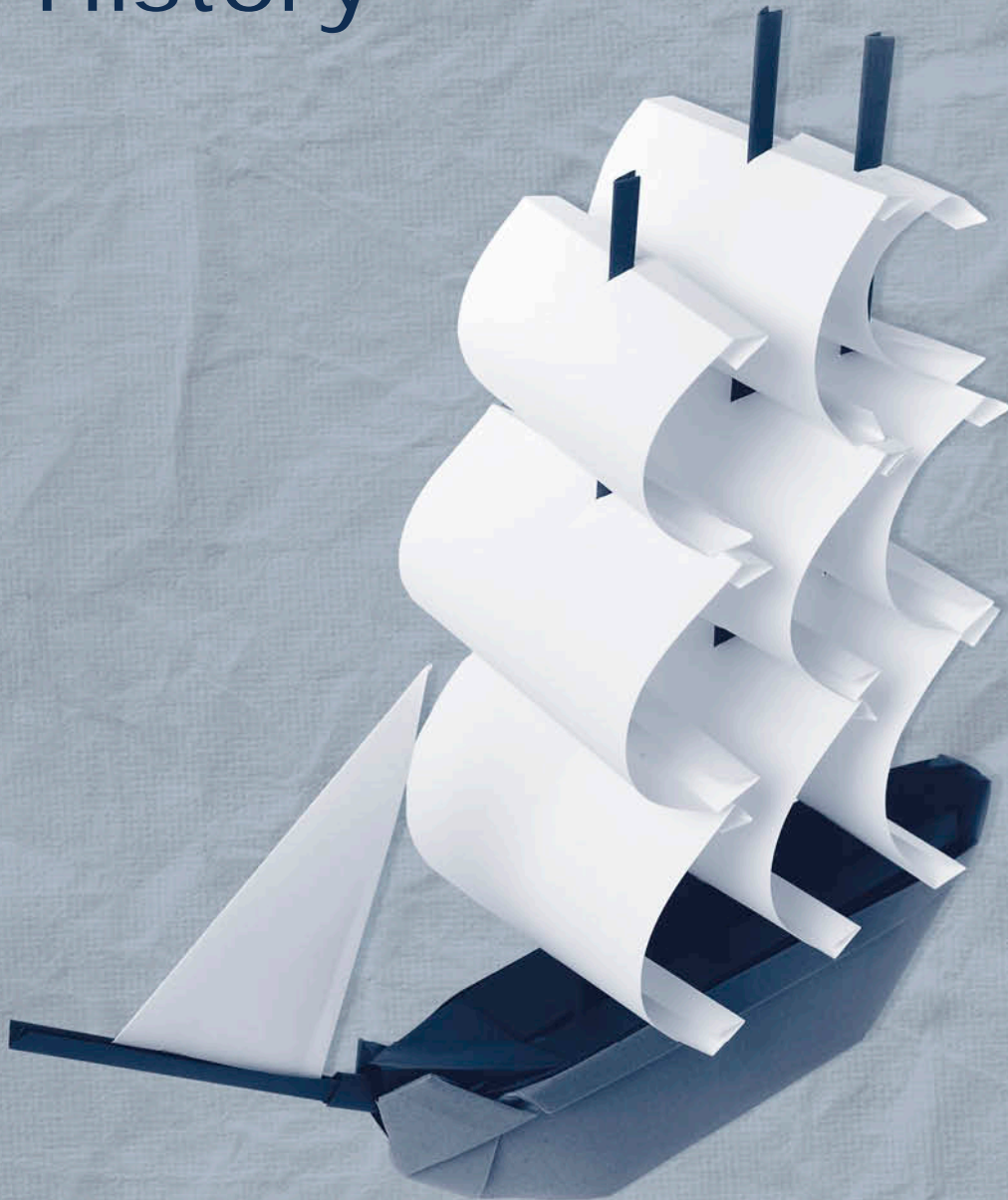


Pearson Edexcel AS and A Level in History



FREQUENTLY ASKED QUESTIONS

Coursework guidance

Can all my students do the same question?

Yes, as long as you have a suitable range of works for your cohort to enable them to produce individual responses. Where all students are following the same topic area, they should not all be evaluating the same three chapters, articles, etc. Students must exercise their own judgement in selecting which resources to use and deciding how to use them.

Do I need to get my question checked/approved?

No, it is not compulsory to submit coursework proposals for approval. An [advisory service](#) is provided for guidance only.

May I produce a resource booklet for my students?

Because students must use at least three substantial works of article or chapter length from three different historians, it is understandable that a school may not be able to provide equal access to enough books for a whole cohort to use. In such cases, it is acceptable for teachers to produce a bank of resources for students to select from. However, teachers should be aware that the History subject criteria require students to carry out a historical enquiry that is independently researched. Any bank of resources provided by the teacher must therefore contain a sufficiently wide range of resources in order to ensure that students are able to exercise individual judgement over their choice of works and historians. The purpose of such a resource bank must therefore be to make a sufficient number of resources available to all students in a cohort, rather than to do the research for the students. Teachers must use their professional judgement to decide what constitutes a sufficiently wide range to ensure an appropriately diverse selection of works which will enable students to carry out independent research and exercise independent judgement when choosing historians' works. It is not acceptable for all students in the same cohort to use the same three works. It may be that individual students within a cohort end up choosing the same three works; however, we would expect to see evidence in the student's resource record sheet that a range of resources has been consulted and that the students have independently selected the historians' works.

Who counts as an historian?

Students' chosen works must be substantial enough to support the assignment, and it is recommended that they are of article or chapter length (they may also be electronic or audio-visual format). The works should contain interpretations that together contain a range of views or emphases. An article by an historian for a sixth-form publication may be used, as well as one published in a scholarly journal. Historians such as Andrew Marr may be suitable if they present a distinct scholarly interpretation, but if you are unsure, it is best to contact the [advisory service](#). One test is whether the work is appropriately referenced and draws on the work of other historians in advancing arguments and reaching conclusions rather than being a personal account.

My student(s) is writing on the medieval/early modern period. Do the interpretations have to be modern or can they use historians writing around the time?

Historians writing around the time would normally be used as sources contemporary to the period. A nineteenth century historian reflecting on the medieval period would of course be appropriate; they do not have to be 20th or 21st century writers. The key is whether the work is appropriately referenced and draws on the work of other historians in advancing arguments and reaching conclusions rather than being a personal account.

Should I teach students about schools of history as part of the taught course?

It is not necessary for students to name or understand schools of history as part of their analysis and evaluation of the interpretations. The taught course should focus on building students' confidence in evaluating scholarly works as well as developing research skills such as selection of information and note taking.

When writing their response students should focus their analysis of the views *in* the chosen works and the differences between them.

I've created a resource booklet. Can I use it for the taught skills course?

Any work that is used in the skills course **cannot** be used as one of the three works or required supplementary reading for coursework. Students need to analyse and evaluate the interpretations discussed in their coursework on an individual basis. Chapters from other sections of a text may also be used as a work for the skills course.

I've created a resource booklet. Can I split it into categories?

No, students should be selecting their three works on an individual basis. Resource booklets should provide students with a range of works from which to choose.

How should students structure their response?

Students are required to present their own view and to analyse three relevant works. The assignment may be divided into sections or be completed as a continuous essay. The use of subheadings is permitted.

Students may find it helpful to complete the assignment in two sections (or indeed four), devoting the first part to the presentation of their view and the second part (or the following three parts relating to each of the bullet points) to the analysis, explanation and evaluation of the differing interpretations in their three chosen works. In reaching a judgement on the view, students must refer to their three chosen works and should make use of supplementary reading. If the assignment is divided into sections, it would seem appropriate for approximately one-third of the words used be devoted to the first section.

How much context do students need to include in their response?

At Level 5 it is noted in the mark scheme that 'Contextual knowledge of the issues is fully integrated into the discussion of the debate.' Contextual knowledge will be a good measure for challenging or agreeing with interpretations and is therefore important to the overall discussion. Note, however, that the assessment objective weighting for coursework is split 5% AO1 and 15% AO3.

Do students need to discuss historians' methodology in their essay?

It is not necessary for students to discuss a historian's methodology as part of the evaluation of interpretations. The coursework question asks students to analyse the ways interpretations differ, to explain these differences and evaluate the arguments as well as presenting their own view.

Methodology may be a useful criterion by which to judge the interpretations, but this will depend on the works chosen and it is not a requirement.

It may be useful to discuss methodology and *why* accounts differ as part of the taught skills course in order to develop students' general understanding of historical interpretations.

What criteria should students use for making a judgement about their three works?

The mark scheme uses the word 'criteria' in relation to strand 4 – Evaluation of, and judgement on, historians' arguments. When assessing the arguments used by historians in relation to a specific issues, students should use the same approach as they would to the evaluation of their own arguments. Additionally, they might give other reasons for judgement that relate to more general criteria related to nature of historical writing – for example a historian's perspective, focus, purpose or choice of evidence etc., but whether these are relevant will depend on the issue investigated and the nature of the chosen works.

For further guidance, please see the support guide [Applying Criteria](#).

Do students need to include a word count?

Final submissions must include a word count. Footnotes are not included in the word count but they must not be used to develop the student's line of argument.

The word count is from 3,000 to 4,000 words. If students exceed this guideline it is less likely that they will be able to satisfy the requirement of production of a concise response.

How much feedback can I give to my students?

Teachers must:

- check the works selected by students to ensure that they will enable the student to complete the assignment
- exercise sufficient supervision to be satisfied that the research is being undertaken independently and that students remain focused on the assignment.

Teachers may:

- help students to understand rubrics and assessment criteria.

Resource records are a good method for checking individual responses to works. The record can be continuously updated throughout coursework planning and writing and will enable you to make judgments about the quality of work.

During the writing phase:

- Teachers may: help students to understand rubrics, assessment criteria and controls.
- Teachers must: review the student's first complete draft. The guidance may indicate to students if any element of the task requirements¹ is absent or given insufficient attention. Guidance must remain 'general', which is defined as guidance that enables students to use their initiative in making amendments and improvements independently.
- Teachers must not:
 - give detailed feedback to individual students about how to improve work to meet the assessment criteria. The guidance provided prior to final submission should only enable students to take the initiative in making amendments, rather than detailing what amendments should be made. This means that teachers cannot provide templates and model answers.
 - mark work provisionally with a view to sharing that mark with students so that they may then improve it.
 - return work to students to make changes after it has been marked.

Where is the mark scheme for the coursework?

It is in the specification, pages 125-127.

How much teaching time should I spend on the coursework component? How should I structure the coursework course?

Total time spent on the whole coursework component should not amount to more than 20% of curriculum time to be in line with the 20% weighting.

Support for students might translate into the following scheme of work:

c6 hours	Optional taught short course on content (if new topic)	Contextual background: key issues and events, etc.
c6 hours	Taught skills course Practice for small group or whole class in the development of writing within the theme of the coursework programme, e.g. analysis and evaluation of works	Research skills: selecting and identifying arguments
		Research skills: note taking Analysing and evaluating historical interpretations, for example: a) method /focus/purpose b) questions asked c) evidence and argument d) judgments
c6 hours	Getting the assignments under way	How to use the resource record
		Selecting three historical works – similarities and differences
		Selecting supplementary works Proposal
c12 hours	Support for individual progress and discussion of findings	Student analysis and evaluation of selected interpretations of history