

Diversity & Inclusion *in History*

Case Study

2020

1948

1066

1215

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Amy Bennett,
Subject lead
for History

Amy Bennett, Subject Lead for History at Harris Academy Sutton – Teaching Migrants in Britain Part 1.

Introduction

Designing a History curriculum is one of the most important – and exciting – decisions a head of history and their department faces. So we were pleased when Amy Bennett, Subject Lead for History at [Harris Academy Sutton](#), told us she would be including [Migrants in Britain, c800–present and Notting Hill, c1948–c1970](#) as part of her GCSE History curriculum from this September, and even more pleased when she agreed to write a series of blog posts for us through 2021 that will record her progress: from her reasons for choosing it and the opportunities and challenges it presents; through the planning and preparation required and the resources she finds most useful; to how it goes in the classroom and how her students respond.

Amy Bennett has been at Harris Academy Sutton since its first year and has loved watching the school grow. She is primarily interested in social history, particularly early modern, but as an avid reader regularly finds new historical obsessions. [@AmyBennettTeach](#)



Harris Academy Sutton is a new academy, established in 2018 in the London Borough of Sutton. It currently has three year groups (Years 7–9) and when it reaches full capacity will be an 11–18 academy of 1200 students.

Part 1: Choosing to teach Migrants in Britain (April 2021)

Having only opened our doors in 2018, our academy has had a really exciting few years. As the number of students has grown, so too has the size and strength of the history department I lead. With our first GCSE cohort starting in September and almost half the year group choosing history, we are fortunate that Pearson have released this migration thematic unit in time. In our current context we have a student body that is 57% non-white British, with a diverse range of ethnicities, languages and family histories. This is an invaluable opportunity to ensure the GCSE course we study is as representative of our students as we can make it; however, I personally would have advocated for the change to migration regardless of the diversity of the student body.

Having been an active member of the history community, attending sessions from [SHP](#) and the [HA](#), I am only too aware of the problems that have gone before of the history curriculum being 'white, male and stale', and as a department this is a narrative we are passionate about disrupting.

At Key Stage 3, we provide opportunities to teach more 'untold stories' and a diverse range of voices, including the Islamic World, the Silk Roads, and from the presence of black people in Tudor England right through to the civil rights struggles of twentieth-century Britain. However, this is always in development, and we want to continue this aim into the GCSE course. The introduction of the migration topic for the thematic was therefore the perfect choice, as it built on work we have been doing at Key Stage 3 due to the wide range of case studies and globalised nature of the content. It also provides an opportunity to tell personal stories and highlight lesser-known communities within Britain, which really appeals to me and which we know will resonate with our students too. We are also eager to incorporate more educational visits: being close to London will allow us to go to the [Migration Museum](#), the [Museum of London Docklands](#) and even do a Notting Hill walking tour, which will be invaluable lived experiences for our students.

We will be studying Migrants in Britain and Notting Hill alongside Early Elizabethan England, Superpower relations and the Cold War, and Weimar and Nazi Germany. We will be studying the thematic study first: this will allow us to introduce each time period in a chronological order, and create a framework of period-specific knowledge that we can attach new learning in the other topics onto. When we study the Religious Settlement and challenges from abroad in the Elizabeth unit, we will link it to the Huguenots from the migration study; when discussing the impact of the First World War and the and the rise of Nazis, a link can be made to migration and the refugees that came to Britain in the twentieth century; and when studying the 'brain drain' and the impact of the Second World War on Germany, we will be able to draw comparisons to Britain and migration then too.

Our students will be able to use the knowledge gained in this unit to view the world around them in a more inclusive and open-minded way. Challenging assumptions about migration, historicising events they read about in the news, and for some being able to find common ideas and experiences to their own in the histories that they learn. I mentioned earlier that I would have advocated for choosing this unit regardless of demographics within my school: broadening the experiences of children is something I think is really important. We believe that learning about the different groups of migrants, and their impact on Britain, will strike a chord with all our students.

The main challenges for us as a department will be gaining the new subject knowledge to teach this topic. In some areas, we are supported by the Key Stage 3 curriculum development we have undertaken the past couple of years, but in others we are starting essentially from scratch. However, we are so excited for the challenge, and know we will be supported by our

Federation consultants and by the wider history community via platforms like Twitter. For our students, I think the challenge will be that we won't be able to include every story we might wish to include – that may sound idealistic, but our students are always asking questions! We've been able to tackle this so far by use of [Meanwhile, elsewhere...](#) homework activities, and will continue to utilise this to full effect, but with our students this will always be something to consider. I think we need to make sure we are getting the sense of period right, as it will be so important not just for this unit but for those we study afterward as well.

As a department we are excited to get going. As soon as we get the topic booklet, we are going to split up some of the recommended reading, and then start formulating enquiry questions. We are already set with David Olusoga's *Black and British* and the *Small Axe* BBC series – I'm just trying to get my hands on some copies of *Bloody Foreigners* by Robert Winder. We've set aside all our department time in the summer term to do as much GCSE preparation as we can. I've signed up to an introductory course being run by Hodder Education, ready to disseminate to my team, and Pearson have just announced their getting ready to teach event – we're ready to hit any other webinars or courses that become available in the meantime!

Take a look at [Pearson's Diversity and Inclusion in History webpages](#) for more great content.