



Pearson  
Edexcel

# GCSE (9–1) History

Guidance on  
Paper 2

Amendments to  
option P3 – *The  
American West  
c1835–c1895*

(April 2021)







# How will the amendments to the GCSE (9–1) History Specification affect your teaching of *The American West, c1835–c1895?*

## What is the new Specification release?

In April 2021, Pearson published Issue 3 of the GCSE (9–1) History Specification. This replaces the earlier Issue 2 of the Specification and is the definitive document for the content which teachers will cover during the GCSE History course. If you have not yet downloaded your copy, you will find it [here](#). The amended specification will first be assessed in 2022.

You have likely noticed that the publication of Issue 3 of the Edexcel GCSE History Specification has included several minor amendments to the wording of the specification. For example, some words in the content of different topics have been clarified, with minor changes that will help teachers to be completely clear on what the specification content is addressing. In many cases this has involved simply changing the grammar or improving the accuracy of a term or sentence. This will aid teachers to have a clearer awareness of what should be covered for each topic. For a full list of the amendments that have been made in the latest edition of the specification to clarify the content, click [here](#).

## What about Option P3, *The American West, c1835–c1895?*

If your centre teaches Option P3, *The American West, c1835–c1895*, you may have noticed that the content for the topic has undergone several amendments. Naturally, you may be wondering why the amendments were made, and how they will affect your teaching.

### Why were amendments made to the content for this topic?

The list of amendments made to the content can be summarised as being for one of three reasons:

- To clarify the content.
- To reorganise some content to where it better fits, with the intention of helping students to see the links within and across the three key topics.
- In some instances, inconsequential content has been removed, meaning that it no longer needs to be taught.

### How will the amendments affect how I teach the topic?

*The amendments should make the teaching for the topic more straightforward and will require no increase in workload or extensive replanning. The reorganisation of the content has not added any new content.*

In some places, the content to be covered has been slightly reduced. The amendments primarily clarify the specific content required, to avoid any confusion or time spent teaching peripheral content which is not directly required in the specification. Additionally, some



points of content have been relocated within the specification in a way that makes them more logical for the planning of lessons. The intention of this is to make the planning and teaching of this topic more straightforward.

The most significant amendments are explained below. The full details of all amendments are at the end of this document. The topic booklet and scheme of work have also been updated.

## Key topic 1: The early settlement of the West, c1835–c1862

<b>Sub-topic 1</b> <b>The Plains Indians: their beliefs and way of life</b>	This section of content is about addressing the beliefs and way of life of the Plains Indians, therefore the last bullet point (US government policy towards the Plains Indians) has been moved, to sub-topic 3, linking to conflict and tension.
<b>Sub-topic 2</b> <b>Migration and early settlement</b>	A-change to note is that ‘economic conditions’ are no longer mentioned in the specification as a factor encouraging migration, although students will still need to be aware that economic conditions were relevant to the decision to migrate, for example in understanding the powerful effect of the rumours of wealth which led to the 1849 California Gold Rush.  The other changes in this sub-topic act to clarify the content. For example, ‘the process and problems of migration’ has been replaced with ‘early migration to c1850’, with the same named examples, simplifying planning. Similarly, ‘white settlement farming’ has become simply ‘white settlement’, which removes the need for teachers to create some sort of artificial division between aspects of white settlement which involved farming, and those which did not.
<b>Sub-topic 3</b> <b>Conflict and tension</b>	In the first bullet point, the content now specifies tensions with Plains Indians, rather than simply tensions between settlers and Plains Indians. This includes, but is not limited to, examples of conflict caused by US government policy – note that these are the examples which were previously in the first sub-topic, so there is no additional content to teach.  In the second bullet point, the specification now addresses ‘lawlessness in early towns and settlements’. The changes to this sub-topic mean that whilst the content remains the same, it will be easier to teach this as a narrative start point considering lawlessness within a law and order narrative rather than as a series of problems and solutions.

## Key topic 2: Development of the plains, c1862–c1876

<b>Sub-topic 1</b> <b>The development of settlement in the West</b>	The most obvious point that will stand out in the changes for this sub-topic is the removal of the specific reference to the Civil War and post-war reconstruction. Of course, in studying the named examples in this key topic, it will remain relevant for students to know about the existence of the Civil War and the need for reconstruction. NB The coverage of the significance
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	<p>of the Civil War in the November 2020 paper means it would not appear from 2022 onwards.</p> <p>The content of the first two bullet points has been reorganised, to provide a clearer focus with one bullet point about the development of the railroads, and one about issues related to homesteaders.</p> <p>The change to the third bullet point is a continuation of the clarification made in key topic 1, sub-topic 3. The content itself has not changed; what is new is that the emphasis is on looking at the development of law and order as a continuation of the problems of lawlessness identified in the first key topic, rather than as a list of problems and attempted solutions.</p>
<b>Sub-topic 2</b> <b>Ranching and the cattle industry</b>	The content of the second bullet point is the same as what was covered in the previous second and third bullets, with the emphasis more generally on the changing role of the cowboy. This still explicitly includes the impact of ranching on the role of cowboys, but it allows students to look more generally at the role of the cowboy within the developing narrative of the American West. Additionally, the relationship between ranchers and homesteaders is now included within this bullet point, allowing you the opportunity to address it as part of the wider narrative, in particular as a basis for the range wars which are covered in the last key topic.
<b>Sub-topic 3</b> <b>Changes in the way of life of the Plains Indians</b>	<p>President Grant's 'Peace Policy' of 1868 is no longer a specified content area, which means that there is no requirement to teach it.</p> <p>The second Fort Laramie Treaty (1868) has been reorganised to be part of the government policy, meaning the sub-topic can be taught in three well-defined bullet points: the impact of factors related to Western settlement on the Plains Indians; the impact of US government policy; and the conflicts that occurred with the Plains Indians in this period.</p>

### Key topic 3: Conflicts and conquest, c1876–c1895

<b>Sub-topic 1</b> <b>Changes in farming, the cattle industry and settlement</b>	One change is that a colon after 'the significance of changes in the nature of ranching' has been replaced by a period. Students will need to consider wider implications than simply the end of the open range.
<b>Sub-topic 2</b> <b>Conflict and tension</b>	In the previous two key topics, the emphasis with law and order in the American West has been adjusted to focus on establishment of law and order across the period. The content to be covered has not changed.
<b>Sub-topic 3</b> <b>The Plains Indians: the destruction of their way of life</b>	The only change to note in this section of the specification content is that the closure of the Indian Frontier has been moved to the earlier sub-topic 1, as an aspect of the continued settled of the West.



## What about the assessment?

There are no changes to how this topic is assessed. The question papers and mark schemes are unchanged, with the minor exception that the word ‘may’ in the stimulus box for Question 2 will now be in bold (as with all questions that have stimulus boxes on all papers from now on). This means that the types of questions, the assessment objectives and the guidance for answering the questions are all unchanged.

## Where can I get more support?

Remember that Pearson provides many sources of free support for with this option and all other options across the GCSE (9–1) History specification. Some key examples include:

- The [Paper 2 guide](#), which offers support on the Paper 2 Booklets B and P, as well as teaching ideas.
- The [Getting Started Guide](#), which provides useful guidance on teaching Paper 2.
- [Topic booklets](#), which are available for this option and all other GCSE History options.
- [Network events](#), and other free or paid support training events.
- Contact the History Subject Advisor, Mark Battye (0333 016 4084, or by clicking [here](#)).

To keep up to date with the free and paid support options, sign up to receive updates by clicking [here](#).



## Appendix

For ease of using this document, reproduced below are:

- the list of amendments made to *The American West, c1835–c1895*
- the amendments as made to Issue 2 with track changes on.

#	Reference (Issue 2)	Amendment	Rationale / any implications for teaching
<b>Paper 2: Period studies</b>			
<b>Option P3: The American West, c1835–c1895</b>			
The aim of the changes detailed below is to make the content flow more logically both within and across the three key topics. This will allow schools and students to see more clearly the narrative threads and connections within the content. In a few places, minor content has been removed.			
<b>Key topic 1: The early settlement of the West, c1835–c1862</b>			
1	Sub-topic 1 ( <i>Plains Indians...</i> ) bp3	This bullet point on US govt policy has been removed. This is now covered in sub-topic 3 ( <i>Conflict and tension</i> )	Government policy fits better in sub-topic 3 as it is more closely related to conflict rather than beliefs and way of life of the Plains Indians
2	Sub-topic 2 ( <i>Migration...</i> ) bp1	'economic conditions' removed.	This simplifies teaching. Students should still be aware that economic conditions encouraged migration, but the factors listed focus on the attractions of moving to, and settling in, the West.
3	Sub-topic 2 ( <i>Migration...</i> ) bp1	'concept of Manifest Destiny' changed to 'belief in Manifest Destiny'.	This is more accurate since it is the belief that is the factor, not the concept.
4	Sub-topic 2 ( <i>Migration...</i> ) bp1	'California' added to 'Gold Rush of 1849'	Added for clarity.
5	Sub-topic 2 ( <i>Migration...</i> ) bp 2	'Process and problems of migration' replaced with 'Early migration to c1850'	This clarifies that the bullet point focuses on the early stages of the continuing narrative of migration West and the experiences of the early migrants <i>en route</i> . Providing an end date for this allows differentiation between migration and settlement (see Point 6).
6	Sub-topic 2 ( <i>Migration...</i> ) bp 3	'white settlement farming' replaced with 'white settlement'	This will allow students to learn about the development of white settlement in general, not just farming, so enabling links to be made to the continuing narratives of migration and settlement (migration – sub-topic 2) and law and order (lawlessness – sub-topic 3).
7	Sub-topic 3 ( <i>Conflict...</i> ) bp 1	'tension between settlers and Plains Indians' changed to 'tension with Plains Indians.'	Now that this bullet point includes US government policy (see Point 9), it is about tension more generally, not just between settlers and Plains Indians but also the impact of US government policy.
8	Sub-topic 3 ( <i>Conflict...</i> ) bp 1	'first' added to Fort Laramie Treaty.	Added for clarity.



#	Reference (Issue 2)	Amendment	Rationale / any implications for teaching
9	Sub-topic 3 (Conflict...) bp 1	'including US government policy and the Permanent Indian Frontier' and 'The Indian Appropriations Act' added	Moved from Key topic 1, sub-topic 1 ( <i>Plains Indians: beliefs...</i> ), bp3, as explained above. Note that 'support for US westward expansion' is not included but remains implicit.
10	Sub-topic 3 (Conflict...) bp 2	'The problems of...' removed and 'including' added before 'attempts'. 'by government and local communities' removed	The amendments clarify that the focus of the bullet point is on lawlessness in the period of early settlement, so creating a starting point for the continuing narrative of attempts to establish law and order across the stages of the Period Study. Students can consider lawlessness within a law and order narrative rather than as a series of problems and solutions.
<b>Key topic 2: Development of the plains, c1862–c1876</b>			
11	Sub-topic 1 ( <i>The development...</i> ) bp 1	'Civil War and post war reconstruction' removed.	The development of the Plains has been reorganised into three areas: railroads, homesteaders, law and order. It is no longer necessary for students to study the Civil War and post-war reconstruction explicitly; however, students still need to be aware that these events provide context for the development of the Plains.
12	Sub-topic 1 ( <i>The development...</i> ) bps 1 and 2	'impact of Homestead Act' moved from bp1 into bp 2.	The Homestead Act fits better in bp 2 alongside problems/solutions for homesteaders.
13	Sub-topic 1 ( <i>The development...</i> ) bps 1 and 2	'Spread of the railroad network' moved from bp2 into bp1.	This allows bp1 to focus entirely on railroads.
14	Sub-topic 1 ( <i>The development...</i> ) bp 3	'Continued problems of...' and 'attempted solutions' removed; 'Introducing' added.	The previous wording placed undue emphasis on problems and solutions; the changes enable students to understand a continuing narrative of dealing with law and order across the Period Study.
15	Sub-topic 2 ( <i>Ranching...</i> ) bp 2	'Impact of changes in ranching on the work of the cowboy' changed to 'The changing role of the cowboy, including changes in ranching'.	The previous wording linked impacts of ranching changes to the work of the cowboy. The new wording allows students to look more generally at the work of cowboys, allowing students to understand how the role of cowboys changed in relation to the continuing narrative of settlement in the American West.
16	Sub-topic 2 ( <i>Ranching...</i> ) bps 2 and 3	'Rivalry between ranchers and homesteaders' moved from bp 3 into bp 2, but now amended to 'Relations between...'	Rationalisation of content to place the relationship between ranchers and homesteaders into the continuing narratives of ranching and settlement in the West that would lead to the rivalry that would see the outbreak of the range wars in Key Topic 3.
17	Sub-topic 3 ( <i>Changes in...</i> ) bp 2	'President Grant's Peace Policy' removed.	Simplification of content.
18	Sub-topic 3 ( <i>Changes in...</i> ) bps 2 and 3	'Fort Laramie Treaty 1868' moved from bp 3 to bp 2. 'second' added.	'Second' added for clarity. The Treaty fits better in bp 2, which deals with US government policy.



#	Reference (Issue 2)	Amendment	Rationale / any implications for teaching
<b>Key topic 3: Conflicts and conquest, c1876–c1895</b>			
19	Sub-topic 1 ( <i>Changes in...</i> ) bp 2	Colon replaced by full stop after ' <i>ranching</i> '	Punctuation clarification: the 'significance of the changes in the nature of ranching' is not simply the end of the open range.
20	Sub-topic 1 ( <i>Changes in...</i> ) bp 3	' <i>Continued growth in settlement</i> ' replaced by ' <i>continued settlement</i> '	This reflects the continued settlement of the geographical area of the West rather than the continued growth of westward expansion. (See Point 21).
21	Sub-topic 1 ( <i>Changes in...</i> ) bp 3 / sub-topic 3 ( <i>The Plains Indians...</i> )	' <i>Closure of the Indian Frontier</i> ' moved from sub-topic 3 to sub-topic 1.	This fits better in sub-topic 1, which is focused on settlement, instead of sub-topic 3, which is about the Plains Indians.
22	Sub-topic 2 ( <i>Conflict and tension</i> ) bp1	' <i>Extent of solutions to problems of...</i> ' replaced by ' <i>Dealing with...</i> '	This enables students to understand the continuing narrative of attempts to establish law and order across the three Key Topics of the Period Study as outlined above.
23	Sub-topic 2 ( <i>Conflict and tension</i> ) bp1	' <i>Wyatt Earp</i> ' moved earlier in sentence.	Changed to make the flow more logical, since Wyatt Earp began his career as a lawman in the mid-1870s.



### Option P3: The American West, c1835–c1895 (track changes on)

Key topic 1: The early settlement of the West, c1835–c1862	
<b>1 The Plains Indians: their beliefs and way of life</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Social and tribal structures, ways of life and means of survival on the Plains.</li><li>Beliefs about land and nature and attitudes to war and property.</li><li><del>US government policy+ support for US westward expansion and the significance of the Permanent Indian Frontier. The Indian Appropriations Act 1851.</del></li></ul>
<b>2 Migration and early settlement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The factors encouraging migration, including <del>economic conditions</del>, the Oregon Trail from 1836, the <del>concept of belief</del> in Manifest Destiny, and the <del>California</del> Gold Rush of 1849.</li><li><del>The process and problems of migration Early migration to c1850</del>, including the experiences of the Donner Party and the Mormon migration, 1846–47.</li><li>The development and problems of white settlement <del>farming</del>.</li></ul>
<b>3 Conflict and tension</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Reasons for tension <del>between settlers and with</del> Plains Indians, <del>including US government policy and the Permanent Indian Frontier</del>. The significance of the <del>first</del> Fort Laramie Treaty (1851). <del>The Indian Appropriations Act (1851)</del>.</li><li><del>The problems of Lawlessness in early towns and settlements, including attempts by government and local communities to tackle lawlessness.</del></li></ul>
Key topic 2: Development of the plains, c1862–c1876	
<b>1 The development of settlement in the West</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The significance of the <del>railroads; Civil War and post-war reconstruction, including the impact of the Homestead Act 1862</del>, the Pacific Railroad Act (1862), and the completion of the First Transcontinental Railroad, (1869) <del>and the spread of the railroad network</del>.</li><li><del>The impact of the Homestead Act (1862)</del>. Attempts at solutions to problems faced by homesteaders: the use of new methods and new technology; the impact of the Timber Culture Act (1873) <del>and of the spread of the railroad network</del>.</li><li><del>Continued problems of Introducing</del> law and order in settlements, <del>and attempted solutions</del>, including the roles of law officers and increases in federal government influence.</li></ul>
<b>2 Ranching and the cattle industry</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The cattle industry and factors in its growth, including the roles of <del>T</del>iff, McCoy and Goodnight, the significance of Abilene and of the increasing use of the railroad network.</li><li><del>The impact of changing role of the cowboy, including changes in ranching on the work of the cowboy. Relations between ranchers and homesteaders.</del></li><li><del>Rivalry between ranchers and homesteaders.</del></li></ul>
<b>3 Changes in the way of life of the Plains Indians</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The impact of railroads, the cattle industry and gold prospecting on the Plains Indians.</li><li>The impact of US government policy towards the Plains Indians, including the continued use of reservations. <del>President Grant's 'Peace Policy', 1868, The second Fort Laramie Treaty (1868)</del>.</li><li>Conflict with the Plains Indians: Little Crow's War (1862) and the Sand Creek Massacre (1864), the significance of Red Cloud's War (1866–68) <del>and the Fort Laramie Treaty (1868)</del>.</li></ul>



### Key topic 3: Conflicts and conquest, c1876–c1895

<b>1 Changes in farming, the cattle industry and settlement</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Changes in farming: the impact of new technology and new farming methods.</li><li>Changes in the cattle industry, including the impact of the winter of 1886–87. The significance of changes in the nature of ranching. The end of the open range.</li><li>Continued growth of settlement: the Exoduster movement and Kansas (1879), the Oklahoma Land Rush of 1893. <a href="#">The closure of the Indian Frontier</a>.</li></ul>
<b>2 Conflict and tension</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>Extent of solutions to problems of Dealing with law and order, including sheriffs and marshals. The significance of Billy the Kid, <a href="#">Wyatt Earp</a>, the OK Corral (1881). <a href="#">Wyatt Earp</a>.</li><li>The range wars, including the Johnson County War of 1892.</li><li>Conflict with the Plains Indians: the Battle of the Little Big Horn, (1876) and its impact; the Wounded Knee Massacre, (1890).</li></ul>
<b>3 The Plains Indians: the destruction of their way of life</b>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>The hunting and extermination of the buffalo.</li><li>The Plains Indians' life on the reservations.</li><li>The significance of changing government attitudes to the Plains Indians, including the Dawes Act (1887) <a href="#">and the closure of the Indian Frontier</a>.</li></ul>