

A LEVEL HISTORY

Exam Board: Pearson Edexcel

Syllabus Code: 9HI01

Entry Requirement

At least a grade 6 in IGCSE/GCSE History or English.

Introduction

There is no doubt that History is a demanding subject, but when well-taught by enthusiastic, knowledgeable and inspirational teachers, the rewards are tremendous. The skills build on those learned at IGCSE. Pupils will emerge after two years with an understanding of the key historical events that have shaped the world in which they live. A Level History allows pupils to study themes in-depth, making it an ideal basis for university study, and it includes a coursework unit in the Upper Sixth year which enables pupils to engage with individual research methods.

Pupils will be expected to read widely, research material independently and be able to write with increasing accuracy and fluency. The ability of argue will also be an advantage. The Department will, of course, aim to foster all these skills and has over recent years produced some extremely gifted historians who have gone on to study the subject at university.

The Lower Sixth Year

In the Lower Sixth pupils will study two units which will be examined in the Upper Sixth Year.

The options are linked by the theme of communism, one of the most significant ideologies of the twentieth century. Communism directly affected the lives of millions of people who lived under communist rule, but it also had indirect effects on

countless others around the world. Studying two different countries allows students to

develop a greater understanding of the nature of communist rule and the similarities and contrasts between them.

Unit One is a breadth study with historical interpretations, Russia, 1917–91: from Lenin to Yeltsin. The topic areas include: how the Tsarist regime fell in February 1917; February to October 1917; holding onto and consolidating power, 1918–24; civil war; changing economic policies; creating the Soviet state; Russia under Stalin, the purges, collectivisation and industrialisation and the role of the cult of personality; why Russia survived the Second World War. Post Stalin, the paper will examine the social and economic developments which took place until the 1980s and then examine in depth the reasons behind the fall of communism in the USSR. Pupils will answer three questions in the examination, two essay and one interpretation question. The examination lasts two hours, 15 minutes.

Unit Two is a depth study, and students will study Mao's China, 1949–76. Topic areas include: the establishment of communist rule in 1947; the social and economic changes which took place to the 1960s, including the Great Leap Forward; the Cultural Revolution and its impact upon China; social and cultural changes across the period, including the mass campaigns, women's rights and thought reform; pupils will also look at the political developments to 1976. Pupils answer two questions in the examination, a source analysis question and one essay. The examination lasts one hour 30 minutes.

The Upper Sixth Year

There are two further units in the Upper Sixth. One is a coursework unit (Unit Four). This will enable students to develop skills in the analysis and evaluation of interpretations of history as part of an independently researched assignment. The focus is on understanding the nature and purpose of the work of the historian. Students will be

specifically required to analyse, explain and evaluate the interpretations of three historians based around a controversial historical issue. The coursework will be assessed using a centre-set assignment. The department will deliver a short introductory course on skills and then supervise students during the process of researching and writing their coursework. It is internally marked and externally moderated. Pupils are able to choose controversies from their three examination units.

The examination unit (Unit Three) will be on the topic of protest, agitation and parliamentary reform in Britain 1770-1928. The paper comprises Aspects in breadth which focus on long-term changes and contextualise the Aspects in depth, which focus in detail on key episodes in the period. The parliamentary reform topic will cover areas such as the background to the 1832 Reform Act, Chartism and the further reform acts of the 19th century, the struggle for female suffrage and the development of the trade union movement and the birth of the Labour Party. The examination lasts two hours 15 minutes and pupils answer three questions, one source question and two essays.

Why study the subject?

Pupils will acquire both breadth and depth of historical knowledge and develop their skills of communicating this knowledge in a clear and effective manner. They will further their understanding of historical explanations and develop the ability to reach substantiated judgements. In particular, they will continue to advance their skills of handling and evaluating source material. These skills are much in demand in today's changing world and the choice of History is a gateway to a wide range of careers. In recent years many pupils have decided to study the subject at university, or have used their A level in history to enter a law course, where the skills are interchangeable.

The Department

The Department is staffed with highly qualified, experienced and committed teachers who are devoted to their subject. The Department is well stocked with books (it has its own library), has all courses on Firefly, including revision materials and question guidance.

What pupils do next

Many go on to study History, International Relations, Politics, Social and Political Science, Political Philosophy and Economics or Law at university. History is excellent preparation for legal studies as many of the skills overlap. History is highly respected by employers and higher education. A history degree enables you to develop your critical thinking skills, your ability to argue, your ability to organise your thoughts and write essays and to research information and present it either verbally, through presentations or in written form.