Pearson Edexcel

GCSE (9–1) History

Guidance on Paper 1

Thematic study and Historic environment

Updated February 2025

Contents

Edexcel Paper 1 Guide

This updated Paper 1 Guide is the first in a series of three paper guides for the Edexcel GCSE (9–1) History specification. These guides are designed to complement the **Getting Started Guide**, by recapping on the content and assessment requirements before going on to consider approaches to teaching the respective paper. This support is aimed at teachers who are new to this paper, although the ideas are relevant to everyone teaching this course.

Please also refer to the **topic booklets** for the Paper 1 options: each booklet includes an overview of the topic, content guidance and exemplification, a student timeline and information on free and paid-for resources.

Specification Issue 5 (2025 exam series)

Issue 5 of the specification was released in June 2024. It is an update for students who are assessed in 2025. The changes in Issue 5 of the Specification are to the assessment model. There is more time overall for the exam papers, along with more accessible opening questions and optionality added to Paper 3. It also includes the changes to language use which were introduced in Issue 4 with the intention of using more accurate and sensitive language without changing the content. Due to the introduction of Specification Issue 6, Issue 5 will only affect students assessed in 2025. For more information on the amendments to the assessment model are, and specifically how they affect Paper 1, please refer to Mark Battye's **subject advisor update of 26 Feb 2024**, or to the relevant support materials detailed in the **GCSE History summary guidance on changes for 2025 and 2026**.

Specification Issue 6 (2026 exam series onwards)

Issue 6 of the specification was released in August 2024 and is for students who will be assessed in 2026. This Issue includes the changes made in the assessment model in Issue 5, as well as amendments to the content following a thorough review. The amendments have not added content; generally, they clarify content, with the aim of helping teachers to focus on what to teach or adjust the order of content to help with the flow of coverage. For more information on what the amendments to the content for Paper 1 are and why they were introduced, please refer to Mark Battye's **subject advisor update of 14 June 2024**, or to the relevant support materials detailed in the **GCSE History summary guidance on changes for 2025 and 2026**.

Students assessed in 2025	Issue 5 of the specification
Students assessed from 2026	Issue 6 of the specification

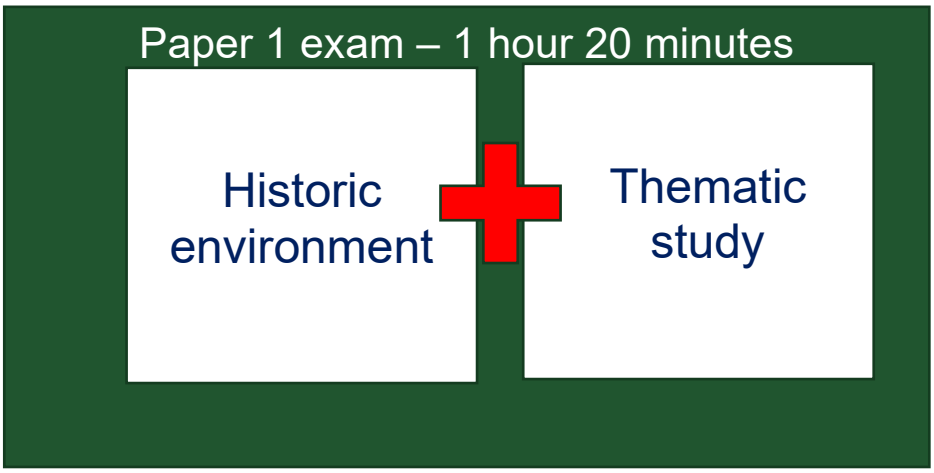
Section 1: Getting to know Paper 1

The current requirements for GCSE History specifications mean that all courses include a Thematic study and a Historic environment study.

How is Paper 1 structured?

Paper 1 consists of two sections. Section A is a Historic environment study, and Part B is a Thematic study. The two choices are linked, meaning that the Historic environment comprises the study of a specific location at a particular time which is drawn from the scope of the Thematic study. For example, selecting the topic 'Crime and Punishment in Britain, c1250–present' includes the Historic environment 'Whitechapel, c1870–c1900: crime, policing and the inner city'.

Both the Thematic study and the Historic environment are assessed in the same exam paper. The whole paper has a time limit of 1 hour 20 minutes.



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

In each option, the Thematic study (Section B of Paper 1) carries 32 marks, with a further 4 marks for spelling, punctuation, grammar and use of specialist vocabulary, while the Historic environment (Section A of Paper 1) carries 16 marks.

What skills does this paper develop?

The study of history often focuses heavily on change, but the study of a longer timescale allows students to understand that change can occur at different rates and that change can co-exist with continuity. For example, whilst in the nineteenth century the scientific awareness of bacteria was being developed, older ideas of religious or moral explanations for disease continued to be widely accepted. Students will appreciate the role of factors which both prompt and influence change, but they will also develop an understanding that 'change' is not always the same as 'progress' and that key changes may be dependent on long-term developments while other aspects were not affected and continued the same.

Students will gain a better understanding of the importance of social attitudes and values and gain a deeper understanding that a factor may play a significant role in one time period but a minor role in another. These are all important aspects of historical understanding which are difficult to develop when studying the shorter timescales of the depth and period topics. It is only the Thematic study which requires students to study change and continuity over a period of several centuries. The Thematic study can also help students to develop a sense of chronology and a mental framework which will help them to appreciate the time periods being studied for other papers: the British depth studies cover either medieval or early modern British history; the Modern depth studies cover twentieth-century non-British history; and the Period studies cover British and non-British history from the early modern period to the twentieth century.

For the Historic environment students learn to critically investigate. Instead of simply learning about the situation and events, students are challenged to evaluate sources, identifying their value for carrying out a historical investigation and rooting them in their contextual knowledge of the specific location and period in history. For example, in Option 10, students will evaluate sources in the context of London during the later Victorian period, considering the development of the police investigative techniques, the attitudes of the media and the population and key social issues, such as anti-Semitism, socialism and poverty. Students will also learn to think beyond the evidence that they have before them, by constructing questions and identifying potential sources which could be used to further an historical investigation.

Building your course

One feature of the Edexcel GCSE (9–1) specification is that there are no prohibited combinations of papers, meaning that you can choose your preferred option of Paper 1 without affecting the available choices for Paper 2 and Paper 3.

This gives you the flexibility to create a combination of units which you will enjoy teaching, using your teaching experience, subject knowledge and available resources, while at the same time ensuring you can create a syllabus which will interest your students.

When choosing, it is a good idea to consider how the Paper 1 topic will fit in with your wider curriculum. In combination with your other choices of topics, you can create a course which gives your students a breadth of historical knowledge. You can also create links between options. For example, some teachers might like to combine Paper 1 Option 12, Warfare and British society, with either the Paper 2 Period study P4 Superpower relations and the Cold War or P5 Conflict in the Middle East. The Thematic study focuses on the nature of warfare and impact on society in Britain, whereas the Period studies focus on international relations between countries which often involved using warfare, or the threat of warfare, to achieve goals. Paper 1 Option 10, Crime and punishment in Britain, which studies the maintenance

of law and order in Britain in relation to crime, has an interesting link to the British depth study options which all address the concept of royal political control over Britain, and Period study P2 British America or P3 The American West, which address the challenges of controlling groups of people in North America in the nineteenth century. Paper 1 Option 13, Migrants in Britain, which has a focus on the reasons that migrants were attracted to Britain and the impact of migration on Britain, could be linked to Period Study P3 The American West, which focuses on similar themes in the history of the USA. Such links can make for an interesting combination of units.

Another consideration is how the choices fit with your wider curriculum at KS3 and KS5. Whilst choices should not be used to narrow down the curriculum, it can also be helpful to students if the choices they study at KS3 give them a relevant knowledge base and historical awareness that helps them to grasp the chronological and thematic content they will study at GCSE. Similarly, well-chosen GCSE units can provide a starting point for students who will continue their studies into GCE AS and A level History topics.

Section A: Historic environment requirement

Note – In this guide, the sections are presented in the order in which they appear in the exam paper, but this does not imply the order in which they should be taught. There is no required order for teaching the content of this paper. It is likely that some teachers will choose to teach Section B (the Thematic section) before Section A due to the chronological relationship between the two sections.

The DfE GCSE Subject Content requirement for Historic environment studies is given below.

> 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. This study may be linked to any other part of the course or may stand alone.

In addition, the guidance requires that at least 40% of the overall GCSE assessment should be British history.

Paper 1 meets this requirement of GCSE History by offering the following four Historic environment options, of which students study **one**:

- Whitechapel, c1870–c1900: crime, policing and the inner city
- The British sector of the Western Front, 1914–18: injuries, treatment and the trenches
- London and the Second World War, 1939–45
- Notting Hill, c1948–c1970

Each of these topics covers a particular site in a specific historical context. *Note that the choice of Historic environment is tied to the choice of Thematic study in Section B.*

Because the Historic environment is embedded in the Thematic study (section B), students will have a contextual sense of the significance of the environment during that period. The choice of Historic environments has been based upon relevance and suitability, but also on the expectation that students will find the situation and events interesting and that teachers will not struggle to obtain teaching resources.

How does this work in practice?

Each Historic environment has a specific geographic area and historical context tied to named features and developments there. The part of the specification covering the Historic environment is divided into two sections. The first section, containing five bullet points, outlines the content that students should know. Exam questions will be related to the content in these bullet points. The content is fairly precise because it needs to be specific to that

place and period. Students will not need to learn content in depth, but they will need to use their knowledge of the key features to gain an understanding of what made that time and place so significant. Contextual knowledge is also required to help them to evaluate the usefulness of sources. They will know if the account or image is presenting a typical scene or an unusual event, and they will understand references within the sources which are indicated in the specification content for each option, such as H Division (option 10), RAMC (option 11), Anderson shelter (option 12) or the 1959 Caribbean Carnival (option 13).

Since the assessment is primarily based upon source investigation skills, the specification also outlines the types of sources that students should be familiar with and the skills that are needed. For example, students studying Whitechapel would be expected to have an awareness of Charles Booth's survey, amongst other sources mentioned. Having an awareness of the relevant types of sources from the specification is particularly important for Question 2(b). This question asks students to create an enquiry question to follow up a detail contained in a source on the exam paper and identify a further potential source which could help with the enquiry. An awareness of the sources in the specification should allow students to move away from generic and undeveloped suggestions, such as a diary, letter or newspaper. For example, students should be aware that H Division police would keep records of events in Whitechapel (option 10), that medical articles would record pioneering techniques (option 11), that government propaganda could be misleading, and newspapers censored during the Blitz (option 12), or that publications produced by the West Indian community in Notting Hill are likely to reflect community interests and issues (option 13).

An example of the specification for a Historic environment study is shown below:

The historic environment	
1 Whitechapel, c1870–c1900: crime, policing and the inner city	• The local context of Whitechapel. The problems of housing and overcrowding. Attempts to improve housing: the Peabody Estate. Provision for the poor in the Whitechapel workhouses. The lack of employment opportunities and level of poverty. Links between the environment and crime: the significance of Whitechapel as an inner city area of poverty, discontent and crime. • The prevalence of lodging houses and pubs creating a fluctuating population without ties to the community. The impact of changing patterns of migration: the settlement of migrants from Ireland and Eastern Europe, and the increase in Jewish migration during the 1880s. The growth of socialism and anarchism in Whitechapel. • The organisation of policing in Whitechapel. The work of H division and the difficulties of policing the slum area of Whitechapel, the rookeries, alleys and courts. Problems caused by alcohol, prostitution, protection rackets, gangs, violent demonstrations and attacks on Jewish people. The Whitechapel Vigilance Committee. • Investigative policing in Whitechapel: developments in techniques of detective investigation, including the use of sketches, photographs and interviews; problems caused by the need for cooperation between the Metropolitan Police, the City of London Police and Scotland Yard. Dealing with the crimes of Jack the Ripper and the added problems caused by the media reporting of the 'Ripper' murders. • The national and regional context: the working of the Metropolitan Police, the quality of police recruits, the role of the 'beat constable'. The development of CID, the role of the Home Secretary and of Sir Charles Warren, public attitudes towards the police.
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.

Each bullet points covers one section of the content for the Historic environment.

Specific historical events or concepts that should be taught are mentioned.

Specific examples and language that students need to know are mentioned. These could be used to answer a question with a broader focus or be the focus of a question.

Examples of sources that students should be aware of, and the analytical skills required in the assessment are identified here.

How is Section A assessed?

AO1 (25%)	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the key features and characteristics of the periods studied.	Knowledge of key features and characteristics of the period is assessed in the 4-mark opening question (2 × 2 marks). Points-based marking.
AO3 (75%)	Analyse, evaluate and use sources (contemporary to the period) to make substantiated judgements, in the context of historical events studied.	The 8-mark 'how useful' question requires students to show their ability to analyse and evaluate the utility of two contemporary sources in relation to a specific historical investigation. Level of response marking. Additionally, the 4-mark 'follow up' question assesses the ability of students to analyse the source and to frame historical questions suitable for carrying out the same specific historical investigation. Points-based marking.

Section A contains two main questions, with question 2 split into two parts. Candidates should answer Q1, Q2(a) and Q2(b).

Q1 (a) Describe **one** feature of… (2)

(b) Describe **one** feature of… (2)

(Total: 4 marks)

- This question assesses the candidates' ability to identify features of the period.
- Parts 1(a) and 1(b) will be about two different content areas, with students assessed on providing one feature of each.
- Marks are awarded for identifying the feature and for adding relevant supporting information.

Q2(a) 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 marks)

- This question assesses the candidates' ability to evaluate the utility of a contemporary source in relation to a specified enquiry.
- The sources could be written or visual but at least one of them will be written. They will include provenance information to help candidates to assess utility.

Q2(b) How could you follow up on Source [A/B] to find out more about…

In your answer, you must give the question you would ask and the type of source you could use.

(4 marks)

- Candidates are assessed on their ability to frame historical questions, and to identify sources which would be useful for answering the question.
- The question paper layout has four stages which are designed to help the student access all the marks by identifying what they need to include.
- The question should be relevant to the area of enquiry and the source specified in the question.

Section B: Thematic study requirement

The DfE History GCSE Subject Content requirement for Thematic studies is given below.

> 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 aspects should include (but are not restricted to) some or all of the following: culture, economics, politics, religion, science, technology and war.

In addition, the requirements state that the Thematic study should cover history from the following three time-periods:

> Medieval (500–1500), Early Modern (1450–1750) and Modern (1700–present day)

The guidance also requires that at least 40% of the overall GCSE assessment should be British history.

Paper 1 meets this requirement of GCSE History by offering the following four Thematic study options, of which students study **one**:

- Option 10: Crime and Punishment in Britain, c1000–present
- Option 11: Medicine in Britain, c1250–present
- Option 12: Warfare and British society, c1250–present
- Option 13: Migrants in Britain, c800–present

Note that the choice of Thematic study is tied to the choice of Historic environment.

How does this work in practice?

Each Thematic study is divided into four time periods which cover the chronological range of the topic. These are c1250–c1500 (options 10 and 13 start at 1000 and 800 respectively), c1500–c1700, c1700–c1900 and c1900–present. Students will study the key features of the topic within those time frames, but in doing so they will also study the change and continuity across and between periods.

To help students to consider the topic over the extended time frame, the content of each option is organised into two Thematic strands which are consistent through all four time periods. These strands are:

Crime and Punishment in Britain, c1000–present	1. Nature and changing definitions of criminal activity 2. The nature of law enforcement and punishment
Medicine in Britain, c1250–present	1. Ideas about the cause of disease and illness 2. Approaches to prevention and treatment
Warfare and British society, c1250–present	1. The nature of warfare 2. The experience of war
Migrants in Britain, c800–present	1. The context for migration 2. The experience and impact of migrants

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 and that must be 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 Crime and punishment, Medicine, Warfare or Migration 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. Note: the factors identified are specific to each option. Teaching should cover the factors that are given in the specification.

In Crime and punishment, Medicine and Warfare, the role of individuals is indicated as a factor or change and as a basis for some case studies. In Migration, key individuals are not named on the specification, in the way that they are named in the other options; however, the experiences of specific migrants may be used to exemplify the strands and case studies and can be used to expand the diversity of the topic. Also, in Migration, in the strands and in some of the case studies, the geographical origin of migrant groups identified has been kept broad to encourage schools to develop local examples or specific examples where relevant or appropriate (see p.5 of the topic booklet).

Factors in the Thematic study

The factors are defined for each individual option, and their influence (in hindering or advancing change) should be explored as appropriate when the defined content is taught. For example, in Crime and punishment, in the period 1500–1700, the influence of the Church is one factor which is significant when approaches to witchcraft are taught; in Medicine, in 1900–present, the influence of science and technology was a key factor in the improvement of the diagnosis of disease; in Warfare, industrialisation during the nineteenth century had a significant impact on the nature of warfare and also on training; in Migration, religious change in Britain played a role in the arrival of Huguenot migrants in Britain.

Case studies in the Thematic study

In the specification content for the Thematic study are specific examples, or case studies, which 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. Every case study will not be capable of illustrating all factors and all elements of the content strands, but they should be explored as appropriate.

For example, in 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. The case studies also provide opportunities to make detailed comparisons over time. For example, the case studies in Warfare 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 Migration, the case studies from each period provide opportunities to compare across periods the experience and impact of migrants.

Although the case studies are important, they are not standalone examples. It is understandable that students will use certain events and memorable stories as hooks – indeed, that is partly the purpose of the case studies named in the specification. However, the temptation to respond to a question by simply describing a case study or to produce a prepared answer will likely lead to creating answers which contain information which is relevant to the topic but that do not answer the question set. The nature of this paper means that students should know how key examples illustrate the strands in the specification for each period rather than relying on knowing just the case studies in depth.

An example section of the specification content for Medicine is presented below to highlight some of the key features mentioned above:

c1500–c1700: The Medical Renaissance in England	
1 Ideas about the cause of disease and illness	• Continuity and change in explanations of the cause of disease and illness. A scientific approach, including the work of Thomas Sydenham in improving diagnosis. The influence of the printing press and the work of the Royal Society on the transmission of ideas.
2 Approaches to prevention and treatment	• Continuity in approaches to prevention, treatment and care in the community and in hospitals. • Change in care and treatment; improvements in medical training and the influence in England of the work of Vesalius.
3 Case studies	• Key individual: William Harvey and the discovery of the circulation of the blood. • Dealing with the Great Plague in London (1665): approaches to treatment and attempts to prevent its spread.
c1700–c1900: Medicine in eighteenth- and nineteenth-century Britain	
1 Ideas about the cause of disease and illness	• Continuity and change in explanations of the cause of disease and illness. The influence in Britain of Pasteur's Germ Theory and Koch's work on microbes.
2 Approaches to prevention and treatment	• The extent of change in care and treatment: improvements in hospital care and the influence of Nightingale. The impact of anaesthetics and antiseptics on surgery. • New approaches to prevention: the development and use of vaccinations and the Public Health Act (1875).
3 Case studies	• Key individual: Jenner and the development of vaccination. • Fighting Cholera in London (1854); attempts to prevent its spread; the significance of Snow and the Broad Street pump.

Each section of the specification content covers one chronological period of history.

The content is organised into strands which are consistent across the periods covered, helping students to see the bigger picture.

Some of the content is quite broad, such as improvements in hospital care…

…but some of the content is quite specific, such as the Public Health Act 1875.

Each period has specific case studies which should be covered. These could be the focus of an exam question or used to address a broader question.

How is Section B assessed?

The Paper 1 Thematic study is assessed on the following assessment objectives:

AO1 (44%)	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the key features and characteristics of the periods studied.	• The opening 4-mark question to Section B will assess the ability of the student to analyse the second-historical concept of either similarity or difference.
		• Two important second-order historical concepts in Section B are causation and change, assessed in the 12-mark 'explain why' question.
		• Additionally, the 16-mark essay question may target any second-order historical concepts in relation to the development of the thematic study over time, including:
		  ○ change and/or continuity
		  ○ consequence
		  ○ similarity and difference
		  ○ significance
		  ○ causation

AO2 (56%)	Explain and analyse historical events and periods studied using second-order historical concepts.	

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Section B contains four questions. Candidates should answer Q3, Q4 and **either** Q5 **or** Q6.

Q3 Explain one way in which … in the years (1st period) was **similar/different** to … in the years (2nd period).

(4 marks)

- This question will address either similarity or difference (in bold).
- It will always compare two different periods of time, for example differences in patterns of migration in the periods 1500–1700 and 1900–present.

Q4 Explain why…

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

- stimulus point 1
- stimulus point 2

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

(12 marks)

- This question targets causation and the process of change. Answers will explain the reasons for a specified event or development.
- It will always cover at least 100 years.
- Two stimulus points are provided to help candidates recognise the context of the question. Students do not have to use them, but answers should cover three aspects of content.

Q5 or Q6 'Statement'. How far do you agree? Explain your answer.

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

- stimulus point 1
- stimulus point 2

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

(16 marks, plus 4 marks for SPaG)

- Students are asked to address how far they agree with a statement, by considering a range of information as evidence and reaching a judgement based upon valid criteria.
- The minimum period for the question is one full time period from the specification, for example 1900–present. However, questions may ask about much longer time periods and include more that one of the periods from the specification.
- Two stimulus points are provided to help candidates. Students do not have to use them, but answers should cover three aspects of content.
- Four additional marks are available for spelling, punctuation, grammar and the use of specialist terminology (SPaG).

Section 2: Teaching Paper 1

This section is intended to offer suggestions on how to approach teaching Paper 1. The suggestions made and examples given have been provided by an experienced former head of department to help address potential problems and are not intended to be definitive approaches to how the topics should be taught. There is no one 'right way' to teach GCSE History; nor is there one 'right way' for students to answer exam questions. The author of this guide has not seen live materials, and any topics used for exemplification are based on questions taken from past papers, sample assessment materials or specimen papers.

Thinking chronologically and thematically from the outset

For many students, a significant challenge in Paper 1 is the range of time covered in the topic. Seeing change and continuity in the theme through approximately 1000 years requires a clear focus of the chronological connection, and an ability to distinguish between the four time periods in the topic. Students also need to understand the wider chronological scope to help them to understand the significance of the Historic environment.

Therefore, it is a good idea to ensure that students have an overview of the overall time frame before they have the chance to become lost in the specific topic content. Here are some practical suggestions of how you could do this when you start teaching the option.

A big overview	It can be a good idea to start by spending a little time on the overview of the topic. This would include identifying the four time periods and the principal 'big ideas' over the period. For example, with the Medicine option this could include the big themes about treatment and prevention of disease. For the Migration option, this could include an awareness of the scale of migration in relation to population size across the time periods or the trends in geographical origin of migrants in different time periods. This could be done in the form of an illustrated timeline, perhaps divided into four sections. This will help students to have a basic conceptual idea of the big themes of the period and will help them to follow the chronological progression of the unit. Alternatively, students could have a card sort task of main events or developments in the course, which they sort into themes. The **topic booklets** provide good overviews for each Thematic study. **Differentiation:** For lower-attaining students, simpler thematic ideas could be given. For higher-attaining students, the themes could be colour-coded to indicate change and continuity.
Comparison of start and end of period	Another way of embedding the topic is to make a comparison of the period by looking at the situation at the start and the end. Students could be given a basic summary of the situation in Britain related to the theme at the start and end of the period. For example, for the Crime option this could be a basic summary of the types of crime, methods of law enforcement and common punishments in both c1000 and the present day.

	On a double page of an exercise book, students write parallel facts on each page, possibly with a symbol or simple illustration, so that the left side describes the situation in c1000 whilst the right side makes equivalent statements for the twenty-first century. **Differentiation:** Weaker pupils could be given the information already broken into subheadings with short descriptions and asked to summarise the main changes into 2 sentences. Alternatively, they could be presented with contrasting images and base their judgements on these instead of text. Higher attaining pupils could be given information that is in continuous prose and includes other evidence like graphs and charts.

Teaching in practice:

James Wilkinson is Head of History at Abbey Grange, Church of England Academy. For Paper 1, this centre teaches Option 11: Medicine in Britain, c1250–present.

We teach Paper 1 chronologically, working from medieval to modern medicine, and then cover the Western Front Historic environment at the end. We teach Paper 1 at the start of the GCSE course. Currently this is in Year 9 as part of a three-year GCSE, but were we to return to a two-year GCSE we would still teach Paper 1 first.

One challenge to teaching Paper 1 is the breadth of knowledge required. We approach this challenge by regular knowledge retrieval tasks, as well as homework and tests that cover content not currently being taught. We make good use of knowledge organisers to help embed the knowledge.

We teach the Historic environment after the Thematic study. We teach the content by focusing on the source skills required for this paper. We address sources in class by getting students to identify two points from the content and then use the students' contextual knowledge to judge if they are accurate or typical. Then we identify two relevant details from the provenance using the model NOP (nature, origin, purpose), and relate these to how useful the source is. We encourage students to focus on how the source is useful rather than the limitations to usefulness.

Common barriers and pitfalls

General issues in Paper 1

Issue	Suggestions for addressing
Confusing the chronology A chronological awareness is important, so that examples in date frames are addressed. For example, in Question 3, students need to compare two specific time periods, and in Questions 5 and 6, the questions will have a specific time frame.	• Regularly use timelines in lesson. This could be laminated on desks, on the cover of exercise books, or on the classroom wall. • Make links between past events and the topic being studied to help students with chronological framework. • Be consistent in the language that you use to label the four time periods (e.g. early modern Britain), including the language used in the Specification to refer to time periods. • Use centuries (e.g. eighteenth century) and hundreds (e.g. 1700s) in class discussion and tasks, perhaps supported by a diagram on the classroom wall.
Historical terminology There are key examples of terminology that students should know. More is covered under the heading 'Key terminology' on page 26 below. Having a good grasp of key terminology is important for identifying the aim of a question or being precise in explanation of the content.	• At the start of the course, identify fundamental terminology such as key factors. In the **topic booklets** you will find helpful key terms lists. • Be consistent in use of terminology, for example the word 'institutions', or 'authorities'. • In written work, have a word 'hit list' on the board of 3–6 words which must be included in the answer. Students could underline or highlight these in the written work to show where they have been used.
Adding content to the specification While giving students a full understanding of the topic is important and teachers may have interesting examples that they like to use, there is a risk that, in adding many examples beyond the scope of the course, especially non-British examples, students will become overloaded. This can be a common danger in using resources that were originally designed for different, possibly older specifications of GCSE History.	• When adapting old teaching resources or materials not specific for the course, avoid the use of examples beyond the scope of the course. • Since the topic is British history, it is a good idea to avoid adding unnecessary additional examples from the wider world that are not in the specification. For example, the Vietnam War is not relevant for a study of Warfare and British society. • Reviewing the changes made for Issue 6 of the specification (first assessment summer 2026), will help to avoid teaching unnecessary content.
Making generalised comments Some students make very generalised statements, such as 'punishments were harsh' or 'the Church was involved in crime and punishment'. Whilst these	• Encourage students to use time frames, examples and technical language to make statements more precise.

may contain some truth, generalised statements are less likely to lead to high-quality analysis or answer the specific question set.	• When marking, highlight generalised sentences in a specific colour and ask students to re-write those lines. • Have a list of common generalised words like 'punishment' on the wall with options to use to clarify the point (e.g. execution, corporal punishment, fines etc.).
Poor time management Some students do not balance their time well between the two sections, or between questions. An example of where students can use the available time badly is spending too long on the Historic environment, especially Question 2(a), and also on Question 4 in the Thematic study, meaning that they have insufficient time to address Question 5/6 completely.	• Encourage students to use the answer space, for example on the shorter questions, and practise with pages laid out like the exam paper. • Make sure that your students understand that they are not required to fill the full space available for each question. The space is intended to allow space for planning as well as answering. • Although there are no set structures, ensure that the plans you are teaching are manageable. For example, there is no requirement to add a contextual introduction or final judgement to Q4 in the Thematic study, and no requirement to compare the two sources in Q2(a) in the Historic environment to decide which is more useful. • Remind your students that, on Q2(a), detailed answers focusing on the content of the sources cannot reach Level 3, whereas shorter answers including a consideration of content, provenance and contextual knowledge may score more highly. • Emphasise to your students the importance of spending sufficient time on Q5/6, since this is worth 16 marks plus the additional 4 SPaG marks.

Section A: Historic environment

Issue	Suggestions for addressing
Not using contextual knowledge The Historic environment Question 2(a) is marked on AO3, which includes the words 'in the context of historical events studied', and therefore the use of contextual knowledge is implicit in the development of analysis and evaluation of the sources. The Level of Response mark scheme indicates that this knowledge must be relevant and linked to the source evaluation.	• When covering key examples in the specification content, have the habit in class of getting students to identify two key features in discussion. This acts as a recap but also helps students to address Q1. • When addressing sources, have guide questions like 'what was happening at this period in time?', 'was this the same everywhere?' and 'were there any groups of people who would have a different opinion?' This can help students to think critically about the source content and origins.

Failing to focus on the enquiry in the question Questions 2(a) and 2(b) have an enquiry that relates to a specific aspect of the specification content. Answers should address the enquiry in the question, not aspects of the wider topic.	• When analysing sources, keep the enquiry in focus rather than simply making generic analysis of routine features like nature, origin and purpose. • Divide a page in two, stick the source in the middle. On each half of the page, analyse the same source with two different enquiry foci, and compare the conclusions that are reached about how useful the source is.
Making generic evaluations of the source utility There are some generic conclusions that students sometimes rely upon instead of evaluating the specific source they are handling. Common, generalised assumptions include: • eyewitness accounts are more useful than non-eyewitness accounts; • photographs are accurate because the scene happened; • newspapers inevitably sensationalise events.	• Present students with three sources of the same type, for example three newspaper articles. To evaluate them individually will require seeing beyond the basic reliability issues of that source type. • Present students with a source that they may assume would be accurate or reliable, like a parliamentary document, quote in a personal diary, eyewitness report, etc. but which has clear inaccuracy. Students should explain why this source is inaccurate by considering other explanations.
Confusing reliability and utility The focus of Question 2(a) is utility. Whilst reliability can be an indication of utility, it does not automatically follow that a less reliable source is less useful in relation to the enquiry being addressed. Some students describe sources as 'biased' without supporting this judgement, and then assume that 'biased' evidence is unreliable and therefore not useful. In some enquiry foci, a less reliable, more exaggerated source could even be judged as being of greater use if it demonstrates how a topic was presented or what people believed. For example, in considering morale in London during the Blitz, a photograph that has clearly been staged to improve morale, and could be judged as less reliable, could still be considered very useful for showing how important the issue of raising morale was at the time.	• If using reliability as a criterion for utility, encourage students to make a judgement about how far this affects the usefulness, rather than seeing the assessment of reliability as the last step. • Suggest to students alternative ways of expressing the idea of 'bias'. For example, is the source representative? Is it exaggerated? • Use non-history examples where an unreliable source could be considered useful, such as analysing an exaggerated quote by a student on social media complaining about a detention for an enquiry into reasons why some students do not enjoy school. • Ensure that, if you teach your students to answer Q2(a) using a structure or plan that includes concepts like NOP (nature, origin, purpose) or equivalent ways of approaching source evaluation, there is a step added to link the evaluation to usefulness. • If you use a formula like NOP, remember that students only need to cover one aspect of the provenance, not all three. The student will need to think about which aspect to include. You could periodically include a short exercise

	analysing source attribution, e.g. using different colours for nature, origin and purpose. • Remind students that the sources used are always contemporary, so the comment that a source is primary or from the time is not really assessing provenance, and the assumption that this makes it automatically reliable is not valid.
Not using valid examples of sources in Question 2(b) Question 2(b) should be viewed as a thought process with four steps: begin with a detail from the source that is relevant to the enquiry; ask a question related to the enquiry; then suggest a source that is relevant to the Historic environment and the enquiry being addressed; and explain how the information in the suggested source would answer the candidate's proposed question. The source should not be generic, such as 'newspapers' or 'diaries', but rather be a type of source that could potentially address the enquiry, for example 'arrest records from H Division of the Metropolitan police' or the diary of a participant in the first Notting Hill Carnival.	• Teach students to see the whole question as a package and consider the end idea, rather than starting with a detail with no plan to move forward. • Provide lists of possible sources, perhaps on a large bank of options on the wall or on the desk, to help students have something to choose from initially. • In pairs, give students a set of cards, each one with a different source type on it. Then name an enquiry question and get students to pick out a source that might be useful. This is especially helpful if there is more than one possible answer from the available cards. • Having completed the four steps of Q2(b) as a class or individually, change the focus of the enquiry which students are asked to investigate, and repeat the four steps. With a different enquiry focus, students will need to pick a different detail in the source and create a different question, meaning that they will likely need to choose a different source for the third step. This should help them to see how the choice of source for the third step is dependent on both the task enquiry focus, and the detail and question that they create.
Repeating the enquiry question as the last step of Question 2(b) A common problem is that in step 4 of Question 2(b) candidates simply paraphrase the question they set in step 2 as the answer. For example, if the question they chose was "I would ask why X?" then they might write for step 4 "This would tell me why X." Students should use step 4 to identify how the piece of evidence would answer the question, e.g. what would it tell them or show them that would respond to the question they set?	• To help students to think about the source, have subsidiary questions to discuss, like "what do you think would be in that source when you looked at it?" • When using sources in lesson, pose questions of the type created in step 2, and ask students how the source they are looking at answers this question.

Section B: Thematic study

Issue	Suggestions for addressing
Lacking examples to back up statements about change or continuity or reasons for development Since Questions 3, 4 and 5/6 assess AO1, students need to have precise examples of knowledge that they can use to support the change/continuity or development that is being discussed.	• In class discussion, when a pupil identifies a thematic change or feature, ask another pupil to back the point up with an example that shows (or disproves) this point. • Use highlighters to analyse model answers by identifying the main point, and the subsequent supporting detail. • Create a living graph, showing change in a theme, such as law enforcement, medical knowledge, tactics in battle, or reasons for migration, and label it with examples that support each phase. • This could be further developed by asking students to explain whether progress was constant.
Confusing the time periods covered The questions in the Thematic study have a specific time frame and focus on a specific aspect or topic. Students need to use examples that are relevant to the time period required, as knowledge not relevant to addressing the question will not be credited. Common points of confusion include: • the idea that prisons were used in the Middle Ages; • that ideas of miasma and the Four Humours were not believed by anyone after 1500; • that the Black Death (1348–49) and the Great Plague in London (1665) were the same thing; • that the English Civil Wars were in the Middle Ages.	• Have a timeline with clearly marked periods on the wall or available to students in lesson. • Make a revision card sort where students group ideas by time period. Include cards with the century numbers (e.g. fourteenth century) to group in the correct periods.
Using inconsistent similarities and differences Some students attempt to support the similarity or difference in Question 3 with examples which are not equivalent. For example, this could involve comparing a surgical treatment from one period with a prevention of disease from the second period or comparing a	• Have a card sort or matching task to help students pair equivalent examples from different periods. • Have a different 'washing line' safely strung over classroom or along wall for each main thematic concept, e.g. military tactics, with examples added to the various lines as they are learned. • Write the first half of an exam answer and ask students to pick an appropriate example to

military tactic in one period with a type of weapon introduced in another period.	complete the comparison. To differentiate, this could be with or without a multiple choice to pick from.
Limited chronological awareness Some students struggle to understand the chronological span. For example, Question 4 spans at least 100 years, and Questions 5 and 6 at least one named time period from the specification (and often longer). Since these questions require students to deploy three aspects of content to access the top of Level 3 and all of Level 4, it is important that they have examples to use from across the time period stated to facilitate this.	• Reverse the process of selecting examples. Make a timeline for a strand of change or development from, for example, c1500–1900 on the board, then set two similar questions with slightly different or even overlapping time frames, such as 1600–1800 and 1750–1900 and highlight on the time frame which examples are useful. • Make a plan for an answer which includes information from outside the time frame, and/or an obvious lack of coverage of the time period. Students should improve the plan. • Set questions without stimuli and list possible knowledge which is relevant. Then add the stimuli to the question and make a plan, using the list to add an example of additional knowledge.
Describing events rather than assessing thematically Some students have a good working knowledge of the main events, developments and case studies in the specification content. However, they should be able to see these in terms of evidence of change or continuity in the overall period. For example, whilst for the Crime option it is a requirement to know about the development of law enforcement in the nineteenth century, it is also essential to see this in the context of change and continuity from law enforcement in previous centuries, and as a starting point for further developments in the twentieth century. In the Migration option, students should be able to recognise change and continuity in the factors affecting the movement of people.	• Give students a selection of events, developments and people to organise into chronological order, then ask them to label the connection between them. • Using a diagram like a thermometer, colour hot and cold for the amount of progress made in each time period in a particular thematic area. • In pairs, use the desk as a timeline by marking it into four time periods, perhaps by use of labels or pieces of paper with the time period written on. Each pair has 20 tokens. The teacher names a thematic change, such as the development of public health, and students 'spend' their tokens by dividing them over the four time periods to reflect the amount of progress, with more tokens representing more progress in a time period. With a second colour of token, a different theme could be shown on the desk, such as understanding of the cause of disease, and the patterns compared for similarities and differences which can be explained. • Make a timeline of key changes within a theme. Then, over the top of the timeline, draw a living graph of progress. This can help students to understand that change does not always lead to progress, and that the two, while related, are not necessarily the same thing.

	• For the migration study, a living graph could be used to help students to look for trends and changes in the significance of the factors.
Not addressing the factors behind change The specification addresses the process of change and identifies key factors which inhibited or encouraged change. For example, with the Migration option these are: institutions (government and Church); religion; economic influences; and attitudes in society. Students should be able to assess how these factors affected change differently in different time periods.	• When each time period or thematic development has been studied, mark the factors from –10 to +10 to indicate how far the factor helped or hindered change. A colour scale could be used instead of numbers. • Have the factors on cards on the desk. Divide the desk into two – one side is for 'hindering progress', the other side is for 'encouraging progress'. When the teacher identifies a change or time period, students move the factors left and right to reflect how far they impacted on change and in which way. • Mark out the four time periods in a straight line as a 'racetrack'. For each time period, students should use the idea of a sports car to judge whether a factor was affecting change in first/second/third gear, or even in reverse.
Weak judgements A common pitfall in the 16-mark judgement question is that whilst students generally remember to state a conclusion, they may assert rather than support a judgement.	• While students are learning to write analytically, you could have a phrase, such as 'this is because…' or 'this is more valid because…' which students can use to express simply analytical ideas. This will encourage them to support their judgement. Once students are more confident in supporting their judgements, encourage them to use a wider range of phrases to enrich their analysis. • Have students read each other's judgements or model judgements prepared by the teacher, and colour code them red (no reason), yellow (a vague reason) or green (a really clear reason) for whether the judgement is supported. • Set short multiple-choice comparisons to choose between two options, for example was X or Y a more important consequence, or was Z more a success or failure? Discuss reasons to lean one way or the other. This concept can be a starting point to students learning to think and write analytically, which can later be developed into addressing actual exam-type questions. In asking students to explain and justify their choice, they are also developing understanding of explaining criteria, which could lead to well-explained judgements in their answers.

Lacking balance in Question 5/6 Since Question 5/6 requires students to reach a judgement on the statement in the question, the answer should be balanced by considering evidence that helps the student to construct a coherent, sustained argument. It also needs some chronological balance – since the question will cover at least one named time period from the specification, the highest level of the mark scheme assesses 'wide-ranging knowledge and understanding of the required features or characteristics of the period studied.'	• After planning Q5/6, have students draw a small timeline covering the period and mark on it where their examples fall. This will show them if there is chronological balance. • Present students with a partial answer which either supports or challenges the statement and have them balance the answer. • Highlight completed answers in two colours to show support and challenge. • If space allows, have students write answers on two sides of the desk – support the statement facing one way, and challenge the statement facing the other way. • Remind students that the answer must include a discussion of the factor/development in the question, so an answer which wholly disagrees with the statement cannot be awarded top marks. If a student wholly agrees with the statement, the answer should still explain why this view is more convincing than other views and therefore consider an alternative, even if only briefly.

Key terminology

Terms such as the Middle Ages/medieval period (up to c1500) and the modern period (from c1900 onwards) are common to all three papers. Other labels are specific to the options.

- On the Crime option, students should understand the terms Anglo-Saxon, Norman, Norman Conquest, and Tudor.
- On the Medicine option, students should know the term Renaissance and understand that in the scientific and medical context, it is usually applied to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.
- On the Crime, Warfare and Migration options, students should know that the term 'early modern' can be used to refer to the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries.

Other terms refer to concepts or key features rather than chronology. Students would be expected to know terms used in the specification such as: government and local authorities, vagabondage, diagnosis, feudal and requisition. On the Migration option, students should be aware of the name groups of migrants identified in the specification, e.g. Vikings, Huguenots. A list of key terms can be found in the **topic booklets**.

Students should also be clear about the different terms used in the strands of the specification. This means recognising the difference between corporal and capital punishment, prevention of disease and treatment, weapons and tactics, the context for migration and the experience of migrants etc. Such terms may be used as the focus of a question and it could affect the mark awarded if the student did not address the aim of the question. Furthermore, the correct use of historical terminology and contextual vocabulary is an element in the SPaG marks on the final question.

Teaching the content – the Thematic study

Choose to structure the Thematic study chronologically or thematically

Many centres choose to teach the Thematic study with a chronological structure, by addressing the medieval content first, followed by the early modern period, etc. This lends itself to mini-units, in which the different strands and case studies could be addressed. This could be done by using a different colour of paper for each time period, for example, to help with keeping class notes organised.

Alternatively, some centres choose to address the content thematically, by starting with an overview to identify the four time periods and then following each of the strands across the four time periods. For example, in the Medicine option, the treatment of disease could be taught across the four time periods as one strand.

It is best to choose this at the planning stage as it will be a challenge to change approach once you are part way through teaching the course. There is no specific requirement to teach the topic either chronologically or thematically.

Teaching in practice:

Rebecca Jarvis is Professional Tutor and Teacher of History at Richard Lander School. For Paper 1, this centre teaches Option 10: Crime and Punishment in Britain, c1000–present.

We choose to teach Paper 1 at the start of the course following a thematic structure. We make good use of interactive, thematic timelines, card sorts, revision quizzes and team games targeting examples of precise knowledge. Use of these activities at regular intervals throughout the course is important to help students to feel confident about the chronology and knowledge required. Ensuring that students understand that this is a breadth rather than depth study is important. We help students to comprehend this by using the analogy of looking down on a landscape from an aeroplane – can they pick out the key features and sufficient evidence to be able to exemplify a point? Students can be daunted by the scale of time period so overview activities at the start allowing students to see the big picture are very useful and help students to feel more confident.

We lay the groundwork for the Historic environment by developing the skills in KS3. These skills are addressed through standalone research projects. With these skills in place, we then address the Historic environment after the Thematic study. Making use of local records office resource packs or outreach sessions is also a great way to introduce source utility skills to students.

Use visual displays

Key word banks on the wall will also help students to move beyond writing descriptively and start writing analytically. In particular, it might help to include words for discussing change and continuity, such as ‘turning point’, ‘process’ and ‘development’.

It can also prove helpful to have the four time periods of the Thematic study along with the associated centuries so that students can quickly refer to them in lesson. It could be possible to add the key names, events and developments to each period within the display.

Visual evaluation
Using a visual style, which could be a thermometer (indicating a range of temperatures), a flag (which could be completely furled, at half mast or flying) or a simple number scale (such as one to five stars), encourages students to evaluate key events and changes in terms of their overall significance as a change.

Make a video summary
Using a free app like Adobe Flash video or one of the other available options, students can insert images and provide a voiceover commentary. Students could pick four images and explain the process of change and continuity through the period. For example, within the Crime option, one group could have law enforcement whilst another has types of crime. This can allow students to make a short but effective chronological sweep of the process of development through the period.

Card sorts
Card sort tasks are a useful way of handling this topic. It is possible to make one set of cards with many of the key developments in the topic and use it in different ways.

- Sequencing: the most obvious is to sequence the events. This will help embed the chronological sequence of events.
- Sorting time periods: similar to sequencing, but events are grouped by the four time periods in the Thematic study.
- Ranking: ordering developments by the degree of progress they brought about.
- Grouping: group the events by theme (surgery, understanding causes of illness, hospital care, etc.), or by factor (individuals, institutions, science and technology, etc.).
- Connections: put the cards on a piece of white paper with blue-tac (or glue for a more permanent solution) and make as many links between the events as possible.
- Picking relevant examples: set an exam question with a date frame and select the events that are both relevant to the question **and** within the date frame.
- Odd one out – in a set of cards, such as developments in war reporting, ask students to decide which card does not fit with the set.

Visual notes
Make notes visual. Use spider-diagrams, coloured notes, flow charts and labelled illustrations to help organise the notes. This can be a helpful way of organising notes within the four time periods and the Historic environment, ensuring students grasp the content of the separate periods of history but also to connect Thematic ideas between periods.

Teaching criteria
One challenging area to teach is using valid criteria to make judgements in the 16-mark question in the Thematic study. Spend time helping students to think in terms of using criteria to make judgements so as to avoid generalised conclusions which simply assert a conclusion. One way is to help students identify criteria by which they could judge a development or event. For example, with a development, students could be encouraged to

think of criteria to judge their significance. They might consider criteria such as the number of people affected, how long the effects lasted or how widely the development was accepted. Having judged the significance of the development, the same criteria could be applied to another development, to compare their relative significance. This thinking could help to develop the analytical approach for planning a 16-mark question by identifying criteria which can be used to measure a judgement relevant to the question.

Key words

There are many key words in the content of Paper 1 (see 'key terminology' above), and additionally students need to learn analytical language to explain their points. One suggestion is for students to build a key words page as they encounter key names and words. The page could have three lists, one for names, one for historical language and one for analytical phrases to construct answers. This could be used while writing practice exam answers.

Teaching the content – the Historic environment

Choose when to teach the Historic environment carefully

All four Historic environments are 'nested' within the Thematic study so they could be studied at the appropriate chronological point and links made to the content of the Thematic study. For example, the study of Whitechapel, while not part of the thematic specification content, can be used to exemplify the nature of crime and the mechanisms of law enforcement in late nineteenth century England. Many of the issues involved in medicine and treatment on the Western Front were linked to nineteenth-century work on anaesthetics and antiseptics. The work of the government during the Blitz in London in the Second World War links to the organisation of a Home Front. The experiences of the 'Windrush generation' in Notting Hill are linked to the influence and impact of decolonisation on migration to Britain in the post-war twentieth century.

Alternatively, the content can be taught as a separate section at the end of the Thematic study. Some centres may choose to teach the Historic environment as a separate unit completely, straight after the Thematic study or at a later date. Whatever approach is taken, it is important to ensure that students understand the chronological relationship between the two separate sections, and that they understand that in terms of the exam, the Thematic study and Historic environment will be assessed in separate sections of Paper 1.

The key point about studying the Historic environment is seeing how events are related to a specific area. Therefore, the sources, questions and student answers must all be rooted securely in that site and period. The Thematic study can help students to understand the wider context of the Historic environment. For example, some details about law enforcement in the period c1700–c1900 may be relevant to the Whitechapel Historic environment on the Crime paper. However, more generalised details about the police or comments outside the period of the Historic environment would not necessarily be relevant.

Teaching in practice:

Emma Holness is Head of History at Newmarket Academy. For Paper 1, this centre teaches Option 11: Medicine in Britain, c1250–present.

We teach the Thematic study chronologically. We trialled a thematic approach in the past and found that the students struggled with the chronology. Since chronology is a key concept for the unit we returned to a chronological approach. We teach Paper 1 as our first topic at Key Stage 4. It is accessible for students, and the chronological framework is helpful as a reference for other units later in the course.

We focus on helping students to understand the key themes and concepts of the course from the beginning. Recognising that we will be studying concepts like beliefs, treatment and care, etc. helps support students in building their own framework within and across the span of this study. Students need to be introduced to core language such as 'institution' to help ensure they are secure in these broader concepts and can use them to navigate the study. It is vital not to assume prior knowledge and to flag up the recurring concepts.

Students need regular recall of knowledge to help them have a secure chronological understanding. This provides opportunities to reflect and secure understanding of periods of change/continuity and extent of change/continuity. I find summary pages from older copies of textbooks, especially those with images, can be handy to help students understand the broader picture of medicine across specific time periods.

We address the Historic environment chronologically, rather than at the end of the unit. We teach the period 1700–1900 then the Western Front, before returning to medicine in the modern period. We present the Historic environment as a 'work of the historian' unit. Students are being asked to build context for historical work, not address causation or significance. We plan carefully to not get carried away with teaching too much depth. For example, students only need the key features of certain WW1 battles, primarily as contextual knowledge to be applied to sources, rather than a detailed study of these battles. Students should be exposed to the specific historical skills needed for this part of Paper 1 as soon as possible in the teaching of the Historic environment. We encourage teachers to view the concepts of Questions 2(a) and 2(b) as being a fundamental part of the unit, rather than simply as assessment questions, in helping students to see how they are 'being historians' on this paper.

We address the environment through the lens of a police investigation to try to understand how all evidence is useful. We encourage students to avoid basic primary/ secondary/ bias concepts and move into more holistic evaluation of utility. We try to always use the word 'provenance' alongside the word 'label' to encourage students to address both aspects of a source, not just the content. We talk about a box the police might investigate - what's inside (the content) is of equal importance to the outside 'label' or 'wrapper' (provenance). In this way we are trying to make the academic concept of provenance more concrete for less able students.

Source evaluation: common pitfalls

The most frequent reason why answers do not reach Level 3 is that the student does not address all three strands of the mark scheme – source content, provenance and contextual knowledge. Many lengthy and thoughtful answers focus on the usefulness of the source content but fail to consider the other elements of source evaluation, or do so in generalised comments or assertions based on assumptions. Students should realise that this creates an unbalanced answer, which cannot score highly.

The source content may be useful in a variety of ways. It may provide details of an event, people's actions, their feelings or attitudes, or give an example of a policy. This information may be useful because it helps the historian to understand what happened, how people felt, or how the event fitted into the wider context.

Students often use the acronym NOP (nature, origin, purpose) to remind themselves to discuss a source's provenance. However, this needs to go beyond simplistic statements that assert the source is from the time in question and is therefore a primary source and reliable, or it is biased and must be unreliable. Similarly, comments such as a photograph is only a snapshot of a moment in time, or a diary is reliable but only one person's view, are valid but vague and generalised.

Students should recognise that every type of source has strengths and weaknesses. The nature of sources such as diaries and letters means they can provide personal details or an insight into motives or attitudes, but they may also be limited because they are only from one person's perspective or because the author only has limited knowledge of events. Photographs can vividly convey the scale of an event but they cannot provide information about the causes or consequences of the event.

When considering the origin of a source, the author, date or location may be significant. The purpose of a source may be related to the intended audience or its effect, for example, a newspaper article may be intended to inform the public about a trial, the purpose of an official record may be to record the outcome of a new surgical technique, a speech before a battle may be intended to raise morale among the soldiers, or a letter may be intended to reassure family members after the writer has migrated to Britain.

The key point is that comments about the source's provenance should be specific to the individual source and used to show whether the provenance makes the source more, or less, useful to the historian. Does the source provide personal details, is it from a key person or a key date, was it intended to inform the public? Reliability is a factor affecting a source's usefulness but many answers assert that a source must be biased because the author is from a particular group, without providing any evidence of that bias.

Contextual knowledge is sometimes added in a separate paragraph but it should always be linked to the evaluation of the source. Students may use contextual knowledge to confirm or challenge details in the source content, to assess how representative the source content is, to comment on the author or the date of the source, or to place it in a wider context.

Many students understand that their answer should cover the three strands of the mark scheme, but approach it as a checklist, covering each strand in a separate paragraph. However, the best answers show that these strands are interlinked. Students should also make clear their judgement on the source's usefulness and explain the basis of that judgement, for example, the source's accuracy, reliability, insights, or typicality.

Carry out a source investigation

Before teaching a topic, start the lesson by presenting the topic in the form of a collection of sources for students to make inferences. This will help students to perceive what is meant by a historical enquiry, and also opens up the possibility of discussing source skills, such as ranking sources by usefulness, or thinking of further questions to ask and sources that could be consulted.

Hold a 'source auction'

The teacher provides a selection of sources and groups of students are given an enquiry title, an amount of money and asked to bid for the sources they think would be most useful for their enquiry. Groups then decide how much each source is worth and what to do if another group is bidding against them. To develop the idea of utility further, different groups can have different enquiry questions which will affect the importance of a source to their enquiry. If the availability of printed resources allows, students could use the sources that they 'purchased' to make a wall display on their assigned enquiry.

Match the source to the enquiry

Have a set of cards on the desk in pairs, naming a wide range of sources relevant to the Historic environment. For example, for Whitechapel it could include housing and employment records, Charles Booth's survey, workhouse records, local newspapers, national newspapers, etc. For Migration, it could include named local newspapers, named publications written for the West Indian community, housing and employment records, oral and written memoirs of local residents, photographs, BBC news items etc. Pose a series of questions to the class, and in pairs, students should sort the same group of cards into two piles for whether they would help investigating that particular enquiry or not. As a differentiated extension, students could also rank the useful sources or select a most useful source from the pile.

Use non-historical content source examples

Set Questions 2(a) and 2(b) using one or two sources that are not related to the course content. For Question 2(a), this works well with sources on a topic that students know very well, such as their school, a sports team, a fast food restaurant or an online television service (such as Netflix). For Question 2(b), it works well with a topic that students do not know much about but that is interesting, such as a TV show from another country or a sport that they have never heard of – follow through the four steps to structure how they would find out more based upon the limited information in the source.

Teaching sources

In Paper 1, the Historic environment is primarily assessed on the candidates' ability to analyse and evaluate historical sources (AO3). This means that students need to develop their ability to address the utility of sources, using valid criteria for assessment, as well as to formulate historical enquiries and identify the types of sources most suited to an enquiry.

The following tasks are intended to exemplify ways of helping students to think about sources in more developed ways, to avoid relying on simple paraphrasing or generalisations.

Using sources

Students are often good at commenting on content or reliability but not linking this to utility. By presenting the same source with differing enquiries, students should see that the utility varies. This will help break them to break free from generalisations, such as newspapers being exaggerated, etc. In the example task, the teacher could identify alternative enquiry foci for the two empty boxes.

Option in this example	**Option 10: Crime and Punishment in Britain, c1000–present**

Historians have many pieces of evidence. It is important to evaluate how useful each piece of evidence is. However, the usefulness depends on the question that is being investigated. A source might be very useful for one enquiry but less so for another enquiry. Take a look at Source A.

Source A – From an article in *The Times* newspaper, October 1888. *The Times* was a national newspaper mainly read by the upper classes.

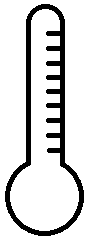
Many critical comments have been made about police failures in connection with the Whitechapel murders. However, it should be remembered that this type of woman chooses to go alone to the place where she has agreed to meet a man.

Some weeks ago, plain-clothes policemen were ordered to patrol this crime-ridden area of Whitechapel and to watch any man or woman seen together in suspicious circumstances.

At about the time when the Mitre Square murder was being committed two of the extra men who had been put on duty were nearby. They would have seen any man and woman going together to Mitre Square. Therefore, the police suspect that the murderer had made an appointment with his female victim and they went to the place separately.

How useful is Source A for an enquiry into…

… the effectiveness of the police in Whitechapel in 1888



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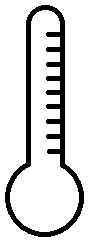

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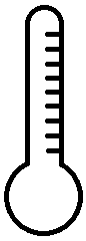


1) What is the main information in the source?
2) The provenance identifies that the source is from a national newspaper dated soon after the Ripper murders. How might this have affected the content of the source?
3) In each of the enquiry topics in the boxes, make a judgement about how useful the source would be for investigating that topic by colouring the thermometer. A hotter thermometer means more useful, and colder means less useful.
4) Next to each thermometer write one reason for your judgement.

Using sources

Students often grasp the basic features of a source, such as a date, but then jump to conclusions about the source based upon a generalisation. This task works by asking students to judge between two sources of a similar type, which leads them to find other criteria for judgement.

Option in this example	**Option 11: Medicine in Britain, c1250–present**

Looking at the type of source can give some hints as to the usefulness, but this is not enough to decide if a source is useful or not. Look at Sources A and B, which are both diaries from people with experience of surgery in the First World War.

Source A – From the diary of Edith Appleton. She was a trained nurse, working at a military base hospital in northern France. Her family published her diaries in 2012.

July 4 - Wounded! Hundreds upon hundreds, some on stretchers, some being carried, and some walking – and all covered from head to foot in mud. We had to deal with large numbers of horribly bad wounds. Some were crawling with maggots while others were stinking and full of gangrene. One poor lad had been shot in both eyes. Three men had died on the way to the hospital and two died before they could be treated.

July 8 - The surgeons are amputating limbs and boring holes into skulls at the rate of 30 a day.

Source B – From the diary of Oswald Robertson, written on 30 November 1917. He was an army surgeon working on the Western Front during the First World War.

Men were horribly mutilated – many were dying when brought into the ward. All the beds were full, and we began putting stretchers on the floor. Blood everywhere – clothes soaked in blood, pools of blood in the stretchers, streams of blood dropping from the stretchers to the floor. My rubber apron was one solid red smear. All we could do was try to stop the bleeding and get the patients as comfortable as possible. I could only transfuse an occasional patient. The majority had to take their chance and go through the operation as best they could.

Imagine that you are investigating the problems in performing operations on the Western Front. You need to choose which of these two sources is more useful.* Since both are diaries, you cannot just use the fact that they are diaries written at the time, by people who experienced the Western Front. You need to consider the content and provenance.

1) To think about the sources, copy out the following table and complete it:

	Source A	Source B
How much does the source tell you about the problems in performing operations?		
How typical is the source from what you know of operations on the Western Front?		
How does the purpose of the source affect the content and the usefulness?		

2) Using the table above, make a judgement – which source is more useful for an enquiry into the treatment of injuries on the Western Front?

Note to teachers*. **Q2(a) does <u>not</u> require students to compare the sources. While this task encourages students to think beyond the basics by comparing two sources, this approach is not expected in an examination answer and the mark scheme does not include provision to reward such comments.

Teaching second-order historical concepts

Being successful on Paper 1 requires more than simply knowing the key features of the period (AO1). The Thematic study section is also assessed on AO2, using second-order historical concepts to explain and analyse historical events. These may include the significance of turning points, the extent of change and continuity, and the process, causes and consequences of change. Students also need to be able to identify similarity and difference between key features of the periods of time covered. Therefore, students need to be taught how to use these concepts effectively. For example, students should develop the ability to write analytically about concepts like the consequences of change, to be able move beyond simple descriptions of historical events and changes.

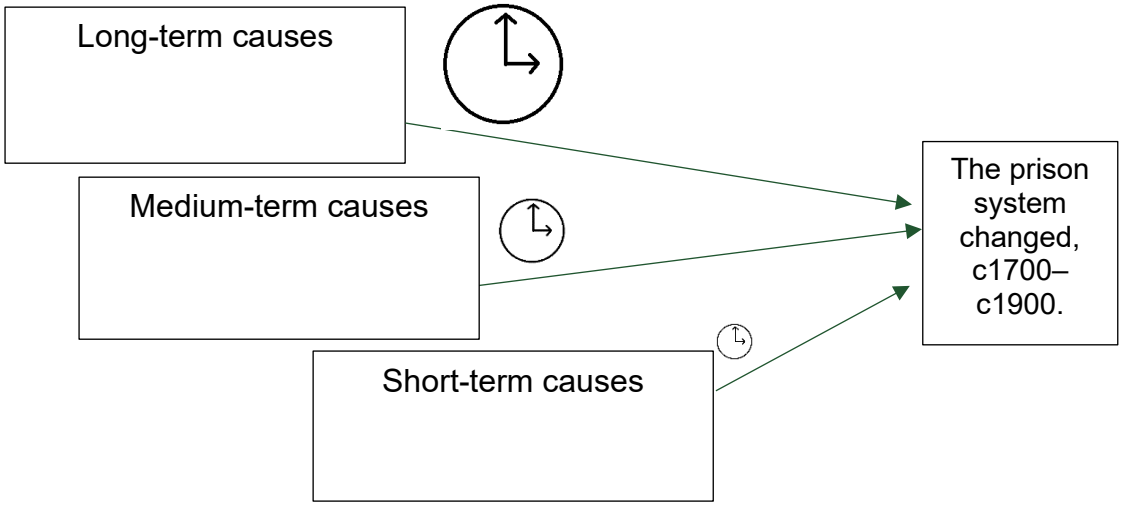
The tasks below are used to exemplify teaching approaches which can be used to help students to think in terms of second-order historical concepts.

Cause and consequence

Students can struggle to think in terms of multiple factors, instead seeing a more linear causation with one action or decision causing a development or change. A task like this one can be used to help students see that a range of factors contributed to a change, and that they do not necessarily all act on the same timescale. It can also be helpful in seeing how some causes can be intrinsically linked to other causes, rather than independent.

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

Changes can be the result of more than one cause. Some causes can work over a long period of time, others can work over a short period of time.



1) Here is a list of causes for the changes in the prison system, c1700–c1900:

A John Howard investigated conditions in prisons and published his findings in *The State of Prisons in England and Wales*, 1777.	**B** Transportation and execution became less common through the 1800s, and prison was used increasingly as a punishment.	**C** Pentonville Prison, built 1842, introduced a new model of 'separate system' prisons.
D Many people through the period thought that punishments should be severe to deter other criminals.	**E** Elizabeth Fry campaigned for better living conditions and education options at Newgate Prison and in other prisons.	**F** Popular opinions were changing, and the idea that punishments should include rehabilitation, not just revenge, was more common.

Organise the reasons into the diagram above by sorting them into long-, medium- and short-term factors. Write the letters in the boxes.

2) Find a connection between two or more of the causes above. Explain how the causes are connected.
3) Colour code the causes in the table above by how important they were in causing changes to the prison system. Use the key below to identify which colours you are using

Extremely important		Important		Less important	

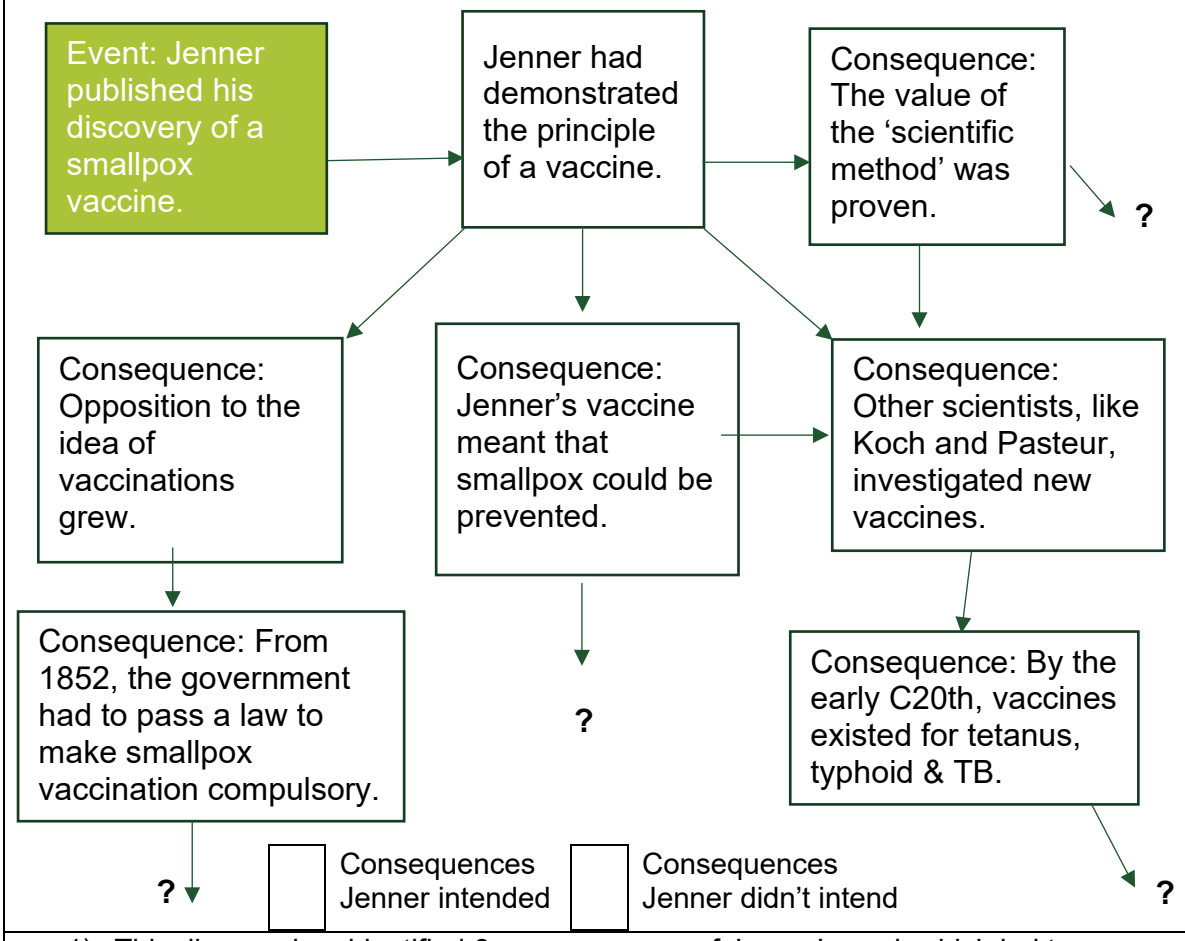
4) Write two sentences to explain which reason you consider to be the most important.

Cause and consequence

Just as students can think about causes in a linear fashion, they can also think about consequences in a simple manner. In reality, one event can have a range of consequences and cause many changes. Not all consequences and changes are necessarily equally significant, and sometimes the most significant changes are those that were unintended. This task is intended to help students to see the multi-faceted nature of consequence and introduces analytical thinking that goes beyond simply listing consequences.

Option in this example	**Option 11: Medicine in Britain, c1250–present**

Most events have multiple causes and also multiple consequences. For example, Jenner's discovery of a vaccination against smallpox was a significant event in the history of medicine that had consequences in several different areas.



1) This diagram has identified 6 consequences of Jenner's work which led to changes. Add at least two more consequences to the diagram. The extra arrows suggest where you might want to add consequences (they can go in other places, if you prefer).
2) Which of the consequences do you think Jenner intended? Colour them in one colour. Then colour the consequences that Jenner probably did not intend a second colour. (remember to mark the key with the same colour).
3) Why did Jenner's discovery have such a wide impact? Why did the consequences not all happen at the same time?
4) Write a historical question which could only be answered well by someone knowing all the different consequences in the diagram.

Cause and consequence

An important historical skill is the ability to connect different developments or changes to see an overall pattern of change. For example, whilst knowing when individual discoveries or new technologies occurred is relevant, it is more useful to be able to see the wider pattern that these developments were part of. This task is about identifying strands, or patterns, of change from individual events. You could differentiate this task for lower-attaining students by identifying three different strands for them.

Option in this example	**Option 12: Warfare and British society, c1250–present**

Many changes happened in warfare during the years c1250–present. But individual changes can be linked together to form a pattern of change. A pattern of change is an overall trend in the changes over a period of time. For example, looking at the changes together can show an overall increase, decrease, decline or continuity in events.

Look at these events which show developments in weaponry and armour between the years c1250–c1700.

c.1650 Dragoons with muskets became part of English army	c.1200 Staff weapons and spears were the most common infantry weapons	c.1350 Most English knights tended to fight on foot, not horseback	c.1300s The English longbow became a fundamental part of the English army
c.1400 Swords became thinner and more sharply pointed to get through plate mail	c.1250 Swords became heavier to crush chainmail armour	c.1640s Pikes became more important, with 1/3 of English soldiers carrying one	c.1600s With the spread of pistols, cavalry used less armour and lighter swords
c.1700 Flintlock weapons widely used	c.1320 Cannon first used in Europe in small numbers, powered by gunpowder	c.1450-1500 Matchlock muskets used but were expensive and unreliable	c.1300s Heavily armoured knights dominated battlefields carrying melee weaponry

In groups, cut out, or copy onto pieces of paper, the changes in the grid above. Arrange them along the bottom of an A3 page in roughly chronological order.

1) Pick out at least three changes which affected recruitment and move these into a line halfway up the page. Link them together by drawing lines to show how they form a strand of change.
   a) In one sentence, describe the change shown in this pattern.
   b) Are there any changes in the pattern that do not fit with the overall trend?
2) Now make two new strands to show other strands, or patterns, of change. You can reuse changes you already used in the first strand by connecting it into the new strands by lines. Then repeat steps a) and b) from task 1 for each of the two new strands.
3) Look at the three different strands of change you have identified. Can you find one or more links between the strands? Draw lines to link any changes in the strands and label the line to say what the link is.
4) Look at the whole pattern of change. Can you identify a trend which describes the overall change?

Change and continuity

During the study of this unit, students will learn about many changes. But not all changes are equally important. It is important for students to learn to consider individual changes as part of the wider pattern of change, and to see that although an individual change may be important, what is more significant is how far a change contributes to a pattern of change. A simple task like this will help students to assess the degree of variation over a period of time. It also helps to show that in the same overall time period, there can be examples of both change and continuity.

Option in this example	**Option 11: Medicine in Britain, c1250–present**

Change is always happening. Each day, small things happen like the number of unemployed in the country tomorrow might be a few more or less than today, and people will be born or die each day. But in terms of history, these types of changes are small. When historians talk about change, they mean larger patterns of change.

Study the following timeline of events in the prevention of disease in Britain in the years 1700–1900. Then answer the questions at the end.

c.1720	Inoculations performed in Britain against smallpox
1796	Edward Jenner experimented with cowpox vaccination to prevent smallpox
1798	Jenner published details of his findings about vaccination
1803	Royal Jennerian Institute founded to make smallpox vaccination available. Many people chose not to be vaccinated
1842	Edwin Chadwick published a report on the sanitary conditions in Britain.
1848	A Public Health Act was passed which encouraged councils to improve sanitary conditions.
1852	Smallpox vaccination made compulsory in Britain
1854	John Snow proved his theories about dirty water with the Broad Street Pump.
1861	Pasteur developed the germ theory
1875	A Public Health Act made it compulsory for councils to improve sanitary conditions.
1885	Pasteur successfully tested a rabies vaccine on a human
1896	A vaccine for typhoid was created.

1) Select three events from the timeline which show an example of how the prevention of disease changed in this period. Write one paragraph to explain the change.
2) 'Continuity' means a period without change. Identify a period of time on the timeline where very little changed in the prevention of disease and explain what stayed the same. They could do this by just identifying a gap between the events in the table; perhaps ask them to choose a date in the timeline when the change didn't have much impact and explain why this meant things mainly stayed the same.
3) Which event on the timeline would you say caused the biggest change in the prevention of disease.
4) Write your own definition for 'change' and 'continuity'.

Change and continuity

A common limitation to analytical thinking is to see a development or event, like a new technology or law, as a change. Whilst this is true in a simple way, it is the consequences of the development, or the difference caused by the development, which is the change. This task will help students to see the difference between a development or event, and the change which results from it. (Remember that although the changes below all led to progress, change doesn't necessarily mean progress.)

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

A development can be a new technology, a law, a decision or an event. You have learned many examples of developments in this topic. Developments, or events, are important because they cause changes. In other words, the change is what is different after the development happens. For example, in 1992, speed cameras were introduced to help police. This was a development. The change was that this meant that police could more easily identify people who broke speed laws in a vehicle.

Study this table, which contains five developments in the work of the police in the twentieth century, and five changes caused by these developments. They have been mixed up:

In 1982, the first Neighbourhood Watch was set up.	Forensic technology has been introduced to police labs.	Specialist police units were formed	Crimes could be handled by officers who have expertise in dealing with that type of crime.	The police have become more effective at identifying criminals and arresting them.
Police response times were improved, allowing them to get to crime scenes more quickly.	Police forces have the ability to tackle threats to national security, including terrorism.	Over 4 million households became involved in helping the police deter crime.	Police cars, helicopters and motorbikes were introduced.	A Special Branch was added to each police force.

1) Sort the cards above into the five 'developments' and five 'changes'.
2) Match each development to the change that it caused.
3) In your own words, explain what the difference is between a development and a change. Use one of the examples above to support your explanation.
4) From your own knowledge, select another development in the work of police in the twentieth century and identify the change that it caused.

Change and continuity

Students often struggle with the idea of judging the significance of a change in order to reach a conclusion. A common problem is to reach the conclusion of an essay and simply assert a judgement that something is more or less important than something else because it happened, or because it sounds more important. Thinking in terms of criteria should help students to think critically about how they can reach supported conclusions.

Option in this example	**Option 12: Warfare and British society, c1250–present**

Changes happen all the time. Every second, things are changing. If historians just listed changes, they would never stop. Therefore, historians have to weigh how important a change is. One way to do this is to decide criteria – that means how you measure change. For example, if you were measuring change in a school, you could look at how grades improved, or how much bullying there was, or the quality of equipment in the school. Using criteria helps to judge how significant, or important, a change is.

Look at these changes in the development of artillery in the years 1700–1900:

c.1700 Bronze used to make cannon lighter and therefore easier to move on the battlefield	c.1700 The British army formed the Royal Regiment of Artillery	1700–1800 Artillery had a longer range than previously.	1803 The British army started to use shrapnel shells	1860 Artillery pieces were cast more quickly and cheaply from solid steel

Imagine you are investigating how far artillery was responsible for changing warfare c1700-c1900.

1) With a partner, make a list of different criteria you could use to judge the importance of changes in artillery for changes in warfare. For example, it could be how long the change lasted, or its impact on battlefield tactics. Choose your best three criteria.
2) As a class, discuss your criteria. You can now keep your three or change any of them if you heard a better idea from the class.
3) Using your three criteria, judge the importance of the development of artillery for changing warfare in the period c1700–c1900.

Now we need other reasons to compare against artillery to help reach a judgement.

4) Think of two more reasons why warfare changed in the period c1700–c1900 that are different from the development of artillery. Support each reason with two or more examples.
5) Judge the importance of your two new reasons using the same criteria you used to judge the development of artillery.
6) Write a paragraph to explain which of the three changes was more important in changing warfare in the years 1700–1900. Explain why you have made this judgement.

Writing analytically

Students sometimes struggle to move from describing facts to using them analytically to make an argument. This ability to write analytically is important in GCSE History, including question 5/6 on Paper 1. This task is a simple example of how students can be helped to use their knowledge analytically.

Option for this example	**Option 13: Migrants in Britain, c800–present**

In history, it is important to remember key information and examples that you can use in your written work and exam answers. But as well as remembering the facts, it is important that you can use the information to write analytically.
In this task, we will focus on the experience of migrants in Britain in the years c1700 to the present.

1 Experience of migrants c1700-c1900

2 Experience of migrants c1900-present

3 The experiences of migrants in Britain changed significantly in the period c1700–present. This was because popular attitudes changed. In the 1700s and 1800s, many immigrants, especially from Eastern Europe and Ireland, were treated with distrust, so it was hard to find housing and employment. But in the twentieth century, there was more sympathy for refugees like the *Kindertransport* from Germany and Ugandan Asians. By the end of the period, new laws were passed to help migrants to access housing and employment, and school curricula were used to encourage people to accept the equal rights of all.

4

1) Start with what you know. Complete the concept diagrams (1 and 2) on the page by adding details about the experience of migrants in the two time periods.
2) Now imagine that you are speaking to another person about the topic. Read their point of view in box 3. Underneath the box, summarise the viewpoint in one sentence.
3) How could you reply to the person if you wanted to disagree with them? Write a response in box 4 which disagrees with what they said. You should use at least two pieces of information to support what you are writing.

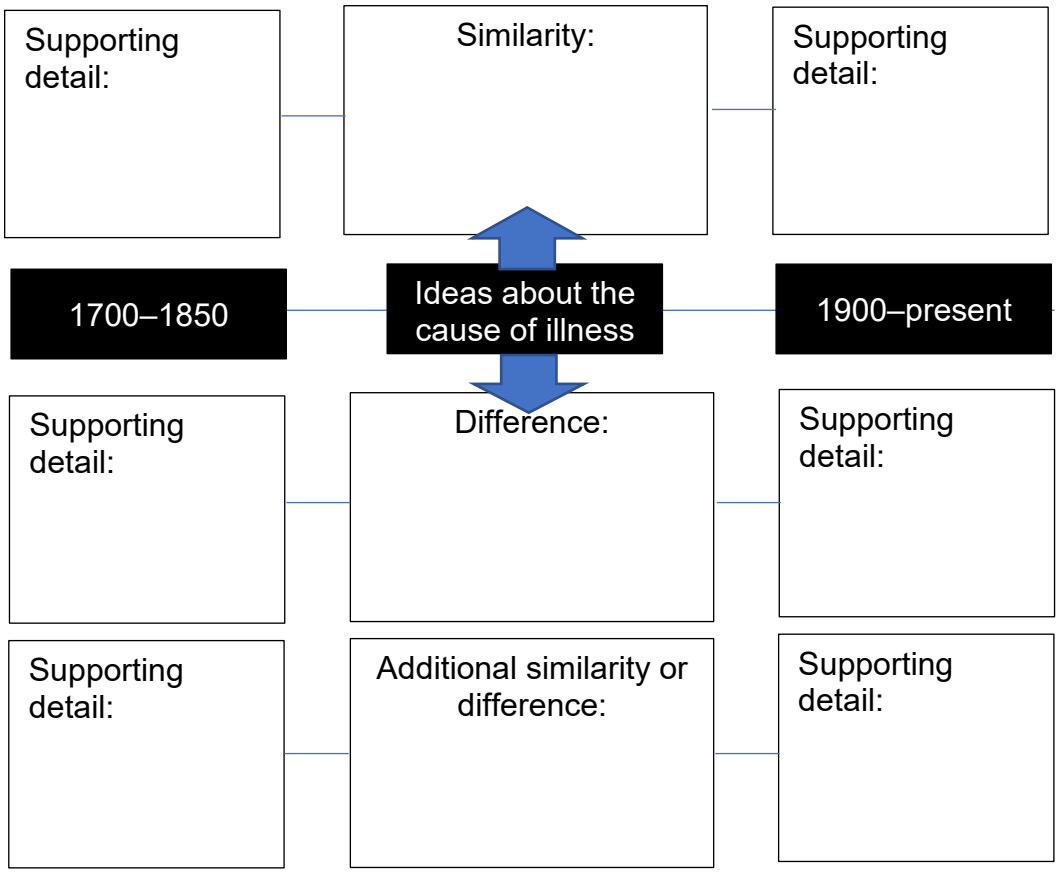
Similarity and difference

Although it is, on the surface, a simple concept, some students can struggle to identify a similarity or difference and support it from each period. This task is intended as a simple way of thinking about identifying and supporting a similarity or difference.

Option for this example	**Option 11: Medicine in Britain, c1250–present**

When we compare different periods of history, we can see differences, because things change. But at the same time, we can still see similarities. Think about an example that is not from this topic – music in the 1960s and 2020s is different because more modern music uses more computerised effects. However, there is a similarity in that drums, pianos and guitars are still commonly used instruments.

When comparing two periods, we identify a similarity or difference and then support it with examples. Let's compare ideas about the cause of illness in the years 1700–1850, and 1900–present.



In the exam, you will only be asked to answer about one similarity OR difference. In this task we are thinking about both.

4) In the top row of empty boxes, identify a similarity between the ideas about the causes of illness in the years 1700-1850 and 1900-present. Then add a supporting detail from each period to develop the similarity. Make sure your information is from the right years.
5) Now fill in the second row of empty boxes by identifying a difference and also a piece of supporting information from each time period.
6) There is usually more than one possible similarity or difference. In the bottom row, give an alternative answer by picking another similarity or difference and supporting it with two details.

Useful resources

Subject advisor

You can get expert advice and support from out dedicated Subject Advisor, Mark Battye. Email teachinghistory@pearson.com.
Sign up to receive monthly subject advisor updates here.

Training events

Pearson offers a changing range of support via training, including free and paid-for events, primarily online, as well as recordings of past training. Visit the Pearson Professional Development Academy: https://pdacademy.pearson.com/.

Results Plus

A free service provided by Pearson for analysing the results of individuals and cohorts of students: https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/support/Services/ResultsPlus.html.

Access to Scripts

Providing visibility and transparency of marking, as well as supporting the development of subsequent teaching by identifying areas where your students have struggled, the self-service portal available via this link will allow you to view actual exam scripts of your students. Case studies on how to make the most of Access to Scripts can be found here, including one from Oasis South Bank specifically about GCSE History.

Free support materials

This document provides links and details on the free support materials available on the Edexcel website: https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/GCSE/History/2016/Teaching-and-learning-materials/gcse-history-support-materials-details-and-links.pdf.
It is updated regularly, so it is worth bookmarking rather than downloading a copy.

The table below pulls out some of the materials that are listed in this document.

Resource	Details
Specification and sample assessment materials	The starting point for information on content and assessment in GCSE (9–1) History. The current versions are Issue 5 (for 2025) and Issue 6 (for 2026).
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.
Mock papers (2024)	A set of secure mock papers created by adapting the summer 2024 papers to reflect the amended assessment model that comes into effect in summer 2025. An Edexcel Online login is required. Also available via the Mocks Service.
Getting Started Guide	An overview of the specification, to help you get to grips with the content and assessment requirements. *Updated in June 2024 up to Issue 6 of the specification.*
Summary guidance on changes for 2025 and 2026	Overview guidance on the changes being made for 2025 and 2026, including a table summarising the content changes for 2026.
Topic booklets	Topic booklets for every option on the specification. These include content guidance and exemplification, student timelines, and suggested resources for teachers and students. *Updates for 2025–26 changes to be released in February 2025.*
Schemes of work	Sample outline schemes of work for each topic in the specification, in editable Word files. Updated December 2024. A digital interactive scheme of work is also available for both KS3 and GCSE.

Resource	Details
Exemplar student answers	Exemplar student answers, including from the summer 2018, 2019 and 2022 series, with examiner commentaries and mark schemes.
Knowledge boosters	Sets of quizzes to support AO1 knowledge and understanding, including for Paper 1: • 11 Medicine in Britain • 10 Crime and Punishment An Edexcel Online login is required. *All KBs updated for 2025–26 changes.*
Student walkthroughs • Paper 1 playlist	A series of pre-recorded student walkthroughs, created in collaboration with Harris Federation. *Updated for Summer 2025*.
Revision tips	Some useful revision tips for students. *Updated for Summer 2025*.
Command words	A series of student-friendly files exploring each command word in turn, plus a summary document paper-by-paper. *Updated for Summer 2025*.
Paper 1 Question 2(b) follow-up enquiry guidance	Guidance on the follow-up enquiry source question: the rationale behind it, the four parts, and how the mark scheme operates.
Whitechapel Historic environment teaching resource	Resources to help teachers incorporate the lives of the five victims of Jack the Ripper into their Whitechapel schemes of work.
New Migration thematic study	A webpage rounding up information and support materials to help you plan and deliver Migrants in Britain.
Using Our Migration Story	Resources from the Our Migration Story website mapped to the new Migrants in Britain thematic study. Topic booklets also include information on resources on Our Migration Story that could be used for their respective options.
Case studies	Case studies on various aspects of teaching history, including: • Licoricia of Winchester • Broadening the history of medicine • Switching to Migrants in Britain 1 and 2
Pearson Professional Development Academy	Book a place on upcoming events, and access recordings of recent past training sessions (on YouTube).

Resource	Details
Past training content	Packs from past training events, such as new to Edexcel, marking training, and supporting higher and lower attainers.

Endorsed resources*

Endorsement means that a resource has been through our quality assurance process to confirm that it meets the teaching and learning requirements of the specification at which it is aimed. 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.
- 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.
- NST Tours – Guided History tours to support teachers and students with GCSE History.

* 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.