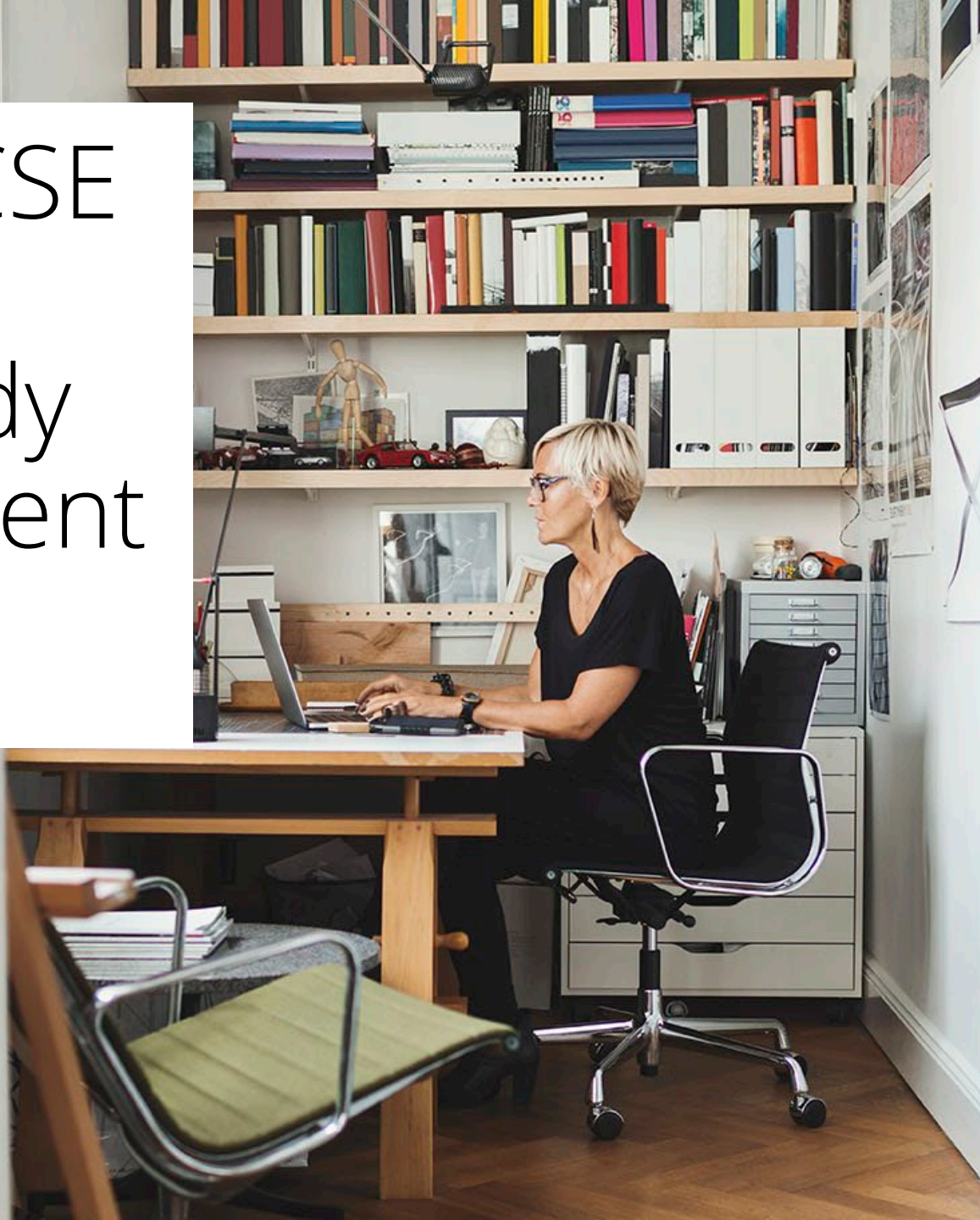


# Edexcel GCSE History Period study network event

Ben Armstrong,  
History subject specialist



# Agenda

This GCSE History feedback event will allow delegates to:

- remind themselves of the purpose, content structure and assessment model for the Period study
- review and discuss student exemplar answers from the 2022 series
- network and share teaching ideas and strategies.

# Optionality in summer 2022

In the summer 2022 series, candidates were required to complete only three of the four components in the GCSE History specification.

Many centres chose to drop the Period study paper. Please complete **Poll 1**, showing why you think this happened (*tick all the points that apply*).

- Scheme of work scheduling made this the easiest paper to drop
- Volume of content
- Lack of student engagement
- Students find the question styles challenging
- Analysis of past results suggested students performed least well on this paper
- Teacher confidence
- Other (*please comment in group chat box*).

# Summer 2023 series

On 29 September, the DfE and Ofqual confirmed plans for the summer 2023 exams:

<https://www.gov.uk/government/news/exams-head-back-to-normality-in-2023>

## GCSE optionality

- Return to full subject content coverage for GCSE History – all four topics must be taught and assessed.
- Entry code calculator has now been updated [here](#); the codes are also in the Information Manual [here](#).
- Paper 2 – the two 'halves' are being put back together.
- Provisional timetable [here](#):
  - Paper 1 – Thursday 18 May (morning)
  - Paper 2 – Wednesday 7 June (afternoon)
  - Paper 3 – Thursday 15 June (morning).



# The nature of the Period study



# The Period study

“Period studies should focus on a substantial and coherent medium time span of at least 50 years and require students to understand the unfolding narrative of substantial developments and issues associated with the period.”

*from Dept for Education subject criteria*

Students should focus on the sequence of events through the period, considering the causes, consequences and effects which connect them together.

Students will see the topic as a progressive development, understanding the significance of the events in the wider chronology and seeing change and continuity through the period.

The content for each Period study is presented as three chronologically consecutive key topics, a structure to help make clear the unfolding story.

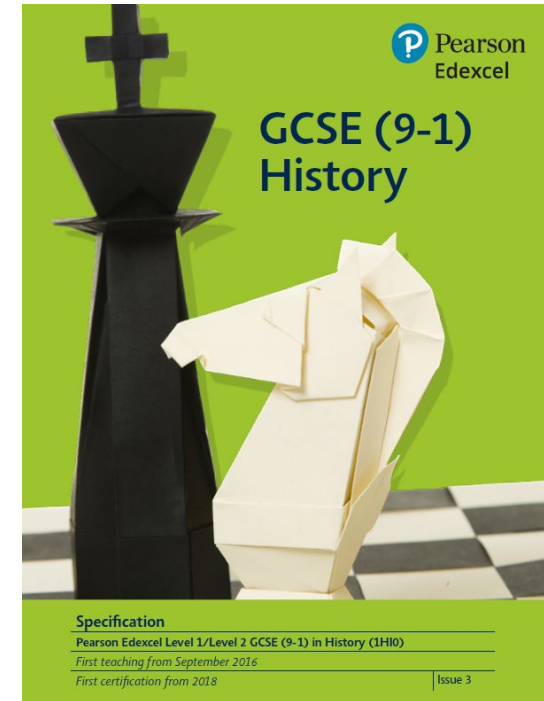
# Choice of Period study

Complete **Poll 2**, showing which option you teach.

- P1 Spain and the 'New World', c1490–c1555
- P2 British America, 1713–83: empire and revolution
- P3 The American West, c1835–c1895
- P4 Superpower Relations and the Cold War, 1941–91
- P5 Conflict in the Middle East, c1945–95

In the group chat, state which option you teach, one positive aspect of the option, and one thing either you or your students find challenging about it.

Please be as specific as possible about the challenge, e.g., 'how to introduce the idea of the analytical narrative' rather than 'how to teach the different question styles', or 'students find it difficult to differentiate between the three times Berlin is the focus of a crisis' rather than 'students get mixed up between events'.



# Changes to American West option (2021)

- Changes made to American West for [Issue 3 of the specification](#) (April 2021, for first assessment June 2022).
- Aim to make teaching the topic more straightforward – no new content, and no changes to assessment. Minor amendments to wording:
  - to clarify content
  - to reorganise content to where it better fits
  - to remove some inconsequential content.
- [Paper 2 American West Guide](#) – for more detail on changes.
- [Amendments to the American West Period study](#) – recorded training session (scroll down the list of GCSE History recordings).
- We are exploring possible language amendments and are also developing a new draft option for next reform. Contact Mark Battye to find out more.



# Question styles



# Paper 2 assessment model

- 1 hour 45 minutes
- 64 marks (Period study = 32 marks)
- 40% of the total examination (Period study = 20%)
- Only paper covering two discrete topics
- Paper 2 assesses AO1 and AO2
  - AO1: Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the key features and characteristics of the periods studied
  - AO2: Explain and analyse historical events and periods studied using second-order historical concepts
- AO1 and AO2 account for 70% of the total marks awarded for GCSE History.

# Period study questions

	Question description	Example question stem	AO and marks
Qu.1	Explanation of consequences	Explain two consequences of ...	AO1 + AO2 8 marks (2 × 4)
Qu.2	Writing an analytical narrative	Write an account which explains ... <i>+ two stimulus points</i>	AO1 + AO2 8 marks
Qu.3	Explanation of importance	Explain two of the following: • The importance of ... for ...	AO1 + AO2 16 marks (2 × 8)

# Period study question styles

The Period study questions focus on the significance of events and developments for what followed from them, rather than in-depth study of key features/characteristics – importance of the ‘unfolding narrative’.

- **Question 1** asks for two consequences of an event, development, idea, etc.
- In **Question 2**, the account of events or developments should provide a sequenced, unfolding narrative. This means that the links between different stages of the account need to be explained, which involves some explanation of how the consequences of one event links to another.
- **Question 3** asks about the significance of one event or development (X) for another aspect (Y) – the difference made by an event, person or development to how subsequent events developed.



# Low-level responses

The specific nature of questions on the Period study paper and the focus on second-order concepts such as consequence and significance can be a reason why some students do not reach higher levels.

- If students do not recognise the event, development or idea named in Question 1, they usually fall back on vague generalities or leave the answer space blank.
- Question 2 often has a specific date range – details outside that time frame will not be rewarded.
- In Question 3, high-level answers need to discuss the significance of X specifically in terms of its impact on Y; simply explaining why X was significant in general terms is not likely to go beyond Level 2.



# Question 1: consequences



# Question 1

The question asks candidates to identify two consequences of an event, development or idea.

The two consequences are marked separately and two Assessment Objectives are identified in each level of the mark scheme.

Level	Marks	Descriptor
1	1–2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Simple or generalised comment is offered about a consequence. [AO2]</li><li>• Generalised information about the topic is included, showing limited knowledge and understanding of the period. [AO1]</li></ul>
2	3–4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Features of the period are analysed to explain a consequence. [AO2]</li><li>• Specific information about the topic is added to support the explanation, showing good knowledge and understanding of the period. [AO1]</li></ul>

# Question 1: Focus on consequence

A consequence is not simply something that happened afterwards – the answer must explain the link to the event in order to explain how it is a consequence of the event. Learners should consider and explain ‘what happened as a result of’.

Two sample answers are provided in the delegate booklet.

- A: Explain **two** consequences of Gorbachev’s ‘new thinking’.
- B: Explain **two** consequences of the Homestead Act (1862).

Time constraints mean that only one answer will be marked and discussed now but a commentary on each answer is provided in the delegate booklet.

Please mark Answer A and type your level and mark and an explanation into the group chat box.

# Question 1: Commentary

## Answer A received the full 8 marks

The first consequence shows that Gorbachev's policies of glasnost and perestroika weakened the USSR's sphere of influence in eastern Europe, leading eventually to collapse of communism in many of those countries.

The second consequence focuses on the international situation and shows that reduced tension and improved relations with the USA were a consequence of Gorbachev's new approach.

In both cases, the link between Gorbachev's 'new thinking' and subsequent developments is made clear and supported with specific detail.

# Question 1: Principal Examiner's Reports

The Period study reports stress that candidates should not waste time on lengthy answers. Each consequence is marked out of 4 and the answer space provided in the booklet should be sufficient for an answer gaining full marks. Answers which require extra paper may be very thorough but cannot gain more than 4 marks each, and a lengthy answer to Question 1 may reduce the time available for other answers.

The reports also point out that a list of several simple or generalised points within an answer would be marked as Level 1. Level 2 is accessed by more thorough explanation and detail of the identified consequence, not by additional Level 1 points being made.



## Question 2: analytical narrative



## Question 2: Understanding the question

Option P1: Write a narrative account analysing Montezuma's actions during the conquest of Mexico by Cortes (1519–20).

The question contains four key elements:

- The topic / situation: the conquest of Mexico by Cortes
- The date range: 1519–20
- The focus: Montezuma's actions
- Two stimulus points: Tenochtitlan, Catholic symbols.

## Question 2: What is an analytical narrative?

An answer to this question should show how events unfolded to reach a specific outcome.

It is not a timeline of events and it is not a narrative where the connectors simply show events happening in sequence (and then ... next ...).

High-level answers use phrases which analyse the connections between the key events, for example:

- Which meant that they ...
- When they saw what had happened they ...
- They felt threatened and therefore they ...
- These actions convinced X that he had to ....

Consider how second-order historical concepts may connect, e.g. causation and consequence, or significance and causation.

## Question 2: Common problems

The Principal Examiner's Reports for the Period studies identify the following weaknesses in low-level answers:

- Providing detailed background information – this is unlikely to be rewarded and wastes time
- Not recognising the time frame of the question – details outside the time frame are likely to be irrelevant
- Answers containing irrelevant information are unlikely to be seen as a coherent or organised answer and thus are unlikely to be awarded Level 3.

## Question 2: Paragraph breaks

Examiners are looking for a narrative which has a beginning, middle and end, so it is helpful to write in paragraphs.

However, in contrast to other extended answers, where paragraph breaks usually identify a new aspect of content, in these answers a new paragraph should not form a break with the previous one but should stress that there is an ongoing thread, for example starting a new paragraph with phrases such as:

- The next year...
- X's response to this was...
- The situation changed when...
- Nothing was done until...



## Question 2: The stimulus points

As in the 12- and 16-mark questions on other papers, it is not necessary to use the stimulus points in the answer. Their function is to remind candidates of aspects of content that could be used to cover the whole period in the question.

Candidates may use any combination of stimulus points and own knowledge, including answers based entirely on own knowledge, but they should remember that answers should cover three aspects of content in order to show breadth and depth of coverage.

## Question 2: Marking exercise

Study the mark scheme on the next slide and use it to mark Answer C in the delegate booklet. Type your levels and marks and a brief explanation into the group chat box.

A commentary on Answers C and D is provided in the delegate booklet.

- C: Write a narrative account analysing the ways in which the cattle industry changed in the years c1876–c1890.
- D: Write a narrative account analysing the key developments in the negotiations between Israel and Palestine in the years 1993–95.

## Question 2: Marking exercise

Level	Marks	Descriptor
1	1–2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A simple or generalised narrative is provided; the account shows limited analysis and organisation of the events included. [AO2]</li><li>• Limited knowledge and understanding of the events is shown. [AO1]</li></ul>
2	3–5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A narrative is given, showing some organisation of material into a sequence of events leading to an outcome. The account of events shows some analysis of the linkage between them, but some passages of the narrative may lack coherence or organisation. [AO2]</li><li>• Accurate and relevant information is added, showing some knowledge and understanding of the events. [AO1]</li></ul> <p><i>Maximum four marks for answers that do not go beyond aspects prompted by the stimulus points.</i></p>
3	6–8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A narrative is given which organises material into a clear sequence of events leading to an outcome. The account of events analyses the linkage between them and is coherent and logically structured. [AO2]</li><li>• Accurate and relevant information is included, showing good knowledge and understanding of the key features or characteristics of the events. [AO1]</li></ul> <p><i>No access to Level 3 for answers which do not go beyond aspects prompted by the stimulus points.</i></p>

## Question 2: Commentary

Answer C received the full 8 marks.

A small amount of background is provided at the start, but its relevance is clear as it explains the situation in 1876 and it does not provide unnecessary detail about (eg) the role of Iliff.

The answer provides a clear sequence of events in the years c1876–1890, with accurate detail explaining the changing situation and leading to the outcome in 1890.

Notice key phrases connecting various stages within the narrative: 'as a result of this', 'consequently, this had a negative impact', 'then, in 1886–87; 'which greatly decreased', 'following this', 'from this point'.



# Question 3: significance





# Question 3: Analysing the question

This question is the only one on the paper where candidates have a choice. They must answer two out of three options.

This is one of the options on the Summer 2022 P4 paper:

- Explain the importance of the Marshall Plan (1947) for relations between East and West.

The question is focused on significance. It involves looking at the consequences of X in order to explain **the importance of its impact on Y**.

Answers which explain the importance of X without making the link to Y cannot progress beyond Level 2.

High-level answers will explain what difference has been made to Y **as a result of X**: in the example above, not just the importance of the Marshall Plan but its importance for relations between East and West.

# Question 3: Marking exercise

Level	Marks	Descriptor
1	1–2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• A simple or generalised answer is given, showing limited development and organisation of material. [AO2]</li><li>• Limited knowledge and understanding of the topic is shown. [AO1]</li></ul>
2	3–5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An explanation is given, showing an attempt to analyse importance. It shows some reasoning, but some passages may lack coherence and organisation. [AO2]</li><li>• Accurate and relevant information is added, showing some knowledge and understanding of the period. [AO1]</li></ul>
3	6–8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• An explanation is given, showing analysis of importance. It shows a line of reasoning that is coherent and logically structured. [AO2]</li><li>• Accurate and relevant information is included, showing good knowledge and understanding of the required features or characteristics of the period studied. [AO1]</li></ul>

# Question 3: Feedback

Answer E is Level 2; use the text box to explain why it does not reach Level 3 and what feedback you would give to a student explaining how to make this a Level 3 answer.

A commentary on Answers E and F is provided in the delegate booklet.

## Question 3: Commentary

The answer is high Level 2 because it includes valid, specific detail (although the suggestion that the Marshall Plan provided military equipment is inaccurate) and suggests that this was an important policy. It also offers some explanation of the impact of this on East–West relations.

To develop the answer, it could explore the wider aims of economic stability and support for democracy in other countries, or the impact on the existing divisions between the allies. The answer explains that the Plan made the USSR suspicious and that war was a possible outcome; it could go on to explain how it drew Western countries together and exacerbated the rivalry between East and West, putting pressure on the USSR to offer similar support to the satellite states.



# Teaching strategies



# Making links

These activities could help students to prepare for any of the three question styles, but especially Question 1.

1. A key event is identified and individual students are given cards, each containing something that could be considered a consequence of the event. The teacher calls on random individuals who have to explain why their card shows a consequence of the key event; the class then votes on the best explanation and highlights key phrases that demonstrate consequence rather than simply a chronological sequence.
2. Students all write an individual event / development on a card; the teacher calls on two random students who have to explain whether one event is or is not linked to the other.

# Consequences

1. The teacher names an event and students are asked to identify two different types of consequences, e.g., political and social; economic and religious; national and international; positive and negative.
2. The teacher names an action / event (e.g., a treaty, a build-up of weapons, a rebellion) and students are asked to identify a consequence that was intended and also one that was not.
3. The teacher describes the consequences of an event / development and students must guess the event / development.
4. The teacher provides a list showing various consequences of an event and students are asked to rate the strength of the connection.
5. Students could also be asked to differentiate between the short-term and long-term consequences of an event.

# Sequencing events

These activities would help students to prepare for Question 2, the analytical narrative. They can be done as an individual paper activity but can also be done as a group discussion or as a more active exercise.

1. Individual students can be given cards showing key episodes / developments and asked to arrange themselves into a line showing the correct order of events.
2. The number of events to sequence can be adapted to suit the ability of the students, or able students can be asked to suggest an additional event and explain where it would fit in the sequence.
3. Once events have been placed in sequence, individual students can be asked to explain the link between events.

# Sequencing events (continued)

4. Give every student a card with an event on it (they do not all need to be different). Choose (e.g.) three individuals and give each of them a ball of coloured wool. The three individuals compete against each other to connect students, forming a chain of events. Points can be given for the number of events correctly sequenced and the explanation of each link.
5. The teacher provides a skeleton narrative analysis with the events / developments left blank; students fill in the blanks, using the explanation of the links to identify the correct event.
6. The teacher provides an analytical narrative which has been cut into strips or boxes, each containing a numbered point; students have to arrange them into the correct sequence.
7. The teacher provides a flowchart of events / developments and students have to annotate the chart to explain how the events are linked.

# The importance of X for Y

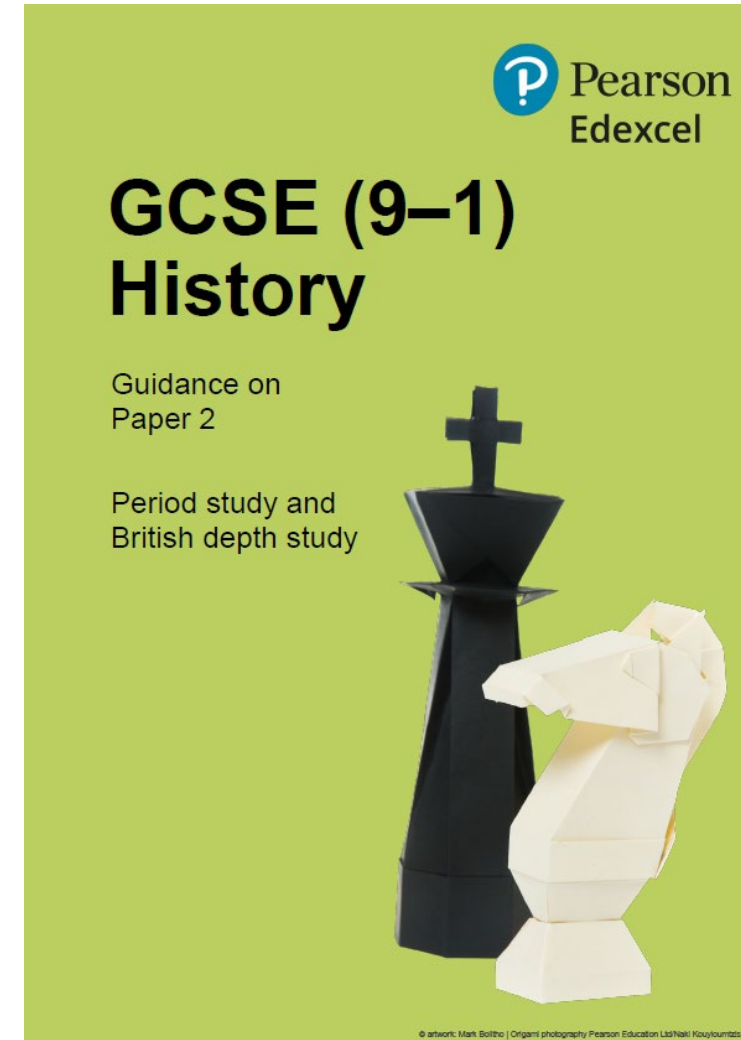
1. The teacher provides three comments about the importance of X and students are asked to identify which one does not have an impact on Y.
2. Half of the students are given cards showing an event X; the other half of the students have cards showing the impact of something on Y. The students then have to find their 'partner' to make the correct link between X and Y.
3. Students are given a list of changes / consequences / impact on Y and have to identify X.



# Paper 2 guide

More ideas and activities in section 2 of the [Paper 2 guide](#)

- Setting the scene
- Common barriers and pitfalls
- Teaching the content
- Teaching second-order historical concepts.



Any questions?



# History Subject Advisor

- Mark Battye
  - 0333 016 4084
  - [qualifications.pearson.com/contactus](https://qualifications.pearson.com/contactus)
  - Live chat via contact us page
  - Email: [teachinghistory@pearson.com](mailto:teachinghistory@pearson.com)
  - [@PearsonHistory](https://twitter.com/PearsonHistory)
  - [Sign up](#) to regular subject advisor updates
  - [qualifications.pearson.com/history](https://qualifications.pearson.com/history)





Pearson