

Proposed GCE AS and A Level Subject Content for History

The criteria

Introduction

AS and A level subject criteria set out the knowledge, understanding, skills and assessment objectives common to all AS and A level specifications in a given subject.

They provide the framework within which the awarding organisation creates the detail of the specification.

Aims and objectives

1. AS and A level specifications in History must encourage learners to:

- develop their interest in and enthusiasm for history and an understanding of its intrinsic value and significance;
- acquire an understanding of different identities within society and an appreciation of aspects such as social, cultural, religious and ethnic diversity, as appropriate;
- build on their understanding of the past through experiencing a broad and balanced course of study;
- improve as effective and independent learners and as critical and reflective thinkers with curious and enquiring minds;
- develop the ability to ask relevant and significant questions about the past and to research them;
- acquire an understanding of the nature of historical study, for example that history is concerned with judgements based on available evidence and that historical judgements are provisional;
- develop their use and understanding of historical terms, concepts and skills;
- make links and draw comparisons within and/or across different periods and aspects of the past; and
- organise and communicate their historical knowledge and understanding in different ways, arguing a case and reaching substantiated judgements.

Subject content

Breadth and depth of content

2. 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.

3. 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.

4. There are no prior knowledge requirements for AS and A level specifications in History.

5. Both AS and A level specifications must require learners to study:

- the history of more than one country or state;
- aspects of the past in breadth (through period(s) or theme(s)) and in depth;
- significant individuals, societies, events, developments and issues within a broad historical context
- developments affecting different groups within the societies studied; and
- a range of appropriate historical perspectives, for example aesthetic, cultural, economic, ethnic, political, religious, scientific, social or technological.

6. In addition, A level specifications must require learners to 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.

Knowledge, skills and understanding

7. AS and A level specifications must require learners to:

- demonstrate knowledge and understanding of historical themes, topics, periods and debates;

- demonstrate their breadth of historical knowledge and understanding by making links and drawing comparisons between different aspects of the period, society, topic or theme studied;
- demonstrate their understanding of key historical terms and concepts, such as change, continuity, causation, consequence and significance;
- analyse and evaluate the causes and consequences of historical events and situations, and changes and developments in the periods or themes studied;
- analyse and evaluate the significance of individuals, groups, events, developments and ideas in history, where appropriate;
- use historical sources critically in their context, deploying appropriate information and reaching substantiated conclusions; and
- comprehend, analyse and evaluate how the past has been interpreted and represented in different ways, including in historians' debates.

8. A Level learners will draw on and evaluate a greater depth and range of more sophisticated content and evidence, demonstrating a more complex understanding of historical concepts, producing responses that are more analytical and judgments that are more effectively substantiated.

Historical interpretation

9. In addition, A level specifications must require learners to develop an understanding of the nature and purpose of history as a discipline and how historians work;

Historical enquiry

10. In addition, A level specifications must require learners to carry out a historical enquiry that is independently researched and that investigates specific historical questions, problems or issues; this should utilise, as appropriate, the knowledge, skills and understanding outlined above.

Organisation and communication

11. AS and A level specifications must require learners to organise and communicate their historical knowledge and understanding, arguing a clear, logical and precise case and reaching substantiated judgements.