not cruel to Solomon.

Things took another turn for the worse, however, when Solomon was sold to Edwin Epps in 1841. Here he was regularly beaten and whipped for any infraction, or failing to complete his quota of work for the day. He met another slave, Patsey, who was sexually abused by Epps. When she disobeyed him, Solomon recounted her fate:

"Mistress Epps stood on the piazza among her children, gazing on the scene with an air of heartless satisfaction. The slaves were huddled together at a little distance, their countenances indicating the sorrow of their hearts. Poor Patsey prayed piteously for mercy, but her prayers were vain. Epps ground his teeth, and stamped upon the ground, screaming at me, like a mad fiend, to strike harder.

'Strike harder, or your turn will come next, you scoundrel,' he yelled.

'Oh, mercy, massa! – oh! have mercy, do. Oh, God! pity me,' Patsey exclaimed continually, struggling fruitlessly, and the flesh quivering at every stroke.

"When I had struck her as many as thirty times, I stopped, and turned round toward Epps, hoping he was satisfied; but with bitter oaths and threats, he ordered me to continue. I inflicted ten or fifteen blows more. By this time her back was covered with long welts, intersecting each other like net work."

After nearly ten years of cruelty, Solomon met a man who would become his saviour. Carpenter Samuel Bass had joined the plantation looking for work. He was an abolitionist at heart and, on hearing the story of Solomon Northup, he took back to New York news of his whereabouts.

With a legal team in tow, emissaries from the North fought against Epps and returned to Solomon his freedom. He spent the remaining years fighting against those who wronged him, but sadly due to the legal system of the time, he failed in his attempts. He disappeared again in 1857 on a trip to Canada to give a lecture. It remains a mystery as to what happened to him. In his book 12 years a slave he ends with these final words.

"My narrative is at an end. I have no comments to make upon the subject of Slavery. Those who read this book may form their own opinions of the 'peculiar institution'. What it may be in other States, I do not profess to know; what it is in the region of Red River, is truly and faithfully delineated in these pages. This is no fiction, no exaggeration. If I have failed in anything, it has been in presenting to the reader too prominently the bright side of the picture. I doubt not hundreds have been as unfortunate as myself; that hundreds of free citizens have been kidnapped and sold into slavery, and are at this moment wearing out their lives on plantations in Texas and Louisiana. But I forbear. Chastened and subdued in spirit by the sufferings I have borne, and thankful to that good Being through whose mercy I have been restored to happiness and liberty, I hope henceforward to lead an upright though lowly life, and rest at last in the church yard where my father sleeps."

References – 12 Years A Slave – Solomon Northup, 1853.



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GCSE REFORM A LEVEL

Focus on ... A Level reform

The future of History in schools is fascinating and full of opportunities. We're very excited by the new History GCSE (first teaching in 2016) and A Level (first teaching 2015) criteria. They create the opportunity to protect much of what works really well in the current qualifications, but also to be creative in designing new, relevant and exciting courses that will appeal to teachers and students alike.

In any redevelopment of qualifications, protecting current good practice is of course of fundamental importance – and especially so for History. Among the many positive key findings of Ofsted's *History for All* report (2011) was that "History was successful in most of the secondary schools visited because it was well taught, notably in examination classes at GCSE and A level." (See www.ofsted.gov.uk/resources/history-for-all) No one wants to jeopardise that by unnecessarily enforcing changes, and so we welcome new subject criteria that allow us both to preserve and build on the proven current skilful delivery of A Level and GCSE courses.

At A Level, proposed government plans for the curriculum include that "AS and A level specifications in History must provide sufficient depth and breadth to allow learners to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding specified below, and must include a rationale for the specification of periods and/or themes which indicate how the following criteria for content are addressed. AS and A level specifications in History must provide a broad and coherent, course of study for all learners whether they progress to further study in the subject or not."

You'll find details on the proposed subject content at:

www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/252939/History_subject_content.pdf

Students must also study:

- "topics from a chronological range of at least 200 years
- a substantial (a minimum of 20 per cent) and coherent element of British history and/or the history of England, Scotland, Ireland or Wales; and
- change and/or development over a period of time sufficient to demonstrate understanding of the process of change, both long term (normally at least 100 years) and short term."

You'll find the full proposals at: www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/252939/History_subject_content.pdf

We've kept the core of what made our A/AS Level History successful where possible and made enhancements and improvements to meet these new principles. To address the 200-year rule, our A Level History will comprise a variety of new and exciting courses to complement existing ones. This includes studies of Pre-Colonial Africa and of Genghis Khan and the Explosion from the Central Asian Steppes, among others. Centres must choose options that cover a full two hundred years of history, and our innovative 'spec calculator' will be available to guide you in this process as well as tailoring a programme of documents to suit your individual needs.



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Component one of both the AS and A Level courses will be focused on a British Period Study. This has two elements: a longer study topic, focusing on a period of time within British history – for example, Britain 1951–1997 – and a smaller depth study from a period immediately preceding or following the main topic content – for example, Churchill, 1930–1951. The assessment for this component will centre, therefore, on two sections. The first section, dealing with the overall topic, will give students the chance to highlight their extended writing skills by providing a choice of questions, from which they'll answer one. The second section will be a document study, giving students the chance to explore their source skills.

Component two of both the AS and A Level courses will be a non-British study, similar to component one but excluding the smaller depth study. Subjects range from topics such as Germany 1919–1963 and the Cold War 1945–1990, through to new and exciting topics such as Genghis Khan and the Explosion from the Central Asian Steppes 1200–1405. Students will be given a choice of questions, from which they must choose one and answer all parts.

Component three is a thematic study, composed of a theme that covers an extended period of history of approximately one hundred years. There are two elements to the Historical Themes and Interpretations Component:

- The thematic essay that will require students to consider developments over approximately one hundred years
- The in-depth interpretation element where students will comprehend, analyse and evaluate the ways in which the past has been interpreted by historians.

This component is a synoptic part of the specification that seeks to develop an understanding of connections and interpretations between different elements of the subject and for students to draw together knowledge, understanding and skills of diverse issues centred on a common theme.

Component four is the internally assessed element of the course and will provide students with the opportunity to explore a topic of personal interest. They'll be expected to complete a variety of topics covering a period of not less than two hundred years.

How will these qualifications be assessed?

- Components 1–3 are assessed entirely through written examinations that are externally marked.
- All examinations take place at the end of the course (one year for AS Level and two years for A Level), available every June.
- Component 4 is assessed internally, then moderated externally – submitted before the examinations begin in May.
- Students entered on an AS Level course will have an additional question set included in component 2 to ensure that a full range of Assessment Objectives are met.

You can find out more about these and other changes on our website: ocr.org.uk/gcselevelreform

- Visit ocr.org.uk/gcselevelreform for the latest information.
- Sign up for email updates at ocr.org.uk/updates.



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With exam season rapidly approaching, we thought this would be a good opportunity to offer some exam tips for students looking at different ways to approach revision.

Podcasts and PowerPoints

For some OCR-specific resources, try www.mrallsophistory.com/revision.

It's regularly updated with new episodes of these popular GCSE History revision podcasts and revision PowerPoints. There is also a range of AS/A2 (A Level) History revision podcasts for students studying 19th and 20th century European history.

For example, there's a revision podcast that presents an overview of the Liberal reforms in Britain. The episode begins with an explanation of the situation before the reforms, and why they were introduced. Reference is made to social research at the time, key politicians, the impact of the Boer War, Britain's industrial situation and the effect of voting reforms in the late 19th century.

The podcast then goes on to explain what the reforms did to improve life for four key groups – children, old people, the unemployed, and workers. Finally, advice and examples are given for writing a balanced answer on how successful (or unsuccessful) the Liberal reforms were.

More exam tips

The following advice comes from www.revisionworld.com, reprinted with kind permission from their writers from their GCSE section.

1. Answer the question that is set

Some students fail to answer the actual question set. Perhaps they misread the question or answer a different question that they had prepared for. **Read the question once right through and then again more slowly.** Some students underline the key words in a question. Make sure you do not just write everything you know about the topic. **Only include information if it supports your answer** to the question set. Examiners do not award marks for correct information that is not relevant to the question. If there is a choice of questions, make sure you can answer all parts of the question before choosing to tackle it.

2. Think carefully about the length of your answer

You should **use the number of marks allocated to the question as a guide to how much you need to write.** Questions that carry 2 or 3 marks require no more than 2 or 3 lines of answer. Remember, no matter how much you write you will never score more than 2 or 3 marks. Questions that carry 8, 10 or more marks require extended writing with points being explained.


3. Questions based on historical sources


Some of the questions will be based on historical source material. **Make sure you use the source in your answer.** You will also need to use your knowledge of the topic to help you explain what the source means and whether the source can be trusted. Only include this knowledge if it helps you to say something better about the sources.



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4. Explaining, analysing and making judgements

Questions that ask for extended writing will also require you to produce explanations. These questions often ask why something happened. Make sure you give several reasons, and that you **explain how those reasons helped bring about a particular event or development**. Some questions require you to reach a judgement, eg whether one cause was more important than another. You must **support your judgement with evidence**.

5. Quality of written communication

In those questions that require extended writing, marks are awarded for the quality of your written communication. This includes **explaining** your arguments clearly, **organising** your answers carefully, and **using correct grammar, punctuation and spelling**.

Exam tips

The final few months before taking your GCSE examination are very important in achieving your best grade.

- Go through the list of topics in your Examination Board's specification and identify those that you feel you need to concentrate on.
- Try not to spend valuable time on topics you already know. It makes you feel good but does not move you forward.
- Study each topic carefully. Mark up the text by underlining, highlighting or making notes.
- Ask questions: Why? How? What happened next? You will get ideas for these questions from past examination papers.

- Then make your own revision note summary of the main points. Use bullet points, mind maps and patterned notes.
- Keep your revision notes organised.
- One of the best ways to revise is to answer the type of questions you will get in the examination. These will require you to use what you know – this helps you to memorise things better.





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Centre coursework marks for GCSE and A Level to be received by OCR by 15 May 2014

GCSE EXAMS:

History A (Schools History Project) (J415)

A954 Study in Development and Study in Depth (2 h)

Monday 1st June am

A955 Historical Source Investigation (1 h 30 min)

Wednesday 10th June am

History B (Modern World) (J417)

A011-7 Aspects of International Relations, 1919-2005 and Study in Depth(2 h)

Monday 1st June am

A021/A022 British Depth Study (1 h 30 min)

Wednesday 10th June am

Applied History

B951: Unit 1: Medieval History (4 h)

5 – 22 May: Examination to be held within this period as convenient to centres

A LEVEL EXAMS:

History A:

F961 British History Period Studies (1 h 30 min)

Wednesday 20th May pm

F962 European and World History Period Studies (1 h 30 min)

Wednesday 20th May pm

F963 British History Enquiries (1 h 30 min)

Wednesday 13th May pm

F964 European and World History Enquiries (1 h 30 min)

Wednesday 13th May pm

F966 Historical Themes (2 h)

Monday 8th June am

History B:

F981 Historical Explanation – British History (1 h 30 min)

Wednesday 20th May pm

F982 Historical Explanation – Non-British History (1 h 30 min)

Wednesday 20th May pm

F983 Using Historical Evidence – British History (1 h 30 min)

Wednesday 13th May pm

F984 Using Historical Evidence – Non-British History (1 h 30 min)

Wednesday 13th May pm



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You can find a complete timetable at the link below:

www.ocr.org.uk/ocr-for/exams-officers/key-dates-and-timetables



Important news

GCSE and A Level reform

Want to know about the future of the subject? You can find out more information and download some sample resources from the link below. Some of the resources include Transition Guides and content overviews, as well as teaching ideas and lesson resources for use in the classroom. As the specification develops, so too will our packages available. If you have any suggestions on the types of resources you would like to see, please contact us with details of what you would like.

www.ocr.org.uk/reformresources

Practical events – designed for you

We're holding a number of Reform Expo events at a range of venues across England to give an overview of our development work (draft specifications and specimen assessment materials) and an opportunity to talk to us.

For further details and to book for these free events, please visit cpdhub@ocr.org.uk.

Historical Association Conference on Friday 16 May and Saturday 17 May at the Holiday Inn, Stratford-upon-Avon

If you're coming to this event, do come and speak to us on stand 6/7 and find out about the direction the subject's heading in. It will be a great opportunity to learn more about our exciting new courses and have your say on how to help develop History further.

Find out more www.ocr.org.uk/events/view/historical-association-conference.

Ways you can get involved in OCR History

• In this newsletter

We'd love to hear from you if you or your students would like to contribute to our newsletter. If you'd like your school featured, please also let us know. We'd like to see History 'in action' so we're looking for volunteers to let us come in and observe lessons and talk to teaching staff and students.

• In our teacher advisory group (TAG)

Here at OCR we hold, every two months, a teacher advisory group. This gives you the opportunity to become involved in the development process and gives us a chance to hear your thoughts and opinions on specifications. If you're interested in joining, please do contact us. The location for these groups is primarily in Cambridge, but if you'd like to host an event for yourselves and other teachers in your local area, we'd be happy to come to you.

• As an Examiner

Interested in becoming an Examiner? It provides a fantastic opportunity for CPD and gives you an insight into the marking process. If you are interested, please contact us for further details on **01223 553998**.

Useful resources links

- www.ocr.org.uk/history
- www.cpdhub.ocr.org.uk
- www.mrallsophistory.com/revision – a fantastic website with lots of information and resources, many geared towards the OCR specification, including podcasts, videos and exam techniques
- www.johndclare.net – great information for revising modern world history
- www.tes.co.uk/teaching-resources
- www.nationalarchives.gov.uk/education
- www.revisionworld.com

Know of any more?

Come across some fantastic resources? Please share them with us so we can share them with the OCR community.



Welcome – Meet the team



Reflection on ... our 'First World War Reconsidered 100 years on' conference



Focus on A955/21 and 22 – Public Health and Protest, GCSE SHP



Spotlight on ... Solomon Northup



Focus on ... A Level reform



Practical tips on revision techniques



Dates for your diary



Important news/Answers to your questions



Useful resources



Get in touch



Answers to your questions

In every issue of *Talking History*, we'll be posting answers to some of your most commonly asked questions. Here are some we've received over the past few months.

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Where can I find past papers?

The quickest way to gain access to past papers and mark schemes can be found here: www.ocr.org.uk/i-want-to/download-past-papers.

Can I get access to marked scripts?

A range of sample answers, with guidance, can be found at www.cpdhub.ocr.org.uk. All you need to do is register for free to gain access. Can't find the script you're looking for? We're regularly adding new ones as they become available to us, so please check back often.

Do you offer any opportunities for CPD?

Yes, once you've registered, you'll be able to access our CPD Hub at www.cpdhub.ocr.org.uk, which has full listings of upcoming courses as well as relevant support materials.

For A Level History A coursework (F966), is it best to approach with a thematic or sequential approach?

Either a thematic or a sequential approach is acceptable under the mark scheme and criteria set down. When picking out themes, candidates are in danger of missing out the overall argument of a passage and this has been the case in the past where the overall intention of the passage has been lost and not sufficiently discussed. Taking a sequential approach is perfectly fine as candidates can take each passage in turn or by looking at all the sources that support X first before moving on to those that refute it, thereby looking at the passage as a whole. The mark scheme doesn't state that you should choose one approach over another, so either is valid. The key is that the overall message of the passage isn't lost in addition to discussing the themes.

GCSE A (SHP) has changed: the exam A955/21 and 22 is now different to previous incarnations. What advice can you offer?

As well as contacting us, you can find several documents in the support section of our website here: www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/gcse-history-a-schools-history-project-j415-from-2012

The documents called 'Unit A955/21 – Overview' and 'Unit A955/22 – Overview' provide additional support, including updated content.

I hear that reforms are coming soon, what's going on?

You can find out more about GCSE and A Level reform by using the following link: ocr.org.uk/gcsealevelreform

I need support for my controlled assessment/coursework. What's available?

You can use our coursework/controlled assessment consultancy service to support your delivery. Please note: for the new specifications (GCSE), for the 2015 controlled assessment tasks (onwards) approval will be needed. Use of our controlled assessment consultancy service to confirm suitability of the final title and the programme of study is compulsory. For both GCSE History A and B, proposal forms must be received by OCR by 31 January in the year of entry. If you need any further help or support, please do contact us and we'll help in any way we can.

'I'd really like to know ...'

Tell us how we can support you – your feedback is vital to us. Find out how to contact us on the 'Get in touch' page.



Useful resources

Past papers at your fingertips

We're launching an exciting new online past papers service that enables you to build your own test papers from past OCR exam questions.

You'll be able to use this new service, called ExamCreator, from the first week of the summer term. There's a web-based portal from which you can create topic-based tests or mock exams by selecting questions from past OCR examinations. There'll be a charge of £120 for each subject package.

A great tool for setting homework, tracking outcomes and more

You can print off tests you've created and use them like traditional exam papers or you can assign them to students to be taken and marked online. Students are sent an email by the system telling them that a test has been assigned to them and they can log in to take the test from any internet-enabled PC.

We've worked with partners The Test Factory to build ExamCreator. To find out more about its benefits and to register as a user, please see the details on our [website](#).



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SHARE YOUR STORY...

First of these is from Miss Hannah Ball, Cornwallis Academy, Maidstone (Head of History), who has recently rejoined OCR.

"We chose to use OCR for GCSE History as we had used it some time ago in the department. After having gone to a different exam board when 'modular' exams seemed to be the mode, we quickly realised that the OCR course was actually the one which our students really related to and enjoyed. We like the course because not only does it offer the opportunity to do a depth study in Nazi Germany and a development study in crime and punishment, which allows students to access a broad range of history, but there is also the opportunity to develop source analysis skills with a specifically designed paper for this. Equally, the controlled assessment option is flexible, allowing students to do either a local or a modern world study. We also find the exam papers are a lot more accessible than those provided by other exam boards. The fact that there is a maximum of 8 marks for one of the questions allows our students to be less daunted by the prospect of these extended answers. Having learned from experience, a question which carries 16 marks can often have a negative impact on a student's confidence.

Our students enjoy the course because they have a natural interest in history, they enjoy the range of topics which they get to experience and they always find the topics spark debate and thoughts among them and lead to good class discussions."

Get in touch

OCR customer contact centre

General qualifications

Telephone: 01223 553998

Fax: 01223 552627

Email: general.qualifications@ocr.org.uk

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