

# GCE AS and A level subject content for history

## Introduction

1. AS and A level subject content sets out the knowledge, understanding and skills common to all AS and A level specifications in history.

## Aims and objectives

2. AS and A level specifications in history must encourage students 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 students 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
  - 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 students to develop the knowledge, skills and understanding specified below, and must include a

rationale for the specification of topics including 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 students 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 students to study:
  - the history of more than one country or state, including at least one outside of the British Isles
  - aspects of the past in breadth (through period and/or theme) and in depth
  - significant individuals, societies, events, developments and issues within a broad historical context
  - developments affecting different groups within the societies studied
  - 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 students 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
  - 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 students to:
  - demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the aspects of history studied and historical debates
  - demonstrate their breadth of historical knowledge and understanding by making links and drawing comparisons between different aspects of the period, society or theme studied
  - demonstrate their understanding of key historical terms and historical 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 and/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
- comprehend, analyse and evaluate how the past has been interpreted in different ways, including in historians' debates

8. A level students will draw on a greater depth and range of content and evidence, and evaluate with more sophistication, demonstrating a deeper understanding of historical concepts, producing responses that are more analytical and judgements that are more effectively substantiated.

9. In addition, A level specifications must require students 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 students 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 students to organise and communicate their historical knowledge and understanding, arguing a clear, logical and precise case and reaching substantiated judgements.