

The A Level course is linear with examinations taking place at the end of the two years. This gives the opportunity to study periods of History in greater depth and to use a wider range of materials. The examination provides a broad and coherent course of study over a 200 year period. Students will have the opportunity to gain an understanding of the role of individuals in history and the nature of change over time. History can be studied in combination with any other subject and no prior knowledge is required.

The A Level is fully linear with exams at the end of the two year course. However, there is an historical investigation which will be completed over the course of one year's independent study. The A Level has an English, European and North American element in order to provide the widest possible study of the past. All students are issued with a good selection of books and there is access to further reading either from the department or from the Library.

The AQA course

The taught course is divided into two parts, both with an essay and source or extract work paper, examinable at the end of the two year course.

The Breadth Study looks at Tsarist and Communist Russian History over a hundred year period between 1855 and 1964. The first part of the course looks at Russia under Tsars Alexander II and III and their use and reliance upon autocratic government. The reign of the last Tsar Nicholas II is a particular focus of the course in the Lower Sixth year. As well as political developments in Russia, we also investigate the social and economic changes, including rapid industrialisation in the late nineteenth century and the impact of the Great War on Russia. Interpretations of the Russian revolutions of 1917 are a vital part of the course. In the Upper Sixth, we move into the soviet period of Russian history and look at the communist consolidation of power under Lenin, the establishment of Stalin's dictatorship and the emergence of the soviet state as a super power by the outbreak of the Second World War. Stalin's use of terror and his industrialisation of Russia are key areas of study. The course is completed with the rule of Khrushchev and we assess the state of the Soviet Union in 1964.

The Depth Study looks at English History between 1625 and 1660. The background to the course is the reign of James I. We then investigate the character and rule of Charles I, his belief in the divine right of kings and his attempts to rule without parliament. The origins of the Civil War and the conflict itself will present a particular focus for our study of this vital and interesting part of English History. The war led to the emergence of a new political and social movement. We move on then to look at the capture, trial and execution of Charles I, which remains enormously controversial and there are many documents to study. The final part of the course will look at the rule of Oliver Cromwell and the restoration of the monarchy.

The third component of the new A Level is made up of the Historical Investigation or NEA. Preparation for the essay will start at the end of the Lower Sixth year and it constitutes an opportunity for students to investigate a contentious question in History using primary and secondary evidence in great depth. Students will decide the actual question they want to answer.

The area we will focus on is The American Revolution and the founding of the United States and American Civil Rights 1865 to 1980. The personal study is submitted at the end of the Upper Sixth and constitutes an essay of about 4000 words.

The Department

The History department is housed in the Woodsmoor Building and each classroom has access to all multi-media equipment. The department organises attendance at conferences throughout the two year course, where students have the opportunity to listen to academics from prestigious universities talk about our subject. There is also an annual trip to the Houses of Parliament in London. Sixth formers have also participated in our trips to America, Russia and Germany, as well as the annual Battlefields trip.



SGS Historians scoop up National awards