

GCSE Subject Criteria for History

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Contents

The criteria	3
Introduction	3
Aims and learning outcomes	3
Subject content.....	4
Assessment objectives	6
Scheme of assessment	7
Grade descriptions	7

The criteria

Introduction

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

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

Aims and learning outcomes

1. GCSE specifications in History should encourage learners to be inspired, moved and changed by following a broad, coherent, satisfying and worthwhile course of study and gain an insight into related sectors. They should prepare learners to make informed decisions about further learning opportunities and career choices.
2. GCSE specifications in History must enable learners to:
 - actively engage in the process of historical enquiry to develop as effective and independent learners, and as critical and reflective thinkers with enquiring minds;
 - develop their knowledge and coherent understanding of selected periods, societies and aspects of GCSE subject criteria for History;
 - develop an awareness of how the past has been represented, interpreted and accorded significance for different reasons and purposes;
 - develop the ability to ask relevant questions about the past and to investigate them critically using a range of sources in their historical context;
 - organise and communicate their historical knowledge and understanding in creative and different ways and reach substantiated judgements;
 - recognise that their historical knowledge, understanding and skills help them understand the present and also provide them with a basis for their role as responsible citizens, as well as for the possible further study of history.

Subject content

3. The content of GCSE specifications in History must reflect the learning outcomes.
4. GCSE specifications in History must build on the programmes of study for history at key stage 3.
5. GCSE specifications in History must enable learners to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding specified below. They must include a rationale for the specification of periods, themes and/or topics that indicates how the criteria for content are addressed.
6. GCSE specifications in History must require learners to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of:
 - the key individuals, societies, events, developments and issues in the period(s), theme(s) or topic(s) specified;
 - the key features and characteristics of the period(s), theme(s) or topic(s) specified and, where appropriate, the social, cultural, religious and ethnic diversity of the societies studied, and the experiences of people in these societies;
 - the links between the key individuals, societies, events, developments and issues specified and the present;
 - a substantial (a minimum of 25 per cent) and coherent element of British history and/or the history of England, Scotland, Ireland or Wales;
 - change and/or development over a period of time sufficient to demonstrate understanding of the process of change, both long term and short term;
 - at least two different scales, such as local, national, European, international and global aspects, of the past in breadth, through period(s), outline(s) or theme(s), and in depth;
 - GCSE specifications in History may also include the study of how history links to related areas including the heritage, tourist and media sectors.

Knowledge and understanding of the past

7. GCSE specifications in History must require learners to demonstrate knowledge and understanding of historical periods, themes and topics studied, and their chronology through:
- making connections and comparisons between different aspects of the periods, themes and topics studied;
 - describing, analysing and evaluating the causes and consequences of historical events and situations;
 - describing, analysing and evaluating changes and developments in the periods, themes and topics studied;
 - assessing the significance of individuals, events, developments and/or ideas in the history studied.

Historical interpretation

8. GCSE specifications in History must require learners to:
- understand, analyse and evaluate how the past has been interpreted and represented in different ways, using a range of appropriate media.

Historical enquiry

9. GCSE specifications in History must require learners to:
- investigate specific historical questions, problems or issues, reviewing and reflecting on progress being made;
 - use a range of historical sources (such as written and visual sources, artefacts, film, ICT, paintings, photographs, music, oral accounts, and buildings and sites) critically in their context, deploying appropriate information and reaching reasoned conclusions.

Organisation and communication

10. GCSE specifications in History must require learners to:

- independently select, organise and communicate their historical knowledge and understanding in a variety of ways;
- use appropriate historical terms and ideas to communicate their knowledge and understanding.

Assessment objectives

11. All specifications must require learners to demonstrate their ability to:

	Assessment objectives	Weighting
AO1	Recall, select and communicate their knowledge and understanding of history.	25–35%
AO2	Demonstrate their understanding of the past through explanation and analysis of: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ key concepts: causation, consequence, continuity, change and significance within an historical context; ■ key features and characteristics of the periods studied and the relationships between them. 	25–35%
AO3	Understand, analyse and evaluate: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ■ a range of source material as part of an historical enquiry; ■ how aspects of the past have been interpreted and represented in different ways as part of an historical enquiry. 	30–40%

AO1 and AO2 are interrelated and connections should be made wherever possible.

Scheme of assessment

12. GCSE specifications in History must allocate a weighting of 75 per cent to external assessment and a weighting of 25 per cent to controlled assessment in the overall scheme of assessment
13. Question papers must be targeted at the full range of GCSE grades.¹
14. Marks must be awarded for candidates' ability to spell, punctuate and use grammar accurately in accordance with the requirements in Appendix A of the *Regulations for the Assessment of the Quality of Written Communication*.

Grade descriptions

15. Grade descriptions are provided to give a general indication of the standards of achievement likely to have been shown by candidates awarded particular grades. The descriptions must be interpreted in relation to the content in the specification; they are not designed to define that content.
16. The grade awarded will depend in practice upon the extent to which the candidate has met the assessment objectives overall. Shortcomings in some aspects of candidates' performance in the assessment may be balanced by better performances in others.

Grade	Descriptions
A	<p>Candidates recall, select, organise and deploy detailed historical knowledge effectively and with consistency. They show thorough understanding of the historical periods, themes and topics studied. They communicate their ideas using historical terms accurately and appropriately.</p> <p>They demonstrate their understanding of the past through developed, reasoned and well-substantiated explanations. They make perceptive analyses of the key concepts, features and characteristics of the periods studied, and the</p>

¹ Specifications in History intended for use in Northern Ireland must be targeted at two tiers of GCSE grades.

	<p>interrelationships between them.</p> <p>They evaluate and use critically a wide range of sources of information in an historical context to investigate historical questions, problems or issues independently, and to reach reasoned and substantiated conclusions.</p> <p>They recognise and provide reasoned comments on how and why events, people and issues have been interpreted and represented in different ways, and provide a well-developed consideration of their value in relation to their historical context.</p>
C	<p>Candidates recall, select, organise and deploy historical knowledge with accuracy and relevance. They show sound understanding of the historical periods, themes and topics studied. They communicate their ideas using historical terminology appropriately.</p> <p>They demonstrate their understanding of the past through structured descriptions and explanations of the main concepts, features and characteristics of the periods studied. Their descriptions are accurate and their explanations show understanding of relevant causes, consequences and changes.</p> <p>They evaluate and use critically a range of sources of information in an historical context to investigate historical questions, problems or issues, and with some limited guidance, to reach reasoned conclusions.</p> <p>They recognise and comment on how and why events, people and issues have been interpreted and represented in different ways, and provide an appropriate consideration of their value in the historical context.</p>
F	<p>Candidates recall, select and organise some relevant historical knowledge to show some basic understanding of historical periods, themes and topics studied. They communicate their ideas using everyday language.</p> <p>They demonstrate their understanding of the past through description of reasons, results and changes in relation to the events, people and issues studied. They provide limited descriptions of events, issues or periods, including</p>

	<p>characteristic ideas, beliefs and attitudes.</p> <p>They understand sources of information and, taking them at their face value, begin to consider their usefulness for investigating historical issues and draw simple conclusions.</p> <p>They identify some differences between ways in which events, people or issues have been represented and interpreted, and may identify some of the reasons for these.</p>
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