

FAQs – OCR GCSE History

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SUBJECT CONTENT

What do I do if I have a specific question about subject content?

Please email History@ocr.org.uk and we are more than happy to help in any way we can.

What should I consider when selecting a course topic for the new specification?

As a starting point we recommend that you first familiarise yourself with the specification itself as this will cover all of the relevant areas of the qualification. After you have read through the specification you might also like to look at our Course Planning Guide Handbook as this will give you further guidance on constructing your course, planning individual studies, and helping students to achieve their potential <http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/222742-course-planning-guide-handbook.pdf>. There is also an Options Booklet which might be useful <http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/223668-options-booklets-handbook.pdf>

Once you have decided on a topic you should then use our Specification Creator Tool on the OCR website to check that the units chosen create a valid course of study.

TEXTBOOKS

What textbooks are available and where can I get hold of one?

A number of new textbooks will be released for the new GCSE History specifications.

I would recommend that you contact our publishing partner Hodder for any textbooks to support the OCR History GCSE. Hodder have a series of History titles available in print and digital formats that are endorsed by OCR and matched to OCR's History specification.

Here are links to the relevant website pages for each specification:

GCSE (9–1) History A (Explaining the Modern World)

<http://www.hoddereducation.co.uk/History/GCSE/OCREMW>

GCSE (9–1) History B (Schools History Project) specification

<http://www.hoddereducation.co.uk/History/GCSE/OCRSHP>

A number of existing books are also available and you can find some examples of these here:

<http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/223668-options-booklets-handbook.pdf>

For the History A Site Study we will be preparing, together with English Heritage and BASA, packs of resources for the urban environment component, these will be available in a few months.

Textbooks are also available for legacy specifications, published by Hodder.

Do I need to cover all of the content in the textbook?

It is worth first looking to see if the text book that you are using has been endorsed by OCR. Not all of the Hodder publications that link to the specification are endorsed and as a result might contain topics that do not align explicitly with the content that you see in the specification. It is perfectly acceptable to use these textbooks but when using them just bear in mind that you will only be required to cover topics that have been outlined within the specification. Nonetheless, examiners will also credit any relevant material used to answer questions set.

REVISION

Do you offer any help with revision?

There are a few resources that would definitely be very helpful to your revision planning for the OCR History GCSE. Hodder have a few titles available in print and digital formats that are endorsed by OCR and matched to OCR's History specification.

Here are links to some relevant titles that might be of interest for each specification:

GCSE (9–1) History A (Explaining the Modern World)

OCR new GCSE History A Revision and Question Practice

<http://www.hoddereducation.co.uk/Product?Product=9781471858970>

OCR legacy GCSE Modern World History Revision Guide 2nd Edition

<http://www.hoddereducation.co.uk/Product?Product=9781471829727>

GCSE (9–1) History B (Schools History Project) specification

OCR new GCSE B SHP History Revision and Question Practice:

<http://www.hoddereducation.co.uk/Product?Product=9781471858987>

My Revision Notes OCR (A) legacy GCSE Schools History Project 2nd Edition

<http://www.hoddereducation.co.uk/Product?Product=9781471829697>

Other non OCR specific resources that might be of use are as follows:

<http://www.amazon.co.uk/History-Schools-Project-Revision-Guide/dp/184762281X>

<https://www.hoddereducation.co.uk/Product?Product=9780719577536>

Furthermore, we have recently uploaded some INSET material for controlled assessment that you might find of use (www.cpdhub.ocr.org.uk) and on our interchange website we have some candidate style answers from our legacy GCSE (www.interchange.ocr.org.uk).

RESITS AND REMARKING

What is OCRs policy on re-marking?

We follow JCQ rules on all post-results services. Please see <http://www.ocr.org.uk/ocr-for/exams-officers/stage-5-post-results-services/> and

<https://interchange.ocr.org.uk/Modules/GeneralQualification/Post%20Results/Results%20Enquiry/Pages/ResultsEnquiryMenu.aspx?menuindex=73&menuid=107> for further information.

ONE-TO-ONE SESSIONS

Is it possible for you to come to our school for a one to one session?

Yes, we certainly have a few options for any school requiring some additional support. In the first instance I would recommend that you contact us on the phone to establish some general guidelines and discuss where you are at in your understanding. If further support is still needed we might be able to provide a one-to one service on request, however you will need to contact CPD Hub to discuss this further, therefore, it would be best to explore what we can do over the phone first.

You can also look at attending one of our Regional Education Network Meetings. We've been hosting these free regional events around the country for a few months, and they have proved popular with history teachers. The events give you an opportunity to share good practice, and to discuss teaching issues, ideas and resources with colleagues. At the same time OCR Subject Specialists will be there on hand to answer any questions. To book these events go to EventBrite www.eventbrite.co.uk and search for 'OCR History'.

GRADE BOUNDARIES

What are the grade boundaries?

The new GCSEs will be graded 1 to 9, with 9 being the top grade. Ofqual has consulted on proposals for how standards should be set for them, and how the grading scale should work. Please refer to this document for further information: <https://www.gov.uk/government/news/setting-standards-for-new-gcses-in-2017> When grade descriptors from Ofqual are made available; we will publish these on our website.

SAMPLE ANSWERS

Are sample answers available?

Our GCSE (9–1) History A (Explaining the Modern World) Specimen Assessment Materials (SAMs) taster booklet introduces you to the style of assessment for our new qualification and would be a good starting point. This booklet features some of the questions and mark schemes for the three assessments that make up the qualification.

Here is the link: <http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/285638-sample-assessment-materials-taster-booklet.pdf>.

We are also working on a SAMs taster booklet for the GCSE (9–1) History B (Schools History Project) specification and this will be up on our website very soon (sign up to our regular updates to be notified).

In addition to the SAMs tasters a complete set of sample assessment materials can be found on the OCR website, on the GCSE History page listed under 'Assessment materials' <http://www.ocr.org.uk/history>. These include parts of some sample answers. We are currently preparing complete sample answers including some written by students themselves with examiner commentary. If you want to volunteer your own students work to publish as sample answers then please contact us at History@ocr.org.uk.

Sample answers are also available for current qualifications, and can be found on our Interchange website (www.interchange.ocr.org.uk) under past papers.

MARK SCHEME APPLICATION

Why are the mark-schemes less detailed and how should I use them?

In some ways the mark schemes are not as detailed as they were in previous years and this is deliberately designed to be the case to ensure that we can reward good history regardless of the approach taken by the candidate so that students will be rewarded when they do what the question asks. The mark scheme has been designed to credit students wherever and however they demonstrate the knowledge, skills and understanding needed for a particular level, no set answer is expected. Each mark-scheme gives some suggestions for how students might do this. Have a look at this one as an example

<http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/207080-unit-j411-11-the-people-s-health-c.1250-to-present-with-the-norman-conquest-1065-1087-sample-assessment-material.pdf>

If you still have queries then you can of course email us at History@ocr.org.uk and we will be happy to go through this with you further.

HISTORY B SHP SITE STUDY

What is it? How will it be assessed? Do I have a completely free choice of site?

The 'History Around Us' unit is moving to being an exam paper, where any two out of three questions will be attempted by candidates answering questions such as 'choose a turning point in your site's history. Explain how and why this changed activity at the site'.

The mark scheme used will be the same for all candidates, and focuses on demonstrating strong knowledge of the key features of the site, a convincing explanation, and analysis of a range of specific features to the site. Centres will have to submit a site proposal form before starting the teaching of the unit to ensure it is a suitable site to be used. Centres will be asked to fill in the form in some detail, outlining how they plan to cover all the points a) to o) in the draft specification in their site study. This will ensure that all candidates will be studying appropriate sites and the appropriate range of material.

In choosing a site, it would be good to look at the a) to o) list (on pages 46-47 of the draft spec) as a planning guide. One change from the original version of the draft specification, following feedback from Ofqual, is that the site must not overlap with content taught in the other topics. So for instance, if you were to study the Norman Conquest British Depth Study, you would not be able to study a castle built between 1065 and 1087.

The study of the historic environment is also a part of GCSE (9–1) History A (Explaining the Modern World). A different approach has been adopted in this specification and sites are nominated. Please refer to the specification for further details or contact us.

Where can I find the Site Study form?

We plan to add the online Site Study form to the Assessment Preparation section of the GCSE History webpage by September at the latest. In the meantime if you need any advice that relates to this please contact one of our Subject Specialists at History@ocr.org.uk and we will do our best to help.

SPAG

What is SPag? How will it be assessed?

The descriptor for full SPaG marks is 'Candidates spell, punctuate and use rules of grammar with consistent accuracy and effective control of meaning in the context of the demands of the question. Where required, they use a wide range of specialist terms adeptly and with precision.'

Therefore 'in the context of the demands of the question' and 'wide range of specialist terms' would rule out irrelevant discussion, no matter how well written, and any answer that scored 0 would therefore have to score 0 for SPaG.

SCHEMES OF WORK

Do you produce schemes of work for GCSE topics?

Suggested schemes of work are available on our forums here:

<http://social.ocr.org.uk/node/2501/conversations>. We are also always keen to see teachers sharing their own resources here.

EXTRA READING

Where can I find additional reading materials and resources?

Our publishing partners Hodder have course guides and sample chapters available for both our new specifications:

Explaining the Modern World

Series page: <https://www.hoddereducation.co.uk/history/gcse/ocremw>

Course guide: <https://www.hoddereducation.co.uk/media/Documents/History/OCR-EMW-GCSE-History.pdf>

Sample chapter: https://www.hoddereducation.co.uk/media/Documents/History/OCR-GCSE-History-A_Explaining-the-Modern-World_Sample-material.pdf

Schools History Project

Series page: <https://www.hoddereducation.co.uk/history/gcse/ocrshp>

Course guide: <https://www.hoddereducation.co.uk/media/Documents/History/OCR-SHP-GCSE-History.pdf>

Sample chapter: https://www.hoddereducation.co.uk/media/Documents/History/OCR-SHP-GCSE_The-Peoples-Health_Sample-Material.pdf

Also, for many of our topics you will find that our Delivery Guides provide links to external materials and a range of suggested teaching activities. These can be found on the History webpage under Teaching and Learning resources.

Alternatively, you can post on our forums to see if any other teachers might be able to suggest some good resources, or contact us and we will try to provide you with some further resources that might be of interest. These can be found here: <http://social.ocr.org.uk/node/2501/conversations>

CONTROLLED ASSESSMENT

I'm doing J418/J415 GCSE History controlled assessment - what is the word count, can I use my own sources, what forms do I have to submit and by when?

All the answers to your questions, plus more guidance and support, can be found in the 'Guide to Controlled Assessment' on our website here: <http://www.ocr.org.uk/Images/180172-guide-to-controlled-assessment-in-history-b.pdf> but to give you instant answers - 2000 words is the limit, and this is very strictly applied. Students can either hand write or word process, instructions are in the above document. You can construct your own bank of sources, or use ours under the support materials tab here: <http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/gcse-history-b-modern-world-j418-from-2013/>, or adapt ours and add in ones more relevant. Most centres start with ours and add in other sources they want. You have to submit a sources checking form once you are ready, and before 31 January in the year of entry, so we know the sources you are using are appropriate. This can be found on the website above under 'forms'.

For J415 you will need to create your own source banks focusing either on the site (history around us) or the chosen modern world issue.

Students answer one question. The questions for each particular year are on Interchange - you need to have your login details to do this.

COLLABORATION

If other schools are teaching the same topic is there a way that we can contact them?

I would suggest that you start a conversation on the topic specific forums where you will find other teachers teaching the same topic. Here is the link <http://social.ocr.org.uk/node/2501/conversations>. Otherwise, if you have registered your options on the Specification Creator Tool then we can send you a list, so please contact us at History@ocr.org.uk and we will send this across.

ACCESSIBILITY

What are OCR's learner accessibility accommodations?

To apply for the appropriate arrangements for disabilities, learning difficulties, permanent or temporary conditions, including applications for modified papers, you will need to access the online tool 'Access Arrangements Online', via Interchange. In addition to this, you will find further information about Access Arrangements on the OCR Access arrangements webpage and the JCQ website.

If you want to discuss the accessibility of resources to support delivery of our qualifications please contact resources.feedback@ocr.org.uk with some further information about the resources that you require.

CPD/INSET

I was not able to attend a CPD event. Can I get materials from it?

You can download all our CPD materials free of charge here:

https://www.cpdhub.ocr.org.uk/DesktopDefault.aspx?e=fjefcbdbhgnidcponie&CATN_ID=1

UPDATES

How can I stay up to date with any OCR History updates?

Our e-newsletter currently has over 6,000 subscribers and is a great way to keep up to date with our news, resources and events. You can subscribe here <http://www.ocr.org.uk/i-want-to/email-updates/>