

HISTORY (AQA: A-level 7042)

What will I study?

The AQA syllabus offers you the chance to study three broad areas of history selected from a span of at least 200 years. There are two examined modules: Tudor England and Modern America. You will be able to enjoy investigating some of the most colourful, flamboyant and dynamic characters in history, from Henry VIII and Elizabeth I to Martin Luther King and President Bill Clinton. The third area of study is a piece of Coursework on Germany from 1890-1990. This spans the move from the Kaiser, through republic, the dictatorship of the Nazis, and a divided nation at the centre of the Cold War and ends with re-unification. By the end of the course you should have a greater understanding of the nature of political power, national identities and religious and racial conflict that run across the three very different historical contexts. You will also have a very good idea why much of the world is currently the way it is.

Which skills will I develop?

History develops specific skills, such as analysing source evidence, using evidence to reach judgements and understanding historians' interpretations of the period. These are developed through the methods of teaching that are used, including the ability to work in groups and to communicate ideas in essay form, presentations and through debate and discussion. There are frequent opportunities to develop beyond the curriculum. The department encourages and manages entry to some of the top essay competitions at Oxford and Cambridge which draw the best historians in the land and we have had several commendations in recent years. This is an opportunity to research History like an undergraduate in a topic of your own interest and we have seen papers as wide ranging as – The significance of Machiavelli's *The Prince*, The extent of the concept of female Kingship in Medieval Europe, 'To what extent was Christianity to blame for the Fall of the Roman Empire?' and 'What does History owe to Marxism?'

Why should I study History?

The skills which are developed in History teach you how to get to the heart of matters, to see the key issues, to be persuasive and decisive over the cause and answer to problems. It is no surprise therefore that most politicians, journalists, lawyers and those with careers in the media, publishing and management studied History to a high level. The course content is fascinating; studying History helps you to understand the similarities to, and differences from, peoples' lives in the past to your own, and the events that shaped our modern world. History can be studied with any combination of subjects and complements Arts, Languages and Science subjects equally well. The department also runs foreign study trips to expand your understanding, for example to Washington, D.C., and several lectures delivered by some of the most prominent historians of our age, several of whose books you will read or have seen on television.

What are the lessons like?

Lessons are rather different from those at GCSE. The emphasis is generally upon debate and discussion and you are encouraged to form opinions based upon research and reading. Group and paired work are regular features of the lessons and a wide range of sources, from films and posters to books and the internet, are utilised in teaching. You will also have the opportunity to go to History Society events which are given by working historians who write the books you use.

Is it essential that I have GCSE History?

It is not essential that you have taken GCSE History, but you should have performed well in similar subjects like English and RS to consider it. We hope that anyone who enjoys History and finds research and debate exciting would consider studying History at A-Level.

The A-Level comprises three components:

Component 1: Breadth study

The study of significant historical developments over a period of around 100 years and associated interpretations.

- Written exam: 2 hours 30 minutes
- Three questions (one compulsory)
- 80 marks
- 40% of A-level

Component 2: Depth study

The study in depth of a period of major historical change or development and associated primary evidence.

- Written exam: 2 hours 30 minutes
- Three questions (one compulsory)
- 80 marks
- 40% of A-level

Component 3: Historical investigation

A personal study based on a topic of student's choice. This should take the form of a question in the context of approximately 100 years. It must not duplicate the content of options chosen for Components 1 and 2.

- 3500-4500 words
- 40 marks
- 20% of A-level
- Marked by teachers
- Moderated by AQA



WHERE NEXT?

Veronica Welch

History at the University of Cambridge

Studied History, English Literature, Mathematics and French