



Pearson
Edexcel

GCSE (9–1) History

Getting Started
Guide for
Teachers

Updated guide,
June 2024 for first
assessment June
2025 / 2026







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1. Introduction

This Getting Started guide provides an overview of the GCSE History specification, to help you get to grips with the changes to content and assessment, and to help you understand what these mean for you and your students.

This guide has been updated to reflect the changes made to new issues of the specification and sample assessment materials.

- Issue 5 of the specification and sample assessment materials are for first teaching September 2023 and first assessment June 2025.
- Issue 6 of the specification is for first teaching September 2024 and first assessment June 2026.

Summary guidance with links on the changes being made for first assessment in June 2025 and June 2026 can be found [here](#).

The infographic is titled 'Pearson Edexcel GCSE History Improvements'. It features the Pearson Edexcel logo in the top right corner. Below the title, it states: 'In response to your feedback, we are making improvements to our GCSE History qualification. We are confident that these small changes will make a big difference.' The main content is organized into a table with four columns: Summer 2024, Summer 2025, Summer 2026, and Next reform. Each column lists specific improvements. The Summer 2024 column includes an additional review of all 17 papers (clarity of questions, stimulus points) and the removal of the Level 2 stimulus points cap. The Summer 2025 column lists improvements to the assessment model (better ramping, choice to Paper 3, extra time, minimising disruption) and language amendments. The Summer 2026 column includes a review of content (minor amendments to improve teaching, for first teaching September 2024). The Next reform column lists making GCSE History more accessible and making the qualification more diverse and inclusive. A decorative image of chess pieces is in the bottom right corner. At the bottom left, it says '1526155157 | UKS | February 2024 | Version 1 | DCL1:Public'.

Summer 2024	Summer 2025	Summer 2026	Next reform
<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Additional review of all 17 papers:<ul style="list-style-type: none">clarity of questionsstimulus points that are accessible to a wider range of students.➤ Removal of Level 2 stimulus points cap.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Improvements to the assessment model:<ul style="list-style-type: none">better ramping on opening questionsadding choice to Paper 3extra time on each paperminimising disruption for teachers and students.➤ Language amendments.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Review of content:<ul style="list-style-type: none">minor amendments to improve the way topics can be taughtfor first teaching September 2024.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">➤ Making GCSE History more accessible to a wider range of students.➤ Making our qualification more diverse and inclusive.

1.1 Issues 4, 5 and 6: updated guide – June 2024

Issue 4 of the specification and sample assessment materials were released in September 2023, to include language changes and the removal of the Level 2 stimulus points cap.

- The language changes are for first assessment June 2025. More information can be found [here](#) – see also below page 12.
- The removal of the Level 2 cap for questions with stimulus points applies from first assessment June 2024. More information on this can be found [here](#) and below on page 24.

Issue 5 of the specification and sample assessment materials were released in June 2024, to include minor amendments to the assessment model to improve the student experience. These changes are for first assessment June 2025. More information on these amendments can be found [here](#) – see also below page 22.



Issue 6 of the specification was released at the same time in June 2024, to include minor changes to the content in 14 of the 17 available options. These changes are for first assessment June 2026. More information on these amendments can be found [here](#) – see also below page 12.

Specification Issue	Which exam series is it for?	What changes does it cover?	What was the release date?
Issue 4	June 2024	Removal of Level 2 stimulus points cap	September 2023
	June 2025	Specification language changes	
Issue 5	June 2025	Changes to assessment model	June 2024
Issue 6	June 2026 onwards	Specification content changes	June 2024

Existing support materials have also been updated accordingly (see 1.4 Resources below).

1.2 Issue 3: updated guide – April 2021

Issue 3 of the specification was released to include the new Migrants in Britain thematic study and accompanying Notting Hill historic environment. In addition to the introduction of this new Paper 1 option, minor amendments were made to the specification, including: content clarification for some options; the mark scheme instructions for examiners for Paper 1 qu.2(b); and the accessibility of some features in the paper design. More information on these amendments can be found [here](#).

1.3 Issue 2: Paper 2 change to exam paper layout

From the summer 2019 series onwards, the combined Paper 2 Period study and British depth study has comprised two separate question-and-answer booklets: Booklet P being the Period study, and Booklet B the British depth study. As well as the two question-and-answer booklets for Paper 2, candidates are also provided with a separate information sheet on the day of the exam which includes key information.

At the start of the exam, candidates are provided with the information sheet and the two question-and-answer booklets. Students are provided only with questions for topics they have studied. The British depth study booklet contains only the option for which they have been entered, so that students no longer have to select the correct British depth study.

For more information, including the new entry codes and FAQs, please read the announcement on the Edexcel website [here](#).

An entry code calculator is also available on the Edexcel website [here](#).



1.4 Resources

Subject advisor


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- [Access the history community](#) 
- [Sign up to receive subject advisor updates](#)

History qualification page

The latest news on our History qualifications, plus contact details for our History subject advisor, Mark Battye. Email: teachinghistory@pearson.com.

Sign up to receive monthly subject advisor updates [here](#).

Free support materials

This section lists information on the key free support materials available on the Edexcel website.

On the [GCSE History \(9–1\) from 2016](#) page:

- select the [Teaching support](#) tab, where resources are separated out by Plan, Teach, and Track and Assess;
- or select the [Course materials](#) tab, and then select the appropriate tab for [Specification and sample assessments](#), [Exam materials](#), or [Teaching and learning materials](#).

Further free support materials can be found via [GCSE History support materials: details and links](#), and via the Resources sections in the [Topic booklets](#).

Resource	Details
Specification and sample assessment materials	The starting point for information on content and assessment in GCSE (9–1) History.
Specimen papers	An extra set of practice papers to exemplify the GCSE (9–1) History assessment model.
Past papers, mark schemes and examiner reports	For every series since 2018. The examiner reports include exemplar student answers with examiner comments. An Edexcel Online login is required to access files with a silver padlock – check with your exams officer if you can't open them.
GCSE History support materials: details and links	Information on all the free support materials available on the Edexcel website to help you deliver GCSE History.



Resource	Details
Mapping documents	Mapping documents to help support teachers in moving to Edexcel GCSE History.
Migration thematic study	A webpage rounding up information and support materials to help you plan and deliver Migrants in Britain.
Paper 1 Guide	Teaching approaches and ideas for the thematic study and historic environment, with case studies from practising teachers.
Paper 2 Guide	Teaching approaches and ideas for the period study and British depth study, with case studies from practising teachers.
Paper 3 guide	Teaching approaches and ideas for the modern depth study, with case studies from practising teachers – to follow in early 2021.
Guidance on sources and interpretations	Guidance on AO3 sources and AO4 interpretations, looking at question types, common problems, and teaching approaches and ideas.
Topic booklets	Topic booklets for every topic in the specification to help you get up to speed with new areas.
Course planner and Schemes of work	A course planner and sample outline schemes of work for each topic in the specification, in editable Word files. A digital interactive scheme of work is also available for both KS3 and GCSE.
Exemplar student answers	Exemplar student answers, including from the summer 2018, 2019 and 2022 series, with examiner commentaries and mark schemes. Two sets of exemplar answers are also available here for Migrants in Britain.
Knowledge boosters	Sets of quizzes to support AO1 knowledge and understanding. Currently available for Medicine, Anglo-Saxons and Normans, Elizabethan England, American West, Superpower relations, and Germany. An Edexcel Online login is required.
Summary guidance on changes for 2025 and 2026	Summary guidance with links on the changes being made for Issue 5 (first assessment 2025) and Issue 6 (2026).
Content changes for 2026: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Topic guidance FAQs 	Guidance for each option on the changes being made to the content for Issue 6 of the specification (first assessment June 2026), and FAQs.



Resource	Details
Assessment changes for 2025: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Guide • FAQs 	Guidance on the changes being made to the assessment model for Issue 5 of the specification (first assessment June 2025), and FAQs. Plus a reminder about the 2024 stimulus points cap change and information on future potential changes.
Specification language changes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Track changes on • Rationale • FAQs 	Guidance on the specification language changes made for Issue 4 of the specification (2023), showing the changes being made, the rationale behind the changes, and FAQs.
Paper 3 Germany practice question 3	A practice question 3 enquiry package, which can be used in mocks alongside the June 2023 paper questions 1 and 2.
History topic of the month	Posters and worksheets for the History topic of the month series.
Case studies	Case studies on various aspects of teaching history.
Results Plus data	Results Plus data from past series is available under the Guide tab. This provides data on global cohort performance, overall and by each grade. An Edexcel Online login is required.
Student walkthroughs	A series of pre-recorded student walkthroughs, created in collaboration with Harris Federation. The recordings are designed to help your students prepare for the summer 2024 exam series. New versions will be recorded in early 2025 to reflect the assessment changes.
Revision tips	Some useful revision tips for students.
Command words	A series of student-friendly files exploring each command word in turn, plus a file on stimulus points and a summary document paper-by-paper.
Pre-recorded events	Recorded versions of past training sessions, including new to Edexcel and feedback from summer series.
Past training content	Packs from past training events, such as new to Edexcel, summer feedback and events on specific papers or question types.
KS3 and KS4 baseline tests	Editable baseline tests to assess students at the start of each key stage and track progress from KS3 to KS4; developed as part of the Pearson Progression Service.



Endorsed resources*

Endorsement means that a resource has been through our quality assurance process to confirm that it meets the teaching and learning requirements a specification is aimed at. Endorsement of a resource doesn't mean it's the only suitable material available, or that it is required to achieve the qualification.

We have also worked with publishers to ensure that there are published resources available for every topic.

Pearson – Designed to help develop confident, articulate and successful historians. Pearson have produced a student book and revision guide/workbook for every topic in the specification, along with foundation student books, target books and revision cards for the most popular topics.

Hodder Education – The Hodder GCSE History for Edexcel students' book helps students achieve their full potential while ensuring pace, enjoyment and motivation.

Oxford University Press – Oxford's Edexcel GCSE History student books help to develop young historians who have the confidence to succeed, with the most up-to-date exam practice and a tried-and-trusted, accessible approach.

Zigzag Education – Photocopiable resources for learning, revision and exam practice.

Anglia Tours – A range of fully-guided History tours which enhance both teaching and learning for the related Pearson qualification.

* You don't have to purchase any resources, including those from Pearson, to deliver our qualifications.

Other, non-endorsed resources are also available and the topic booklets suggest resources suitable for both teachers and students for each topic

While these resources – and others – may be used to support teaching and learning, the official specification and associated assessment guidance materials are the only authoritative source of information and should always be referred to for definitive guidance.



2. Content Guidance

This section provides an overview of each element of the specification and the options that are available. Detailed guidance on individual topics is given in the separate [topic booklets](#), which have been updated to reflect the recent amendments.

Content changes (Issue 6 – first assessment June 2026)

As part of our work to improve the student experience, we have made minor amendments to many of the topics to improve the way they can be taught. As with the assessment changes (below page xx), the intention is to minimise disruption for teachers and students. There are three main types of amendment:

- rewording to clarify the focus of the content and/or to flag where too much detail is not required
- movement of content to make the structure and flow of ideas more logical – this is intended to help teaching and learning
- simplification of content, by removing unnecessary detail.

This approach is similar to that taken with American West for Issue 3. More information on the changes can be found [here](#).

Language changes (Issue 4 – first assessment June 2025)

Following reviews of our GCSE History specification, issues were raised about language use in the specification, and we decided to proceed with making language changes to the current specification (rather than await next reform). We consulted with a range of teachers and other voices in the History teaching community. The changes apply to language only and there are no changes to content.

More information on the language changes can be found [here](#), and via the links in the free resources table in section 1.4 above. The most significant changes concern the terms 'slaves', 'Indians' and 'Native Americans', which appear in three period studies, P1, P2 and P3.

Content changes (Issue 3 – first assessment June 2022)

The new Migration thematic study was added to the specification. In addition, minor amendments were made to some existing options mainly for purposes of clarification. In particular, for option P3, The American West, there has been a clarification of the specification through the reorganisation and rewording of some of the content in all of the Key topics (guidance on all amendments [here](#), and on American West [here](#)).

2.1 Thematic studies

The thematic studies are designed to meet the following DFE criteria:

Thematic studies should require students to understand change and continuity across a long sweep of history, including the most significant characteristics of different ages. They should reveal wider changes in aspects of society over the centuries and allow comparisons to be made between different periods of history.

These thematic studies consequently should be seen *not* in terms of coverage of an extended period, but as the *tracing of significant threads in the theme across the chronological range*. The principles of the thematic study will be familiar to teachers who have previously taught a development study within an SHP specification. For those less familiar with these principles, suggestions on teaching approaches and common barriers and pitfalls can be found in the [Paper 1 Guide](#).



Thematic study options

There are four thematic study choices, each forming part of a Paper 1 option that incorporates the thematic study and the historic environment.

10: Crime and punishment in Britain, c1000–present and Whitechapel, c1870–c1900: crime, policing and the inner city.
11: Medicine in Britain, c1250–present and The British sector of the Western Front, 1914–18: injuries, treatment and the trenches.
12: Warfare and British society, c1250–present and London and the Second World War, 1939–45.
13: Migrants in Britain, c800–present and Notting Hill, c1948–c1970

Thematic study content structure

Each option is defined in terms of two key strands which should be studied across the time span. These two strands for each option are:

Option 10: Crime and punishment in Britain, c1000–present

- 1 Nature and changing definitions of criminal activity
- 2 The nature of law enforcement and punishment

Option 11: Medicine in Britain, c1250–present

- 1 Ideas about the cause of disease and illness
- 2 Approaches to prevention and treatment

Option 12: Warfare and British society, c1250–present

- 1 The nature of warfare
- 2 The experience of war

Option 13: Migrants in Britain, c800–present

- 1 The context of migration
- 2 The experience and impact of migrants

The process of change

In the specification, each thematic study begins with an **introductory section** headed 'The process of change'. This explains the content focus and identifies the relevant concepts and factors that students need to understand. Hence this section identifies the learning and assessment focus for the study. **It is crucial that these concepts and factors are incorporated into the teaching.**

This introduction indicates that, in studying the content defined in strands 1 and 2, students should understand the following key elements:

- How key features in the development of [chosen thematic study] were linked with the key features of society in Britain in the periods studied.
- The nature and process of change including:
 - understanding patterns of change, trends and turning points
 - the *influence of factors* inhibiting or encouraging change within periods and across the theme.
- How factors worked together to bring about particular developments at particular times. For example:



Teaching focus	Option example
<i>how key features in the development of [crime and punishment] were linked with the key features of society in Britain</i>	Key feature of society: The impact of industrialisation and the growth of towns in the nineteenth century. Linked development: The breakdown in community law and order and the growth of a professional police force.
<i>how patterns in settlement [in migration] were linked to key features of society in Britain</i>	Key feature of society: economic growth and the rise of the cloth trade. The pattern of settlement: Flemish and Walloon migrants from Europe in the early modern period.
<i>understanding patterns of change [in medicine]</i>	Turning point in medicine in the nineteenth century: a new approach to prevention after Pasteur's development of the germ theory. Trends in medicine in the twentieth century: improvements in diagnosis of illness, using new technologies.
<i>understanding patterns of change [in migration]</i>	Turning point in the context of migration: the impact of decolonisation
<i>influence of factors [in warfare]</i>	The roles of science and technology in improving weaponry throughout the period: use of gunpowder, development of muskets and heavy artillery, chemical and nuclear weapons.
<i>influence of factors [in migration]</i>	The role of the Church and religion in the medieval period: the concept of Christendom encouraged the international movement of craftsmen, clergy, scholars, traders etc; the building of cathedrals and monasteries.
<i>how factors worked together to bring about particular developments [in medicine] at particular times</i>	The development of penicillin in the mid-twentieth century: The combined roles of individuals (Fleming, Florey and Chain), government (funding), attitudes (wartime priorities), science and technology (new freeze-drying techniques in industry).
<i>how factors worked together to bring about particular developments [in migration] at particular times</i>	The experience of Huguenots in seventeenth-century England: The combined roles of religion (the emergence of England as predominantly Protestant nation), government (stimulation of trade), and economic factors (growth of craft industries).

The factors are defined for each individual option in the process of change section, and their influence (in hindering or advancing change) should be explored as appropriate (i.e. where they were influential in developments) when the defined content is taught.



For example,

- Option 10 Crime and punishment, in the period c1500–c1700 the influence of the Church is one factor which is significant when approaches to witchcraft are taught
- Option 11 Medicine, in c1900 to the present, the influence of science and technology is a factor playing a part in the improvements in diagnosis
- Option 12 Warfare – see table above
- Option 13 Migration, in c1700–c1900, the role of economic influences in the nature of voluntary, forced and internal migration.

In the four Paper 1 topic booklets, Section 2.3 Content exemplification includes a column exemplifying the roles of the factors in change in each time period.

Period content

As well as the two key strands to be studied across the time span, the content to be studied is divided into four chronological sections that run from the medieval period to the present day. All sections must be studied. The four sections – or periods – provide a framework for understanding the option, but should not be taken in isolation from each other – students should appreciate developments across these sections and across the option as a whole. For example, the period c1900 to the present is separated for the purpose of defining specification content but, in each theme, developments in the nineteenth century might be seen as the beginning of key developments which continue into the twentieth century.

Students should understand chronological terms, such as medieval, Middle Ages, Reformation, modern, and that, for example, 'the 1500s' is the sixteenth century and that 'c1900' means 'around 1900'. This will enable students to recognise when assessment questions cover more than one period of time. Please note that in our thematic studies, the modern period means 1900–present.

Case studies

These have been selected for more detailed study. Case studies are defined as a third aspect for study in each period, under strands 1 and 2. They should be used, as appropriate, to analyse the role of factors and to exemplify in context the threads defined in strands 1 and 2. Not every case study will be capable of illustrating all factors and all elements of the content strands, but they should be explored as appropriate. For example,

- In option 11 (Medicine), the case study on William Harvey provides opportunities to exemplify from strand 1 'a scientific approach', 'the work of the Royal Society', and from strand 2 'continuity in approaches to treatment'. The roles of factors – individuals, technology and contemporary attitudes – could be explored.
- In option 13 (Migration), the case study on the experience of the Huguenots in seventeenth-century England provides opportunities to exemplify from strand 1 the 'reasons for migration and the pattern of settlement', and from strand 2, 'the impact of migrants in England' in trade, industry and culture; while the role of economic issues and religion as factors of change could be explored.

The case studies also provide opportunities to make detailed comparisons over time. For example,

- In option 12 (Warfare), the case studies of the Battle of Waterloo and trench warfare on the Western Front allow for comparison across periods on the nature of warfare and use of weaponry.
- In option 13 (Migration), the case studies from each period provide opportunities to compare across periods the experience and impact of migrants.



2.2 Historic environment

The studies of the historic environment have been designed to meet the following DFE criteria:

The study of the historic environment should focus on one particular site in its historical context. The study should examine the relationship between a place and historical events and developments. The focus of study may range in scale from, for example, a particular building or part of a building to a city or rural landscape/setting. There is no requirement that students visit the site.

Historic environment sites

A chosen site has been linked to each thematic study. Linking the historic environment to the thematic study has been done to promote overall coherence for the qualification as a whole – it aids teaching and learning by allowing the issues studied in the historic environment to be seen within a broader thematic context. The options have been chosen to be engaging for students as they study key features of the environment. They have also been chosen for their potential to allow a source-based, enquiry-focused approach to their content. The assessment of this element targets AO1 and AO3 (see section 3 below).

Each study of the historic environment focuses on one particular site in its historical context.

10 Whitechapel, c1870–c1900: crime, policing and the inner city	This topic focuses on the relationship between conditions in a locality (the inner city area of Whitechapel) and their impact on crime and policing in the area, as well as the impact of crime and policing in the locality, in the broader context of national developments in policing.
11 The British sector of the Western Front, 1914–18: injuries, treatment and the trenches	The topic focuses on the relationship between conditions in a locality (the British Sector of the Western Front) and their impact on the nature of illness and the provision of medical care, as well as the impact of provision for medical care in the locality in the broader context of medical developments in medicine in the early twentieth century.
12 London and the Second World War, 1939–45	This topic focuses on the relationship between an event (the Second World War) and its impact on the physical fabric and people's lives in the locality (London) in the broader context of the impact of war on civilians.
13 Notting Hill, c1948–c1970	This topic focuses on the relationship between the conditions in a locality (Notting Hill) and the experiences of the local community, particularly in the context of local and national post-Second World War migration.



Historic environment content structure

The content of the historic environment options is divided into two sections.

The **first section** defines the content to be studied in five bullet points. Four of the bullet points relate to the specified environment; the fifth contextualises them. It should be noted, for example, that the context for option 10, The British sector of the Western Front, 1914–18: injuries, treatment and the trenches, is not about the reasons for the war or the overall conduct of it, but specifically the historical context of medicine in the twentieth century. Aspects of the first bullet point relate specifically to the physical context of the historical environment – the aspects of the place which have a bearing on the topic (for example, the trenches and the conditions in them) and question 1 (see page 24) may relate discretely to features of the locality.

The **second section** defines the evidence and enquiry knowledge students should acquire relevant to this topic, including knowledge of appropriate local and national sources through which enquiries might be followed up. This section gives students the opportunity to develop the skills and understandings to pursue enquiries and frame historical questions as the DFE criteria require.

The assessment approach adopted for the historic environment element (see page 25) indicates that the focus should be on:

- developing an understanding of key features of the specified locality and its national historical context
- developing source knowledge and appreciation of their value as evidence
- developing relevant enquiry skills.



2.3 Period studies

The period studies have been designed to meet the following criteria:

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.

Period study options

The period studies have been chosen for their potential to illuminate the developments which unfolded in the following areas:

P1 Spain the 'New World', c1490–c1555	Spanish exploration, conquest and settlement of parts of the Americas from Columbus's voyages, through the conquest of Mexico to the conquest and consolidation of empire in Peru.
P2 British America, 1713–83: empire and revolution	The development of the British empire in North America from 1713 to the American Revolution and loss of the 13 colonies.
P3 The American West, c1835–c1895	US exploration and settlement of the American West and its unfolding impact on Indigenous peoples from the opening of the first wagon trails west to the immediate aftermath of the closing of the American Frontier.
P4 Superpower relations and the Cold War, 1941–91	Relations between the USA and the USSR, from allies in Second World War, through the Cold War until its ending with the fall of the Soviet Union.
P5 Conflict in the Middle East, c1945–95	The story of Israelis and Palestinians from the founding of Israel in 1945 to Oslo II in 1995; the relations between Israel and neighbouring states over these years.

The differing chronological lengths of these options reflect the differing density of coverage required.

The content for each period study option is presented in **three chronologically consecutive key topics**, a structure which helps make clear the unfolding story. Although there are three defined key topics in each period study, students should appreciate the narrative connections that run across them.

The **assessment approach** to this element (see section 3, page 43) indicates that the focus should be on the significance of events and developments for what followed from them, rather than on an in-depth study of their key features and characteristics. For example, in option P2, the focus of Key topic 1.2 'Slavery in North America' is primarily on its impact, consequences and significance as part of developments in British settlement in North America.



2.4 British depth studies

The depth studies have been designed to meet the following criteria:

Depth studies should focus on a substantial and coherent short time span and require students to understand the complexity of a society or historical situation and the interplay of different aspects within it.

The British depth studies all cover time spans significantly shorter than the period studies – between 27 and 31 years. Each requires students to understand the complexity of a society or historical situation and the interplay of different aspects within it. For example:

B1 Anglo-Saxon and Norman England, c1060–1088	Political, e.g. rival claimants to the throne, the conquest of England, Anglo-Saxon and Norman government. Religious, e.g. Norman control of the Church. Social and economic, e.g. the imposition of the feudal system, the culture of the Norman aristocracy.
B2 The reigns of King Richard I and King John, 1189–1216	Political, e.g. Richard and the Third Crusade, relations between monarch and barons, royal government. Religious, e.g. impact of the Interdict, antisemitism. Social and economic, e.g. the feudal hierarchy, peasant life, towns, financial impositions.
B3 Henry VIII and his ministers, 1509–40	Political, e.g. government under Wolsey and Cromwell, the management and use of parliament. Religious, e.g. the Reformation, the Pilgrimage of Grace. Social and economic, e.g. the impact of the dissolution of the monasteries.
B4 Early Elizabethan England, 1558–88	Political, e.g. government in Elizabethan England, challenge of Mary, Queen of Scots, rivalry with Spain. Religious, e.g. religious divisions in society. Social and economic, e.g. poverty, education, trade and exploration.

Within each option, the **content of three key topics** is defined to emphasise connections. Key topics overlap chronologically, and students should be prepared to make connections between each of the key topics, both across and within the period covered by them. Students should appreciate the key features and characteristics of the society and be able to analyse and account for key events, developments and changes, and their consequences and significance.

For example, in option B1 students should understand that there was a range of reasons for and consequences of the Norman Conquest. In dealing with the consequences or impact of the Conquest, they should understand the political and military issues defined in Key topic 2, and the social, economic, religious and constitutional issues defined in Key topic 3. They should be aware, too, of connections between them: for example, the significance of the feudal system (Key topic 3.1) in William's ability to secure the kingdom (Key topic 2).



2.5 Modern depth studies

The modern depth studies have also been chosen and designed to allow students to understand the complexity of a society or historical situation within a short coherent period and to appreciate the interplay of different aspects within it.

30 Russia and the Soviet Union, 1917–41	Political, e.g. the Bolshevik Revolution, consolidation of power, communist policies. Social, economic and cultural, e.g. the impact of the NEP and Five-Year plans, living and working conditions, economic changes, the position of women and ethnic minorities, official culture, socialist realism.
31 Weimar and Nazi Germany, 1918–39	Political, e.g. Weimar and Nazi governments, Hitler's rise to power, the Nazi state. Social, economic and cultural, e.g. economic problems and recovery in the 1920s, women, young people and minorities in the Nazi state, use of propaganda.
32 Mao's China, 1945–76	Political, e.g. the Civil War, the consolidation of Communist control, government policies and control of people's lives, instruments of power. Social, economic and cultural, e.g. changes in agriculture, impact on people's lives of the Great Leap Forward and Cultural Revolution.
33 The USA, 1954–75: conflict at home and abroad	Political, e.g. the political struggles of the civil rights movement, US involvement in the Vietnam War from its start to its end. Social, economic and cultural, e.g. the position of Black Americans, divisions in US society over civil rights and the Vietnam War, media coverage, the economic costs of war.

The modern depth studies are more highly weighted, at 30%, than the British depth studies. This is accounted for by the assessment of **all four** Assessment Objectives in this paper (see section 3, page 50) and reflected in the definition of **four key topics** for study. The modern depth studies are particularly well suited to the analysis and evaluation of source material and of interpretations of history.

In common with the British depth studies, there is a focus on the factors which combined to cause events and developments in the period but students will also need the skills and understanding to address AO3 and AO4 in these studies. This is dealt with in more detail below (see section 3, page 50). In making inferences, students should understand that source material can be interpreted beyond its face value content, for example, to reveal the attitudes of the author or the values of contemporary society. In dealing with source evaluation, students should be aware of a range of valid considerations which can be brought to bear to assess the usefulness of a source. In dealing with interpretations, the specification identifies key skills and understandings which students should develop. They should:

- be aware that interpretations are based on evidence from their period of study
- be aware of a range of evidence that can be used to reach conclusions
- study examples of such evidence and consider ways in which it could give rise to and support different interpretations
- understand a range of reasons why interpretations may differ



- be aware that differences based on conclusions drawn from evidence are legitimate and can be explained
- be able to evaluate given interpretations using their own knowledge of the period.

The examination questions with a focus on interpretations (qu.3a–3d) may be applied to any aspect of the defined content. There is additional guidance on this aspect below in section 3.

Note: it is **not** required that students are taught about different schools of thought or about historical controversies related to the modern depth studies



3. Assessment Guidance

3.1 Assessment overview

Changes to the assessment model from 2025

Following the post-series review in 2023, the following changes have been made to the assessment model from the summer 2025 series onwards. These changes are intended to improve the student experience.

The table below summarises these changes:

Paper/Question	Exams up to 2024	Exams from 2025 onwards
Paper 1 timing	1 hr 15 mins	1 hr 20 mins (+5 mins)
Paper 2 timing	1 hr 45 mins	1 hr 50 mins (+5 mins)
Paper 3 timing	1 hr 20 mins	1 hr 30 mins (+10 mins)
Paper 1 Q1	Q1 Describe two features of... (4)	Q1a Describe one feature of... (2) Q1b Describe one feature of... (2)
Paper 1 Q5/6	Covering at least 200 years	Covering either a complete period or at least 200 years
Paper 2B Q1	Q1 Describe two features of... (4)	Q1a Describe one feature of... (2) Q1b Describe one feature of... (2)
Paper 2B numbering	1a, 1b, 1c(i) or (ii)	1a, 1b, 2, 3 or 4
Paper 2P Q1	Q1 Explain two consequences of... (8)	Q1a Explain one consequence of... (4) Q1b Explain one consequence of... (4)
Paper 3 Q2	Q2 Explain why... (12)	Q2a or Q2b Explain why... (12)

Opening questions: the key features and consequences questions have each been divided into two parts. This should improve the 'ramping' and accessibility of the papers – more information below on pp.25, 43 and 46. The question numbering in the British depth study has also been amended for greater clarity and consistency.

Paper 3 Question 2: students are now provided with a choice of two Explain why... questions on Paper 3.

Assessment time: the total assessment time has been increased from 4 hrs 20 mins to 4 hrs 40 mins: five minutes have been added to Paper 1, 5 minutes to Paper 2, and 10 minutes to Paper 3. This is in response to feedback from teachers and students about the value of providing more time for reading sources and interpretations and planning essays; in addition, Paper 2 now divides more neatly into two 'halves' of 55 minutes for each booklet.

More information, including FAQs, can be found on the Edexcel website [here](#).



Please note that all example questions provided in this guide are taken from the Sample Assessment Materials (SAMs). Issue 5 of the SAMs, for first assessment June 2025, can be found on the Edexcel website [here](#).

The table below shows the paper timings that will apply from June 2025:

Paper	Section	Assessment objective	Marks
Paper 1 Weighting: 30% Total marks: 52 Exam time: 1h 20	Section A Historic environment <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 questions	AO1 AO3	16 marks
	Section B Thematic study <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 questions	AO1/AO2	32 marks + 4 SPaG marks*
Paper 2 Weighting: 40% Total marks: 64 Exam time: 1h 50	Booklet P Period study <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 questions	AO1/AO2	32 marks
	Booklet B British depth study <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 3 questions	AO1/AO2	32 marks
Paper 3 Weighting: 30% Total marks: 52 Exam time: 1h 30	Section A <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 2 questions	AO3 AO1/AO2	16 marks
	Section B <ul style="list-style-type: none">• 4-part question	AO3 AO4	32 marks + 4 SPaG marks*

The total qualification mark is 168, of which 8 marks are for spelling, punctuation, grammar and use of specialist terminology (SPaG) (see page 63)

Stimulus material

In many high-tariff questions, stimulus points are provided. They focus on knowledge and understanding, and are designed to help students develop their answers by associating what they may have learnt with the question being asked.

Students are given two short bullet points. These may be a feature of the period, an individual and so on. For example, option 11 question 4 requires an explanation of the reasons for rapid change in treatment and the points given are 'magic bullets' and 'high-tech treatment'.

Students do not have to use the stimulus material provided. Indeed, they would be well-advised not to attempt to write about a bullet point they do not recognise. The stimulus is there to help candidates to link the question asked with the material they have studied and to provide a prompt to analysis of the process of change, for example, by indicating an aspect of change (high-tech treatment) or an individual or development that encouraged change (magic bullets). In a question requiring explanation of slow change or continuity, the stimulus material might relate to an aspect which stayed the same or a factor hindering the process and so on.

The question also prompts students to include information of their own – and they should plan to include information related to at least one more aspect of content. The mark scheme (see below) restricts the marks available for answers which do not do this. It should be noted that the stimulus points are information-related and do not themselves give a reason; they can also go beyond the specification in the wording that they use.



Issue 4 changes

From June 2024 onwards, the Level 2 cap has been removed from all questions that use stimulus points. This means that Level 2 students can now achieve the top of the level without going beyond aspects prompted by the stimulus points. (The intention with the cap is to ensure higher-attaining students are rewarded for using wider contextual knowledge. The Level 2 cap was not supporting this intention and so it has been removed.) The stimulus cap remains unchanged for higher levels (Levels 3 and 4).

The wording of the stimulus cap in Level 3 and Level 4 of the mark scheme has also been rephrased to make the requirement clearer to students: in questions with stimulus points, students are required to address three aspects of content in order to reach the higher levels of the mark scheme.

For example, this is the 12-mark causation question wording in the mark scheme:

Wording up to 2023	Wording from 2024 onwards
<i>Maximum 8 marks for Level 3 answers that do not go beyond aspects prompted by the stimulus points.</i>	<i>Maximum 8 marks for answers that do not address three or more aspects of content.</i>
<i>No access to Level 4 for answers that do not go beyond aspects prompted by the stimulus points.</i>	<i>No access to Level 4 for answers that do not address three or more aspects of content.</i>

Issue 3 changes

Two changes were made to the design of the stimulus boxes, which took effect from June 2022.

1. The word 'may' is now emboldened, to make the question papers more accessible as it emphasises that the use of the stimulus points is optional.
2. The size of the stimulus box is reduced. This is also intended to improve accessibility to avoid undue attention being drawn to the box at the expense of the question.

Stimulus points are found in:

- Paper 1 Q4 and Q5/6
- Paper 2 Booklet P Q2
- Paper 2 Booklet B Q2 and Q3/4
- Paper 3 Q2.



3.2 Paper 1

Paper 1 is worth 30% of the total assessment and has a time allowance of 1 hour 20 minutes. The Paper 1 question paper is divided into two sections:

- Section A: historic environment (10% of the total assessment)
- Section B: thematic study (20% of the total assessment)

Paper 1 assessment overview

	Total marks	AO	Question description	Example question stem
Section A: historic environment				
1(a)	2	AO1	Description of a feature	Describe one feature of...
1(b)	2	AO1	Description of a feature	Describe one feature of...
2(a)	8	AO3	Analysis and evaluation of source utility	How useful are Sources A and B for an enquiry into...?
2(b)	4	AO3	Framing historical questions	How could you follow up Source [A/B] to find out more about...?
Section B: thematic study				
3	4	AO1/ AO2	Comparison of similarity and/or difference (over time)	Explain one way in which xxxx was similar to yyyy
4	12	AO1/ AO2	Explanation of the process of change	Explain why... + <i>two stimulus points</i>
5/6	16 + 4 SPaG	AO1/ AO2	Judgement relating to one of the following: the extent of change; patterns of change; process of change; impact of change	'[Statement.]' How far do you agree? Explain your answer. + <i>two stimulus points</i>

Paper 1 Section A: historic environment

This section is best read in conjunction with:

1. The [Guidance on sources and interpretations](#), which identifies common problems and offers teaching approaches for Paper 1 Section A and Paper 3 Section B.
2. The [Paper 1 guide](#), which goes into detail about the content of the paper as well as suggesting some teaching approaches.

In Section A, students answer two questions that assess knowledge, plus a two-part question based on two provided sources. Questions 1(a) and 1(b) each require a description of one feature, and each targets AO1. Question 2 consists of two sub-questions (8 marks; 4 marks), both of which target AO3.

Questions 1(a) and 1(b)

Question 1 targets AO1 only. It is now separated into two questions, and each question requires students to describe one key feature. It is worded as:

Describe **one** feature of... (2)

Each question is worth 2 marks (using a points-based mark allocation). The limited space available for each question is intended to prevent students writing lengthy



answers going beyond the question and containing material which would not be rewarded.

Question 2 sources

A separate source booklet is provided containing two sources. Question 2(a) uses Source A and Source B. Question 2(b) uses *either* Source A *or* Source B: candidates are instructed which source to use.

As the target for question 2 is AO3, **the sources are contemporary to the period of study**. That is, they are evidence directly from the period and may record the experiences of those directly involved, or are contemporary evidence from those without direct involvement, for example contemporary cartoons or articles in newspapers written by those who were not directly witnesses to an event. They may also feature reminiscences and reflections constructed after the period but by those who were involved, or contemporary evidence collected and presented at a later date, such as raw data. Later secondary sources, for example textbook extracts or historians' accounts, are *not* used.

Sources may be written or visual.

Question 2(a)

Analysis of two sources and evaluation of their utility.

The question is phrased as:

How useful are Sources A and B for an enquiry into...?
Explain your answer, using Sources A and B and your knowledge of the historical context. (8)

The enquiries in the four sample question papers relate to:

- the effectiveness of...
- the problems involved in...
- what was done to...
- finding out more about....

Other enquiries are possible.

Students should be prepared to consider the specific strengths and weaknesses of the provided sources for a given enquiry. In considering usefulness, students are expected to take into account the provenance of a source (aspects of its nature, origin or purpose) when evaluating the contribution its content can make to an enquiry. They are also expected to make use of contextual knowledge in their evaluation.

For each source in turn, students should comment on source content, consider one relevant aspect of provenance, and use one linked aspect of relevant contextual knowledge. They need to make a judgement on how useful the source is for the specific enquiry, making clear the criteria for judgement. Comparison between the sources is **not** required.

For example, option 12 question 2(a) asks:

How useful are Sources A and B for an enquiry into what was done to protect civilians in London from bombing raids?
Explain your answer, using Sources A and B and your knowledge of the historical context. (8)



Source A for this question – given below – is a record from an interview carried out many years after the situation described in the source.

Source A: From the memories of Constance Holt, who was editor of a magazine during the war. She was interviewed about the Blitz for the book *Don't You Know There's A War On?*, published in 1989.

Most of the tube stations were taken over as shelters, as there weren't enough big public shelters that people could get to. Russell Square Station was one of these. I remember on several occasions coming back from the theatre by tube, and when I got out at Russell Square, bunks had been put all along the platform, and you'd see women doing up their curlers and getting ready for bed. Of course, you'd try not to look at them because they were in their 'bedrooms'.

I remember there was a little bit of snobbery about stations. I heard one woman say, 'Oh, us and our family go to Regent's Park now, it's nicer people.' And the children used to go for rides on the tube. At least their mothers knew where they were, and it was much safer than the street.

The caption gives students relevant information about the nature and origin of the source. They should make use of this information in their answer and apply it to the content of the source. The recollections come from an adult woman with an adult's perspective on the situation, but the focus of her recollections is on the social aspect of the experience of using the Underground as a shelter and in this extract she is not dealing with the experience during an actual air raid. Her reminiscences are also being put through the filter of the priorities of the author collecting the recollections for her book. Contextual knowledge could be used to confirm the extent to which, or way in which, civilians did make use of the Underground. It could also be used to consider the limitations or typicality of the information provided. For example, the impression of calm and safety given here could be evaluated using knowledge that there were disasters when Underground stations suffered direct hits, but that such disasters were relatively uncommon.

Question 2(b)

Ability to frame historical questions.

This question is designed to meet one of the new assessment requirements contained in the DfE criteria which all awarding organisations must fulfil.

Specifications should require students to develop and demonstrate:

- the ability to understand and use critically and constructively a range of contemporary source material appropriate to the period ... to frame their own valid historical questions and make their own valid historical claims

The 2(b) question is phrased as

How could you follow up Source [A/B] to find out more about...?

Complete the table below.

(4)

The question is applied to one of the two sources provided. The follow-up focus is related to an aspect of the subject matter of the specified source which is also defined for study in the specification.

In the case of the sample assessment material examples,

- the option 10 follow-up is related to finding out more about the effectiveness of the police in Whitechapel



- option 11 is related to the problems involved in performing operations on the Western Front
- option 12 is related to what was done to protect civilians in London from bombing raids
- option 13 is related to finding out more about the Caribbean Carnival in 1959.

The answer table on the question paper is provided to direct students to structure their answer appropriately.

Detail in source [A/B] that I would follow up:

Question I would ask:

The follow-up enquiry focus may relate to any **relevant** aspect of the content defined for study. The detail selected must be from the indicated source and relevant to the focus of the Q2 enquiry.

Students will be rewarded only for a relevant question which relates directly to the specific content detail that the student has selected from the indicated source, **not** for the forming of a general question about crime and policing in Whitechapel, surgery and treatment in the British sector of the Western Front, London and the Second World War, or Notting Hill.

What type of source I could use:

How this might help answer my question:

The mark scheme's indicative content shows that the type of source selected should be directly related to the information it can generate, and the two responses will be reviewed together. Students are not expected to have an exhaustive list of every source type available to the historian, but they should be able to go beyond the broadly generic catch-all categories of 'records', 'diaries' etc.

It may be, however, that the final part of the answer will validate a more generic choice of, for example, 'a diary of a soldier', by linking it to relevant information that the personal experience of a soldier could provide. The key is the valid explanation of how it would help answer the question.



Paper 1 Section A mark schemes

Two types of mark scheme are used in Section A of Paper 1, and in other papers: points-based and levels-based.

Points-based mark schemes

Questions 1(a), 1(b) and 2(b) are marked using points-based mark schemes, so are considered together here first. A points-based mark scheme is used for assessment whenever a maximum of 2 marks is available for a distinct part of a response and the application of a single mark can be defined.

For example, in Paper 1 question 1(a), 2 marks are available and are awarded: 1 for the feature and 1 for valid supporting detail – as can be seen in the case of Paper 1 option 12 question 1(a):

Question	
1(a)	Describe one feature of the East End of London that made it a target for the Blitz. Target: knowledge of key features and characteristics of the period. AO1: 2 marks.
Marking instructions	
Award 1 mark for a valid feature identified. The second mark should be awarded for supporting information. e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>London's docks were in the East End (1). Over a third of Britain's trade passed through the port of London (1).</i>• <i>It was an area where materials were stored (1). This included coal supplies for the war effort (1).</i>• <i>It was a heavily populated part of the capital (1). A high casualty rate in this area would affect morale in the capital (1).</i> Accept other appropriate features and supporting information.	

Candidates are asked to describe only one feature, but three examples are given in the indicative content. Other appropriate features must be accepted.

The examples in the indicative content above show supporting information which develops a feature for the second mark. What would **not** be rewarded is another piece of information that does not develop the feature identified. For example:

- It was a highly populated area. Over a third of Britain's trade passed through the area.
- It was an area where materials were stored. It was a highly populated area.

The mark scheme is identical for questions 1(a) and 1(b).



In question 2(b), each element of the answer table is awarded one mark for a valid point, as this example of option 12 question 2(b) shows:

Question	
2(b)	<p>How could you follow up Source A to find out more about what was done to protect civilians in London from bombing raids?</p> <p>In your answer, you must give the question you would ask and the type of source you could use.</p> <p>Target: Source analysis and use (the ability to frame historical questions).</p> <p>A03: 4 marks.</p>
Marking instructions	
<p>Award 1 mark for selecting a detail in Source A that could form the basis of a follow-up enquiry and 1 mark for an appropriate follow-up question.</p> <p>e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Detail in Source A that I would follow up: The fact that bunks were put up along the platform. (1)</i>• <i>Question I would ask: How were these bunks provided? (1)</i> <p>(No mark for a question that is not linked to following up Source A, e.g. 'because it would be an interesting question to ask'.)</p> <p>Award 1 mark for identification of an appropriate source to use in a follow-up enquiry and 1 mark for an answer that explains how the information it contains could help answer the chosen follow-up question.</p> <p>e.g.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>What type of source I could use: Records from London Underground showing how the bunks were first used. (1)</i>• <i>How this might help answer my question: To see if this was an official arrangement and the bunks were provided by the government or London Underground or whether this was done by the people themselves as they began to use the underground stations each night. (1)</i> <p>Accept other appropriate alternatives.</p>	

The examples given in the mark schemes for questions 1(a), 1(b) and 2(b) are *not* prescriptive: markers are instructed to accept appropriate alternatives.

Levels-based mark schemes

These are used whenever the precise award of a single mark cannot be defined – when a judgement must be made about the quality of the response. Levels-based mark schemes include generic level descriptors and indicative content:

- **Level descriptors** clearly define progression, with the identification of key strands which can be traced within each level, as the colour-coding below shows.
- **Indicative content** is separated out from the levels to avoid the impression of creating a model answer at each level. The indicative content itself is not designed to provide a model structure for student responses, but to provide examiners with exemplification that could be used within responses. Not all the indicated content is required and other relevant points must be accepted.

Additionally, some mark schemes contain 'marking instructions' to examiners to assist in awarding marks. For example, 'no credit may be given for contextual knowledge unless it is linked to evaluation of the sources' reminds examiners not to award marks for knowledge of the period if it is included, but not used as part of a process of evaluating the source. Similarly, generic source comments (about an eyewitness, a photograph, etc.) may not be given credit on their own.



A 'best-fit' approach to marking

Examiners are instructed to apply a 'best-fit' approach when marking. This acknowledges that students may be stronger in one strand than another. In the example below, three strands are indicated. This means that strong performance in strands 1 and 2 might allow a student into Level 3, even if the performance in strand 3 better fitted Level 2. For marks at the top of a level to be awarded, all three strands must fit the descriptors at the level. The General marking guidance on page 3 of the [Sample assessment materials](#) provides information on 'Finding the right level' and 'Finding a mark within a level'.

A three-level mark scheme is used for **question 2(a)** which targets AO3, 8 marks. The progression in student performance from one level to the next is defined according to ability in three linked strands (colour-coded here):

- making and explaining a judgement
- comprehension and analysis of the sources
- use of contextual knowledge.

For example:

Question		
2(a)		<p>How useful are Sources A and B for an enquiry into what was done to protect civilians in London from bombing raids?</p> <p>Explain your answer, using Sources A and B and your own knowledge of the historical context.</p> <p>Target: Analysis and evaluation of source utility.</p> <p>AO3: 8 marks.</p>
Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable material.
1	1–2	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A simple judgement on utility is given, and supported by undeveloped comment on the content of the sources and/or their provenance¹. Simple comprehension of the source material is shown by the extraction or paraphrase of some content. Limited contextual knowledge is deployed with implicit links to the sources.
2	3–5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judgements on source utility for the specified enquiry are given using valid criteria. Judgements are supported by developed comment related to the content of the sources and/or their provenance¹. Comprehension and some analysis of the sources is shown by the selection and use of material to support comments on their utility. Contextual knowledge is used to support comments on the usefulness of the content of the sources and/or their provenance.
3	6–8	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Judgements on source utility for the specified enquiry are given, applying valid criteria with developed reasoning which takes into account how the provenance¹ affects the usefulness of the source content. The sources are analysed to support reasoning about their utility. Contextual knowledge is used in the process of interpreting the sources and applying criteria for judgements on their utility.
Notes: 1. Provenance = nature, origin, purpose.		



The indicative content for question 2(a) in each option is organised to deal with each source separately and to group the points into three categories:

- the usefulness of points which can be drawn from the source content itself
- points about the source provenance which affect its utility (either to strengthen or weaken the evidence)
- points which draw on relevant historical context to comment on utility – for example, to assess accuracy, typicality or to expand on or support inferences.

The indicative content is not intended to provide a structure to answer the question, but to provide exemplification of the strands for marking purposes.

For example, the indicative content for option 12 question 2(a) Source A is given below:

Source A

The usefulness could be identified in terms of the following points which could be drawn from the source:

- Source A is important in the way it suggests that there were not enough public air-raid shelters or that they were not all accessible, therefore people looked for an alternative.
- The information in Source A is useful because it gives an insight into how people adapted their family routines during the Blitz. However, it relates to night time and does not provide information about precautions taken during daytime air raids.

The following points could be made about the authorship, nature or purpose of the source and applied to ascribe usefulness to material drawn from it:

- The comment comes from a woman being interviewed for a book published in 1989 – the interviewer may have prompted Constance Holt to provide a positive slant on her comments or may have selected an unrepresentative comment, making it less useful.
- The woman is not speaking of times when an air raid was happening, so this positive view of calm might be unrealistic and therefore of limited use.

Knowledge of the historical context should be deployed to support inferences and/or to assess the usefulness of information. Relevant points may include:

- Stations were fitted with bunks for thousands of people and shelter marshals were appointed to keep order. Approximately 170,000 people sheltered in the tunnels and stations during the war but Balham underground station was hit in 1940, showing that people were not always safe using the underground stations as shelters.
- The comment suggests that social activities, such as theatre trips, continued as normal, but there is no mention of the blackout or of the role of black-out wardens, air-raid wardens, fire watchers etc. that affected people's activities.

The mark scheme refers to the 'application of valid criteria'. These could consider, for example, the accuracy, reliability, limitations, knowledge of the author, special insights or valuable information provided by the sources.

The **key to a high-level response** is that criteria relevant to an evaluation of the specific source (reliability, for example) are selected and applied with valid reasoning and not simply asserted, and that content, provenance and context of the sources are considered together in relation to the **focus of the stated enquiry**.



Paper 1 Section B: thematic study

Section B of Paper 1 requires students to complete three questions (4, 12 and 16 marks), with a choice in the final question. The numbering starts at 3, following on from questions 1(a), 1(b), 2(a) and 2(b) in Section A.

The questions in Section B target understanding of the thematic content in breadth. They are stepped to require more extended responses as candidates work through this section of the question paper. Questions are required to cover two time periods in Q3; at least one hundred years in Q4; and either a complete period or at least two hundred years in Q5/6. Questions may, of course, cover longer periods, for example option 13 question 6 targets the period c1700–present.

The requirement that Q5/6 may cover a complete period is new to Issue 5 of the SAMs, making it possible from June 2025 to ask questions about the modern period only (1900–present).

Option 10 question 6 has been updated for Issue 5 of the SAMs to provide an example of this.

Question 3 - Comparison.

This question asks students to explain a similarity or difference across two given time periods. The question may be worded as:

Explain **one** way in which [xxx] in [time 1 + time 2] was/were similar/different... (4)

Explain **one** way in which [xxx] in Britain was/were similar/different in [time 1] from /and [time 2]. (4)

For example, option 12 question 3:

Explain **one** way in which the reporting of war in Britain was different in the coverage of the Crimean War and the Iraq War (2003). (4)

Question 4 - Explanation of the reasons for an aspect of change.

The question will begin 'Explain why...'. Minor variations in the formulation will follow, but the required explanation will relate to an aspect of change. For example:

Explain why there were changes in [xxx] during/in [time]. (12)

Explain why [xxx] changed slowly/quickly/continued to change during / in [time]. (12)

Explain why there was a rapid change in [xxx] in [time]. (12)



For example, option 10 question 4:

Explain why there were new definitions of crimes against authority in the years c1000–c1700.

(12)

You **may** use the following in your answer:

- poaching
- heresy

You **must** also use information of your own.

Question 5/6

Students have a choice between either Question 5 or Question 6. Each question is presented as a quotation with which the students are asked the extent to which they agree and to explain their answer. It has been found that presenting questions in this way allows them to be more direct or varied than is the case with the 'Was xxxx the most important yyyy?' formulation.

They may target any of the second-order concepts required by the DfE/Ofqual criteria (cause, consequence, change, continuity, significance, similarity and difference); most questions will target more than one second-order concept. The provision of choice of question allows students to respond in relation to an area of content and/or second-order concept(s) where they feel more confident.

For example, option 12 question 5 requires evaluation of change and significance:

'The creation of the New Model Army (1645) was a turning point in the composition of the army in Britain in the period c1500–c1700.'

How far do you agree? Explain your answer.

(16)

You **may** use the following in your answer:

- a standing army
- the use of cavalry, c1500–c1700

You **must** also use information of your own.

Option 12 question 6 requires analysis and evaluation of causation and change:

'The use of artillery was the main reason why warfare changed during the period c1700–c1900.'

How far do you agree? Explain your answer.

(16)

You **may** use the following in your answer:

- the use of infantry squares during the Battle of Waterloo
- the use of artillery during the Crimean War

You **must** also use information of your own.

The **key features of strong answers** in relation to this question are those with focus on the question target (change, causation etc.) and that apply criteria to make a judgement. (See below page 48 for further discussion of this aspect.) In coming to a judgement, both sides of the argument should be addressed. The indicative content in the mark scheme for question 5/6 provides examples of points supporting and points countering the statement in the question about which a judgement is required.

Note that there are 4 marks for SPaG for question 5/6. See page 63.



Paper 1 Section B mark schemes

Question 3 is marked using a two-level scheme. In this difference question, for example:

Question		
3		Explain one way in which the reporting of war in Britain was different in the coverage of the Crimean War and the Iraq War (2003). Target: Analysis of second order concepts: difference [AO2]; Knowledge and understanding of features and characteristics [AO1]. AO2: 2 marks. AO1: 2 marks.
Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable material.
1	1–2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Simple or generalised comment is offered about a similarity/difference. [AO2]Generalised information about the topic is included, showing limited knowledge and understanding of the periods. [AO1]
2	3–4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Features of the period are analysed to explain a similarity/difference. [AO2]Specific information about the topic is added to support the comparison, showing good knowledge and understanding of the periods. [AO1]

Marking instructions

Markers must apply the descriptors above in line with the general marking guidance (page 3).

Performance in AO1 and AO2 is interdependent. An answer displaying no qualities of AO2 cannot be awarded more than the top of Level 1, no matter how strong performance is in AO1; markers should note that the expectation for AO1 is that candidates demonstrate both knowledge *and* understanding.

Indicative content guidance

Answers must be credited according to candidates' deployment of material in relation to the qualities outlined in the mark scheme. While specific references are made in the indicative content below, this does not imply that these must be included; other relevant material must also be credited.

Relevant points may include:

- During the Crimean War, photographs and articles were printed in the newspapers whereas during the Iraq War there were also television reports showing action directly.
- During the Crimean War there was a delay in the news reaching Britain but during the Iraq War coverage was almost immediate.

The question targets AO1 and AO2 and the mark scheme is separated into bullet points relating to each assessment objective. The first bullet point in the level descriptors relates to the quality of comparison (AO2) and the second to the knowledge and understanding of period used in support (AO1). The progression in AO2 moves from the generalised to analytical comparison and in AO1 from generalised to specific information. In the above example, a Level 1 response might refer to the new use of television in the later twentieth century, but without making



a full comparison with the Crimean War by a supported comment on the immediacy or the directness of the reporting.

As with the AO3 mark schemes discussed above (page 30), the indicative content for the AO1 and AO2 mark schemes is separated out from the level descriptions to keep the focus in the generic descriptions clearly on the qualities required for performance at each level and to avoid any impression of giving 'model' content answers at each level. Only one comparison is required in question 3. The indicative content for each option offers two examples. Other relevant points will be credited.

Marking instructions

Although AO1 and AO2 are expressed separately, the marking instructions make it clear that there is limited reward purely for displaying AO1 knowledge and understanding. The knowledge must be deployed in relation to the question focus (in this case, comparison for difference), otherwise the answer is not addressing the question set. In the example above, an answer providing detailed information about war reporting during the Crimean War, but not making any comparison to war reporting during the Iraq War, could not score above 2 marks. It is important to note that this instruction pegging solely AO1 answers to the top of Level 1 applies also in the 12- and 16-mark questions, restricting reward to a maximum of 3 and 4 marks respectively.

AO1 and AO2 mark schemes for the 12- and 16-mark questions

The extended answers in **Questions 4** and **5/6** are assessed against a four-level mark scheme (again colour-coded, pages 37–38 directly below), and the **principles of 'best-fit'** outlined previously on page 30 apply to marking uneven performance.

As in question 3, bullet point 1 traces the progression in AO2 (red), identifying the qualities relevant to explanation and analysis of second-order concepts; bullet point 2 traces the progression in AO1 (blue). Bullet points 1 and 2 are the same for the 12- and 16-mark questions. This consistency makes it clearer for students what qualities their answers should demonstrate for higher marks.

The 16-mark question has an additional AO2 requirement for evaluation and judgement, and this is reflected in the higher AO2 weighting for the question (10 of the 16 marks). Progression in this element is traced in bullet point 3 (green). The indicative content suggests some valid criteria which students may apply. (See also Booklet B question 3/4 below page 48.)



Mark	12-mark questions	Level	16-mark questions	Mark
0	No rewardable material.		No rewardable material.	0
1–3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A simple or generalised answer is given, lacking development and organisation. [AO2]• Limited knowledge and understanding of the topic is shown. [AO1]	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A simple or generalised answer is given, lacking development and organisation. [AO2]• Limited knowledge and understanding of the topic is shown. [AO1]• The overall judgement is missing or asserted. [AO2]	1–4
4–6	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An explanation is given, showing limited analysis and with implicit or unsustained links to the conceptual focus of the question. It shows some development and organisation of material, but a line of reasoning is not sustained. [AO2]• Accurate and relevant information is included, showing some knowledge and understanding of the period. [AO1]	2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An explanation is given, showing limited analysis and with implicit or unsustained links to the conceptual focus of the question. It shows some development and organisation of material, but a line of reasoning is not sustained. [AO2]• Accurate and relevant information is included, showing some knowledge and understanding of the period. [AO1]• The overall judgement is given but its justification is asserted or insecure. [AO2]	5–8



Mark	12-mark questions	Level	16-mark questions	Mark
7–9	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An explanation is given, showing some analysis, which is mainly directed at the conceptual focus of the question. It shows a line of reasoning that is generally sustained, although some passages may lack coherence and organisation. [AO2]• Accurate and relevant information is included, showing good knowledge and understanding of the required features or characteristics of the period studied. [AO1] <p><i>Maximum 8 marks for answers that do not address three or more aspects of content.</i></p>	3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An explanation is given, showing some analysis, which is mainly directed at the conceptual focus of the question. It shows a line of reasoning that is generally sustained, although some passages may lack coherence and organisation. [AO2]• Accurate and relevant information is included, showing good knowledge and understanding of the required features or characteristics of the period studied. [AO1]• The overall judgement is given with some justification, but some criteria selected for the required judgement are left implicit or not validly applied. [AO2] <p><i>Maximum 11 marks for answers that do not address three or more aspects of content.</i></p>	9–12
10–12	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An analytical explanation is given which is directed consistently at the conceptual focus of the question, showing a line of reasoning that is coherent, sustained and logically structured. [AO2]• Accurate and relevant information is precisely selected to address the question directly, showing wide-ranging knowledge and understanding of the required features or characteristics of the period studied. [AO1] <p><i>No access to Level 4 for answers that do not address three or more aspects of content.</i></p>	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An analytical explanation is given which is directed consistently at the conceptual focus of the question, showing a line of reasoning that is coherent, sustained and logically structured. [AO2]• Accurate and relevant information is precisely selected to address the question directly, showing wide-ranging knowledge and understanding of the required features or characteristics of the period studied. [AO1]• Criteria for the required judgement are justified and applied in the process of reaching the overall judgement. [AO2] <p><i>No access to Level 4 for answers that do not address three or more aspects of content.</i></p>	13–16



Progression in each of the strands

Progression in AO2 (bullet points 1 and 3) is characterised by the move from simple or generalised responses to analytical explanations which show a line of reasoning that is coherent, sustained and logically structured. In questions requiring evaluation, it is also characterised by the quality of the justification for, and the application of, criteria for judgements. See below and page 48 for more discussion of this aspect.

Progression in AO1 (bullet point 2) is characterised by the increasing ability to select information precisely and to show wide-ranging knowledge and understanding.

Additionally, mark ceilings apply at the top of Level 3 and for all of Level 4 to require knowledge of three or more relevant aspects of content (i.e. go beyond those aspects prompted by the stimulus material).

Differences from GCSE 2013 extended answer mark schemes

The separation of AO1 and AO2 in the new GCSE Assessment Objectives has meant that the GCSE (9–1) History level descriptors must be able to trace progression in each AO, and this is reflected in the bullet points.

Progression can be traced through the levels with answers improving from: generalised to more specific but essentially descriptive, to focused explanation, and finally to substantiated evaluative answers.

In some mark schemes prior to the GCSE (9–1) History specification there were prescriptive characteristics, such as the number of causes, consequences and so on. Our research indicated that while some teachers found the clarity helpful, more of those consulted found that it artificially constrained students' approach to construction of a response and tended to lead to undue concentration on the teaching of mark schemes rather than to the development of high-quality extended writing. There is no prescription in the number of causes, consequences and so on in the current specification.

As indicated above, content range has remained important – the stimulus points relate to aspects of content of the topic and three relevant areas should be considered, but a counting approach to the number of causes etc. is not a feature of the mark schemes. Judgements about the statement will call on the ability to interrelate and to prioritise – there must be valid criteria for making judgements – but the descriptors allow differing approaches. Answers might, for example, in making a judgement about change, argue that one change was more fundamental by examining a range of aspects it affected or by arguing that a central feature of life/government etc. was affected which had a major impact on the bulk of the population. Both these approaches would have an appreciation of relative significance at their core (more aspects; more central impact) whichever approach they took. This is exemplified in discussion of the indicative content below.



Indicative content

The indicative content is now presented as a series of valid points relevant to the question asked. Students are not expected to include all, or indeed any, of these points. Examiners are instructed to credit other relevant material. Since the 16-mark question requires a judgement, the indicative content is grouped into points which support the statement that students are asked to assess and points which counter it.

For example, option 11 question 6:

'Jenner's vaccination against smallpox was a major breakthrough in the prevention of disease in Britain during the period c1700–c1900.'

How far do you agree? Explain your answer.

You **may** use the following in your answer.

- cowpox
- cholera

You **must** also use information of your own.

Indicative content for this question:

Relevant points that support the statement may include:

- Jenner's vaccination was the first time a specific disease could be effectively prevented.
- The only development in the prevention of disease before Jenner's vaccination was during the eighteenth century, when inoculation was used, but this had many problems, so it was not a major breakthrough.
- Jenner's vaccination succeeded in preventing one of the major killer diseases of the period, so that by 1900 it was no longer the threat it had been in 1700.
- Jenner was willing to offer free vaccinations so that all groups within society could receive protection from smallpox.

Relevant points to counter the statement may include:

- Many people resisted Jenner's vaccination because they disliked the idea of using a disease linked to animals or because vaccination was sometimes incorrectly applied and seemed to fail; it therefore had limited effect until it was made compulsory and enforced by the government in 1853 and 1871.
- Preventive measures against disease did not change – during the cholera epidemics of the nineteenth century, local authorities ordered barrels of tar to be burned, based on the idea of miasma.
- No one understood how or why the vaccination worked, and so this technique could not be applied to other major killer diseases such as cholera which appeared as a new threat in the nineteenth century.
- The application of Jenner's vaccination depended on the chance link between smallpox and cowpox; even if the link was understood, it could not be replicated for other diseases. Only after the work of Pasteur and Koch in the late nineteenth century could vaccination be understood and others developed.

This **indicative content** offers four relevant points which could form **criteria** to support the statement that it was a breakthrough: its ability to prevent a specific disease; earlier inoculation was not effective enough to constitute a breakthrough; vaccination prevented a major killer disease; free availability allowed extensive take-up. It then suggests four relevant points which could form criteria to counter the proposition: popular resistance



limited take-up; it had limited impact on approaches to prevention of infectious diseases; it lacked a theoretical underpinning to support further developments; its dependence on the specific link between cowpox and smallpox which meant that it had limited application.

A **strong answer** would provide arguments both for and against the statement and draw on three content areas (for example, cowpox, cholera, Pasteur's work) to support the arguments. The overall judgement would depend on the importance attached in the argument to the criteria advanced – for example, given that smallpox was a major killer in the nineteenth century, Jenner's vaccine, it could be argued, *was* a breakthrough because of its ability to prevent a mass killer disease (importance = mass impact); even if it couldn't be replicated it was a huge benefit in terms of life saving in this respect for the first time.

To reach a judgement, answers should explore support for the statement and a counter-argument. So a judgement based on two criteria is a minimum. It is conceivable that a strongly-argued, well-reasoned, effectively-supported answer dealing only with two criteria (e.g. life-saving impact v. limited theoretical application) could be awarded full marks: the mark scheme no longer precludes this as long as three aspects of content are included. It is more likely, however, that answers will provide a convincing argument if based on at least three criteria where two out of the three criteria provide weight for an overall judgement which supports (or challenges) the proposition.

There are different ways of achieving good marks, for example answers dealing with fewer points but backed up with detailed knowledge; or answers dealing with more points but with less detailed knowledge.



3.3 Paper 2

Paper 2 question paper structure

Paper 2 combines the assessment of the British depth study and the Period study. The paper is worth 40% of the total assessment and has a time allowance of 1 hour 50 minutes. The Period study and British depth study are worth 32 marks each, so students may wish to allocate 55 minutes for each area of study.

These two areas of content have been combined into a single examination, because they are each worth 20% – lower-weighted components than the others, requiring less examination time individually – and the questions target AO1 and AO2 only. Combining these elements has avoided students having to sit four separate examinations amid a busy exam timetable at the end of Year 11.

Since the summer 2019 series, Paper 2 has comprised two separate question-and-answer booklets: Booklet P (Period study), and Booklet B (British depth study).

At the start of the exam, students receive an information sheet, containing key information, and the two question-and-answer booklets. Students are provided only with questions for the options for which they have been entered (the same as for Papers 1 and 3). Students no longer have to select the correct British depth study.

Paper 2 assessment overview:

	Total marks	AO	Question description	Example question stem
Booklet P: period study				
1(a)	4	AO1 AO2	Explanation of consequence	Explain one consequence of...
1(b)	4	AO1 AO2	Explanation of consequence	Explain one consequence of...
2	8	AO1 AO2	Writing an analytical narrative	Write a narrative account analysing... + <i>two stimulus points</i>
3	16	AO1 AO2	Explanation of importance	Explain two of the following: The importance of...
Booklet B: British depth study				
1(a)	2	AO1	Description of key feature	Describe one feature of...
1(b)	2	AO1	Description of key feature	Describe one feature of...
2	12	AO1 AO2	Explanation of causation	Explain why... + <i>two stimulus points</i>
3/4	16	AO1 AO2	Judgement relating to one of the following: causation, consequence, change, continuity, significance, similarity and difference	['Statement.'] How far do you agree? Explain your answer. + <i>two stimulus points</i>



Paper 2 Booklet P: period study

The questions in Booklet P have been designed so that they help to achieve the stated purpose of the period study in the criteria:

to understand the unfolding narrative of substantial developments and issues

This is why there is an emphasis on the consequence (Q1) and importance (Q3) of key events and developments, and a requirement to produce an analytical narrative (Q2).

The section is best read in conjunction with the [Paper 2 guide](#), which goes into detail about the content of the paper as well as suggesting some teaching approaches.

Question 1(a) and (b)

Question 1 targets consequence. It is now separated into two questions, and each question part requires students to explain one consequence. It is worded as:

Explain **one** consequence of xxx. (4)

The total for the question is 8 marks (4 marks for each question part). The limited space available for each part is intended to prevent students writing lengthy answers.

Question 2

Question 2 targets analytical narrative (AO1 and AO2, 8 marks). The DfE criteria require students to be able to write narrative. This is not simply a requirement to deploy knowledge of the period and say what happened. The reason it includes AO2 and is classed as *analytical* narrative is that AO2 rewards the ability to 'find connections and provide logical chains of reasoning', which is what good historical narrative manages to achieve: it seeks not only to describe what happened, but also to find connections and make sense of events so that there is analysis of why events unfolded in the way that they did. In terms of second-order concepts, this question targets causation, consequence and change (for example, why an event or development [x] occurred, its consequences and what it led to next, how this then caused [y], and what change this led to). Hence each question begins:

Write a narrative account analysing... (8)

The sample assessment materials indicate that the scope of a narrative may vary considerably in its chronology and that question wording may vary slightly, according to the narrative being sought:

- Write a narrative account analysing the key events of [1519–21] leading to [the Aztec surrender].
- Write a narrative account analysing the [suppression of piracy in American waters in the years 1717–c1720].
- Write a narrative account analysing the ways [in which the cattle industry grew in the years 1865–74].
- Write a narrative account analysing the key events of [the Berlin Crisis, 1948–49].
- Write a narrative account analysing the key events of [1945–48 which led to the creation of Israel].

Other minor variations are possible in the live papers. Students should be clear about the time span of the question and what it is their narrative is designed to analyse (for example: key events leading to xxx; the suppression of xxx; the way in which xxx grew; the key events of xxx).

Stimulus points (see page 23) are provided for Question 2. These may be chosen to prompt coverage of the chronology as in the third example above: Abilene (1867), the introduction of barbed wire (1874); or key features of the narrative in the case of the fourth example above: Stalin's fears; the Airlift.



Question 3

Question 3 focuses on the importance of an event/person/development etc. In terms of second-order concepts, this targets consequence and significance. The question focuses on what difference the specified event/person/development etc. made to how subsequent events unfolded. Students have a choice, selecting two out of the three events/developments given. The question is worth 16 marks, but the answers are marked as 2×8 , assessing treatment of each event/development separately.

The question is worded as:

Explain **two** of the following:

- the importance of X for/in/on Y. (8)
- the importance of X for/in/on Y. (8)
- the importance of X for/in/on Y. (8)

For example:

Explain **two** of the following:

- The importance of the events in Hungary in 1956 *for the development of the Cold War.* (8)
- The importance of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia (1968) *for relations between the US and the Soviet Union.* (8)
- The importance of Gorbachev's 'new thinking' *for Soviet control of Eastern Europe.* (8)

Students should take care to note what it is they are being asked to analyse, as shown italicised in each of the passages above.

High-level answers will relate the significance or consequences of the chosen event/development precisely to it. For example, in the second choice above, students are not being asked to comment generally on the importance of the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia, but to consider its importance *for relations between the US and the Soviet Union.*



Paper 2 Booklet P mark schemes

Each of questions 1(a), 1(b), 2 and 3 is marked using a level-based mark scheme, based on the principles described above for the AO1 and AO2 schemes used in Paper 1 (see page 36). As in Paper 1, a mark ceiling applies at Level 3 for Paper 2 Booklet P question 2, to require knowledge of relevant aspects beyond those prompted by the stimulus material.

Progression is described in two levels for the 4-mark questions and three levels for the questions carrying 8 marks. The key features of progression are similar to those analysed above for Paper 1, except that the Level 4 qualities are not expected in the period study. However, the organisation of the answers is expected to be marginally more secure in Level 3 in Paper 2 Booklet P. This reflects the reduced level of challenge involved in organisation of a shorter amount of material. It also demands a higher quality of response to achieve full marks in an 8-mark question than is required for 8/12 marks in Paper 1.

The table below shows the differences in the Level 3 descriptors between Paper 1 question 4 and Paper 2 Booklet P question 2. The reference to 'logical structure' and 'good knowledge and understanding of key features' in Level 3 of question 2 should be interpreted in the case of narrative as having a sense of the beginning, development and end of the narrative sought.

Paper 1 question 4, Level 3 (7-9 marks)	Paper 2 Booklet P question 2, Level 3 (6-8 marks)
<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An explanation is given, showing some analysis, which is mainly directed at the conceptual focus of the question. It shows a line of reasoning that is generally sustained, although some passages may lack coherence and organisation. [AO2]• Accurate and relevant information is included, showing good knowledge and understanding of the required features or characteristics of the period studied. [AO1] <p><i>Maximum 8 marks for answers that do not address three or more aspects of content.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• 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]• Accurate and relevant information is included, showing good knowledge and understanding of the key features or characteristics of the events. [AO1] <p><i>No access to Level 3 for answers that do not address three or more aspects of content.</i></p>



Paper 2 Booklet B: British depth study

Booklet B assesses the British depth study. Please note that from summer 2025 the question numbering has been amended to provide greater clarity and consistency.

The section is best read in conjunction with the [Paper 2 guide](#), which goes into detail about the content of the paper as well as suggesting some teaching approaches.

Question 1(a) and (b)

Question 1 targets AO1 only. It is now separated into two questions, and each question requires students to describe one key feature. It is worded as:

Describe **one** feature of xxx. (2)

The total for the question is 4 marks (2 marks for each question part, using a points-based mark allocation). As in Paper 1, the limited space available for each part is intended to prevent students writing lengthy answers going beyond the question and containing material which would not be rewarded.

Question 2

Question 2 requires an explanation of causation (AO1: 6; AO2: 6). It is worded:

Explain why... (12)

Its stem and mark scheme match question 4 in the thematic study (see pages 33 and 37–38), but the key difference is that the question in the depth study relates to a much shorter period and may even relate to a single event or year. Instead of a focus associated with the process of change, the depth study causation questions may also relate to the causes of an event, development, success, failure and so on. The emphasis in the depth studies is on the interaction of aspects in society and the essence of good causal explanations is to show how factors combined to bring about an outcome.

Question 3/4

Students have a choice between questions 3 and 4. The questions are worth 16 marks (AO1: 6; AO2: 10) and are designed in the same way as Paper 1 questions 5 and 6 (see page 34) – except that they will relate to the shorter periods of time appropriate for a depth study.

Questions 3 and 4 are each presented as a quotation with which students are asked the extent to which they agree and to explain their answer. The questions may target any of the second-order concepts (cause, consequence, change, continuity, significance, similarity and difference).

For example:

B1	3	'The main reason William I was able to keep control of England in the years 1066–75 was the building of castles.'	(16)	Causation
B2	4	'The loss of Normandy was the main consequence of England's involvement in war in the years 1189–1204.'	(16)	Consequence
B3	4	'The main change for the Church in England in the years 1534–40 was that it had to accept King Henry as its head.'	(16)	Change
B4	3	'The threat of invasion was Elizabeth's main problem when she became queen in 1558.'	(16)	Significance

Stimulus points (see page 23) are provided for Questions 2 and 3/4.



Paper 2 Booklet B mark schemes

Question 1(a) and (b)

This first question is marked on a points-based mark scheme as described in Paper 1 (see page 29).

For example:

Question	
1(a)	Describe one feature of the Amicable Grant (1525). Target: Knowledge of key features and characteristics of the period. AO1: 4 marks.
Marking instructions	
Award 1 mark for a valid feature. The second mark should be awarded for supporting information. e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>It was a non-parliamentary tax (1) that was organised by Wolsey (1).</i>• <i>It was designed to raise money to fight France (1) and it was levied on secular and ecclesiastical possessions (1).</i>• <i>There were some objections and open rebellion (1) and as a result the king changed his mind (1).</i> Accept other appropriate features and supporting information.	



Questions 2 and 3/4

These questions are marked using the same 12- and 16-mark generic four-level descriptors as for Paper 1 (see pages 37–38), and the same mark ceilings are in place at the top of Level 3 and for all of Level 4 for answers that do not address three or more aspects of content.

The indicative content makes clear that in Paper 2, in contrast to Paper 1, more detailed knowledge of the much shorter time span is expected. In the case of Paper 2, the references to 'good knowledge' and 'wide-ranging knowledge' in the Level 3 and 4 descriptors require deployment of information in depth about the issue raised by the question. For example, in B4 question 4, the eight bullet points relate to the short period 1569–70 compared with option 12 question 6 where they relate to two centuries.

AO2 making judgements and applying criteria

All the 16-mark AO1 and AO2 questions (Paper 1 and Paper 2 Booklet B) require students to make a judgement: 'How far do you agree?'

The mark scheme progression in the relevant strand (bullet point 3) moves from judgements that are asserted to judgements that are justified by the application of criteria.

It may be helpful for students to think in terms of the criteria for judgement they apply when making decisions [judgements] in everyday life – to buy clothes (fit, fashion and price) or prefer a certain TV programme or film (artists, characters, special effects, storyline). For example:

'I chose this pair of trousers. It was the best.'	A judgement given, with justification asserted.
'I chose this pair of trousers because it suited me best.'	A judgement with some justification, but without the evidence of valid criteria being applied.
'I chose this pair of trousers because, although others were a better fit or better price [+ comparative details], this pair was the best combination of a good fit round the waist and the right length at a price of [xx] which I could afford.'	Exemplifies the use of criteria for overall judgement and with justification.

In the case of B3 question 3:

'Wolsey's failure to gain an annulment of Henry's marriage was the main reason why he fell from power in 1529.' How far do you agree?

Explain your answer.

You **may** use the following in your answer:

- relations with Pope Clement VII
- the nobility

You **must** also use information of your own.

The indicative content suggests a range of factors which could be used to support and counter the statement. The strongest answers will provide a basis for making a judgement as to how far they agree.

**Indicative content guidance**

Answers must be credited according to candidates' deployment of material in relation to the qualities outlined in the mark scheme. While specific references are made in the indicative content below, this does not imply that these must be included; other relevant material must also be credited. The grouping of points below does not imply that this is how candidates are expected to structure their answers.

Relevant points which support the statement may include:

- Wolsey was unable to weaken the grip of Charles V over Pope Clement, and thus the annulment did not seem attainable.
- Wolsey, as Cardinal, was expected to have sway with Pope Clement, but Wolsey was unable to persuade Pope Clement in favour of Henry's case; Wolsey's links to the pope prompted questions of his loyalty.
- Henry's disappointment in relation to Wolsey's failure was clear and his antipathy towards Wolsey grew.
- The rise of the Boleyn faction at Court meant pressure on Wolsey grew, as did Henry's dissatisfaction, prompted by the faction.

Relevant points to counter the statement may include:

- Wolsey was unable to control nobles at Court by the late 1520s and his power base was weakening – many nobles disliked Wolsey and sneered at his background, and they undermined his position.
- Wolsey had concentrated too much power in and around himself and had few allies in the nobility to help him.
- Foreign policy failures weakened Wolsey, independent of the issue of the annulment.
- Wolsey's own personality eventually militated against him – he failed to acknowledge and deal with the challenges he faced.

For example, an answer might show that Wolsey was weakened by noble opposition and foreign policy failures, but reach an overall judgement that the failure to gain an annulment was more significant. The justification the students could use could be that Wolsey was initially able to survive the opposition of the nobility and that the failure of the annulment was decisive in that it greatly reduced the King's regard for him, strengthening the position of his noble opponents including the powerful Boleyn faction, which in turn fatally weakened his position.



3.4 Paper 3

Paper 3 assessment overview

	Total marks	AO	Question description	Example question stem
Section A				
1	4	AO3	Making inferences from sources	Give two things you can infer from Source A about...
2(a) or (b)	12	AO1 AO2	Explanation of causation	Explain why... + <i>two stimulus points</i>
Section B				
3(a)	8	AO3	Evaluation of source utility	How useful are Sources B and C for an enquiry into...?
3(b)	4	AO4	Analysis of interpretations for difference of view	What is the main difference between the views?
3(c)	4	AO4	Explanation of a reason for a difference of view	Suggest one reason why Interpretations 1 and 2 give different views about...
3(d)	16 + 4 SPaG	AO4	Evaluation of a historical interpretation	How far do you agree with Interpretation 2 about...?

Paper 3 is divided into two sections, the second of which is an enquiry case study based on a package of contemporary and secondary material. Section A addresses specification content which is not addressed in Section B and is designed to widen the range of topics covered, since Section B is necessarily tightly focused on a limited content range and a single issue.

The introduction of choice to question 2 from June 2025 is intended to widen further the range of topics covered in any exam series.



Paper 3 Section A

This section is best read in conjunction with:

1. the [Guidance on sources and interpretations](#), which identifies common problems and offers teaching approaches for Paper 1 Section A and Paper 3 Section B.
2. the [Paper 3 guide](#), which goes into detail about the content of the paper as well as suggesting some teaching approaches.

Section A targets AO1, AO2 and AO3.

Question 1

Making inferences from one source.

The question is phrased as:

Give **two** things you can infer from Source A about...
Complete the table below to explain your answer. (4)

The question wording replaces the 'What can you learn from Source x about...?' used in previous specifications. This wording makes it clear that the question target is not comprehension of source content, but goes beyond that to target the ability to read between the lines or see beneath the surface to make inferences.

The answer table is constructed to support students in making the required number of inferences and in providing detail from the source to support the inference. The table is also designed to keep the response short: the question is only worth 4 marks and extended responses are not required.

Valid detail to support an inference may take the form of a quotation or paraphrase from the source, or a valid comment about the source or its content. In the examples of supporting detail below, the first is a quotation, the second a paraphrase and the third a valid comment about the source.

The source for question 1 is placed in the question paper both to simplify the process of dealing with it for candidates and to make sure it is not used by mistake in conjunction with the case-study collection of material for section B – which is necessarily collated in a separate booklet.

Question 1 is marked using a point-based mark scheme (see page 29). 2 marks are available for each inference and are awarded: 1 for the inference and 1 for the selection of valid supporting detail – as can be seen in the option 31 question 1 mark scheme:

Question	
1	Give two things that you can infer from Source A about Hitler's leadership of the Nazi Party in the 1920s. Target: Source analysis (making inferences). AO3: 4 marks.
Marking instructions	
Award 1 mark for each valid inference up to a maximum of two inferences. The second mark should be awarded for supporting detail selected from the source. e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>Hitler was not interested in details, most important to him was control (1). Hitler said, 'Power first! Afterwards we can act as events occur.'</i> (1)	



- *Hitler was impatient with people in the Party who opposed him (1). Strasser said: '...who even then could hardly bear contradiction.'* (1)
- *Hitler was a short-tempered and dictatorial leader (1). Hitler thumped the table saying: 'Power first!'* (1)

Accept other appropriate alternatives.

Question 2(a) or 2(b)

From June 2025, students are provided with a choice of two questions to answer. Question 2 requires an explanation (AO1: 6; AO2: 6) and is worded:

Explain why... (12)

Stimulus points (see page 23) are provided for Question 2. The question stem remains the same from year to year.

The operation of the question 2 mark scheme follows the practice outlined for Paper 2 British depth study question 2 above (see page 45).

Paper 3 Section B

This section is best read in conjunction with:

1. the [Guidance on sources and interpretations](#), which identifies common problems and offers teaching approaches for Paper 1 Section A and Paper 3 Section B.
2. the [Paper 3 guide](#), which goes into detail about the content of the paper as well as suggesting some teaching approaches.
3. the [recording of the Paper 3 Question 3 network event](#), which recaps on how the question is assessed, looks at exemplar student responses, and shares teaching ideas and strategies.

Section B targets AO3 and AO4.

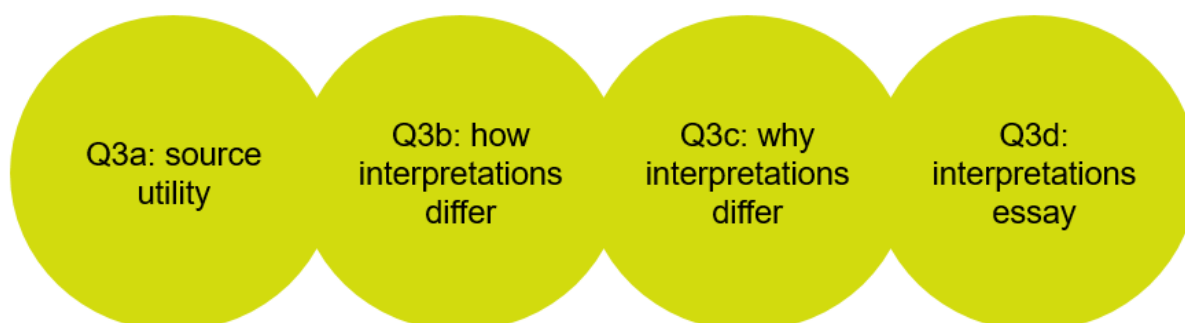
Question 3 is a **package** related to a **specific enquiry**. It is subdivided into:

3(a) AO3, 8 marks

3(b) AO4, 4 marks

3(c) AO4, 4 marks

3(d) AO4, 16 marks.





Question 3(a)

This question targets the ability to analyse and evaluate source utility. The question and mark scheme make the same demands as Paper 1 question 2(a)

The question is worded as

Study Sources B and C.

How useful are Sources B and C for an enquiry into...?

Explain your answer, using Sources B and C and your knowledge of historical context. (8)

The guidance for Paper 1 question 2(a) and its mark scheme above (pages 26 and 30), also applies to this question Paper 3 question 3(a). These sources will also be contemporary to the period of study and may be written or visual.

In the case of Paper 3, the sources are chosen to introduce the topic that is also the focus of question 3(b), 3(c) and 3(d). They provide evidence which candidates may make use of in question 3(c) (see below). For example, in option 31 the focus of the issue is attitudes to the Hitler Youth movement, and the sources used for question 3(a) have already provided evidence which indicates that there was support for and resistance to the Hitler Youth among young men at the time.

Beginning with the use of sources contemporary to the period that are also related to the issue of interpretation in this section of the paper is designed to embed the understanding that interpretations of history are grounded in evidence.

Historical interpretations

Questions 3(b), 3(c) and 3(d) together meet the AO4 criteria requirements that students should analyse and evaluate interpretations, explaining how and why they differ. The questions have been carefully stepped for accessibility and separated into three elements: how differ, why differ and then evaluation of one of the views so that students can become clear, before they attempt 3(d), that there is material which supports and which counters the view they are evaluating.

Questions 3(b), 3(c) and 3(d) are based on two secondary extracts. These are labelled 'interpretations' in the Sources/Interpretations Booklet to distinguish them clearly from the sources contemporary to the period used in question 3(a). Strictly speaking these are secondary extracts which could be said to offer an interpretation within them; at GCE the term 'extract' is used. We decided that at GCSE it was more helpful to students to use the term 'interpretation' to emphasise the difference between their AO3 focus in question 3(a) and the AO4 focus for 3(b), 3(c) and 3(d).

The extracts may be interpretations of an aspect of the period taken from textbooks, from the writings of historians, or from an appropriate history website, suitably eased for accessibility. Where an extract is eased, the original meaning of the author will not be altered in the process.

Question 3(b) – identifying difference

Study Interpretations 1 and 2.

They give different views about...

What is the main difference between these views?

Explain your answer, using details from **both** interpretations. (4)

3(b) asks students to use the substance of the interpretations (e.g. information, tone, emphasis contained within them) to analyse and explain how they differ. The task simply requires students to demonstrate their understanding of the key message being



conveyed within the texts; they are **not** required to bring in other matters (e.g. knowledge of historical context, methods, authorship, the date that it was written, etc.). However, an appreciation of the nature of historical interpretation (as characterised by emphasis, claim and judgement) will underpin students' appreciation of the differences.

Students should understand the differences between what they are asked to do in 3(a), where they examine sources as evidence which are the building blocks used by historians in the process of creating accounts, and what they are asked to do in 3(b), which is to analyse a difference in the finished product (the constructed account). For this reason, we have been careful not to distract students and blur the distinction between evidence and interpretations of history by choosing extracts in 3(b) which would lead them into discussing issues of provenance which they use centrally for 3(a).

In 3(b), students should focus on the overall message each extract conveys – for example, by its selection of content, its emphasis, its explanation or comment.

For example, option 31 question 3(b);

Study Interpretations 1 and 2.

They give different views about the attitudes of young people towards the Hitler Youth movement.

What is the main difference between these views?

Explain your answer, using details from **both** interpretations. (4)

Interpretation 1: From *Germany 1918–45* by J Cloake, published in 1997.

Many young people were attracted by the exciting and interesting activities of the youth movements. There were many outdoor events such as camping and hiking as well as sports. Some enjoyed the military aspects of the youth movements, the uniforms, the marching and the discipline. Other young people liked the music that was a frequent part of cultural activities or the military parades. There was great comradeship among the Hitler Youth.

Interpretation 2: From *Germany 1858–1990: Hope, Terror and Revival* by A Kitson, published in 2001.

The movement became less popular towards the late 1930s as the activities became increasingly focused on preparations for war and the discipline became more strict when membership became compulsory. There was a growing resentment at the way Hitler Youth leaders acted as if they were better than members who were barely younger than they were. Some youngsters began to kick against the restrictions of the Hitler Youth.

Strong answers to question 3(b) would be explicit about the nature of the difference, usually at the very start of the answer. The instruction to identify a 'main difference between the views' is there to encourage a brief answer with a secure focus on 'view', rather extensive cross-referencing of details in the extracts.

Questions may relate to any aspect of the content specified, but the focus will be a central issue. In the sample assessment materials, for example,

- option 30 focuses on different views about the effects of collectivisation on the Soviet Union in the years 1928–41;
- option 32 focuses on different views about the aims of the Hundred Flowers campaign; and



- option 33 focuses on different views about attitudes in the USA towards involvement in the Vietnam War.

These differences relate to: attitudes, aims, effects; other foci are possible, both on other areas of specification content and on other second-order concepts that historians address. They could relate to difference of view about causes or changes, for example.

In the case of attitudes or effects, students could usefully begin by thinking about whether a view suggests these were positive or negative (language, tone and emphasis or selection of material will indicate that); in the case of change, whether change or continuity is emphasised; and in the case of cause, whether different causes are emphasised by the authors. When a key point of difference has been identified, good answers will use details from the extracts to show that difference.

For example in the two extracts from 31 above, it is clear that the emphasis in Interpretation 1 is on positive attitudes to the Hitler Youth and in Interpretation 2 on negatives.

The table below analyses some of the details to show the way in which the differences of view are conveyed:

	Interpretation 1 emphasises positive attitudes	Interpretation 2 emphasises negative attitudes
Language and tone	Exciting, interesting, enjoyed, liked, comradeship	Less popular, growing resentment, kick against
Selection of information	Outdoor events, sports, music, parades Some enjoyed the marching and discipline	Discipline became more strict, membership compulsory, resentment of HY leaders
Points of emphasis	Many young people were attracted; there was great comradeship	Movement became less popular towards late 1930s when focused on preparation for war Some youngsters began to kick against restrictions

It is interesting to note that discipline appears in both – given a positive gloss in Interpretation 1 and a negative in Interpretation 2. Examples such as this could help students see that passages can be analysed in terms not only of the selection, but also the treatment of material included.

Question 3(c) – why is there a difference?

Suggest **one** reason why Interpretations 1 and 2 give different views about...

You **may** use Sources B and C to help explain your answer. (4)

This question asks students to suggest why the interpretations may differ.

They are invited (but not required) to use Sources B and C. This gives students opportunities to draw on an understanding that interpretations may differ for several reasons. They may, if they choose not to use the sources, explain other reasons which are appropriate in the case of the extracts presented to them (see mark scheme and guidance below).

Students should distinguish between their comments on these interpretations and their comments on contemporary sources. Responses based on matters such as the origin or



time of production of these secondary works are unlikely to be valid for this question. Such answers would blur the distinction between evaluation of *sources* in terms of authorship and purpose, and explanation of difference of views about an aspect of history presented in a secondary work. It is important to avoid the dangers of students at this level forming assumptions that matters such as the time of or circumstance of writing will *necessarily* affect the thrust of interpretation. While this is a valid consideration when students have detailed knowledge of a nominated historical controversy and its historiography, it is not a useful line of argument without that detailed knowledge and may lead to invalid assumptions or unsupported assertions.

Question 3(d) – evaluating and making a judgement

How far do you agree with Interpretation 2 about...?

Explain your answer, using **both** interpretations and your knowledge of the historical context. (16 + 4 SPaG*)

*Spelling, punctuation, grammar and the use of specialist terminology

Question 3d is the culmination of the **enquiry package** on Paper 3.

This question focuses on evaluating the view contained in one of the interpretations (always Interpretation 2). Students are instructed to do this based on their knowledge and understanding of periods/events studied, and on the other interpretation which provides a counter view. Questions (b) and (c) have provided a stepped approach to this task by requiring students to become thoroughly familiar with the material in both extracts and with the difference between the two interpretations. This approach to the evaluation of interpretations embeds the understanding that histories give rise to discussion and debate, and that judgements must be based on knowledge and understanding of period.

The importance of own knowledge must be stressed. Students who rely on just the information in the interpretations will be limited to the lower levels of the mark scheme.

The question is phrased 'How far do you agree with...' and, therefore, the answer needs to develop a line of argument. Consequently, answers that focus on one interpretation, answers that simply paraphrase or juxtapose points from the interpretations, or answers that adopt a checklist approach are likely to reflect the attributes of the lower levels of the mark scheme descriptors.

The essence of the task is to:

- identify the overall view being offered
- provide detail from the interpretation and from additional contextual knowledge to support that view
- examine the challenge offered from the other interpretation and own knowledge, including points additional to those in the second interpretation if appropriate
- reach an overall judgement.

There is no stipulation as to how answers are organised, and the organisation of the mark scheme does not imply that the expected approach will follow the form above. Answers may deal with points separately exploring the argument for and against each, rather than dealing with the answer in blocks of points for and points against the interpretation.

A response reflecting the qualities of the highest level of the mark scheme will be organised to provide an explained evaluation and to show a line of reasoning in coming to an overall judgement that is coherent, sustained and logically structured. Such responses might:



- identify the overall view being offered and indicate areas of challenge from the other interpretation
- identify the key points of evidence being used to support this view and assess the validity of each of them, using the other interpretation and additional contextual knowledge.
- evaluate the points in the interpretation and the points that have been provided to challenge that interpretation in order to form a judgement.

It is important that students understand what is meant by 'evaluate'. The highest-level responses will use precisely selected, relevant contextual knowledge to support the evaluation of the interpretation under discussion. For example, students could use contextual knowledge to say whether the situation changed over time to show that the interpretation offers an accurate view of the first part of the period but not of the later years.

Students should not focus heavily on the accuracy of individual details but should concentrate on the overall interpretation. For example, the exact date or number of people involved in something is less important than how that event is presented.

Paper 3 Section B mark schemes

For **question 3(a)** (AO3: 8 marks), the mark scheme operates in the same way as Paper 1 question 2(a) (see page 31).

Question 3(b) (AO4: 4 marks) is marked using a two-level mark scheme.

For example:

Question		
3(b)		Study Interpretations 1 and 2. They give different views about the attitudes of young people towards the Hitler Youth movement. What is the main difference between the views? Explain your answer, using details from both interpretations. Target: Analysis of interpretations (how they differ). AO4: 4 marks.
Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable material.
1	1–2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited analysis of the interpretations is shown by the extraction or paraphrase of some content, but differences of surface detail only are given, or a difference of view is asserted without direct support.
2	3–4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The interpretations are analysed and a key difference of view is identified and supported from them.
Marking instructions Markers must apply the descriptors above in line with the general marking guidance (page 3).		
Indicative content guidance Answers must be credited according to candidates' deployment of material in relation to the qualities outlined in the mark scheme. The indicative content below		



is not prescriptive and other relevant material not suggested below must also be credited.

- A main difference is that Interpretation 1 emphasises the enthusiasm for and attractions of the Hitler Youth by mentioning the hiking, sports and camping trips. Interpretation 2 emphasises the unpopularity of the Hitler Youth and its less attractive activities such as those designed to prepare the youngsters for war.

The move to Level 2 is seen when a clear difference of view is indicated and detail from the extracts (information chosen for inclusion/use of language and tone/points of emphasis) is added to support the point made. The indicative content has exemplified a difference of emphasis (enthusiasm v. unpopularity), supported by comparison of information chosen for inclusion – the authors' choice/selection of information regarding the activities mentioned in each. Other elements of the table above (page 55) could also be used, but it is not necessary to include all three elements in this short response.

Responses will stay in Level 1 if they assert differences without support (for example, simply saying Interpretation 1 is positive and Interpretation 2 negative) or if they give differences of detail (for example, Interpretation 1 includes hiking and Interpretation 2 the resentment of the leaders) without showing how these details convey a difference of view.

Question 3(c) (AO4: 4 marks) is marked using a two-level mark scheme.

For example:

Question		
3(c)		Suggest one reason why Interpretations 1 and 2 give different views about attitudes of young people towards the Hitler Youth. You may use Sources B and C to help explain your answer. Target: Analysis of interpretations (why they differ). AO4: 4 marks.
Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable material.
1	1–2	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• A simple valid explanation is offered but displaying only limited analysis. Support for the explanation is based on simple undeveloped comment or on the selection of details from the provided material or own knowledge, with only implied linkage to the explanation.
2	3–4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• An explanation of a reason for difference is given, analysing the interpretations. The explanation is substantiated effectively.
Marking instructions Markers must apply the descriptors above in line with the general marking guidance (page 3).		
Indicative content guidance Answers must be credited according to candidates' deployment of material in relation to the qualities outlined in the mark scheme. The indicative content below is not prescriptive. The examples below show different approaches to explaining difference, any one of which may be valid. Other valid material must be credited. <ul style="list-style-type: none">• The interpretations may differ because they have given weight to different sources. For example Source B provides some support for Interpretation 1		



which stresses the attractions of the Hitler Youth while Source A provides some support for Interpretation 2 which emphasises the less popular activities of the Hitler Youth.

- The interpretations may differ because they are partial extracts, with Interpretation 1 mentioning only what attracted those who joined the Hitler Youth Movement and Interpretation 2 focusing only on the later 1930s and the reasons why it became less popular.
- They may differ because the authors have a different emphasis – Interpretation 1 is dealing with a range of features of the Hitler Youth and mainly leisure activities; Interpretation 2 focuses on discipline and how it prepared youngsters for the war.

Only **one** reason is required. The move to Level 2 is achieved when the answer gives a valid reason with specific support that is related to the provided material. Learnt responses about 'why historians differ' are not what is looked for here. However, students' understanding of why it is that historians come to different conclusions or have different emphases will underpin a good response to this question.

Students may use the provided Sources B and C to help them to construct a response. They could use the sources to show that the evidence of the period points in different directions and can support the different views, hence difference of view may arise from the weight the authors have given to the evidence they used. (See bullet point 1 in the indicative content above.) The contemporary Sources B and C do not have to be used. The indicative content makes clear that other valid approaches to explaining difference will be credited; these could, for example, be linked to the interests or focus of the writers evident in the extracts. In the case of the extracts provided for option 31, 1 is dealing with the range of leisure activities available in the Hitler Youth and the earlier period, 2 is dealing with the later period and preparations for war.

Do not over-complicate this question. Students do **not** need to worry about the provenance of the interpretations: this is **not** a nominated controversy. There is **no** requirement in the specification for students to acquire a background in the historical debates relevant to their Paper 3 depth study, but they should appreciate that historians legitimately have differences of view or come to different conclusions when they conduct their enquiries into the evidence.

Question 3(d) 20 marks (AO4: 16 marks; SPaG: 4 marks) is marked for AO4 using a four-level mark scheme. Progression is traced in three strands (colour-coded below):

- the quality of the judgement based on reasoning
- **the analysis of the provided material**
- **the deployment of knowledge of the historical context to support the application of criteria.**

Question	
3(d)	<p>How far do you agree with Interpretation 2 about the attitudes of young people towards the Hitler Youth movement?</p> <p>Explain your answer, using both interpretations and your knowledge of the historical context.</p> <p>Target: Analysis and evaluation of interpretations.</p> <p>AO4: 16 marks.</p> <p>Spelling, punctuation, grammar and the use of specialist terminology (SPaG): up to 4 additional marks.</p>



Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable material.
1	1–4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Answer offers simple valid comment to agree with or counter the interpretation. Limited analysis of one interpretation is shown by selection and inclusion of some detail in the form of simple paraphrase or direct quotation. Generalised contextual knowledge is included and linked to the evaluation.
2	5–8	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Answer offers valid evaluative comment to agree with or counter the interpretation. Some analysis is shown in selecting and including details from both interpretations to support this comment. Some relevant contextual knowledge is included and linked to the evaluation. An overall judgement is given but its justification is insecure or undeveloped and a line of reasoning is not sustained.
3	9–12	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Answer provides an explained evaluation, agreeing or disagreeing with the interpretation. Good analysis of the interpretations is shown indicating difference of view and deploying this to support the evaluation. Relevant contextual knowledge is used directly to support the evaluation. An overall judgement is given with some justification and a line of reasoning is generally sustained.
4	13–16	<ul style="list-style-type: none">Answer provides an explained evaluation, reviewing the alternative views in coming to a substantiated judgement. Precise analysis of the interpretations is shown, indicating how the differences of view are conveyed and deploying this material to support the evaluation. Relevant contextual knowledge is precisely selected to support the evaluation. An overall judgement is justified and the line of reasoning is coherent, sustained and logically structured.

Marking instructions

Markers must apply the descriptors above in line with the general marking guidance.

No credit may be given for contextual knowledge unless it is linked to evaluation of the interpretations.

In all levels, the second sentence relates to analysis and while the rest relate to evaluation. The following rules will apply:

- In Level 1, answers that meet the requirements only in relation to analysis without evidence of evaluation should be awarded 1 mark.
- In other levels, answers that meet the requirements only in relation to analysis (but that also fully meet the descriptors for evaluation of the level below) should be awarded no more than the bottom mark in the level.

It can be seen that the generic level descriptors for the 16-mark judgement questions have much in common with the four-level mark schemes used in Papers 1 and 2 for AO1 and AO2 – in particular the progression in the ability to support judgements and apply criteria in the process of making them. In this linear specification, whatever order the papers are taught in, the experience of the learners in one aspect can support their progression in the next when the fundamental principles of progression are consistent.



In Papers 1 and 2, the indicative content for the 16-mark judgement questions is grouped into points which support and points which counter the statement to be tested; in question 3(d) of Paper 3 the alternative views are provided by the two extracts. For Paper 3 question 3(d), therefore, the indicative content is organised to suggest relevant points from the provided material and own contextual knowledge which first support the view to be evaluated and then those that counter it. In coming to an overall judgement, high-level responses will engage with support for and against the view to be tested and **must** make use of provided material *and* knowledge of the context.

For example, this can be seen in the indicative content for option 31 question 3(d). The points picked out in blue are examples of relevant knowledge of context which could be deployed to support or counter the view.

Indicative content guidance

Answers must be credited according to candidates' deployment of material in relation to the qualities outlined in the mark scheme. While specific references are made in the indicative content below, this does not imply that these must be included; other relevant material must also be credited. The grouping of points below does not imply that this is how candidates are expected to structure their answers.

The interpretation to be evaluated suggests that Interpretation 2 suggests that the Hitler Youth was not popular with the young.

Relevant points from the provided material and own knowledge which support the claim made in the interpretation may include:

- Interpretation 2 suggests that the Hitler Youth was not popular with the young because the activities were increasingly devoted to preparing them for war.
- Interpretation 2 suggests that there was little enthusiasm for the Hitler Youth because of the attitude of some of the Hitler Youth leaders.
- There was evidence of falling membership in the later 1930s as well as fewer members of the Hitler Youth attending meetings.
- Some of the young preferred to join other youth organisations – so much so that, in 1936, these were banned by Hitler.
- Alternative youth groups such as the Edelweiss Pirates were set up by those who did not like the Hitler Youth.

Relevant points from the provided material and own knowledge which counter the view may include:

- Interpretation 1 suggests that the Hitler Youth movement was popular with the young because it provided a range of exciting activities.
- Interpretation 1 also suggests that the Hitler Youth was popular because it encouraged a feeling of comradeship.
- Many girls enjoyed the Hitler Youth, more especially the League of German Maidens because it enabled them to take part in activities that had previously been only for boys.
- Members of the Hitler Youth were often made to feel important. For example many were able to watch the Berlin Olympics of 1936.
- By 1936, even before it was compulsory, two-thirds of girls and boys were members of the Hitler Youth.

The Level 4 mark scheme includes, as part of the analysis of the provided material (red), a requirement for students to show "how the differences of view are conveyed". The highest-attaining answers should show how the authors of the interpretations have



created different views; this could be through the use of language, tone, emphasis or selection of details.

Unlike the 16-mark judgement essay questions on Papers 1 and 2, the mark scheme does not insert mark ceilings (no stimulus points are provided) or stipulate a balance between use of the provided material and deployment of knowledge, since there is not a separate mark-weighting for knowledge. Were an answer to be so unbalanced that one strand was absent, a 'best-fit' application of the mark scheme would reach a judgement on the most appropriate level for an answer which was below baseline in one element and fitted the Level 4 descriptor in the other. A mark in the region of the Level 2/Level 3 borderline might be awarded according to the quality of what was in the response. Note however that the marking instructions allow no credit for knowledge displayed in isolation, since there are no AO1 marks here – knowledge must be applied. Also, an answer overly-reliant on analysis of the extracts is restricted to the bottom mark point in any level – it must meet the descriptor in the other strands to move beyond the lowest mark point (and must, of course, have met the descriptor in the other strands in the level below to achieve the bottom mark point for analysis in the level above).

For more on the best-fit approach to marking, see above page 31 and the mocks marking training materials on the Edexcel website [here](#).



3.5 Spelling, punctuation, grammar and the use of specialist terminology (SPaG)

The Ofqual requirements specify that:

In each specification as a whole, 5 per cent of the marks must be used to credit the accuracy of candidates' spelling, punctuation and grammar and their use of specialist terminology.

The wording of the descriptors has been amended for reformed GCSE qualifications. The table below shows the former and new wording. Candidates may only receive SPaG marks for responses that are in the context of the demands of the question; that is, where learners have made a genuine attempt to answer the question.

	2013 GCSE SPaG descriptors	Current SPaG descriptors
High performance	Candidates spell, punctuate and use rules of grammar with consistent accuracy and effective control of meaning in the context of the demands of the question. Where required, they use a wide range of specialist terms adeptly and with precision.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learners spell and punctuate with consistent accuracy• Learners use rules of grammar with effective control of meaning overall• Learners use a wide range of specialist terms as appropriate
Intermediate performance	Candidates spell, punctuate and use rules of grammar with considerable accuracy and general control of meaning in the context of the demands of the question. Where required, they use a good range of specialist terms with facility.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learners spell and punctuate with considerable accuracy• Learners use rules of grammar with general control of meaning overall• Learners use a good range of specialist terms as appropriate
Threshold performance	Candidates spell, punctuate and use rules of grammar with reasonable accuracy in the context of the demands of the question. Any errors do not hinder meaning in the response. Where required, they use a limited range of specialist terms appropriately.	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learners spell and punctuate with reasonable accuracy• Learners use rules of grammar with some control of meaning and any errors do not significantly hinder meaning overall• Learners use a limited range of specialist terms as appropriate
No marks awarded		<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The learner writes nothing• The learner's response does not relate to the question• The learner's achievement in SPaG does not reach the threshold performance level, for example errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar severely hinder meaning



It should be noted that there is no longer a requirement for Quality of Written Communication (QWC) to appear in the levels-based mark schemes.

In the new Edexcel specification, there are 160 marks for the qualification, so there are 8 SPaG marks in total. These marks have been allocated as 4 SPaG marks each to two of the three 16-mark questions:

- Paper 1, question 5/6
- Paper 3, question 3(d)

The table below shows how the 4 marks are allocated across the three performance levels.

Performance	Mark	Descriptor
No marks awarded	0	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The learner writes nothing• The learner's response does not relate to the question• The learner's achievement in SPaG does not reach the threshold performance level, for example errors in spelling, punctuation and grammar severely hinder meaning
Threshold performance	1	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learners spell and punctuate with reasonable accuracy• Learners use rules of grammar with some control of meaning and any errors do not significantly hinder meaning overall• Learners use a limited range of specialist terms as appropriate
Intermediate performance	2–3	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learners spell and punctuate with considerable accuracy• Learners use rules of grammar with general control of meaning overall• Learners use a good range of specialist terms as appropriate
High performance	4	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Learners spell and punctuate with consistent accuracy• Learners use rules of grammar with effective control of meaning overall• Learners use a wide range of specialist terms as appropriate



Appendix 1. What changed at last reform?

What were the changes to the GCSE qualification?

GCSE History specifications changed for first assessment 2018.

- There is a new 9–1 grading system, with 9 being the top level (see page 69).
- There is no coursework or controlled assessment component: all assessment is through external examinations.
- There is a fully linear structure, with all exams sat at the end of the course.
- GCSE History continues to be untiered. There are tiers in only a small number of subjects, such as Mathematics.

Changes to content requirements for GCSE History specifications

The content requirements for GCSE History specifications have been revised by the Department for Education and Ofqual. All awarding organisations' specifications for GCSE History in England must meet these requirements.

GCSE History (9–1) specifications must include the following five elements:

- a thematic study spanning medieval, early modern and modern history
- a period study covering at least 50 years
- a British depth study **and** a non-British depth study from different eras (modern, early modern and medieval)
- a study of the historic environment.

Students will be required to study at least 40% British history: this is an increase from the previous requirement of 25%.

Changes to Assessment Objectives

The GCSE History Assessment Objectives have been revised and there are now four objectives:

AO1 35%	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the key features and characteristics of the periods studied.
AO2 35%	Explain and analyse historical events and periods studied using second-order historical concepts*.
AO3 15%	Analyse, evaluate and use sources (contemporary to the period) to make substantiated judgements, in the context of historical events studied.
AO4 15%	Analyse, evaluate and make substantiated judgements about interpretations (including how and why interpretations may differ) in the context of historical events studied.

* The second-order historical concepts referred to in AO2 are: change, continuity, causation, consequence, significance, similarity and difference.

What was previously AO3 has now been divided into two separate objectives, one for analysis and evaluation of sources contemporary to the period (new AO3) and one for later interpretations (new AO4). This means that 15% of the assessment must be



allocated to historical interpretations. The requirement for 'why interpretations may differ' in AO4 is also new in these objectives.

Ofqual's GCSE Subject Level Guidance for History provides the following definitions:

'Sources' (contemporary to the period) means 'primary sources or sources that in either their origin and/or their authorship are contemporary to the period studied. This could also include contemporary evidence that is collected and presented at a later date, for example raw data'.

An **'interpretation'** is 'an attempt to portray and/or make meaning of the past using evidence, that is, a deliberate construct created after the event(s). This can include both academic and non-academic interpretations'.

Changes to Edexcel GCSE History

Edexcel GCSE History (9–1): one specification

We are offering a single Edexcel GCSE History specification, which draws on the best of our previous Modern World and Schools History Project specifications. The changes to the requirements for GCSE History mean that it is no longer necessary to have two different specifications. Having one specification allows us to bring together the best of Modern World and SHP specifications, and to provide more choice and flexibility.

Specification overview

There are three papers. Within each paper, there is a choice of options. There are no forbidden combinations. The British requirement is met through the thematic study and historic environment (Paper 1) and the British depth study (Paper 2).

Paper 1: Thematic study and historic environment	30%	Thematic study (20%) <i>and</i> Historic environment (10%)	Crime and punishment in Britain, c1000–present <i>and</i> Whitechapel, c1870–c1900: crime, policing and the inner city Medicine in Britain, c1250–present <i>and</i> The British sector of the Western Front, 1914–18: injuries, treatment and the trenches Warfare and British society, c1250–present <i>and</i> London and the Second World War, 1939–45 Migrants in Britain, c800–present <i>and</i> Notting Hill, c1948–c1970 (from Sept 2021).
Paper 2: Period study and British depth study	40%	British depth study (20%)	Anglo-Saxon and Norman England, c1060–88 The reigns of King Richard I and King John, 1189–1216 Henry VIII and his ministers, 1509–40 Early Elizabethan England, 1558–88
		Period study (20%)	Spain and the 'New World', c1490–c1555 British America, 1713–83: empire and revolution The American West, c1835–c1895 Superpower relations and the Cold War, 1941–91 Conflict in the Middle East, 1945–95



Paper 3: Modern depth study	30%	Modern depth study (30%)	Russia and the Soviet Union, 1917–41 Weimar and Nazi Germany, 1918–39 Mao's China, 1945–76 The USA, 1954–75: conflict at home and abroad
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Constructing a coherent course

Options have been selected that will meet the DfE criteria and, at the same time, allow conceptual, geographical, period and thematic links to be made across a course of study. Some examples are given in Appendix 2 of the specification, showing links that exist between different parts of the course. The document [Guidance on constructing a course](#) provides a range of further suggestions.

Mapping between Edexcel and other specifications

[Mapping documents](#) are available on the Pearson Edexcel website, outlining similarities between specifications, along with key benefits of the Pearson Edexcel specification. More information on switching to Pearson Edexcel for GCSE History can be found at: quals.pearson.com/gcsehistswitch.

Changes to specification content

The specification provides much continuity of content with the 2009/2013 Edexcel History A and History B specifications, as well as offering several new areas of content. The following topics are **new** for this specification:

- Anglo-Saxon and Norman England, c1060–88
- The reigns of King Richard I and King John, 1189–1216
- Henry VIII and his ministers, 1509–40
- Early Elizabethan England, 1558–88
- Spain and the 'New World', c1490–c1555
- British America, 1713–83: empire and revolution
- Conflict in the Middle East, 1945–95
- Migrants in Britain, c800–present *and* Notting Hill, c1948–c1970 (first teaching Sept 2021, first assessment June 2022).

Continuity with 2013 Edexcel History A (Modern World) specification

2013 Edexcel A specification	2016 specification
Unit 1 International Relations: The Era of the Cold War 1943–1991	Superpower relations and the Cold War, 1941–91
Unit 2A Germany 1918–39 Unit 2B Russia 1914–39	Weimar and Nazi Germany, 1918–39 Russia and the Soviet Union, 1917–41
Unit 3A War and the transformation of British society c1903–28 Unit 3B War and the transformation of British society c1931–51	Some overlap with: The British sector of the Western Front, 1914–18: injuries, treatment and the trenches London and the Second World War, 1939–45



[2009 specification: Unit 3C A divided union? The USA 1945–70]	The USA, 1954–75: conflict at home and abroad
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Continuity with 2013 Edexcel History B (SHP) specification

2013 Edexcel B specification	2016 specification
Unit 1A Medicine and public health in Britain c50AD to the present day Unit 1B Crime and punishment in Britain c50AD to the present day Unit 1C The changing nature of warfare in Britain c50AD to the present day	The starting dates are now later. Crime and punishment in Britain, c1000–present Medicine in Britain, c1250–present Warfare and British society, c1250–present
Unit 2B The American West c1845–c1890 Unit 2C Germany 1918–45	The American West, c1835–c1895 Weimar and Nazi Germany, 1918–39
Unit 3A: The transformation of surgery c1845–c1918 Unit 3B: Protest, law and order in the twentieth century Unit 3C: The impact of war on Britain c1903–1945	Aspects have been incorporated into: Medicine in Britain, c1250–present Crime and punishment in Britain, c1000–present Warfare and British society, c1250–present and London and the Second World War, 1939–45.

Continuity with 2013 Edexcel History A and B Unit 4 Controlled assessment

2013 Edexcel A and B specifications	2016 specification
CA1: Germany 1918–39	Weimar and Nazi Germany, 1918–39
CA2: Russia and the USSR 1917–39	Russia and the Soviet Union, 1917–41
CA4: China 1945–76	Mao's China, 1945–76
CA5: Vietnam c1950–75	Incorporated into The USA, 1954–75: conflict at home and abroad
CA6: Civil rights and protest in the USA 1945–70	Incorporated into The USA, 1954–75: conflict at home and abroad
CA8: Crime, policing and protest in England c1886–c1926	Some overlap with Crime and punishment in Britain, c1000–present and Whitechapel, c1870–c1900: crime, policing and the inner city
CA10(L): The impact of war on Britain c1914–45	Some overlap with Warfare and British society, c1250–present and London and the Second World War, 1939–45
CA15L: The medieval castle — a thematic study	Some overlap with aspects of Anglo-Saxon and Norman England, c1060–1088.



Appendix 2. 9–1 Grading

Ahead of first assessment of the new GCSE (9–1) qualifications, Ofqual provided the following information about the new 9–1 grading system:

- 1 is the lowest grade, anchored to grade G: 'The bottom of grade 1 will be aligned with the bottom of grade G.'
- 4 will be anchored to grade C: 'Broadly the same proportion of students will achieve a grade 4 and above as currently achieve a grade C and above.'
- 7 will be anchored to grade A: 'Broadly the same proportion of students will achieve a grade 7 and above as currently achieve an A and above.'
- 9 is the highest grade: a 'tailored approach' will be applied, using a formula that will mean around 20% of those students who get grade 7 or above will get a grade 9.

The diagram below provides a visual representation of this information.

