

GCSE

History

Paper 1 Overview



Who are we?



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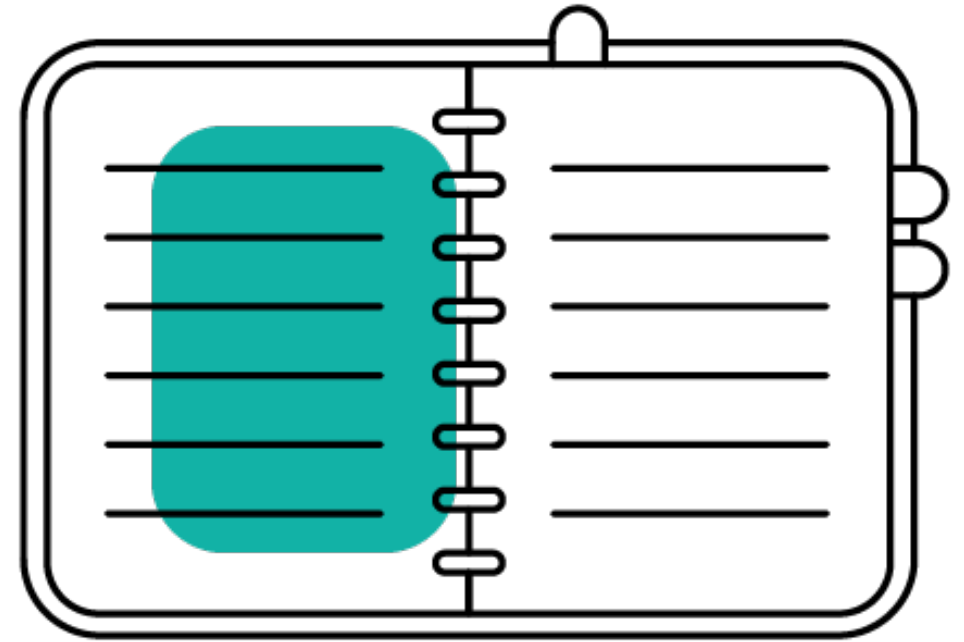


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What are we going to cover?

In this session we are going to look at:

- What does Paper 1 look like?
- How can you do well on this paper?



Paper 1 overview

1 hr 20 mins (ET: 1 hr 40 mins) 52 marks

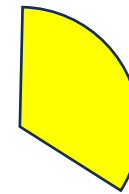
Section A... 16 marks 30%

This part of the paper is the '**historic environment**'. This means studying a particular **place** in a particular period of **time**.

Section B... 36 marks 70%

This part of the paper is about **change and continuity** across a long period of time in British history. You need to understand how your topic changed and stayed the same from the **medieval period to the present day**.

10% of your GCSE



1/3 of this exam
about 25 mins
(ET: about 31mins)

20% of your GCSE



2/3 of this exam
about 55 mins
(ET: about 69 mins)

Paper 1 overview: Which option are you studying?

The four thematic study options for Paper 1, with their respective Historic environments are:

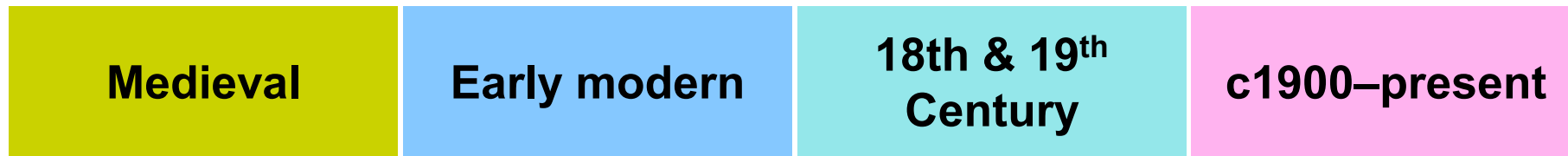
Option	Thematic study	Historic environment
10	Crime and Punishment in Britain, c1000–present	Whitechapel, c1870–c1900: crime, policing and the inner city
11	Medicine in Britain, c1250–present	The British sector of the Western Front, 1914–18: injuries, treatment and the trenches
12	Warfare and British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

Paper 1 overview: What are the questions?

Question		Marks
Section A: Historic Environment		
Q1a	Describe one feature of...	2
Q1b	Describe one feature of...	2
Q2a	How useful are Sources A and B for an enquiry into...?	8
Q2b	How could you follow up Source ... to find more about...?	4
Section B: Thematic Study		
Q3	Explain one way in which ... in the years (1st period) was similar/different to ... in the years (2nd period).	4
Q4	Explain why...	12
Q5 / Q6	'Statement.' How far do you agree?	16 + 4 SPaG

Why is chronology vital?

Paper 1 focuses on change and continuity over **four time periods**.



Be familiar with the dates and names given to the different time periods that are specific to your topic studied eg *c1500–c1700: The Medical Renaissance in England*.

What are the themes you need to know?

Thematic Study

Crime and Punishment in Britain, c1000–present

Medicine in Britain, c1250–present

Warfare and British society, c1250–present

Migrants in Britain, c800–present

Strands

1. Nature and changing definitions of criminal activity.
2. The nature of law enforcement and Punishment.

1. Ideas about the cause of disease and Illness.
2. Approaches to prevention and treatment.

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

1. The context for migration.
2. The experience and impact of migrants.

What are the factors influencing change/continuity?

Thematic Study

Crime and Punishment in Britain, c1000–present

Medicine in Britain, c1250–present

Warfare and British society, c1250–present

Migrants in Britain, c800–present

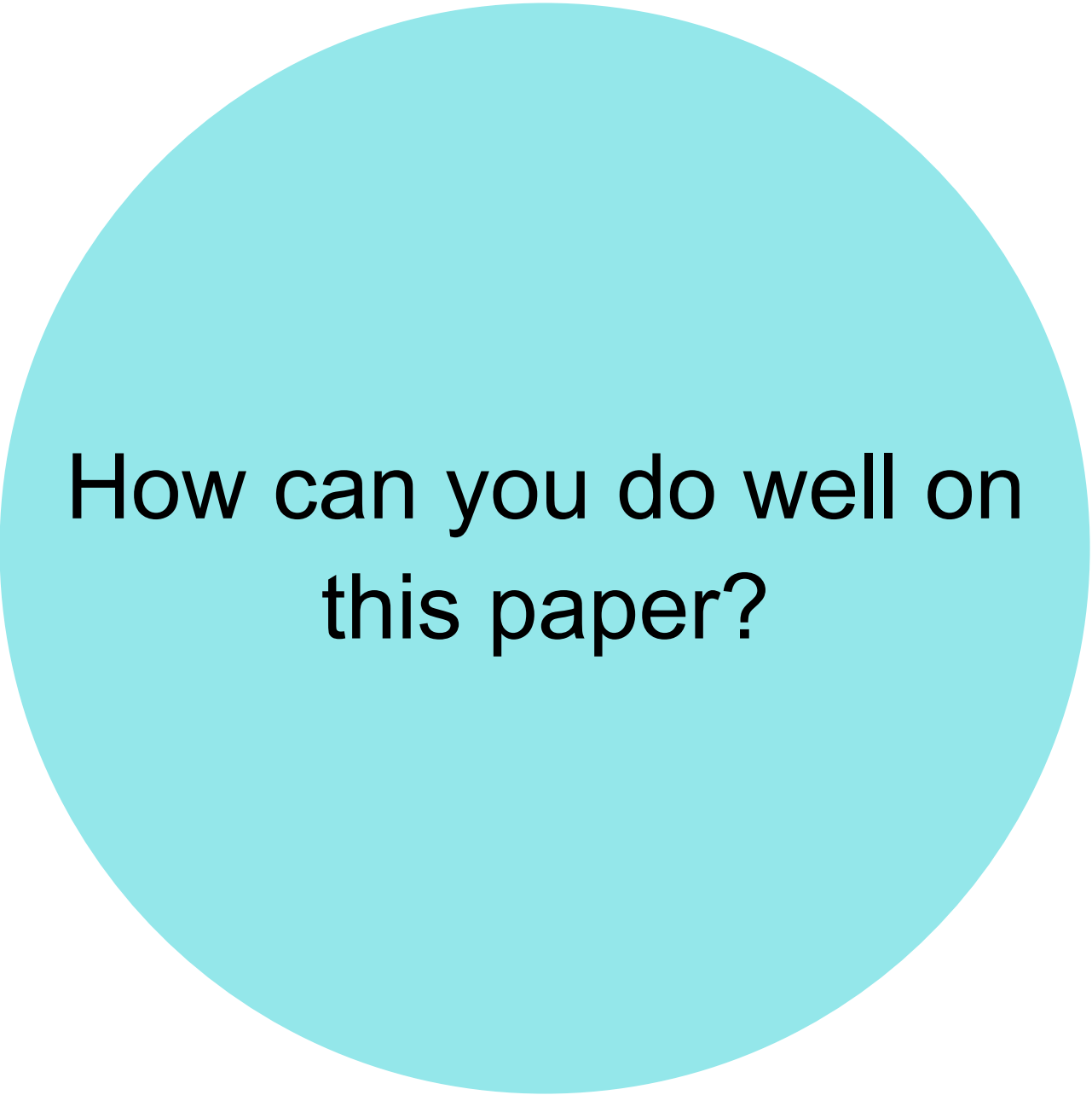
Factors

attitudes in society; individuals and institutions (Church and government); and science and technology.

individuals and institutions (Church and government); science and technology; and attitudes in society.

governments and individuals; science, technology and communications; and attitudes in society.

institutions (government and Church); religion; economic influences; and attitudes in society.

A large, solid light blue circle is centered on a white background. Inside the circle, the text "How can you do well on this paper?" is written in a black, sans-serif font, centered horizontally and vertically.

How can you do well on
this paper?

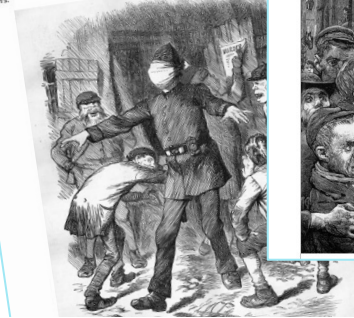
Understand a range of sources exist

Whitechapel, c1870–c1900:
crime, policing and the
inner city

2 Knowledge, selection and use of sources for historical enquiries

- Knowledge of local sources relevant to the period and issue, e.g. housing and employment records, council records and census returns, Charles Booth's survey, workhouse records, local police records, coroners' reports, photographs and London newspapers.
- Knowledge of national sources relevant to the period and issue, e.g. national newspapers, records of crimes and police investigations, Old Bailey records of trials and *Punch* cartoons.
- Recognition of the strengths and weaknesses of different types of source for specific enquiries.
- Framing of questions relevant to the pursuit of a specific enquiry.
- Selection of appropriate sources for specific investigations.

Source A: A cartoon published in *Punch* magazine, 22 September 1888. The title 'Man's Buff' refers to a children's game where one person is blindfolded and tries to find the others.



Source A: An artist's impression of a scene in the Whitechapel district of London in 1888. It was printed in the *Penny Illustrated Paper*, a cheap weekly newspaper. The police constable is from H Division. The building behind him is a police station.



Source A: From *The People of the Abyss* by Jack London, 1903. Jack London was an American writer who spent time living among the poor in Whitechapel. Homeless poor people could stay overnight in a workhouse casual ward in return for completing work. Here Jack London is describing a conversation about a casual ward.

I was told that after a cold bath, I would be given bread and skilly. Skilly is made from oatmeal stirred into hot water. Then I would be sent directly to bed. I would get up at half past five in the morning and breakfast would be the same meal – bread and skilly.

Then I would have to do my work. I would be locked up in a cell to pick oakum*, or to clean and scrub, or to break stones. My friend said, 'I don't have to break stones; I'm old, you see. But they'll make you do it because you're young and strong.'

'Then comes dinner,' he went on, 'bread, cheese, and cold water. Then you finish your work, eat the same as before, and then bed. At six o'clock next morning you're let out, provided you've finished your work.'

* pick oakum – picking out tar from old ropes

Source B: From *Colour of London*



Have secure chronological understanding

Medicine in Britain,
c1250–present

Black Death

**The Royal
Society**

**Creation of
the NHS**

**Germ
Theory**

medieval

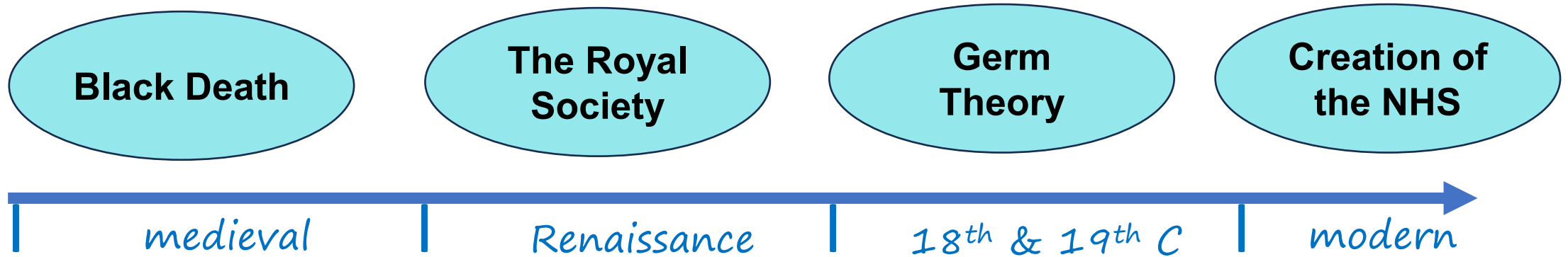
Renaissance

18th & 19th C

modern

Have secure chronological understanding

Medicine in Britain,
c1250–present



Know the terminology

Migrants in Britain,
c800–present

voluntary

migration

forced

temporary

internal

Other key vocabulary for this option includes:

- alien
- asylum seeker
- Christendom
- civil liberties
- colony
- colour bar
- Commonwealth
- conquest
- context
- Danelaw
- decolonisation
- denizen; letters of denization
- discrimination
- empire
- enslaved
- entrepreneur
- foreigner
- Huguenot
- immigration
- industrialisation
- integration
- internal migration
- invasion
- migration: economic, forced, temporary, voluntary
- monarchy
- pogroms
- prejudice
- privateering
- Protestant
- racism
- refugee
- settlement
- stereotype
- Stranger
- urbanisation

Language to explain change and continuity

Crime and Punishment in
Britain, c1000–present

- The abolition of the death penalty;

Speed	Whether it was a good thing	How much it changed	How important it was
Gradual Slow Fast Swift Rapid Slight Steady	Momentous Great Frightening Fantastic Violent Beneficial Just/fair	Significant Huge Small Widespread Revolution Drastic Barely	Insignificant Influential Immense Minor Vital Crucial Partial

Know your stuff!

Crime and Punishment in Britain, c1000–present

c1500–c1700: Crime and punishment in early modern England	
1 Nature and changing definitions of criminal activity	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Continuity and change in the nature of crimes against the person, property and authority, including heresy and treason.• New definitions of crime in the sixteenth century: vagabondage and witchcraft.
2 The nature of law enforcement and punishment	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The role of the authorities and local communities in law enforcement, including town watchmen.• The continued use of corporal and capital punishment; the introduction of transportation and the start of the Bloody Code.
3 Case studies	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• The Gunpowder Plotters, 1605: their crimes and punishment.• Key individual: Matthew Hopkins and the witch-hunts of 1645–47. The reasons for their intensity; the punishment of those convicted.

Witchcraft

What is it?
Who was involved?
Why did the trials intensify?
What was their punishment?

A summary of the answers

- It was...
- Matthew Hopkins
- ...
- ...

Matthew Hopkins

Other revision tips



Pearson Edexcel GCSEs History (9–1) from 2016

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/subjects/history.html>

CATEGORIES

- ☐ Specification and sample assessments (14)
- ☐ Exam materials (353)
- ☒ Teaching and learning materials (195)

Student support



Top revision tips for students: Summer 2025 onwards

Introduction

With the summer exam series just around the corner, these are some useful revision tips for Pearson Edexcel GCSE History students, covering aspects of assessment that some students struggle to get to grips with.

We've made some small changes to the assessment model, starting in Summer 2025.

- Extra time on each paper:** you will be given an extra 5 mins on Paper 1, 5 mins on Paper 2, and 10 mins on Paper 3. Use the extra time in the exam hall to think and plan your answers – you aren't expected to write more!
- Splitting up opening questions:** on Paper 1 and Paper 2B, you will now be asked to describe **one** key feature each of two separate topics, and on Paper 2P, you will now be asked to explain **one** consequence each of two separate events or developments.
- Choice of explain why questions on Paper 3:** you will now have a choice of two questions for Paper 3 Q2 Explain why.
- Renumbering on Paper 2B:** the question numbering will now be Q1a, Q1b, Q2, Q3/4. (This is a tidying-up exercise.)
- Language amendments:** we've changed a few terms which are considered outdated and problematic. Only a few options are affected: the main changes are from 'Plains Indians' to 'Indigenous peoples', and from 'slaves' to 'enslaved people'. We will gloss the term 'Indigenous peoples' on any questions where it appears, to remind you that we previously used the term 'Plains Indians'. The American West is the option most affected – check with your teacher if you're unsure.

Make sure you know your stuff!

70% of the marks on your GCSE History exams are for knowledge and understanding so it's important that you know your topics well. Evidence shows that increased confidence in using and applying knowledge helps students to tackle questions in exams. Try creating revision flash cards and mind maps to help you to understand and memorise content and make sure familiarise yourself with key words from the specification and textbooks.

If you find part of a topic complicated, try talking it through with someone else, like a friend or member of your family. You could even give them a copy of the textbook or revision guide and get them to ask you some questions in the process. This will help ensure you have a confident grasp of the content. Another idea for challenging content is to read around the topic so don't just rely on your class notes – try reading a history website, watch a YouTube video or listen to a podcast.

When revising content try to think about it in terms of the questions you will be asked on that paper. For example, on the Paper 2 period study a lot of the question types focus on consequence or importance, so you need to be able to think about and explain the content on this paper in that way.

Dates and chronology are important

Try to understand the correct dates and order in which things happened – you can do this by creating basic timelines. In the Paper 1 thematic studies you need to have a good understanding of the terminology of the different time periods in history such as early modern, renaissance, modern etc. When answering a question in the exam pay close attention to any dates in the question – you need to make sure your response stays within the correct dates because you can't get any credit from examiners for content which is outside of these. Many students lose valuable time in exams by spending too much time scene-setting or describing later events which are outside of the time frame of the question.



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