



# TRANSFERRING FROM B TO A

July 2014



A LEVEL HISTORY B (H108, H508)

# SUMMARY

**After running two History A Levels for the last six years, OCR has reluctantly decided that it will not submit a new draft specification for History B for accreditation as part of its wider programme of qualification reform.**

This means that the current GCE History B specification will be available to teach in September 2014, but not beyond and the last assessment for this specification will be in June 2016.

While this is disappointing news for many, we wanted to take this opportunity to thank you for your dedication and commitment in supporting this distinctive A Level over a number of years. We also hope you will consider the benefits of transferring to a new broader single specification – GCE History A – that, once accredited, will encompass the approach and interests favoured by users of our current History B specification.

Transferring from History B to History A might seem a daunting experience on the surface, but as you'll hopefully see from this document, many of the skills, knowledge and resources you have used in delivering History B will still be valid and useful in the new curriculum. History A offers a wide range of topics to suit many areas of expertise and interest.

It consists of three units that are externally assessed and one unit that is assessed by the centre and externally moderated by OCR. It is composed of a variety of exciting courses, with over fifty different studies to choose from.

It is our strong desire to ensure that OCR History A should captivate the learner and develop a desire within them to continue learning beyond the confines of the classroom. And, like History B, this qualification is designed to foster the development of critical and reflective thinking with an understanding of historical topics and issues.

OCR History A provides a fantastic curriculum to ignite and engage learners' passions and interests. Our content will 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.

There is no core content in History, and our view is that the logical extension of this is that teachers should have as much professional freedom as possible to approach the subject in their chosen valid way. This specification provides that freedom.

Centres should have the opportunity to deliver the history of pre-colonial non-western civilisations and peoples, for example, as well as British and European history, and should be able to do so with confidence, and so topics are included in History A to encourage centres to look beyond the most commonly taught areas of history.

OCR's A Level in History A has been designed to emphasise knowledge and argument, and to encompass a large range of traditional and new optional topics.



# DRAFT SPECIFICATION FOR A LEVEL HISTORY A

Periods	Unit Group 1 British Period Studies	Unit Group 2 Non British Period studies	Unit Group 3 Themes
<b>Early Medieval</b>	Alfred and the Making of England 871-1016 (Enquiry topic: Alfred the Great). Anglo-Saxon England and the Norman Conquest 1035-1107 (Enquiry topic: Norman England 1087-1107)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The rise of Islam c.500-661</li> <li>Charlemagne 768-814</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Early Anglo-Saxons c.400-800</li> <li>The Viking Age c.790-1066</li> </ul>
<b>Late Medieval</b>	England 1199-1272 (Enquiry topic: King John 1199-1216) England 1377-1455 (Enquiry topic: Richard II 1377-1399) England 1445-1509: Lancastrians, Yorkists and Henry VII (Enquiry topic: Wars of the Roses 1445-1461)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Crusades and the Crusader States 1095-1192</li> <li>Genghis Khan and the explosion from the Steppes 1200-1405</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Medieval Heresy c.1100-1300</li> <li>English Government and the Church 1066-1215</li> </ul>
<b>C16</b>	England 1485-1558: the Early Tudors (Enquiry topic: Mid Tudor Crises 1547-1558) England 1547-1603: the Later Tudors (Enquiry topic: Mid Tudor Crises 1547-1558)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Exploration, Encounters and Empire 1445-1570</li> <li>Spain 1469-1556</li> <li>Charles V and Luther 1519-59</li> <li>Philip II 1556-1609</li> <li>African Kingdoms c.1450-1600: Four Case Studies</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Rebellion and Disorder under the Tudors 1485-1603</li> <li>The Catholic Reformation 1492-1610</li> <li>The Renaissance c.1400-1550</li> <li>Tudor Foreign Policy 1485-1603</li> <li>The Development of the Nation State: France 1498-1610</li> <li>The Ascendancy of the Ottoman Empire 1453-1683</li> </ul>
<b>C17/18</b>	The Early Stuarts and the Origins of the Civil War 1603-1660 (Enquiry topic: The Execution of Charles I and the Interregnum 1646-1660) The Making of Georgian Britain 1678-c1760 (Enquiry topic: The Glorious Revolution 1678-1689)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Russia 1645 to 1741</li> <li>The Rise and Decline of the Mughal Empire 1526-1707</li> <li>The American Revolution 1750-1791</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Origins and Growth of the British Empire 1583-1783</li> <li>The Ascendancy of France 1610-1715</li> <li>Popular Culture and the Witchcraze of the 16th and 17th Centuries</li> </ul>
<b>Modern</b>	From Pitt to Peel: Britain 1783-1853 (Enquiry topic: Peel and the Age of Reform 1832-1853) Liberals, Conservatives and the Rise of Labour 1846-1918 (Enquiry topic: England and a New Century c1900-1918) Britain 1900-1951 (Enquiry topic: England and a New Century c1900-1918) Britain 1930-1997 (Enquiry topic: Churchill 1930-1951)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The French Revolution and the rule of Napoleon 1774-1815</li> <li>France 1814-1870</li> <li>Italy and Unification 1789-1896</li> <li>The USA in the 19th Century: Westward expansion and Civil War 1803-c1890</li> <li>Japan 1854-1937</li> <li>International Relations 1890-1941</li> <li>Russia 1894-1941</li> <li>Italy 1896-1943</li> <li>Democracy and Dictatorships in Germany 1919-63</li> <li>The Cold War in Europe 1941-95</li> <li>The USA and the Cold War in Asia 1945-1975</li> <li>Apartheid and Reconciliation: South African Politics 1948-1999</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The Challenge of German Nationalism 1789-1919</li> <li>The Changing Nature of Warfare 1792-1945</li> <li>Britain and Ireland 1791-1921</li> <li>Russia and its Rulers 1855-1964</li> <li>Civil Rights in the USA 1865-1992</li> <li>From Colonialism to Independence: The British Empire 1857-1962</li> <li>The Middle East 1908-2011: Ottomans to Arab Spring</li> <li>China and its Rulers, 1899-2001</li> </ul>

Same Similar New



# CONTENT

As you can see from the chart, many of the courses delivered through the A level A specification will be very similar to teachers of the B specification. Some, like the Viking Age, Charlemagne or the End of Consensus, are virtually identical in terms of the knowledge needed, but they do require instead a different approach to examinations. Others, like the Italian Unification and the Challenge of German Nationalism, closely resemble the European Nationalism topic, but instead appear on two unit groups; this means that many centres currently offering History B's European Nationalism could use the knowledge base developed within History B to cover 2 out of the 4 unit groups in the new A Level A specification. For those centres that do currently choose that option, in addition to the Elizabeth module, your three unit groups could therefore still comprise those three modules, in their History 'A' forms.

The approaches may be different, but the content remains the same, so your resources will still be of importance in the delivery of the subject. The unique way History B tackled material will be beneficial as well, helping students to analyse sources in depth and getting to the heart of historical enquiries. You can find more detail regarding assessment further on in this document.

For many of the topics found in History B, you will find a similar programme of study housed in History A. As you progress through the teaching of the qualification, you should find that existing resources, both bought and made, will serve well throughout the delivery of the new History A specification.

The following table highlights this, showing previous B specification topics and listing similar or identical unit groups from the new A specification along with which unit group they are located in.

A Level	New/similar titles
Lancastrians and Yorkists, 1437–85	<a href="#">England 1455-1509: Lancastrians, Yorkists and Henry VII</a>
Tudor Finale: the Reign of Elizabeth I, 1558–1603	<a href="#">England 1547-1603: the Later Tudors</a>
Liberal Sunset: the Rise and Fall of 'New Liberalism', 1890–1922	<a href="#">Liberals, Conservatives and the Rise of Labour 1846-1918</a>
The End of Consensus: Britain 1945–90	<a href="#">Britain 1930-1997</a>
Charlemagne	Charlemagne 768-814
Luther and the German Reformation, 1517–47	Charles V and Luther 1519-1559
Robespierre and the French Revolution, 1774–95	The French Revolution and the rule of Napoleon 1774-1815
Russia in Turmoil, 1900–1921	Russia 1894-1941 <a href="#">Russia and its Rulers 1855-1964</a>
The Impact and Consequences of the Black Death in England up to the 1450s	
Protest and Rebellion in Tudor England, 1489–1601	<a href="#">Rebellion and Disorder under the Tudors 1485-1603</a>
Radicalism, Popular Politics and Control, 1780–1880s.	<a href="#">From Pitt to Peel: Britain 1783-1853</a>
The Impact of War on British Society and Politics since 1900	<a href="#">Britain 1900-1951</a>
The Vikings in Europe, 790s–1066	<a href="#">The Viking Age c790-1066</a>
The Italian Renaissance c.1420–c.1550	<a href="#">The Renaissance c1400-c1600</a>
European Nationalism, 1815–1914: Germany and Italy	Italy and Unification 1789-1896 Italy 1896-1943 <a href="#">The Challenge of German Nationalism 1789-1919</a>
Race and American Society, 1865–1970s	<a href="#">Civil Rights in the USA 1865-1992</a>
The Debate over the Impact of the Norman Conquest, 1066–1216	<a href="#">Anglo-Saxon England and the Norman Conquest</a>
The Debate over Britain's 17th Century Crises, 1629–89	<a href="#">The Early Stuarts and the Origins of the Civil War 1603-1660</a> <a href="#">The Making of Georgian Britain 1678-1760</a>
Different Interpretations of British Imperialism, c.1850–c.1950	<a href="#">From Colonialism to Independence: The British Empire c1857-1962</a>
The Debate over British Appeasement in the 1930s	<a href="#">Britain 1900-1951</a> <a href="#">Britain 1930-1997</a>
Different Approaches to the Crusades, 1095–1272	The Crusades and the Crusader States 1095-1192
Different Interpretations of Witch-hunting in Early Modern Europe, c.1560–c.1660	<a href="#">Popular Culture and the Witchcraze of the 16th and 17th Centuries</a>
Different American Wests, 1840–1900	The USA in the 19th Century: Westward expansion and Civil War 1803-c1890
Debates about the Holocaust	<a href="#">Potential course work topic</a>

Coursework elements, too, will be similar; a research diary can still be used to drive student progress as they undertake a programme of personal investigation in much the same way they do now, but will no longer form a compulsory part of the assessment.

**Unit Group 1**  
**Unit Group 2**  
**Unit Group 3**



# POTENTIAL PATHWAYS

In this section, we have listed some of the popular pathways through the A-Level 'A' syllabus that fit into subjects currently being offered as part of History 'B':

Unit Group 1	Unit Group 2	Unit Group 3	Unit Group 4
England 1455-1509: Lancastrian, Yorkists and Henry VII	Italian Unification	Russia and its Rulers, 1855-1964	Free choice
England 1547-1603: the Later Tudors	Russia 1894-1941	Rebellion and Disorder under the Tudors	Free choice
Liberals, Conservatives and the Rise of Labour 1846-1918	The Crusades and the Crusader States	Civil Rights in the USA 1865-1992	Free choice
Anglo-Saxon England and the Norman Conquest	The USA in the 19th Century: Westward Expansion and Civil War 1803-c1890	The Challenge of German Nationalism 1789-1919	Free choice
Britain 1930-1997	The French Revolution and the rule of Napoleon 1774-1815	Popular Culture and the Witchcraze of the 16th and 17th Centuries	Free choice
England 1547-1603: the Later Tudors	Italian Unification	The Challenge of German Nationalism 1789-1919	Free choice

Please note the above combinations are potential choices only. There are over 5000 valid combination of courses.



# NEW HISTORY GUIDELINES

Under new subject criteria, GCE History has undergone some significant changes. The most prominent of these is the '200 year rule' combined with the necessity to study 20% of British history. To comply with that, we have set grouped our specification into **FOUR** units.

- **Unit Group 1 is a British Period and Enquiry Study**
- **Unit Group 2 is a non-British Period Study**
- **Unit Group 3 is a Thematic Study**
- **Unit Group 4 is a Coursework Option.**

*Note: A breakdown of each unit groups' required skills and rationale can be found in the Assessment section of this document.*

Centres must choose one topic from each group and the combined study programme produce a date range in excess of 200 years (not included coursework).

For example, a programme of study on:

Unit Group 1	Unit Group 2
England 1455-1509: Lancastrian, Yorkists and Henry VII	Spain 1469-1556
Unit Group 3	Unit Group 4
Tudor Foreign Policy 1485-1603	Free choice

Would **not** be a valid combination, as the **earliest start** date (1455) and the **latest end** date (1603) do not add to more than 200 years. All the options on the previous page form valid combinations.

**Below and on the following pages** you will find a complete breakdown of all the topics available together with earliest and latest dates for each. You can use this as a guide to see what valid combinations you can study.

Unit group	Group title	Unit entry code	Title	Historical date	
				Earliest	Latest
<b>Unit Group 1</b>	British Period Study and Enquiry	Y101	Alfred and the Making of England 871-1016 (Enquiry topic: Alfred the Great)	871	1016
		Y102	Anglo-Saxon England and the Norman Conquest 1035-1107 (Enquiry topic: Norman England 1087-1107)	1035	1107
		Y103	England 1199-1272 (Enquiry topic: King John 1199-1216)	1199	1272
		Y104	England 1377-1455 (Enquiry topic: Richard II 1377-1399)	1377	1455
		Y105	England 1445-1509: Lancastrians, Yorkists and Henry VII (Enquiry topic: Wars of the Roses 1445-1461)	1445	1509
		Y106	England 1485-1558: the Early Tudors (Enquiry topic: Mid Tudor Crises 1547-1558)	1485	1558
		Y107	England 1547-1603: the Later Tudors (Enquiry topic: Mid Tudor Crises 1547-1558)	1547	1603
		Y108	The Early Stuarts and the Origins of the Civil War 1603-1660 (Enquiry topic: The Execution of Charles I and the Interregnum 1646-1660)	1603	1660
		Y109	The Making of Georgian Britain 1678-c1760 (Enquiry topic: The Glorious Revolution 1678-1689)	1678	c1760
		Y110	From Pitt to Peel: Britain 1783-1853 (Enquiry topic: Peel and the Age of Reform 1832-1853)	1783	1853
		Y111	Liberals, Conservatives and the Rise of Labour 1846-1918 (Enquiry topic: England and a New Century c1900-1918)	1846	1918
		Y112	Britain 1900-1951 (Enquiry topic: England and a New Century c1900-1918)	1900	1951
		Y113	Britain 1930-1997 (Enquiry topic: Churchill 1930-1951)	1930	1997

\* All units in Unit group 1: *British Period Study and Enquiry* are externally assessed (written papers)



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Unit Group 3	Unit Group 4
Tudor Foreign Policy 1485-1603	Free choice

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Unit Group 1	British Period Study and Enquiry	Y101	Alfred and the Making of England 871-1016 (Enquiry topic: Alfred the Great)	871	1016
		Y102	Anglo-Saxon England and the Norman Conquest 1035-1107 (Enquiry topic: Norman England 1087-1107)	1035	1107
		Y103	England 1199-1272 (Enquiry topic: King John 1199-1216)	1199	1272
		Y104	England 1377-1455 (Enquiry topic: Richard II 1377-1399)	1377	1455
		Y105	England 1445-1509: Lancastrians, Yorkists and Henry VII (Enquiry topic: Wars of the Roses 1445-1461)	1445	1509
		Y106	England 1485-1558: the Early Tudors (Enquiry topic: Mid Tudor Crises 1547-1558)	1485	1558
		Y107	England 1547-1603: the Later Tudors (Enquiry topic: Mid Tudor Crises 1547-1558)	1547	1603
		Y108	The Early Stuarts and the Origins of the Civil War 1603-1660 (Enquiry topic: The Execution of Charles I and the Interregnum 1646-1660)	1603	1660
		Y109	The Making of Georgian Britain 1678-c1760 (Enquiry topic: The Glorious Revolution 1678-1689)	1678	c1760
		Y110	From Pitt to Peel: Britain 1783-1853 (Enquiry topic: Peel and the Age of Reform 1832-1853)	1783	1853
		Y111	Liberals, Conservatives and the Rise of Labour 1846-1918 (Enquiry topic: England and a New Century c1900-1918)	1846	1918
		Y112	Britain 1900-1951 (Enquiry topic: England and a New Century c1900-1918)	1900	1951
		Y113	Britain 1930-1997 (Enquiry topic: Churchill 1930-1951)	1930	1997

\* All units in Unit group 1: *British Period Study and Enquiry* are externally assessed (written papers)



Unit group	Group title	Unit entry code	Title	Historical date	
				Earliest	Latest
<b>Unit Group 3</b>	Thematic Study and Historical Interpretations	Y301	The Early Anglo-Saxons c400-800	c400	800
		Y302	The Viking Age c790-1066	c790	1066
		Y303	English Government and the Church 1066-1216	1066	1216
		Y304	Medieval Heresy and the Church c1150–1450	1150	1521
		Y305	The Renaissance c1400-c1600	c1400	c1600
		Y306	Rebellion and Disorder under the Tudors 1485-1603	1485	1603
		Y307	Tudor Foreign Policy 1485-1603	1485	1603
		Y308	The Catholic Reformation 1492-1610	1492	1610
		Y309	The Ascendancy of the Ottoman Empire 1453-1606	1453	1606
		Y310	The Development of the Nation State: France 1498-1610	1498	1610
		Y311	The Origins and Growth of the British Empire 1583-1783	1583	1783
		Y312	Popular Culture and the Witchcraze of the 16th and 17th Centuries	16th Century	17th Century
		Y313	The Ascendancy of France 1610-1715	1610	1715
		Y314	The Challenge of German Nationalism 1789-1919	1789	1919
		Y315	The Changing Nature of Warfare 1792-1945	1792	1945
		Y316	Britain and Ireland 1791-1921	1791	1921
		Y317	China and its Rulers 1839-1989	1839	1989
		Y318	Russia and its Rulers 1855-1964 (This unit cannot be taken in combination with unit Y219 Russia 1894-1941)	1855	1964
		Y319	Civil Rights in the USA 1865-1992	1865	1992
		Y320	From Colonialism to Independence: The British Empire 1857-1965	1857	1965
		Y321	The Middle East 1908-2011: Ottomans to Arab Spring	1908	2011

\* All units in Unit group 3: *Thematic Study and Historical Interpretations* are externally assessed (written papers)



# ASSESSMENT

A significant change for current History B centres will arise from the style and types of questions that are used in the A specification. Some examples are given below:

## Question from B Specification

*Why did Catholics cause problems for Elizabeth?*

## Future A Specification Sample Question

*How effectively did Elizabeth deal with the problems she faced in 1558?*

The two questions clearly compare in that they relate to problems for Elizabeth. The level of knowledge needed for the second is greater; however this is reflected in the greater length of time available for answering the question.

Unit F981 still has relevance to the new History A unit group one. Historical explanations retain their importance. While the historical 'modes' have less significance, they still form a part of all history explanations, so knowing that a question is dealing with intentional modes, whilst not as prominent, still forms the basis for a well-rounded education that will serve students well.

The new unit group 1 in History A also has a section on using historical evidence. In the case of Elizabeth, this focuses on Mid-Tudor Crises. Students will need to understand how to deal effectively with sources, just as in the History B specification. Questions will change from *"Explain how these sources are both useful and raise problems and issues for a historian using them."* to: *"Using these four sources in their historical context, assess how far they support the view that female rule was a serious problem in the 1550s."*

While on the surface, the question focuses on knowledge, underneath there is a clear need to use and assess sources in the same way as previously, with higher levels requiring detailed analysis of both the content and provenance of the sources.

There is, too, in History A a prominent focus on interpretations. Unit group 3 of the new A specification contains questions that practitioners of the B specification will recognise in their layout. These questions will usually be written like: *"Evaluate the interpretations in both of the passages and explain which you think is more convincing about..."* This therefore can use much of F985/6's approach, though, of course, with some differences.

The most obvious difference will be the exclusion of the controlled assessment exam. New guidelines require a reduction in non-examined assessment, which includes controlled assessment style exams and as a result, this has not been considered an option for any history specification. As a whole, there will be 3 examined units and 1 coursework unit. Unit group 1 will consist of 2 sections. Section 1 will be a source based exam, Section 2, a traditional style essay question. Unit group 2 will focus on knowledge and understanding and will be essay based. Unit group 3 is also split into 2 sections. Section 1 will be the interpretation unit and Section 2 will be essay based. Unit group 4 is the coursework option, giving students a free choice on which topic to choose, testing their skills as

investigators in a similar vein to the F987 topic, but without a personal diary.

The precise breakdown of the four unit groups in specification A can be found in the next section.

## How is History A assessed?

History A will comprise of three examined unit groups and one coursework unit.

**Unit Group 1:** The nature of the examination will require learners to demonstrate an understanding of the key historical terms and concepts relevant to the period studied. The questions relating to the Period Study element will require learners to recall, select and deploy appropriate knowledge and communicate this clearly and effectively. Learners will be expected to demonstrate abilities to explain, assess, analyse and consider the relationships between key features of the period studied in order to reach substantiated judgements.

In the Enquiry element, the focus will be on the critical use of evidence in investigating and assessing historical questions, problems and issues. The link with the Period Study will make it easier for teachers to provide the historical background, context, and awareness of how their option is located within the longer term developments of the topic.

**Unit Group 2:** For the assessment of this unit group, each unit will have two questions set and learners will answer both parts from one of the questions. Learners will be required to answer both a traditional Period Study essay (as in a unit group 1) and a shorter question assessing the significance of two events, pertaining to a different key topic from within the option chosen.

**Unit Group 3:** The thematic essays will focus on making links and comparisons between different aspects of the topics studied and of testing hypotheses before reaching a judgement.

The depth studies will require learners to evaluate historians' interpretations of specified events/individuals (etc) arising from the theme. This will provide learners with the opportunity to assess and evaluate the arguments using their analytical skills and knowledge of the topic. They will have the opportunity to show they can discriminate between different interpretations to reach a supported judgement on the issue on which they are being examined.

**Unit Group 4:** The unit assesses AO1, AO2 and AO3 through one piece of written work. Half of the marks will be awarded for AO1, and thus the essay should be driven by use of knowledge and understanding to reach substantiated judgements. A range of primary (AO2) and secondary (AO3) sources should be evident and analysed, but formal critical evaluation in itself is less important than the discerning use of evidence to support analysis.

More detail on this can be found in the following pages:



# BRITISH PERIOD STUDY AND ENQUIRY

## Introduction to Unit Group 1

Centres should choose one unit from the thirteen available in unit group 1.

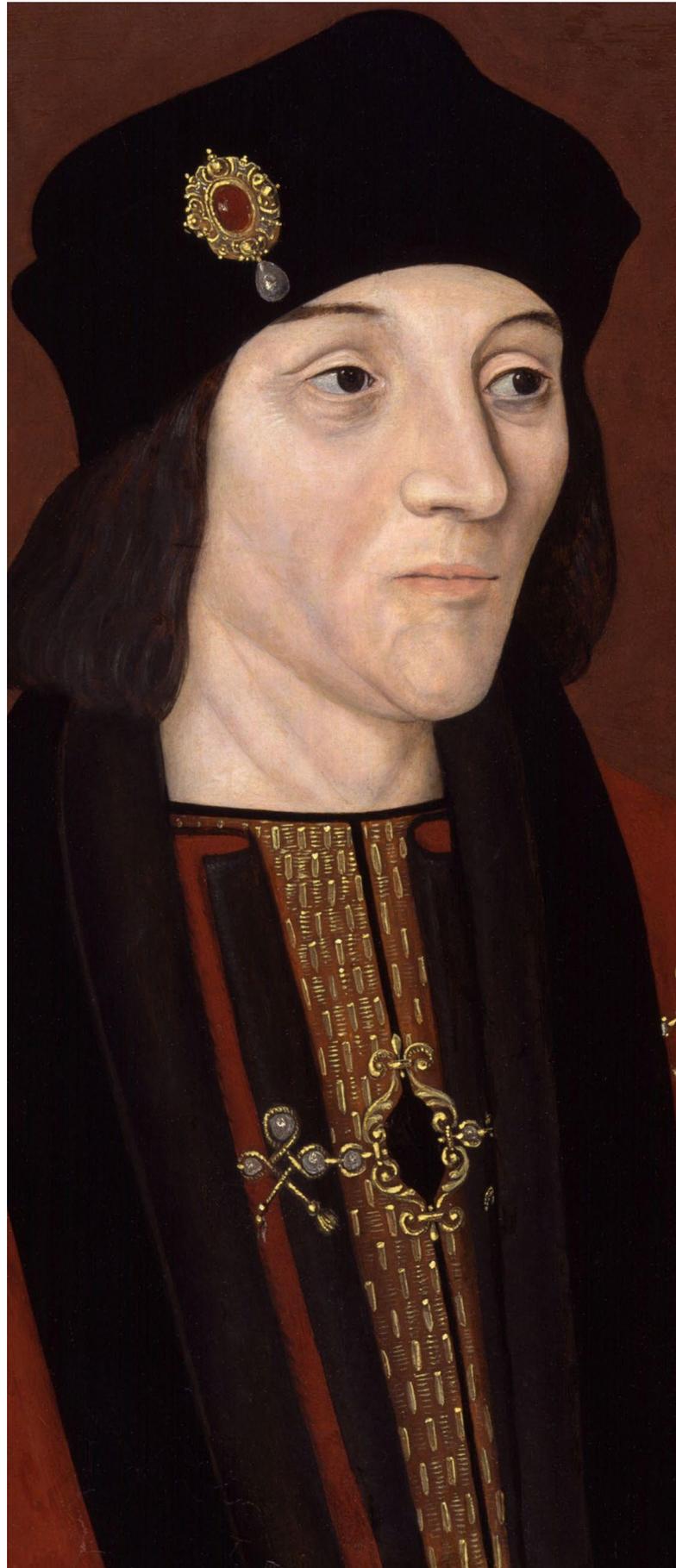
Each unit has two elements: a Period Study and an Enquiry. The Enquiry element either precedes or continues the Period Study element so as to provide increased coherence and coverage of the chosen period of British history.

The Period Study element of the unit is assessed by essays, which will allow learners to develop their use and understanding of historical terms, concepts and skills. The length of the periods studied will encourage learners to develop their interest in, and understanding of, important developments. The topics available in the units in this group will enable learners to ask significant questions about important issues. They are sufficiently broad and balanced to ensure both coherence and variety and have sufficient chronological range to provide for the study of continuity and change, which allows analysis of causes and consequences within the periods.

The addition of the Enquiry element to either the beginning or end of the period will ensure that learners do not have a borehole approach to their study, but will be able to see change and developments, and make substantiated judgements, over a substantial length of time, so that they can see issues in a wider perspective. The Enquiry topic areas include the study of significant individuals, societies, events and issues. They also include a range of different historical perspectives, for example aesthetic, cultural, economic, ethnic, political, religious, scientific, social and technological.

The nature of the examination will require learners to demonstrate an understanding of the key historical terms and concepts relevant to the period studied. The questions relating to the Period Study element will require learners to recall, select and deploy appropriate knowledge and communicate this clearly and effectively. Learners will be expected to demonstrate abilities to explain, assess, analyse and consider the relationships between key features of the period studied in order to reach substantiated judgements.

In the Enquiry element, the focus will be on the critical use of evidence in investigating and assessing historical questions, problems and issues. The link with the Period Study will make it easier for teachers to provide the historical background, context, and awareness of how their option is located within the longer term developments of the topic. The focus of the questions may be on depth of one Key topic or breadth, using parts of several key topics for the evaluation of a theme. Each Enquiry topic is of sufficient length to provide a coherent and worthwhile study within the overall period. Each provides a range of perspectives affecting individuals, societies and groups and will enable learners to analyse and evaluate different interpretations and representations of the past through contemporary perspectives. The critical evaluation of sources will be central to this element, with all marks awarded against AO2.



# NON-BRITISH PERIOD STUDIES

## Introduction to Unit Group 2

Centres should choose one of the twenty-four units available in this unit group.

The periods of non-British study will have the same number of Key Topics as for the British Period Study element, but there is no associated Enquiry element.

For the assessment of this unit group, each unit will have two questions set and learners will answer both parts from one of the questions. Learners will be required to answer both a traditional Period Study essay (as in a unit group 1) and a shorter question assessing the significance of two events, pertaining to a different key topic from within the option chosen.

The nature of both questions ensures that learners will have to reach a supported judgement if they want to access the higher mark range.

The length of the periods studied within this unit group will encourage learners to develop their interest in, and understanding of, important developments. They will also enable learners to ask significant questions about important issues. They are sufficiently broad and balanced to ensure both coherence and variety. The units have sufficient chronological range to provide for the study of continuity and change, which will allow the development of the Key Topics and for the analysis of cause and consequences within the periods. The length of periods studied will prevent a borehole approach to their study and learners will be able to see change and developments, and make substantiated judgements, over substantial lengths of time, so that they can see issues in a wider perspective. The topic areas available in the units in this group also include the study of significant individuals, societies, events and issues. They also include a range of different historical perspectives, for example aesthetic, cultural, economic, ethnic, political, religious, scientific, social and technological.

Centres will be able to choose, should they desire, a non-European period from the same time period as their British unit and this will also allow a broad understanding of the period in a wider context.

The nature of the examination will require learners to demonstrate an understanding of the key historical terms and concepts relevant to the period studied. The questions will require learners to recall, select and deploy appropriate knowledge and communicate this clearly and effectively. Learners will be expected to demonstrate abilities to explain, assess, analyse and consider the relationships between key features of the period studied in order to reach substantiated judgements.



# THEMATIC STUDY AND HISTORICAL INTERPRETATIONS

## Introduction to Unit Group 3

There are two elements to the Historical Themes and Interpretations unit group:

- the thematic essay which will require learners to consider developments over at least 100 years
- the in–depth Interpretation element where learners will comprehend, analyse and evaluate the ways in which the past has been interpreted by historians, by using their detailed knowledge of key specified individuals, events or issues that are prominent within the theme. Three such depth studies are specified for each option.

This unit group seeks to develop an understanding of connections and interpretations between different elements of the subject and for learners to draw together knowledge, understanding and skills of diverse issues centred upon a common theme.

The topics covered by the units in this group are based on themes covering an extended period of at least 100 years with a focus on continuity, development, change and evaluation of interpretations appropriate to the topic. The emphasis is on developing and interpreting a broad overview of the period studied, whilst also considering the validity of historical interpretations on specific topics within the theme being studied, therefore combining breadth and depth.

The thematic essays will focus on making links and comparisons between different aspects of the topics studied and of testing hypotheses before reaching a judgement.

The depth studies will require learners to evaluate historians' interpretations of the named events (etc). This will provide learners with the opportunity to assess and evaluate the arguments using their analytical skills and knowledge of the topic. They will have the opportunity to show they can discriminate between different interpretations to reach a supported judgement on the issue on which they are being examined.

Further advice and guidance on this unit group is available from the OCR website.



# NON EXAM ASSESSMENT: TOPIC BASED ESSAY

## Introduction to Unit Group 4

The History A unit Y100 Topic Based Essay is an independently researched essay of 3000–4000 words in length. This unit is a non-exam assessment.

The essay should explain and analyse different perspectives on a clearly-stated historical issue, drawing on a range of primary and secondary material.

The essay title should be chosen by the learner, checked by the consultancy service, and should be based on the independent investigation of a historical issue. The issue may arise from the study of a period or topic in unit groups 1–3 or it may be on a topic, or from a period, that the learner has not studied as part of the A level course. There is no restriction on the number of learners from the same centre offering answers to the same title.

The unit assesses AO1, AO2 and AO3 through one piece of written work. Half of the marks will be awarded for AO1, and thus the essay should be driven by use of knowledge and understanding to reach substantiated judgements. A range of primary (AO2) and secondary (AO3) sources should be evident and analysed, but formal critical evaluation in itself is less important than the discerning use of evidence to support analysis.

The work will be marked by centres and moderated by OCR.

## Choice of topic

A consultancy service is available to advise on appropriate titles. The non-exam assessment topics chosen can add coherence to the overall course in any of the following ways:

### Learners may extend their knowledge of aspects of the past already studied.

An example of this may be that the French Revolution and Napoleon has been studied for unit group 2, but a learner has a special interest in the War of the Third Coalition, or the Hundred Days. A learner has studied US Civil rights in unit group 3 but may wish to consider the career of Martin Luther King in greater depth. The reign of Elizabeth has been studied in unit group 1, but a learner may wish to consider the issue of why she did not marry in greater depth. Learners may not complete non exam assessment on any of the three depth study topics they study in unit group 3.

### Learners may wish to build on what they know to study related aspects not specifically required by the specification.

An example of this may be that while US Civil Rights has led to the study of rights for women, African-Americans and Trade Unions, a learner is interested in knowing more about gay rights. A learner may have enjoyed studying Elizabeth and may wish to pursue a cultural aspect of the Elizabethan age.

A learner may have studied China in unit group 3 between 1839 and 1989 but may wish to know more of Chinese history in an earlier era.

### Learners may wish to study a topic which is not related to other topics studied in order to extend the range of their historical knowledge.

The focus of their studies may have been the modern period but they may wish to investigate something from an earlier period, or from a different geographical area. Such a study would involve using historical skills but would be a broadening rather than a deepening of knowledge.

### Learners may wish to study a topic which involves a different sort of history than they have studied.

Thus they may choose an aspect of social history to balance a course which has been more focused on political history. They may wish to study an aspect of local history when their main course has been predominantly based on national history. They may wish to pursue a cultural or intellectual topic – a study of the arts or philosophy or literature in a particular period. They may wish to focus on an economic topic or a scientific topic. This could well come out of interests and enthusiasms in other disciplines they have been studying. A love of modern languages and history, for example, might be linked by studying an aspect of France, Spain, Italy, China or Russia. This could involve looking at evidence in French, Spanish, Italian, Mandarin or Russian, or merely extending knowledge and understanding of the history of a particular country whose language has been studied.

### Learners may have an interest in a particular topic for its own sake.

This could emerge, for example, from their family, where they live, a hobby, a place they have visited, something they have seen in an exhibition, or a play, novel or film that has not featured in the main A level History course. Some examples might be the impact of industrial growth on a town or a region; the impact of civil war on a local area; the development of culture in a particular city; the impact of religious or social change on a locality; the significance of a particular person, or events which have impacted on past members of their family.

Please note: Coursework **does not** contribute to the 200 year minimum programme of study requirement as explained in the GCE History Subject Criteria.



# FURTHER SUPPORT

If you would like to discuss this, or any other topic with us, please do not hesitate to contact us, you can do so by:

Telephone: 01223 553998

or

Email: [history@ocr.org.uk](mailto:history@ocr.org.uk)

We are on hand to support your needs as you make this transition. On our website you will find sample resources and guides to delivering the new A-Level specification. This can be accessed here:

[www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/as-a-level-gce-history-a-h105-h505-from-2015/](http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/as-a-level-gce-history-a-h105-h505-from-2015/)

Resources here include sample lesson elements, delivery guides and resource lists. They are being updated regularly so please do check back for more.

To give us feedback on, or ideas about the OCR resources you have used, email [resourcesfeedback@ocr.org.uk](mailto:resourcesfeedback@ocr.org.uk)

## OCR Resources: *the small print*

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