

2 The specification overview

2a. Overview of A Level in History A (H505)

Learners must take one unit from each of unit groups 1 to 3 as well as the mandatory non exam assessment unit Y100 Topic based essay.

Content Overview	Assessment Overview	
<p>British period study and enquiry: (unit group 1)</p> <p>Learners study one of the 13 units available, each of which constitutes a substantial and coherent element of British History.</p> <p>The enquiry is a source-based study which immediately precedes or follows the outline period study.</p>	<p>British period study and enquiry (Y101-Y113) 50 marks 1 hour 30 minute paper</p>	<p>25% of total A level</p>
<p>Non-British period study: (unit group 2)</p> <p>Learners study one of the 24 units available, each of which constitutes a coherent period of non-British History.</p>	<p>Non-British period study (Y201-Y224) 30 marks 1 hour paper</p>	<p>15% of total A level</p>
<p>Thematic study and historical interpretations: (unit group 3)</p> <p>Learners study one of the 21 units available. Each unit comprises a thematic study over a period of at least 100 years, and three in-depth studies of events, individuals or issues that are key parts of the theme.</p> <p>Learners will develop the ability to treat the whole period thematically, and to use their detailed knowledge of the depth study topics to evaluate interpretations of the specified key events, individuals or issues.</p>	<p>Thematic study and historical interpretations (Y301-Y321) 80 marks 2 hour 30 minute paper</p>	<p>40% of total A level</p>
<p>Topic based essay: (unit Y100)* **</p> <p>Learners will complete a 3000–4000 word essay on a topic of their choice, which may arise out of content studied elsewhere in the course. This is an internally assessed unit group. A Title(s) Proposal Form must be submitted to OCR using the Title(s) Proposal tool.</p>	<p>3000–4000 word essay (Y100/03 or 04) Non exam assessment 40 marks</p>	<p>20% of total A level</p>

*Includes synoptic assessment

**Learners who are retaking a qualification can choose either to retake the non exam assessment unit or to carry forward their mark for that unit. See Section 4d for further details.

Unit Y113: Britain 1930–1997	
Enquiry Topic: Churchill 1930–1951	
Key Topics	Content Learners should have studied the following:
Churchill's view of events 1929–1940	Why Churchill was out of office 1929–1939; his attitude to the Abdication Crisis; his views about Empire and India and clashes with his party; attitude towards Germany after 1933; his views about rearmament and appeasement; why Churchill became Prime Minister.
Churchill as wartime Prime Minister	Why Churchill became Prime Minister; stance in 1940 and style of leadership; relations with his generals and his impact on strategic decisions in the Mediterranean, bombing of Germany and the war in Europe 1944–1945; plans for reconstruction and loss of 1945 election.
Churchill and international diplomacy 1939–1951	Churchill's view on Britain's world and imperial role; relations with other wartime leaders (Roosevelt, Stalin and de Gaulle); contribution to international conferences; plans for post-war Europe; Iron Curtain speech; attitude to Empire and Europe after 1945.
British Period Study: Britain 1951–1997	
Key Topics	Content Learners should have studied the following:
Conservative domination 1951–1964	Reasons for the Conservative victory 1951; social changes, immigration, unrest, social mobility and tensions, education, living standards, housing, prosperity and unemployment; Conservative economic policies, Butskellism, industrial growth and stagflation; Conservative leadership of Churchill, Eden, Macmillan and Home; scandals including the Vassall affair, Philby, Argyll and Profumo; reasons for Conservative decline; Labour leadership, divisions and electoral failures of the Labour Party.
Labour and Conservative governments 1964–1979	Labour victory 1964, Wilson as leader 1964–1970; economic problems and policies; relations with the Trade Unions; Labour party divisions; 1970 election, Heath as party leader and Prime Minister; aims and policies of Heath's government; industrial relations, miners' strike; Wilson and Callaghan 1974–1979, problems and policies 1974–1979.
Thatcher and the end of consensus 1979–1997	Election victories; Thatcher and her ministers; reasons for support and opposition; social and economic policies including monetarism, free-market, supply-side economics and privatisation; social policies and unrest; unemployment and the Trade Unions, the Miners' Strike; fall of Thatcher and replacement with Major; Conservative divisions under Major and electoral defeat 1997.

Britain's position in the world 1951–1997

Relations with and policies towards the USA and the USSR; Britain's influence at the UN; role in Europe; nuclear policy; response to crises: Korean War, Suez, the Falklands War, First Gulf War; decolonisation and changing attitudes to the Commonwealth.

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Unit Y213: The French Revolution and the rule of Napoleon 1774–1815	
Key Topics	Content Learners should have studied the following:
The causes of the French Revolution from 1774 and the events of 1789	The structure of the Ancien Régime; qualities of Louis XVI as King of France; financial problems and attempts by Turgot, Necker and Calonne to deal with them; the ideas of the Enlightenment and the impact of the American Revolution and the War of Independence; social discontents; economic problems from 1787; the Assembly of Notables and the political developments 1787–May 1789; the Estates General, events in Paris in 1789; the ‘Great Fear’; the October Days.
The Revolution from October 1789 to the Directory 1795	The attempts to establish a constitutional monarchy; reforms in church and state; the significance of riots and direct political action 1789–1792; the Jacobins; the flight to Varennes; the overthrow of the monarchy; the Convention and the Terror; the destruction of the Girondins; the ascendancy and fall of Robespierre; the establishment of the Thermidorian Regime; the constitution of the Directory.
Napoleon Bonaparte to 1807	The career of Bonaparte to 1799: early life and character; his military leadership and reasons for success to 1799 including Toulon, the Italian Campaign, Egypt, the weaknesses of the Thermidorian regime and the coup of Brumaire in 1799; Napoleon’s reforms as Consul, including the constitutional, legal, financial, educational changes; the establishment and nature of the Empire in France; nature of and reasons for military successes and failures after 1799: Marengo and the War of the Third Coalition, including the battles of Ulm and Austerlitz, Trafalgar.
The decline and fall of Napoleon 1807–1815	The Continental System and the war against Britain; the war in Spain; the Russian Campaign; Napoleon’s rule in France after 1807; the campaigns of 1813–1815 and abdication; the Hundred Days; personal failings and reasons for fall.

Unit Y318: Russia and its Rulers 1855–1964

This theme focuses on the nature of Russian government and its impact on the Russian people and society. Learners should understand the similarities and differences between the autocratic rule of the tsars to 1917 and the subsequent Communist dictatorship. The strands identified below are not to be studied in isolation to each other.

Learners are not expected to demonstrate a detailed understanding of the specification content, except for the named in-depth studies, but are expected to know the main developments and turning points relevant to the theme.

Thematic Study: Russia and its Rulers 1855–1964	
Key Topics	Content Learners should have studied the following:
The nature of government	Autocracy, dictatorship and totalitarianism, developments in central administration; methods of repression and enforcement; the extent and impact of reform; the nature, extent and effectiveness of opposition both before and after 1917, changes in local government; attitude of the Tsars, Provisional Government and Communists to political change; the extent of political change.
The impact of dictatorial regimes on the economy and society of the Russian Empire and the USSR	Changes to living and working conditions of urban and rural people including the impact on the peasants of Emancipation, Land Banks, famines, NEP, collectivisation and the Virgin Land scheme, the impact of industrial growth under the Tsars, War communism, NEP and the Five Year Plans on industrial workers; limitations on personal, political and religious freedom; reasons for and extent of economic and social changes.
Impact of war and revolution on the development of the Russian Empire and the USSR	The effects of the following wars on government, society, nationalities and the economy: the Crimean War, the Japanese War, 1905 Revolution, 1917 Revolutions, First World War, Second World War, the Cold War.
Russia: Empire, nationalities and satellite states	The Polish Revolt 1863; expansion in Asia; Russification; Finland; the Baltic provinces; impact of the First World War and the Treaty of Brest Litovsk; Russo-Polish War; Communist advance into Eastern and Central Europe after the Second World War.

Russia and its Rulers 1855–1964	
Depth Studies	Content Learners should be aware of debates surrounding the issues outlined for each in-depth topic:
Alexander II's domestic reforms	The effects of the Crimean War; the aims of Alexander II's domestic policies; the nature of his government; changes in central administration; the extent and impact of domestic reform; the extent and effectiveness of opposition; changes in urban and rural living and working conditions; limitations on personal, political and religious freedom; extent of economic and social change.
The Provisional Government	Main domestic policies of the Provisional Government; the nature of the government; methods of repression and enforcement; the extent and impact of reform; the extent and effectiveness of opposition; changes in urban and rural living and working conditions, limitations on personal, political and religious freedom; extent of economic and social changes; the impact of the continuing war; reasons for the overthrow of the Provisional Government.
Khrushchev in power 1956–1964	The aims of Khrushchev; the nature of his government; opposition, methods and enforcement of repression in Russia and its satellites; the extent and impact of reform; changes in urban and rural living and working conditions; limitations on personal, political and religious freedom; extent of economic and social changes including economic planning and the Virgin Lands Scheme; the impact of the Cold War; Khrushchev's fall.