

A Level History

Exam Insights
May/June 2024



Welcome to this A level History exam insights event for the May/June 2024 exam series.

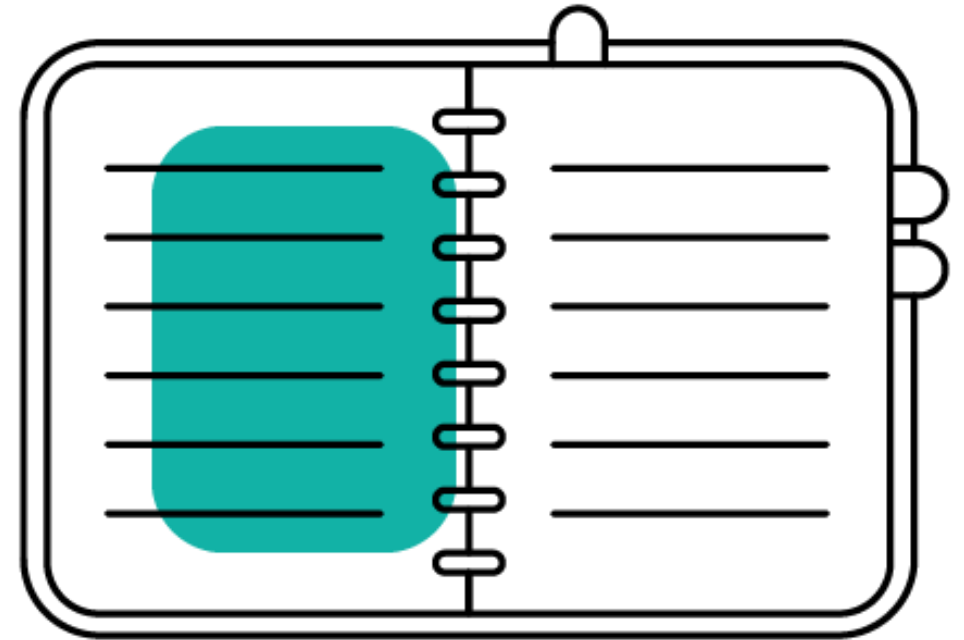
This session will provide insights and feedback on this summer's exam series. It will focus on the performance of some of the key questions in the series and provide analysis to support. The session will point out key statistical performance data that may help you with planning for the year ahead.

Dr Jane Marjoram is a former head of History, experienced examiner, and Pearson A level History subject specialist



In this session we are going to look at:

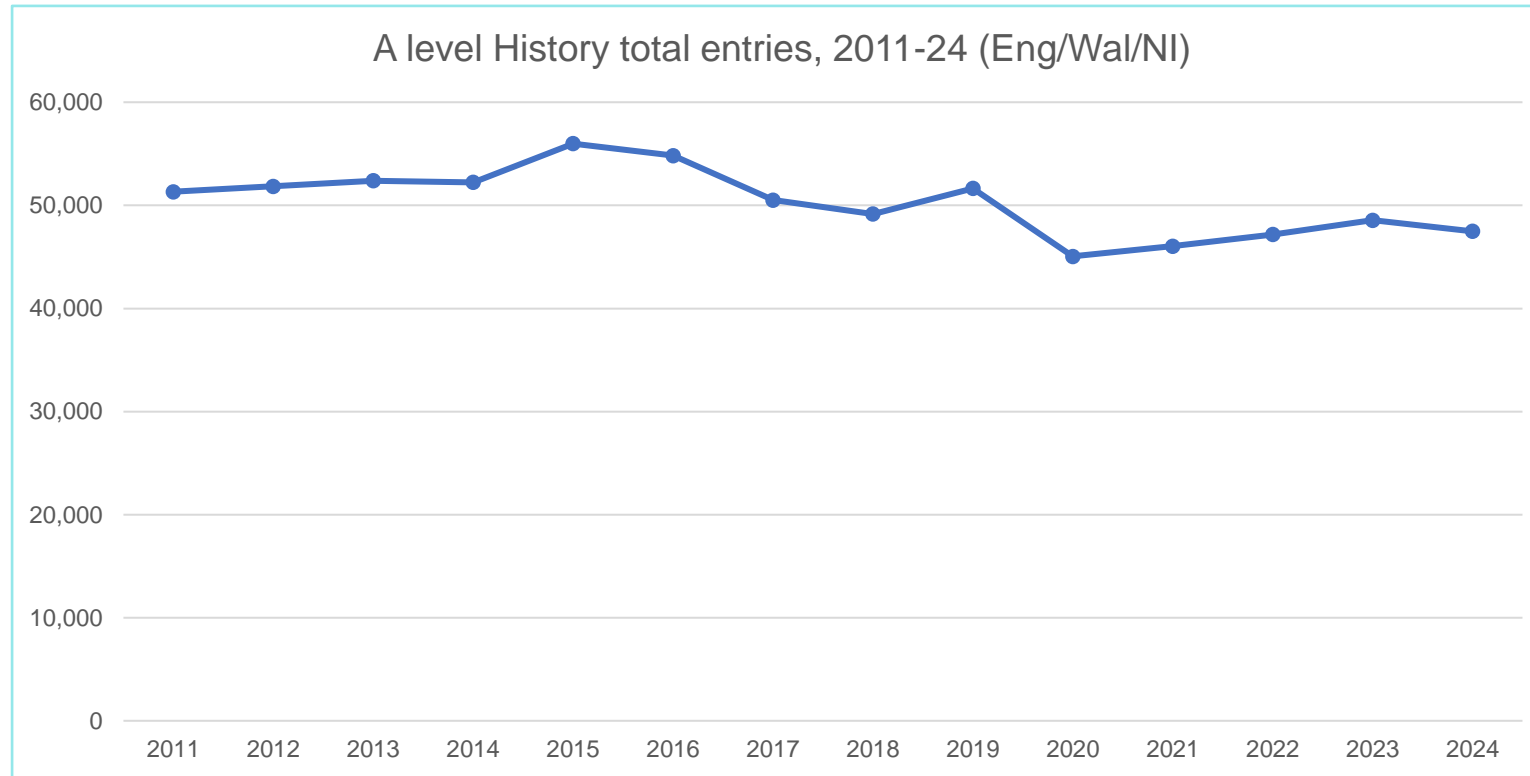
- the performance of candidates in the May/June 2024 series
- the variation of candidates' performances on different questions and why performance varies
- the Examiner reports
- common issues and FAQs



Summer 2024 entry data

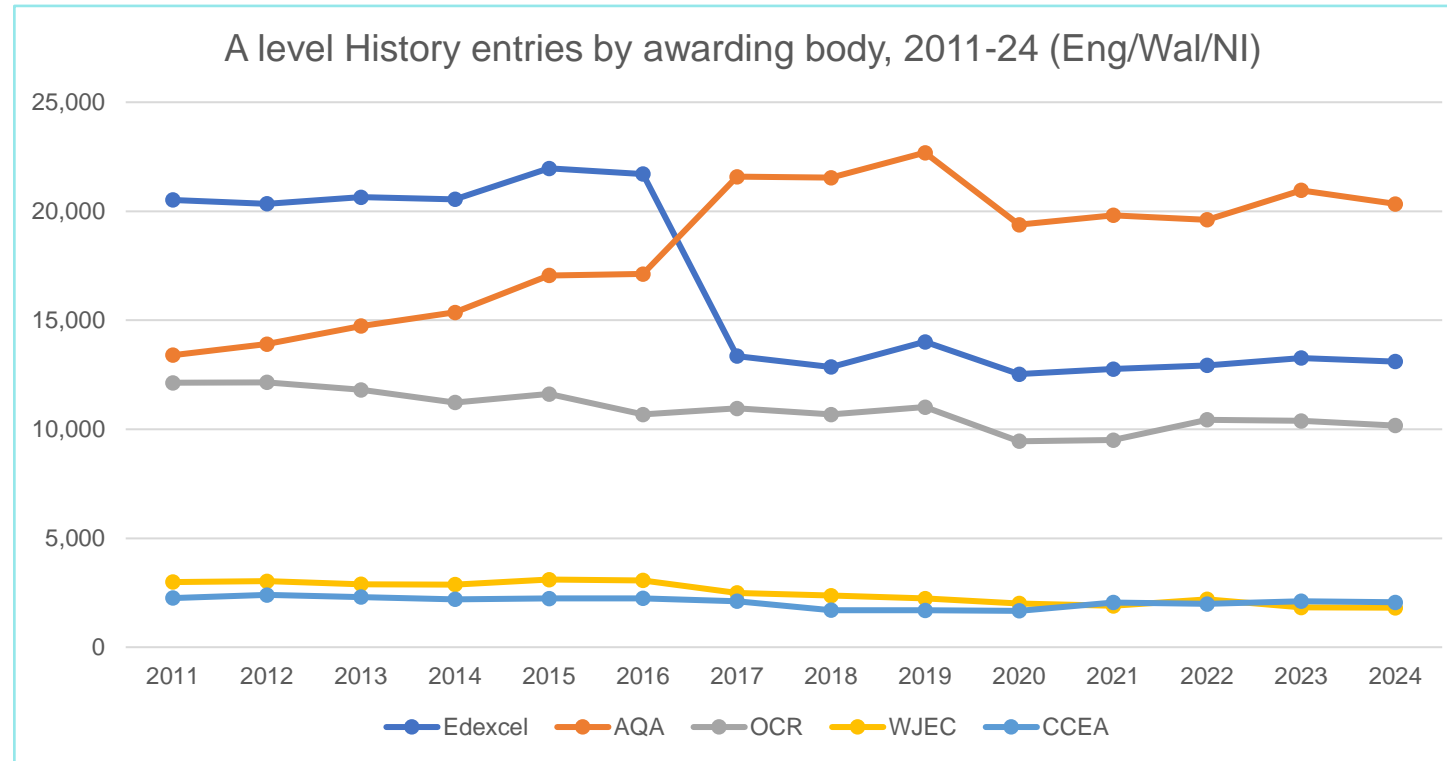


A level History entries



- The total number of entries in England, Wales and NI was **47,494** (a drop of 1072 on 2023).
- Entry numbers recovered after the drop in 2020 and are possibly steady out.
- Is A level History increasing or decreasing in popularity at your centre?

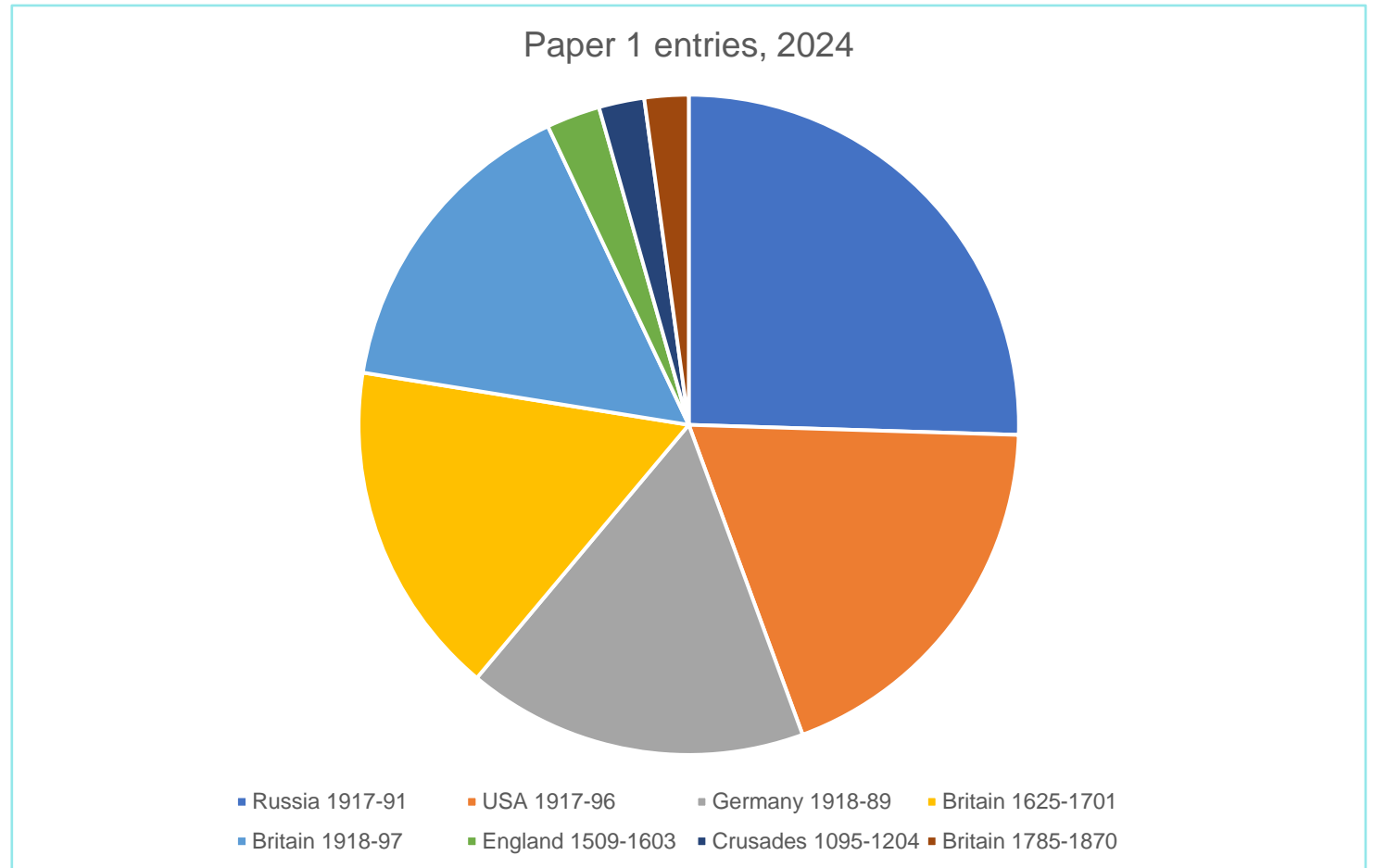
A level History entries – by awarding body



- In Summer 2024, Edexcel had **13,111 entries** (161 fewer than in 2023).
- Entry numbers for each of the awarding bodies haven't changed much since first assessment, June 2017.
- How do students perceive the qualification?

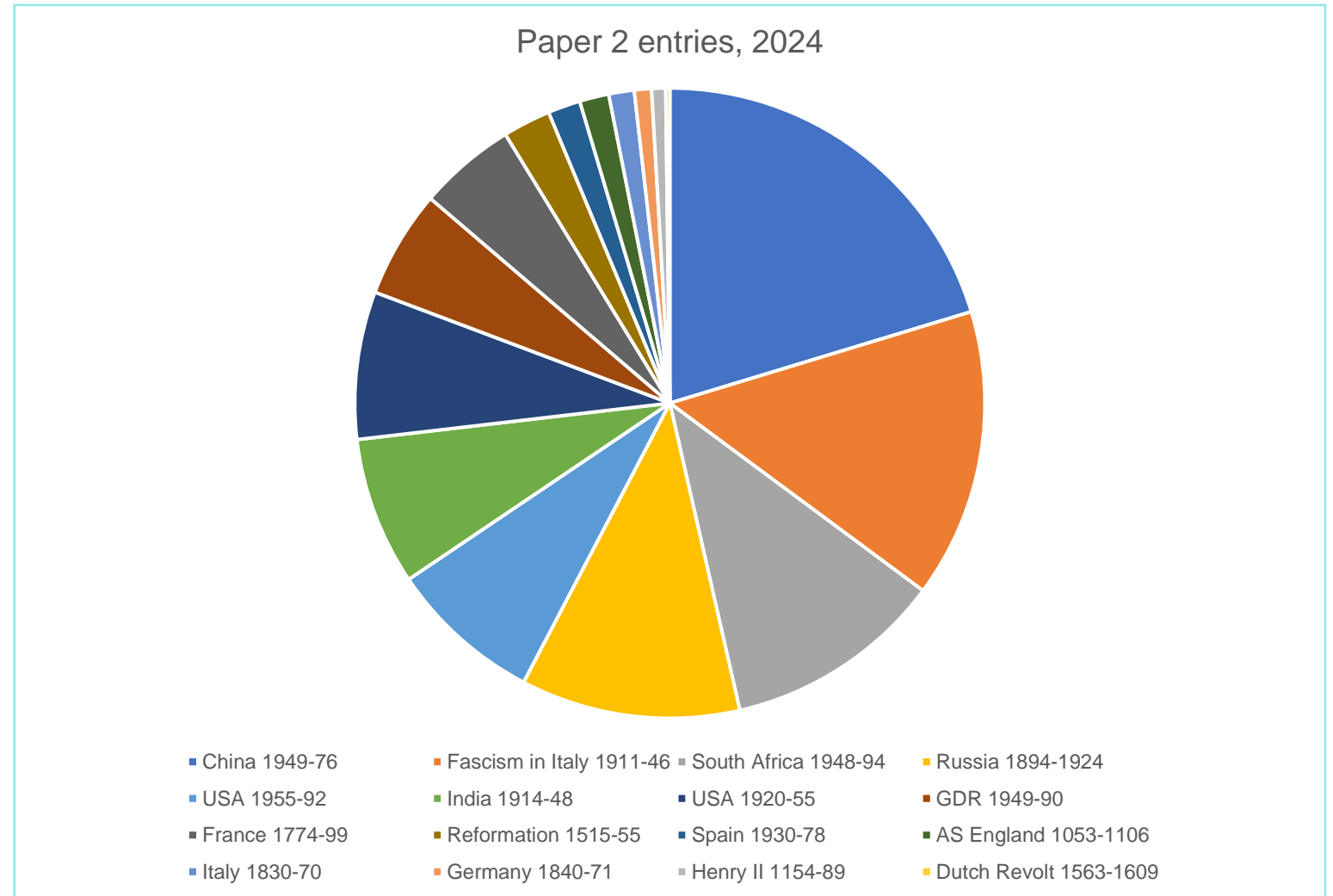
Paper 1 breadth study – entries by option

- The most popular Paper 1 breadth study options are:
 - Russia, 1917–91
 - USA, 1917–96
 - Germany, 1918–89
 - Britain, 1625–1701
- Over 75% of students entered for Routes E–H on Papers 1/2: entirely twentieth-century routes.
- Entry numbers are stable, but some growth in C20 USA and C20 Russia and some decline in C20 Germany.



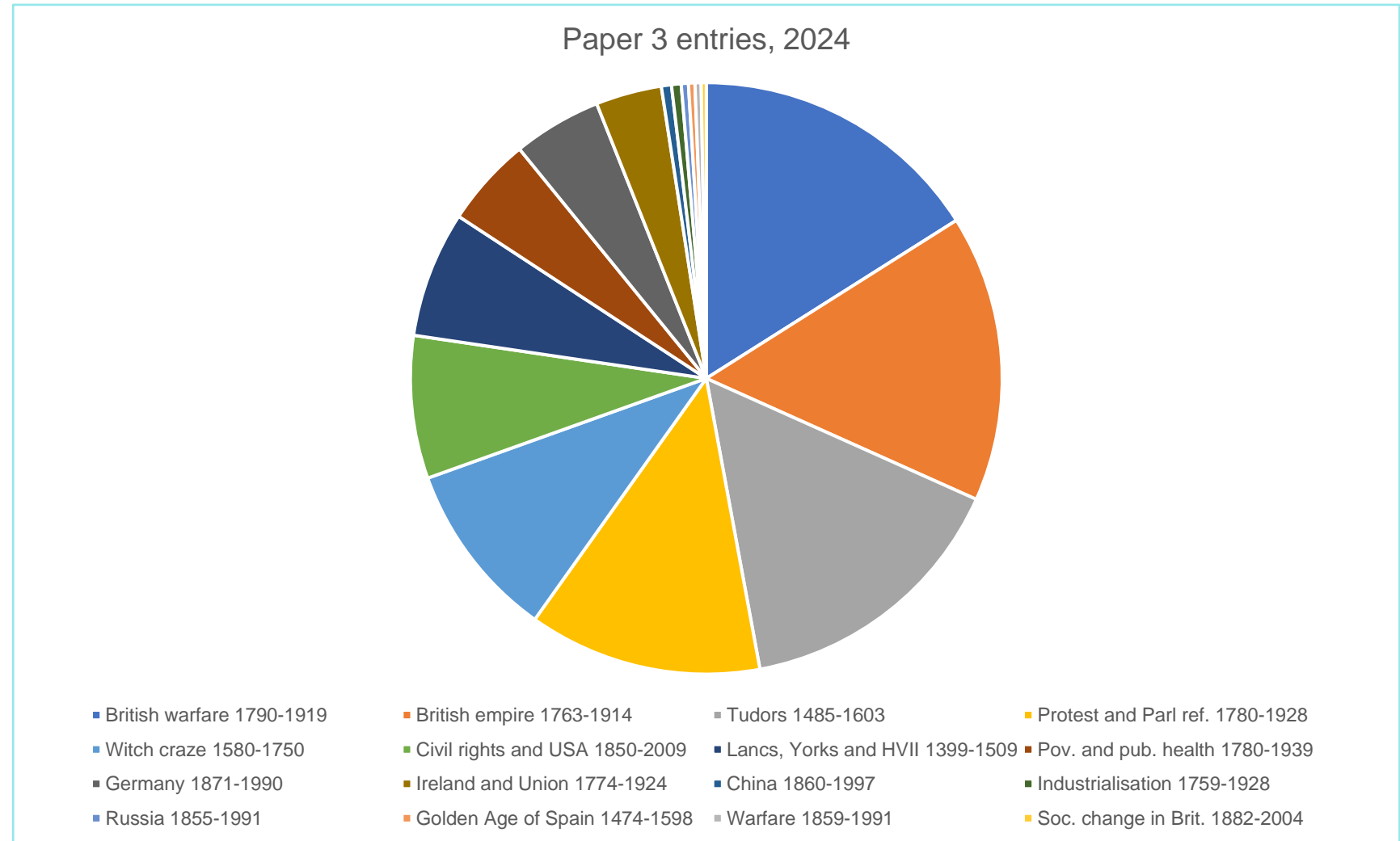
Paper 2 depth study – entries by option

- The most popular Paper 2 depth study options are:
 1. China, 1949–76
 2. Italy, 1911–46
 3. South Africa, 1948–94
 4. Russia, 1894–1924
- Again, entry numbers are stable, but some growth in China and some decline in Russia and Henry II.

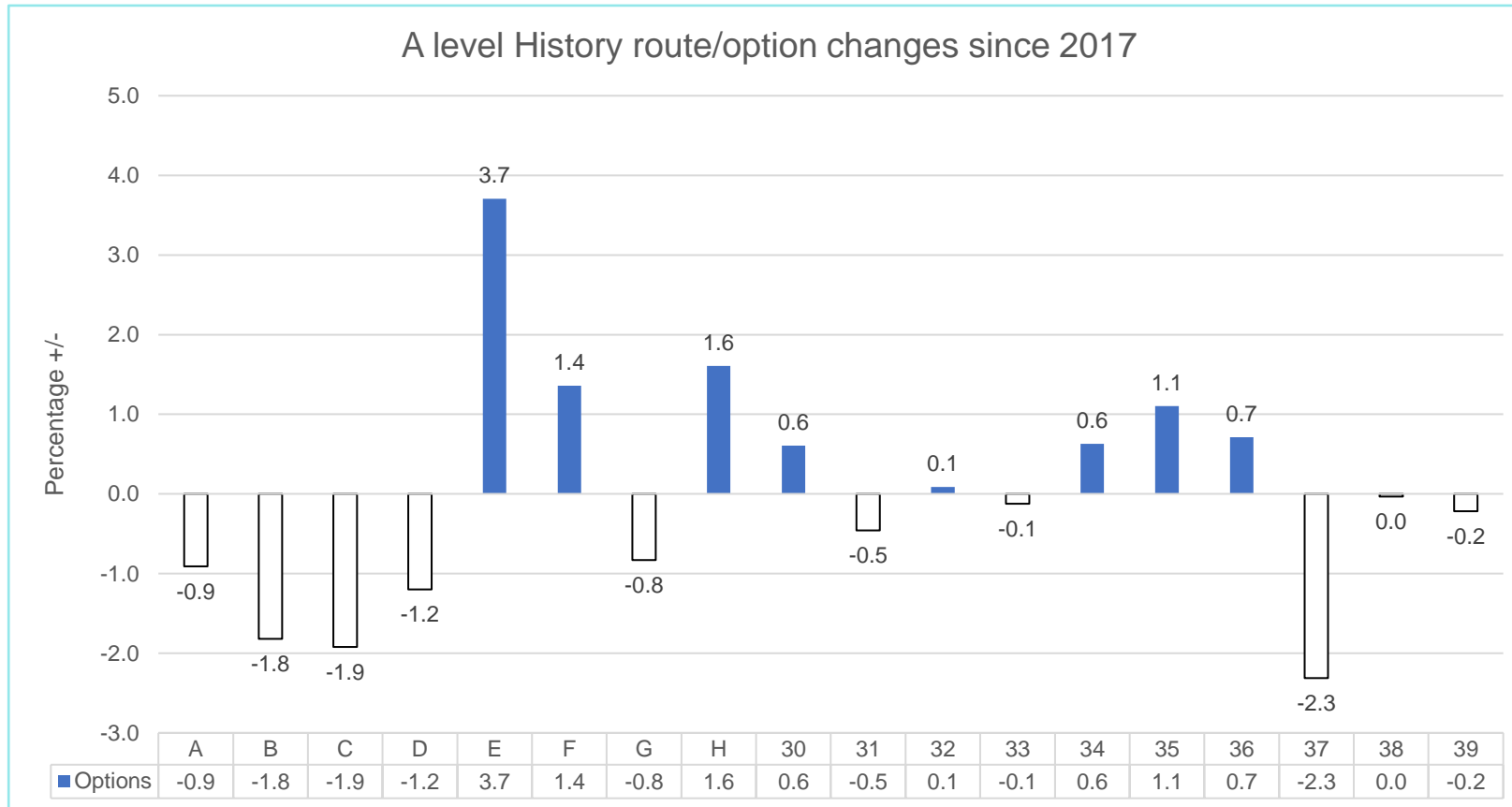


Paper 3 breadth and depth study – entries by option

- The most popular Paper 3 breadth/depth options are:
 1. British warfare, 1790–1919
 2. British empire, 1763–1914
 3. Tudors, 1485–1603
 4. Protest and Parl reform, 1780–1928
- Entry numbers are stable, but some decline in Protest and Parliamentary reform.



Changes in routes/options since 2017



- Routes E, F and H, and options 30, 32 (just!), 34, 35, and 36 have grown since 2017.
- The percentage changes are all small (apart from Route E: Communist states in the twentieth century).

Grade boundaries and statistics



Grade boundaries

You can find grade boundaries on our website:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/results-certification/grade-boundaries.html>

- **Subject-level grade boundaries** are available for each possible combination of topics available.
- This means we can adjust for any difference in level of demand on different options and award grades more accurately to reflect student performance, for example:

A level overall grade boundaries				Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U
9HI0	A Level History 04 1A 2A 30	Subject	200	175	160	136	112	89	66	0	
9HI0	A Level History 04 1A 2A 31	Subject	200	176	161	137	113	90	67	0	
9HI0	A Level History 04 1A 2A 32	Subject	200	174	159	135	112	89	66	0	

- **Notional paper-level grade boundaries** are also available for each paper.

A level notional component grade boundaries				Max Mark	A*	A	B	C	D	E	U
9HI0	A Level History Paper 1A	Raw	60	51	46	39	32	25	18	0	
9HI0	A Level History Paper 1B	Raw	60	51	46	39	32	25	19	0	
9HI0	A Level History Paper 1C	Raw	60	49	45	38	31	24	18	0	

Grade statistics

Grade statistics are available on our website:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/support-topics/results-certification/grade-statistics.html>

- **Cumulative percentage** outcomes for Edexcel A level History since first assessment of 9HI0:

9HI0	A*	A	B	C	D	E
2017	5.6	23.2	59.1	85.5	96.6	99.1
2018	4.7	21.8	58.4	85.0	96.2	99.2
2019	4.5	20.0	56.7	84.6	95.9	99.0
2020	11.2	34.9	67.5	91.0	98.4	99.8
2021	14.7	40.7	70.8	90.6	97.4	99.7
2022	11.4	33.0	69.2	89.0	96.7	99.1
2023	4.8	24.4	60.4	83.8	94.4	98.4
2024	5.0	22.3	58.2	83.8	95.2	98.6

ResultsPlus and Access to Scripts



- **ResultsPlus** is our free results analysis tool which lets you analyse your students' results from the summer series: <https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/Services/ResultsPlus.html>
- Use your [Edexcel Online](#) account to log in – ask your Exams Officer to grant you ResultsPlus access if you don't currently have it.
- We create a **global data** spreadsheet for each series with the data tidied up. Look under the Guidance dropdown on the AS and A level History [Teaching and learning materials](#) tab.

GCE A level History June 2024 Results Plus data for each paper						Edexcel averages:						
Question	AO	Score	Max score	Percent		A*	A	B	C	D	E	U
1E RUSSIA 1917-91												
Q01	AO1	14.44	20	72.2%		18.05	16.73	15.01	13.35	11.53	8.73	8.71
Q02	AO1	13.17	20	65.9%		18.90	16.67	13.96	11.38	10.44	7.20	5.50
Q03	AO1	13.10	20	65.5%		17.79	16.11	13.99	11.36	8.82	7.47	3.85
Q04	AO1	13.64	20	68.2%		18.03	16.19	14.71	12.16	10.01	8.95	7.00
Q05	AO3	13.71	20	68.6%		17.75	16.15	14.54	12.45	10.21	8.04	7.60
Total (est)		41.31	60	68.8%		53.80	49.02	43.70	37.24	30.91	24.66	21.05

- Use our **free Access to Scripts service** to view your students' marked exam scripts: <https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/Services/access-to-scripts.html>
- The service is available from results day until **13 December 2024**.
- This [case study](#) with a GCSE History centre offers ways you can use Access to Scripts.

Feedback on the summer 2024 series

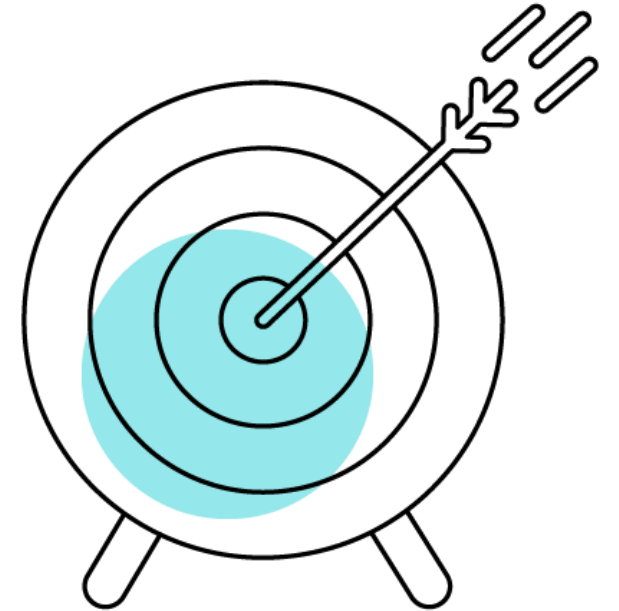


Assessment objectives

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 (55%)

AO2 – Analyse and evaluate appropriate source material, primary and/or contemporary to the period, within its historical context (20%)

AO3 – Analyse and evaluate, in relation to the historical context, different ways in which aspects of the past have been interpreted (25%)



Key features of external assessment

AO1	AO2	AO3
5 essays in the examinations; each worth 20 marks and marked to a common generic mark scheme. Choice of one question from two in each section	2 compulsory questions in the examinations, each worth 20 marks and based on unseen source material	1 compulsory question in the external examinations, worth 20 marks and based on unseen extracts.
Paper 1 2 essays on themes in breadth	Paper 2 Evaluating the usefulness of two sources for a single enquiry	Paper 1 section C Evaluating a view relating to a nominated controversy, using extracts containing differences of view.
Paper 2 1 essay on a topic in depth	Paper 3 Evaluating the usefulness of one source for two enquiries	
Paper 3 1 essay on a topic in depth 1 essay on a theme in breadth		

AO1 in Papers 1, 2 and 3



Principles of the AO1 generic mark scheme

There are **four strands** in the generic mark scheme. These are indicated by four separate bullet points. The generic mark scheme indicates how these bullet points progress through the levels.

- Bullet point 1 relates to the analysis and exploration of the key features and characteristics of the period in relation to the focus of the question.
- Bullet point 2 relates to the selection and deployment of knowledge in relation to the question and the conceptual demands of the question.
- Bullet point 3 relates to evaluation and judgement.
- Bullet point 4 deals with the way in which the argument is organised and communicated.

Refer to page 2 of the delegate booklet to see how each bullet point progresses through the levels from Level 1 to Level 5.

Responses that did well

- Were well-organised, often demonstrating evidence of planning, and communicated their arguments effectively.
- Were targeted on analysis, explored the focus of the question under consideration and maintained that focus for most, if not all, of the response.
- Considered both the given factor/feature/issue and counter arguments with sufficient, precisely selected knowledge to demonstrate a secure understanding of both elements.
- Reached a judgement that was securely linked to the conceptual focus of the question, e.g. causation, significance. In responses that did well, this was likely to be demonstrated throughout the answer, not just in the conclusion.
- Established criteria that explained and justified the judgement that has been reached, e.g. why was x the most important reason; why was y less significant than z.
- Dealt securely with the entire chronology of breadth questions, not merely bookending the dates.

Responses that did less well

- Had insufficient knowledge of the stated factor in the question and therefore dismissed its importance with very limited discussion, or, in some instances, completely ignored it.
- Focused a response exclusively on evidence supporting the given factor/issue, when counter-arguments were required. Answers do not need to be balanced between support and counter-arguments, but both sides must be considered in order to enable a judgement to be reached.
- Had limited knowledge of when particular events took place, and were therefore unable to focus the analysis on the chronological parameters of the question.
- Were descriptive, generalised and/or assertive in approach, with only limited analysis.
- Attempted to recycle an answer that had, perhaps, been written previously as homework, as a template for the answer. This meant that the focus was not on the question set in this examination series and constrained the mark that could be achieved.

Applying criteria – bullet point 3

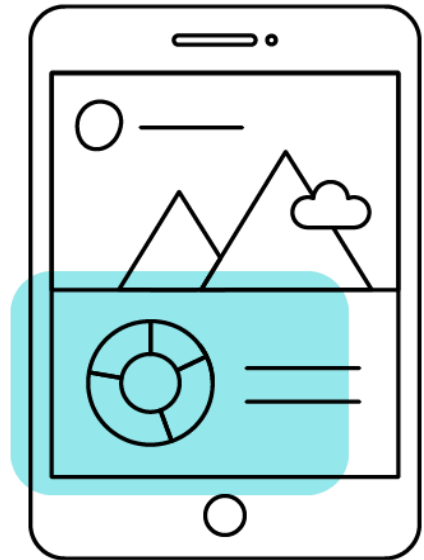
- Criteria in bullet point 3 of the mark scheme refers to the basis on which candidates reach their judgement, not the issues that are discussed in the process of reaching that judgement.
- The mark scheme progression moves from the lack of, or implicit use of, criteria through to the selection and application of valid criteria that enable a judgement to be made and supported in the response.
- Candidates are not rewarded for using the wording of the mark schemes in their responses, but for applying the principles that these represent. Some increase was noted this summer of candidates making generic comments lifted from the mark scheme rather than applying those principles to their responses.
- Further guidance and exemplification can be found via this link:
 - <https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/A%20Level/History/2015/teaching-and-learning-materials/GCE-History-guidance-to-application-of-valid-criteria.pdf>

Breadth questions

- Breadth questions are set on both Paper 1 and Paper 3.
- On Paper 3, breadth questions will always be set to cover a chronological range of a minimum of 100 years.
- Breadth is considered as part of the assessment in bullet point 2 of the mark scheme.
- To achieve Level 5, candidates must meet the demands of the question 'fully'.
- To achieve Level 4, candidates must meet 'most' of the demands of the question.
- The expectations for breadth in Paper 3 are made explicit in the Principal Examiner reports that are available on the GCE History page of the Edexcel Pearson website ([here](#)).

AO1 responses – student exemplar answers

- The first answer is from Section B of Paper 2
 - France in revolution, 1774–99 (9HI0 2C)
 - Delegate booklet pp.3–6
 - This is a Level 3 response.
-
- The second answer is from Section C of Paper 3
 - Protest, agitation and Parliamentary reform in Britain, c1780–1928 (9HI0 36)
 - Delegate booklet pp.7–12
 - This is a Level 5 response.



AO2 in Papers 2 and 3



Principles of the AO2 generic mark scheme

Paper 2 comprises two sources that are used 'together' for a single enquiry, whereas Paper 3 comprises one longer source that is used for two enquiries.

There are **three strands** in the generic mark scheme. These are indicated by three separate bullet points. The generic mark scheme indicates how these bullet points progress through the levels.

- Bullet point 1 relates to the interpretation and analysis of the source(s) in relation to the enquiry/enquiries posed.
- Bullet point 2 relates to the use of contextual knowledge to explain the meaning and implications of the source(s) and/or to discuss the limitations of what is in the source(s) in relation to the enquiry/enquiries posed.
- Bullet point 3 relates to the evaluation of the source(s) to indicate its weight and value in terms of both content and provenance in relation to the enquiry/enquiries posed.

Refer to page 13 of the delegate booklet to see how each bullet point progresses through the levels from Level 1 to Level 5 (Paper 2 mark scheme).

Responses that did well

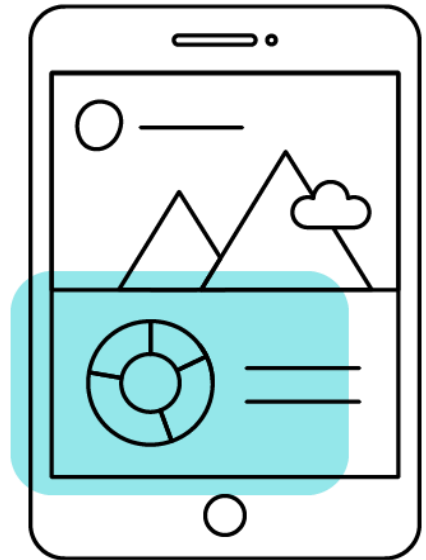
- Were able to draw out reasoned inferences from both sources (Paper 2) or for both enquiries (Paper 3), which were developed and supported from the source(s) and that were clearly linked to the focus of the enquiry/enquiries.
- Used relevant knowledge of the historical context effectively to explain the inferences, to expand on details and/or to challenge the arguments raised by the source(s).
- Did not include extraneous contextual knowledge that had no real relevance for the content or provenance of the source(s) provided.
- Evaluated the source(s) thoroughly in relation to the demands of the question on the basis of contextual knowledge and/or the nature, origin and purpose of the source.
- In Paper 2, answers understood the requirement to use the sources together and there was evidence of this. This was achieved in a variety of different ways.

Responses that did less well

- Had a limited focus on the precise terms of the question. Such responses often discussed what could be learned from the source(s) about a variety of issues that were not actually linked to the precise terms of the question.
- Either paraphrased sections of the content or asserted (often using the phrasing of the mark scheme) the existence of inferences without development or support from the source(s).
- Spent a significant part of the answer describing contextual knowledge that addressed the question but was not clearly linked to the source.
- Had a limited grasp on the chronology of the question and therefore used contextual knowledge from beyond the question's time frame in ways that were not relevant.
- Evaluated the source(s) in stereotypical ways without directly applying this to what was actually in the specific source(s) provided in the examination.
- Commented on what was missing from the source(s) when the source(s) could not reasonably be expected to provide that information.

AO2 responses

- The first answer is from Section A of Paper 2
- Luther and the German Reformation, c1515–1555 (9HI0 2B)
- Delegate booklet pp.14–19
- This is a Level 3 response.
- The second answer is from Section A of Paper 3
- Mass media and social change in Britain, 1882–2004 (9HI0 39)
- Delegate booklet pp.20–26
- This is a Level 5 response.



AO3 in Paper 1



Principles of the AO3 generic mark scheme

There are **three strands** in the generic mark scheme. These are indicated by three separate bullet points. The generic mark scheme indicates how these bullet points progress through the levels.

- Bullet point 1 relates to the interpretation and analysis of the provided extracts.
- Bullet point 2 relates to the deployment of knowledge of issues related to the debate.
- Bullet point 3 relates to the evaluation of, and judgement about, the interpretations provided in the extracts.

Refer to page 27 of the delegate booklet to see how each bullet point progresses through the levels from Level 1 to Level 5.

Responses that did well

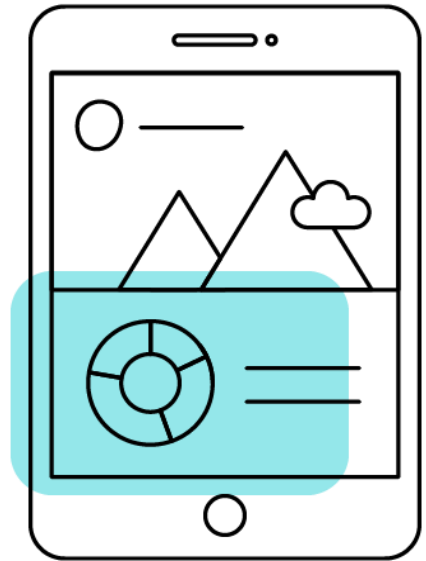
- Clearly engaged with the different arguments provided within the two extracts, recognising that these are historical interpretations.
- Provided a comparative analysis of the different interpretations, e.g. considered their differences or compared their arguments.
- Explored the validity of the arguments offered by the two historians in light of the evidence, both from within the extracts, and supported by reference to the candidates' own knowledge.
- Used careful selection of own knowledge so that it related to the issues raised within the extracts and integrated with them. Used this as the basis for developing and critiquing the interpretations under consideration.
- Showed a secure awareness throughout the response of the demands of the question, clearly linked to the use of the extracts.
- Reached a judgement about the view provided in the question, taking account of the views of both extracts in the process. This judgement was generally apparent in the course of the answer, not just as a conclusion.

Responses that did less well

- Made limited or uneven use of the extracts. Often paraphrased or picked out information from the extracts with little development or explanation of their arguments.
- Misinterpreted elements of the arguments presented in the extracts.
- Did not engage in any comparison of the issues of the key points of interpretation.
- Had a lack of focus on the precise terms of the question, often shifting its focus to the broader topic.
- Presented own knowledge in stand-alone sections, rather than integrating it with the interpretations of the sources, or lacked sufficient own knowledge that was linked to the arguments in the extracts.
- Treated the extracts as if they were sources and applied AO2 skills rather than AO3 skills, evaluating the reliability through provenance.
- Provided a very limited conclusion or merely summed up the views in the two extracts. This meant there was only a limited judgement as to 'how convincing' the candidate found the stated view.

AO3 response

- This response is from Section C of Paper 1
- Britain, c1785–c1870: democracy, protest and reform (9HI0 1D)
- Delegate booklet pp.28–33
- It is a secure Level 4 response.



Support and training



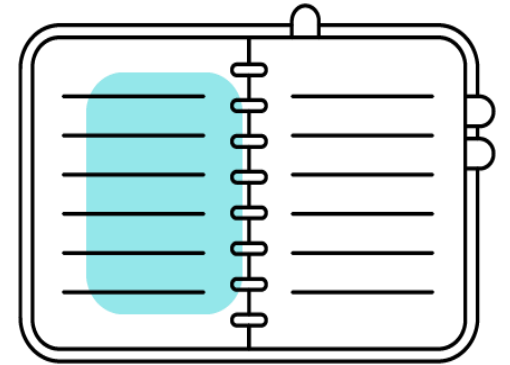
A level History – support and training

Support

- New [coursework guide](#), drawing together all existing support – released summer 2024
- Case study on the South Africa depth study – *to be released autumn 2024*
- Details and links to existing support materials listed here:
- <https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/A%20Level/History/2015/teaching-and-learning-materials/pearson-edexcel-gce-history-support-materials-details-and-links.pdf>

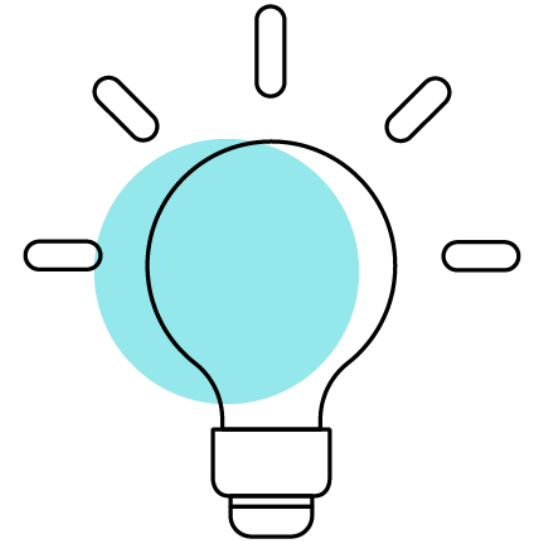
Training

- Recorded version of the [coursework marking training](#), modules 1–3
- Spring term online network event – *date and focus tbc*



Curriculum and assessment review

- The new Labour government has commissioned an independent review, chaired by Professor Becky Francis into curriculum and assessment.
- The review will cover Key stages 1–5, and will focus on the key challenges to attainment for young people, especially those who are economically disadvantaged, or with special education needs or disabilities.
- The announcement can be read here:
<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/government-launches-curriculum-and-assessment-review>
- The review aims, terms of reference and working principles can be read [here](#).
- Interim report due early 2025.
- Final review with recommendations in Autumn 2025.





Discussion

Discussion points

Feedback on Summer 2024

- How did your students find this summer's series?
- What did you think of this summer's papers?
- Please add your thoughts in the chat box. Even if we don't have time in this session to discuss all the points raised, we will read them afterwards and take on board your feedback.



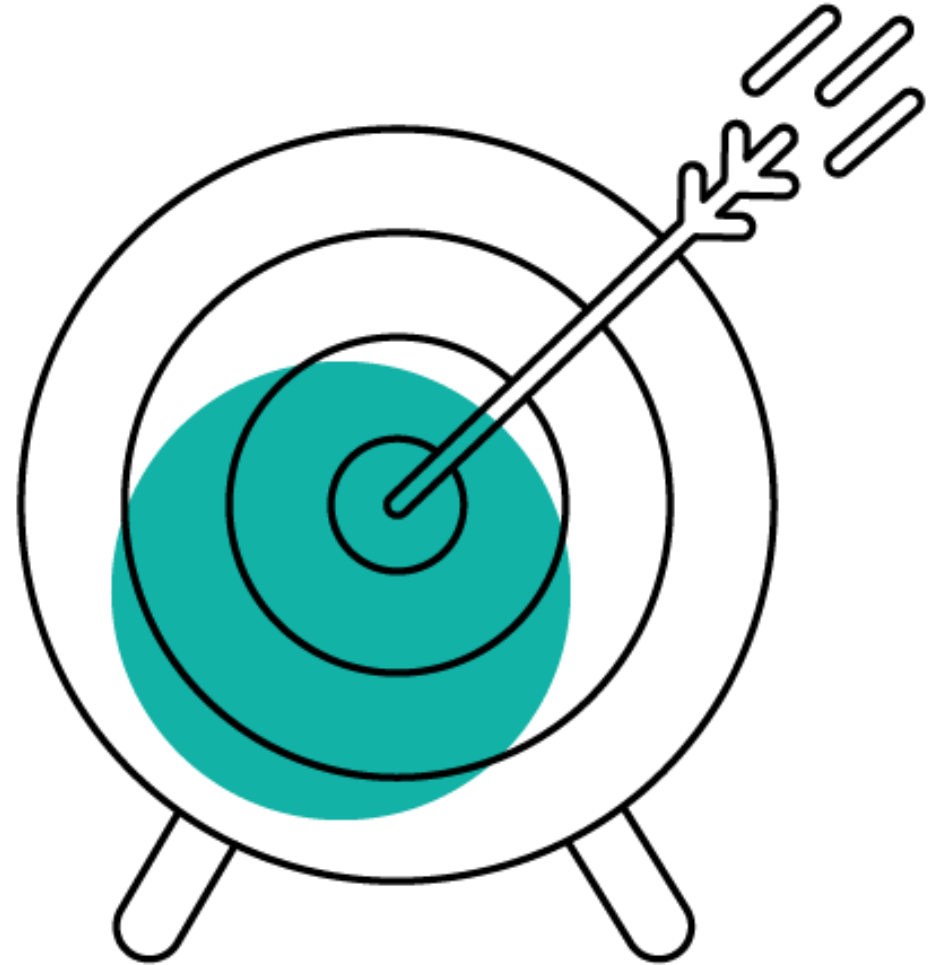
Looking forward to Summer 2025

- How are your new Y13 students progressing towards the summer 2025 series?
- Have you learnt any new aspects to teaching A level History over the last couple of years that you are continuing with? Any new revision strategies?
- Any additional support or training that you would like us to provide?

A level History insights on May/June 2024

In this session we looked at the following objectives:

- the performance of candidates in the May/June 2024 series
- the variation of candidates' performances on different questions and why performance varies
- the Examiner reports
- common issues and FAQs



Focus Group Volunteers

We are currently exploring new methods of delivering training for A Level History and are seeking volunteers to join a focus group.

More Information

We understand that fitting live training sessions into a busy schedule can sometimes be challenging. Therefore, we are developing an 'anytime' training course for the A Level History NEA, which will be accessible through the Professional Development Academy. Before its official release, we are offering a select group of volunteers the chance to review the course and provide feedback. Would you be interested in participating?

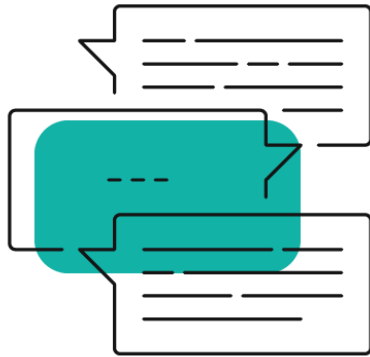
Please scan the QR code to apply to take part (you can also access this in the delegate pack).



Numbers are limited and we will be in touch later this term if you've got a place in the focus group.

Subject Advisor Support

Our subject advisors are experts in their fields and are here to support you throughout the year.



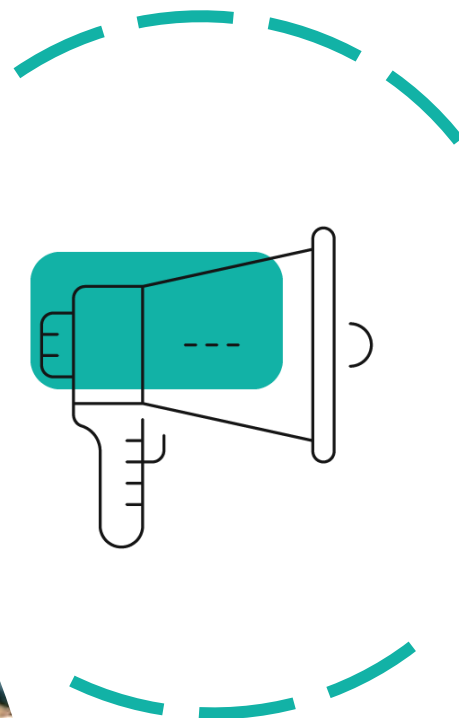
Find the Subject Advisor for your area [here](#) and sign up to receive regular updates from your Subject Advisor on qualification news and support for your subject [here](#).



Find out more

For more professional development courses please see Pearson's [Professional Development Academy](#)





Your Feedback Matters

Following this event, you will receive an invitation to share your thoughts about the session. Your feedback is invaluable to us, as it helps us tailor our professional development materials to better meet your needs. Please don't hesitate to let us know what you'd like to see more of and what areas you think could be improved.



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