

Course title: History A-Level AQA

Academic year:	2026
Course Venue:	The Weston Road Academy
Course Type:	A-level
Duration:	2 years

Course Description:

Our A-Level History course centres on two exciting units which have been carefully selected to combine together an array of different themes, including domestic problems, foreign policy relations, and economic developments. In two ostensibly different epochs, we analyse similar themes concerning the leadership of influential figures, evaluating their successes and failures to gain a holistic understanding of important historical concepts, such as change and continuity, significance, and cause and consequence. In studying both components, you will learn to work with primary evidence and form coherent and persuasive arguments. In Year 13 you will undertake a personal investigation which will also develop your research skills.

Course Content:

Year 12 topics

Consolidation of the Tudor Dynasty: England, 1485–1547

This unit focuses on the 2 monarchs Henry VII and Henry VIII and the following themes:

Henry VII, 1485–1509

- Henry Tudor's consolidation of power: character and aims; establishing the Tudor dynasty
- Government: councils, parliament, justice, royal finance, domestic policies
- Relationships with Scotland and other foreign powers; securing the succession; marriage alliances
- Social discontent and rebellions
- Economic development: trade, exploration, prosperity and depression
- Religion; humanism; arts and learning

Henry VIII, 1509–1547

- Henry VIII: character and aims; addressing Henry VII's legacy
- Government: Crown and Parliament, ministers, domestic policies including the establishment of Royal Supremacy
- Relationships with Scotland and other foreign powers; securing the succession
- Society: elites and commoners; regional issues and the social impact of religious upheaval; rebellion
- Economic development: trade, exploration, prosperity and depression
- Religion: renaissance ideas; reform of the Church; continuity and change by 1547

Option 2Q: The American Dream: reality and illusion, 1945–1980

Part one: prosperity, inequality and Superpower status, 1945–1963

This unit explores the post-war years of American History, focusing on the presidencies of Harry S. Truman, Dwight D. Eisenhower, and John F. Kennedy. Between 1945-1963 America witnessed dramatic changes in an array of different areas. When studying Truman, we cover topics, such as the legacies of World War II, America as a Superpower, and the emergence of the Cold War in Europe and Asia. We then cover the 'consumer boom' under Eisenhower, as well as key events in the Civil Rights movements, including the reaction to the Death of Emmett Till and the protest of Rosa Parks. Finally, we study the presidency of John F. Kennedy, including the challenge of Castro's Cuba, deepening involvement in Vietnam, the rise of the Civil Rights Movement, and the growing pressures for social change from women and youth.

Year 13 topics

NEA Coursework:

For this section you will be studying Rome in the 1st Century BC- 1st Century AD.

You will then devise your own question based on an area which has evoked your interest, and write an essay (approximately 4500 words).

Common themes/questions include:

- Greatest threat to Rome (Spartacus, Arminius, Boadicea)
- Most significant emperor (Julius Caesar, Augustus, Tiberius, Caligula, Claudius, Nero)
- Most influential Roman religion (paganism, eastern cults)
- Most influential woman (Cleopatra, Livia, Agrippina)
- Most psychologically disturbed emperor (Tiberius, Caligula, Nero)
- Greatest military general (Marius, Sulla, Julius Caesar, Pompey, Agrippa)

Part two: England: turmoil and triumph, 1547–1603

This unit initially focuses on a period of rebellion under the young monarch Edward VI and 'bloody' Queen Mary! Then emerges into the triumphal reign of Queen Elizabeth I.

Instability and consolidation: 'the Mid-Tudor Crisis', 1547–1563

- Edward VI, Somerset and Northumberland; royal authority; problems of succession; relations with foreign powers
- The social impact of religious and economic changes under Edward VI; rebellion; intellectual developments; humanist and religious thought
- Mary I and her ministers; royal authority; problems of succession; relations with foreign powers
- The social impact of religious and economic changes under Mary I; rebellion; intellectual developments; humanist and religious thought

- Elizabeth I: character and aims; consolidation of power, including the Act of Settlement and relations with foreign powers
- The impact of economic, social and religious developments in the early years of Elizabeth's rule

The triumph of Elizabeth, 1563–1603

- Elizabethan government: court, ministers and parliament; factional rivalries
- Foreign affairs: issues of succession; Mary, Queen of Scots; relations with Spain
- Society: continuity and change; problems in the regions; social discontent and rebellions
- Economic development: trade, exploration and colonisation; prosperity and depression
- Religious developments, change and continuity; the English renaissance and 'the Golden Age' of art, literature and music
- The last years of Elizabeth: the state of England politically, economically, religiously and socially by 1603

Option 2Q: The American Dream: reality and illusion, 1945–1980

Part two: challenges to the American Dream, 1963–1980

In Year 13, we further interrogate the concept of the American Dream by learning about the presidencies of Lyndon B. Johnson, Richard M. Nixon and America under presidencies of Gerald Ford and Jimmy Carter. We continue to explore topics relating to politics, the economy, social change, foreign policy, and Civil Rights. When studying Johnson, we cover topics including the escalation of the war in Vietnam, developments in the Civil Rights Movement, education and youth, and feminism. We develop these themes when exploring the presidency of Richard Nixon. We analyse the legacy of Nixon and cover the reaction to protest movements and forces of social change, the continuation of the war in Vietnam and Cambodia, the influence of Kissinger on US policies towards the USSR, Latin America and China, as well as the Watergate Affair and its aftermath. The unit finishes with a coverage of the USA after Nixon, 1974–1980, where we study the final withdrawal from Vietnam, relations with the USSR and China, and the USA by 1980. Through these topics, we will then evaluate whether the American Dream was a reality or illusion between the years 1945 and 1980.

Entry requirements:

The standard entry criteria to study in the sixth form are a 9-4 in at least seven different subjects, including English and mathematics, which would usually be at grade 4 or above.

To study other subjects already taken at GCSE you must achieve at least a grade 5 or above in that subject.

Assessment Objectives:

AO1 Demonstrate, organise and communicate knowledge and understanding to analyse and evaluate the key features related to the periods studied, making substantiated judgements and exploring concepts, as relevant, of cause, consequence, change, continuity, similarity, difference and significance.

AO2 Analyse and evaluate appropriate source material, primary and/or contemporary to the period, within its historical context.

AO3 Analyse and evaluate, in relation to the historical context, different ways in which aspects of the past have been interpreted.

Future opportunities:

- Progress to degree level History (or other degrees with related skills, e.g. law, classical studies).
- 'The Top 20 Universities in Britain recommend it' (source: *The Times*).
- Skills that History students develop:
The ability to analyse; make informed criticisms; gain fluent oral & written skills; listen and work with others; self-reliance; organisation; develop and justify your own opinion.
- More than ever before, employers are keen to meet school leavers who have analytical and evaluative minds. These qualities, combined with good literacy skills, cannot fail to impress on application forms and at interview whether applying for jobs as lawyers, managers, journalists or many other occupations.

Further information:

See Mr S. Brown the Subject Leader for History.