Pearson Edexcel

GCSE (9–1) History

Guidance on
Paper 2

Period study and
British depth study

Updated
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Contents

Edexcel Paper 2 Guide

This Paper 2 Guide is the second 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 2 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 2, 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 2 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

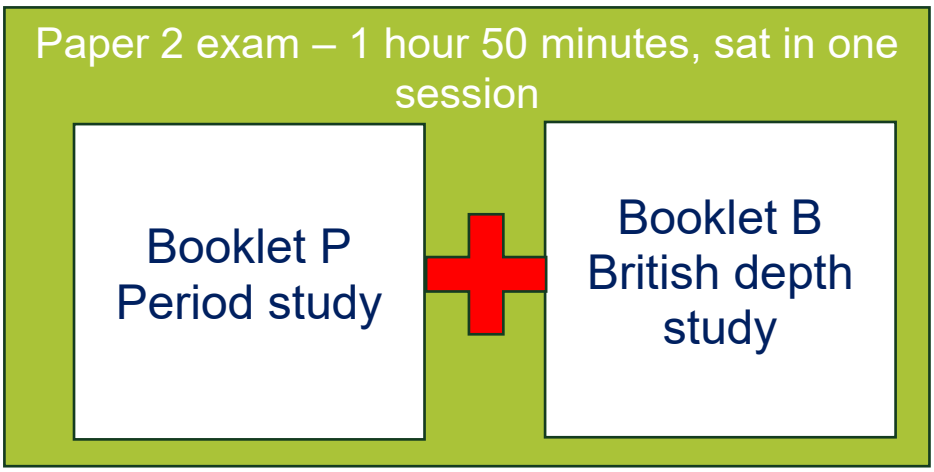
Section 1: Getting to know Paper 2

The current requirements for GCSE History specifications mean that all courses include a British depth study and a Period study.

How is Paper 2 structured?

Paper 2 consists of two separate question-and-answer booklets. Booklet P is a period study, and Booklet B is a British depth study. The British depth study covers a topic from medieval or early modern British history, while the period study topics range from the early modern period to the twentieth century and focus on a specific continuing narrative of developments, issues and events. The two choices are independent and so any British depth study can be combined with any period study.

Students sit the two booklets as part of the same exam. This means that candidates will be given both exam papers at the start of the scheduled Paper 2 session, and the time of 1 hour and 50 minutes is to complete both papers. Students can choose to answer the booklets in either order. It is up to students how they divide their time across the two booklets. However, as the period study and British depth study are both worth 32 marks each, students may wish to allocate about half the time for each area of study.



Building your course

One feature of the Pearson Paper 2 topic options is that there are no prohibited combinations between the Period study (Booklet P) and British depth study (Booklet B). This gives you flexibility to create a combination which suits you as a teacher as well as your students. The options available for each part of Paper 2 are mentioned in the relevant sections of this document.

Having the flexibility to choose helps you to ensure that your students gain a broad historical awareness through their GCSE History course. For example, it allows you to choose an option for one part of the paper which covers a period of history you have experience teaching, with an option that is new but will excite and interest your class.

It is worth considering the combination that will work within your broader curriculum setting. For example, you could choose two options that have a thematic link, such as Spain and the 'New World', c1490–c1555 for the Period study, with Early Elizabethan England, 1558–88 for the British depth study. Although there is no overlap of content, there is a conceptual connection as both relate to Britain and Spain in a world with developing exploration and imperialism. Similarly, the Period study options Conflict in the Middle East 1945–95 and Superpower Relations and the Cold War, 1941–91 have a narrative link (though again, no content overlap) with the Paper 3 options, Russia and the Soviet Union, 1917–41 and Weimar and Nazi Germany, 1918–39. Finding narrative or thematic links like the ones mentioned here or others can make for an interesting and effective combination of topics for your students.

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.

Period study requirement: Booklet P

The DfE GCSE Subject Content requirement for period studies is given below:

> Period studies should focus on a substantial and coherent medium time span of at least 50 years and require students to understand the *unfolding narrative of substantial developments and issues* associated with the period. [emphasis added]

This means that during the Period study, students should focus on the unfolding narrative, or sequence of events, through the period. This requires emphasis on understanding the key events and developments of the period, by considering the causes, consequences and effects which connect them together. Students will not see a collection of unconnected events in time, but rather a chain of events. They will learn to see the topic as a progressive development, understanding the significance of the events in the wider chronology and seeing change and continuity through the period.

Paper 2 meets this requirement of GCSE History by offering the following five Period study options, of which students study **one**:

- P1: Spain and the 'New World', c1490–c1555
- P2: British America, 1713–83: empire and revolution
- P3: The American West, c1835–c1895
- P4: Superpower relations and the Cold War, 1941–91
- P5: Conflict in the Middle East, 1945–95

More information about each of the options, including specific content coverage and guidance on teaching the topic, is available in the Specification **Issue 5** **or** **Issue 6** (see the introduction to this booklet for which you should use) and the **topic booklets**.

How does this work in practice?

Each Period study is divided into three key topics. An example of this is given below:

P4: Superpower relations and the Cold War, 1941–91

1. The origins of the Cold War, 1941–58
2. Cold War crises, 1958–70
3. The end of the Cold War, 1970–91

The key topics provide a framework for teaching the option. They are organised in chronological sequence. However, they should not be taken in isolation of one another. Amongst the key historical concepts assessed in the Period study are analysing historical narrative, describing consequence and explaining significance (impact – consequence, change, continuity). Students need to understand not only the narrative connections within each of the three key topics but also those that run across the key topics.

Key topic 1: The early settlement of the West, c1835–c1862	
1 Indigenous peoples of the Plains: their beliefs and ways of life	• Social and tribal structures, ways of life and means of survival on the Plains. • Beliefs about land and nature and attitudes to war and property.
2 Migration and early settlement	• The factors encouraging migration, including the Oregon Trail from 1836, the belief in Manifest Destiny, and the California Gold Rush of 1849. • Early migration to c1850, including the experiences of the Donner Party and the Mormon migration, 1846–47. • The development and problems of early settlement.
3 Conflict and tension	• Reasons for tension with Indigenous peoples of the Plains, including US government policy and the 'Permanent Indian Frontier'. The significance of the first Fort Laramie Treaty (1851). The Indian Appropriations Act (1851). • Lawlessness in early towns and settlements, including attempts to tackle lawlessness.

An example of one of the three key topics for the option, P3: The American West, c1835–c1895.

Each key topic is structured with three subsidiary sections to structure the teaching of the unit.

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

How is it assessed?

The Paper 2 Period study is assessed on the following assessment objectives:

AO1 (50%)	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the key features and characteristics of the periods studied.
AO2 (50%)	Explain and analyse historical events and periods studied using second-order historical concepts. • The 8-mark 'consequence' question assesses the second-order historical concept of consequence. • The 8-mark 'narrative account' question assesses the students' ability to write an analytical narrative, targeting a mix of second-order historical concepts, including consequence and change. • The 16-mark (2 × 8-mark) 'importance' question targets the second-order historical concepts of significance and consequence.

From the table above, the importance of focusing on the concepts of causation, consequence and significance when teaching the content is clear, as they run through the assessment of the period study.

Booklet P contains three questions, with students selecting two from a choice of three parts for Question 3.

Q1 (a) Explain **one** consequence of… (4)

(b) Explain **one** consequence of… (4)
(Total: 8 marks)

- This question assesses the candidates' ability to explain a consequence of an event or development – what happened as a result of… (explaining the connection clearly).
- Each part of the question, 1(a) and 1(b), will ask about a different event or development.
- Students only need to explain one consequence for each; there are no extra marks for additional consequences.

Q2 Write a narrative account analysing…
You **may** use the following in your answer:

- stimulus point 1
- stimulus point 2

You **must** also use information of your own.
(8 marks)

- This question assesses the candidates' ability to analyse a historical narrative.
- This is more than simply describing. Good answers should use language indicating second-order historical concepts, such as consequence (using phrases such as 'this led to…', 'as a result…') and significance to explain analytically the narrative.
- Two stimulus points are provided to help candidates plan a chronological narrative. Students do not have to use them, but answers should cover three aspects of content.

Q3 Explain **two** of the following:

- The importance of… for… (8)
- The importance of… for… (8)
- The importance of… for… (8)

(Total: 16 marks)

- Candidates are assessed for their ability to explain the importance of two events or developments from a choice of three.
- The question will always frame the importance of an event/development/issue in terms of a specific focus, and candidates should ensure that they address the event/development/issue in relation to this focus.
- The two answers are marked independently out of 8 marks, rather than collectively out of 16.

British depth study requirement: Booklet B

The DfE History GCSE Subject Content requirement for depth studies is given below:

> Depth studies should focus on a substantial and coherent short time span and require students to understand the complexity of a society or historical situation and the interplay of different aspects within it. Depending on the particular society or historical situation selected for study, these aspects may include (but are not restricted to) social, economic, political, religious, technological and military factors.

In addition, the DfE guidance states:

> GCSE specifications in history should require students to study at least one British depth study.

Paper 2 meets this requirement of GCSE History by offering the following four British depth study options, of which students study **one**:

- B1: Anglo-Saxon and Norman England, c1060–88
- B2: The reigns of King Richard I and King John, 1189–1216
- B3: Henry VIII and his ministers, 1509–40
- B4: Early Elizabethan England, 1558–88

More information about each of the options, including specific content coverage and guidance on teaching the topic, is available in the Specification **Issue 5** **or** **Issue 6** (see the introduction to this booklet for which you should use) and the **topic booklets**.

How does this work in practice?

Each depth study is divided into three key topics. An example of this is given below:

B1: Anglo-Saxon and Norman England, c1060–88

1. Anglo-Saxon England and the Norman Conquest, 1060–66
2. William I in power: securing the kingdom, 1066–87
3. Norman England: 1066–88

The key topics provide a framework for teaching and understanding the option. However, they are not entirely independent and there are many links between aspects of the different key topics. This can be seen through the fact that in each of the four options, there is chronological overlap between the three key topics. This helps to highlight to students the complexity and interplay of different aspects within society.

Key topic 1: Queen, government and religion, 1558–69	
1 The situation on Elizabeth's accession	• Elizabethan England in 1558: society and government. • The Virgin Queen: the problem of her legitimacy, gender, marriage. Her character and strengths. • Challenges at home and from abroad: the French threat, financial weaknesses.
2 The 'settlement' of religion	• Religious divisions in England in 1558. • Elizabeth's religious settlement (1559): its features and impact. • The Church of England: its role in society.
3 Challenge to the religious settlement	• The nature and extent of the Puritan challenge. • The nature and extent of the Catholic challenge, including the role of the nobility, Papacy and foreign powers.
4 The problem of Mary, Queen of Scots	• Mary, Queen of Scots: her claim to the English throne, her arrival in England in 1568. • Relations between Elizabeth and Mary, 1568–69.

An example of one of the three key topics for the Elizabeth option B4.

Each key topic is broken down into 4 subsidiary blocks to assist teaching the option.

Some aspects of the content are broad, for example the nature and extent of the Puritan challenge 1558–69…

…whilst some content is specifically identified, such as the arrival of Mary, Queen of Scots in England in 1568.

How is it assessed?

The Paper 2 British depth study is assessed on the following assessment objectives:

AO1 (50%)	Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the key features and characteristics of the periods studied.
AO2 (50%)	Explain and analyse historical events and periods studied using second-order historical concepts. • In the British depth study, an important second-order historical concept is causation, assessed in the 12-mark 'explain why' question. • Additionally, the 16-mark essay 'judgement' question may target any second-order historical concepts, including: ○ Change ○ Continuity ○ Causation ○ Consequence ○ Similarity and difference ○ Significance

Booklet B contains four questions. Candidates should answer Q1, Q2 and **either** Q3 **or** Q4.

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

(b) Describe **one** feature of… (2)

(Total: 4 marks)

- Each part of the question asks for one feature. One mark is for identifying the feature, the second for adding relevant additional information.
- Each of the parts, 1(a) and 1(b), will ask for a feature of a different area of content.
- Students will be credited for relevant features of the topic. Only one mark is available for additional information, so students should avoid producing lengthy answers.

Q2 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 requires an answer that explains a specified an event or development.
- Two stimulus points are provided to help candidates. Students do not have to use them, but answers should cover three aspects of content.

Q3 or Q4 '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)

- This question requires an extended answer, addressing the conceptual focus of the question and reaching a judgement based upon valid criteria.
- Two stimulus points are provided to help candidates. Students do not have to use them, but answers should cover three aspects of content.
- Unlike the 16-mark questions on Paper 1 and 3, there are no additional marks for SPaG.

Section 2: Teaching Paper 2

This section is intended to offer suggestions on how to approach teaching Paper 2. 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.

Setting the Scene

For many students, a significant challenge in Paper 2 is being able to comprehend the societies which they will be studying. The British depth studies, for example study society in a time where there were very different social expectations and attitudes, such as the central role that religion played in everyday life or the acceptance of social roles in which there was limited potential to change one's station in life. In the same way, the Period studies involve learning about events and people with vastly different cultural ideas, whether that was the American ideals of the rugged individualism in the American West option, or the conflict between capitalism and communism in the Cold War that left many people genuinely afraid of nuclear destruction.

Therefore, it is a good idea to ensure that students have a grounding in the option before they have the chance to become lost in the specific parts of the 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 could be in the form of an illustrated timeline, for example. The idea is to help students to see the overall framework of the topic and the main ideas or events. This will help them to have some conceptual idea of the big ideas of the period before studying them in detail. This could be referred back to whilst covering the events and act as a way of helping students see where they are up to chronologically, and could be converted into a card sort exercise of key events with dates. The **topic booklets** provide good overviews for each British depth study and Period study. **Differentiation:** For lower-attaining students, fewer events and simpler descriptions could be given. For higher-attaining students, the concepts could be colour coded to indicate themes, like economic issues or military developments.
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 information describing the two years; for example, on the Early Elizabethan option, information describing England in 1558 and 1588. On a double page of an exercise book, students write parallel facts on each page, possibly with a symbol or simple illustration. With the

	Elizabethan option in mind, students might, for instance, identify on the left-hand page that there was a strong divide between Protestant and Catholic in 1558 which Elizabeth had to handle, and on the right-hand page, that whilst there was still significant Catholic support in 1588, Protestantism was well-established. **Differentiation:** Lower-attaining pupils could be given the information already broken into themes with short descriptions, and asked to summarise the main change into 2 sentences. Alternatively, they could base comparisons on pairs of contrasting images. Higher-attaining pupils could be given information that is in continuous prose, includes other evidence like graphs and charts, and offers a Venn diagram with aspects that didn't seem to have changed in the middle.
Use of videos	Sometimes video clips, used with discernment at the start of a topic, can help students to be able to conceptually visualise the nature of the unit. Especially with the British depth studies, docu-dramas (like the DVD *1066*) or Hollywood films (like *Elizabeth*) can help to set the scene.

Teaching in practice:

Chris Tilley, Haslingden High School. Paper 2 options – Anglo-Saxon and Norman England, and Superpower Relations and the Cold War

We do a "Big Overview" of the topic. We create a huge timeline of major events from the study period helping to form a chronological structure to which we can pin knowledge and concepts as we study them. We support this with discussion about prior knowledge from KS2 and KS3, but also include the wider historical awareness students have gained from other GCSE units.

Common barriers and pitfalls

General issues

Issue	Suggestions for addressing
Confusing the chronology A chronological awareness is important, so that examples in date frames are addressed. This is essential for the narrative analysis question on the Period study.	• Regularly use timelines in lessons. • Make links between past events and the topic being studied. • Create plans for the same exam question twice, but with different date ranges (e.g. 1558–70 then 1558–88) to help students to focus on the importance of the date range.
Not using relevant examples Relevant examples are important. Some students use examples that fall outside of the period, for example, references to Shakespeare in the Early Elizabethan paper (his first play was three years after the end of the course) or detailed Mormon history prior to the migration West.	• When adapting old teaching resources or materials not specific for the course, avoid the use of examples beyond the scope of the course. • As a lesson starter, challenge pupils to think of an example that they could use to prove a statement. • Create a series of 'odd one out' activities, where one event is outside the time frame. • 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 'people didn't agree about religion in Elizabethan England' or 'some people revolted in England'.	• When marking, highlight generalised sentences in a specific colour and ask students to re-write those lines. • Have a list of key 'generalised words', like people, on the wall with options to use in their place (e.g. Catholics, the nobility, etc.).
Poor time management Some students do not balance their time well between the two papers, or between questions. A common example is spending too long on Question 2 (Explain why…) on the British depth study, resulting in insufficient time on Question 3. Another example is Question 1 on the Period study, where candidates need to manage how much they write in each part.	• Encourage students to use the answer space, for example on the shorter questions, and practice with pages laid out like the exam paper. • 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 Q2 on the British depth study. • Remind students that they can answer Booklet B and Booklet P in either order.

Booklet P: Period study

Issue	Suggestions for addressing
Not supporting consequences with specific detail Question 1 assesses AO1 and AO2. Some students accurately identify a consequence but fail to provide sufficient supporting materials (AO1) or to explain/analyse the consequence – what happened as a result of… (AO2).	• In class discussion, when a pupil identifies a factor or issue, ask another pupil to back the point up with an example that shows (or disproves) this. • Use highlighters to analyse model answers by identifying the main point, and the subsequent supporting detail. • Instead of doing early practice questions on consequence in a writing grid, try answering in a flow chart that links the focus event/development/issue to supporting detail. Then move back to prose paragraphs when this is embedded.
Describing events, not a narrative Some students are aware of the events but do not make the links between them. On Question 2, which asks for a narrative analysis, some students answer by describing three events within the period, perhaps basing two on the stimulus material. The answer for Q2 requires a narrative link, showing the concept of events being connected together.	• Flow diagrams are an effective way of showing the key events in unfolding events. By creating a flow diagram, students can show how events are connected. The task can be simplified by giving students the first and last events, with 2–3 spaces in between, or by giving all the events in a jumbled order. The task can also be made more challenging by providing clues to the various stages in the narrative but not using the terms with which students will be familiar. • Have lines of string across the classroom. With laminated cards naming the main events/developments, pupils peg a series of features relevant to a question into order. This could be developed with a second set of laminated cards in another colour with connecting phrases, like 'this led to', 'this increased tension between…' to structure the idea of connecting ideas. • Use non-historical ideas with which students are familiar to develop the narrative style. Watch a short scene from TV or a film and use linking phrases to write a short narrative. Then apply the style to a historical event. • In pairs, write a short script for an audio podcast. Highlight all the analytical phrases. Record the script being read out loud, where one student reads the non-

	highlighted parts, and the second reads the highlighted words. • Students create a story board with no writing and then pass it to another student who writes a narrative using the storyboard (ideally using 3 or 4 different topics so that the storyboard is less predictable). • As a challenge for higher-attaining students, give a timeline which contains more detail and more events than are necessary. They should choose the most important 5 points and use them to create a simplified flow diagram which still shows the key narrative.
Not addressing the question focus Question 3 centres on the importance of a person/event/development. Some students simply assert significance by describing the event. Crucially, the question will have a key topic area/focus on which to determine significance. For instance, in the Superpower relations option, for the June 2019 question, 'The importance of the refugee problem in Berlin for increasing tensions between East and West in the years 1958–61', students need to focus on the significance for the relationship between superpowers, rather than, for example, focusing on the lives of citizens. Students need to analyse why the event (*x*) was important for given focus (*y*) by considering the impact of the consequences, what difference did it make.	• Make a spider diagram of every single way that an event/development/person was important. Then pick a specific question focus, like domestic policies or another relevant theme. Highlight all the points that would be relevant. Then change the focus and highlight in a different colour to compare which points are relevant. • Encourage students to focus more on the second (Y) event than the first (X) event. An activity could be to work backwards – present students with a changed situation (e.g. in American West: the cattle industry became very profitable), and ask students what might have caused that. Lower attainers could be given clues (e.g. railroads, army contracts). • Use a non-history example. For example, the importance of a sports team going bankrupt on (a) the players and staff, (b) the fans, (c) the general public. Use the example to focus on how the same event has differing impacts and a differing degree of significance in different contexts.

Booklet B: British depth study

Issue	Suggestions for addressing
Lacking sufficient supporting knowledge Students do not approach the questions with sufficient depth or range of knowledge. For both Question 2 and Question 3/4, accessing the top mark in Level 3 and all the marks in Level 4 requires three aspects of content to be deployed. The development of this content to provide sufficient relevant and accurate evidence to support the explanation/ analysis being made will determine the Level awarded (see mark schemes).	• Whilst teaching topics, create lists or spider diagrams of factors and consequences of key events. • Spend some time with exam questions making lists of possible content, to instil the idea that there are many aspects of content that could be used.
Describing instead of analysing Some students describe, rather than analyse the events in Question 2 and Question 3/4. The question requires an analytical focus on the second-order concepts, rather than a simple narrative or description of events.	• Consider the difference between the descriptive question 'how do you come to school each day?' and 'why do you come to school each day?' Then spider-diagram answers to the latter and write a model paragraph based upon one of the reasons. The idea is to use a non-historical question to address the issue of causation as a second-order concept. • Whilst students are learning to write analytically, have a phrase to encourage them to focus, such as 'This caused X because…'. Once students are more confident in analysing events, encourage them to use a wider range of phrases to enrich their analysis. • Have key words visible on the wall with analytical phrases like 'increased tension between…', 'affected public attitudes towards…', persuaded X to…', 'led to…', 'resulted in…' and other examples of analytical language.
Listing rather than developing factors Some students identify factors in Question 2 or relevant content in Question 3/4 without analytical development. The answer reads more like a list than an analysis or explanation.	• Begin with a spider diagram of factors, but then ask students to select from the options and make a plan with points/factors which they are confident writing about. • Practise making plans for questions Q2 and Q3/4 which include developmental points. Although there is no specific structure to use, ensure that the structure that you are teaching lends to developing each relevant

	point. For example, a common approach to Q2 is to use PEEL paragraphs (point, example, explain, link). • With model paragraphs that develop a point or factor well, have students highlight and annotate for the main point, development, analytical language, etc.
Weak judgements A common pitfall in the 16-mark judgement question, Question 3/4, is that whilst students generally remember to add a conclusion, they often assert rather than support a judgement. For example, 'overall I agree with… because it was more important than the other options'. *See also 'Teaching criteria' in the section on Teaching the content below.*	• For students who are struggling to express a judgement, you could suggest a possible phrase, such as 'this is because…' or 'this is more valid because…' which students can become used to using in their judgements. This will encourage them to support the reasons. As they become more confident, you can then encourage students to use a wider range of language to express their judgements. • Have students read each others' 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 of a success or failure? Discuss reasons to lean one way or the other. This concept will help students to develop the ability to use several points, factors or arguments in an exam answer. • Encourage students to explain how far they agree with the statement in the question (rather than simply stating they 'partially agree' or 'somewhat agree'). For example, 'The statement is partially valid because…, but the evidence against it is stronger because…'. • It would also help to give them criteria they could use, e.g. more important because it affected more people / affected the elite / the effects lasted longer / it had a significant impact on daily life.

Teaching the content

Visual displays

Use coloured posters and notes around the classroom to help students to work. One helpful example is to have a long wall display, with key events from the period study, connected by string. The display could include images. This will help students to visualise the connections between key events.

Key word banks on the wall will also help students to move beyond writing descriptively and start writing analytically.

Teaching in practice:

Gino Gizzi, Haslingden High School. Paper 2 options – Anglo-Saxon and Norman England, and Superpower Relations and the Cold War

We find that barriers with the period study tend to revolve around a lack of geopolitical awareness. As well as making sure that any potential areas of confusion are given dedicated lesson time, we make sure that there are clear wall displays. For example, we like to show a reminder of the difference between capitalism and communism, and a physical timeline which helps the students to remember the link between key events.

Freeze frame

In small groups, students should be given an event or development. They need to show a freeze frame of the event. It is a good idea to photograph this to show on the screen. The rest of the class should try to guess what the event or development was.

Make a documentary

Using a free app like Adobe Flash video, students can insert images and provide a news/documentary style voice over. They should explain the importance of the event in terms of consequences. For the highest-attaining students, the documentary or news report should be made in two shorter phases, one immediately after the event and a second 'update' report taken an appropriate time after the event which includes longer-term consequences.

Card sorts

This paper lends itself to card sorts which can be used in different ways. It is possible to make one set of cards with many of the events 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.
- Ranking: ordering the events by, for example, importance to international relations or importance to royal power. Change the ranking criteria to see if the events stay in the same order or not.
- Grouping: group the events by theme (military, religious, etc.), success/failure, 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 issue AND within the date frame.

Visual notes

Make notes visual. Use spider-diagrams, coloured notes, flow charts and labelled illustrations to help organise the notes. This is especially important when reaching the end of one of the key topics within an option, to ensure that students have a good grasp of the topic before moving on.

Teaching criteria

One challenging area to teach is using valid criteria to make judgements in the 16-mark question on the British depth study. One practical suggestion is to take the history out of the concept and consider it in the context of a completely familiar setting. For example, in groups get the students think of how they would judge the school if they were visiting it as inspectors? What sort of things might they look at, and would the school simply be good or bad, or would it more likely need a more sophisticated judgement? For example, they might consider behaviour, the quality of teaching and the food in the canteen, or other possible suggestions. You could then take this a step further by asking what they consider to be the main reason why the school was graded as 'good', 'outstanding', etc. The same could be achieved with a video clip of a movie scene or sports match, by identifying main reasons or consequences, for example, and then judging them for importance.

Then apply the same logic to a historical statement, for example 'The main reason William I was able to keep control of England in the years 1066–75 was the building of castles.' How could they judge how important each reason was? What might make one reason more important than another? Having considered this in discussion, they could write just the judgement to finish an exam style question.

Key words

There are many key words in the content of Paper 2, and additionally students need to learn analytical language to explain their points. One practical suggestion, mentioned above, is to have word banks on the wall. However, students can also have a glossary page, perhaps stuck into the back of their exercise book, where they can record key terms as they come across them. It can also help to flag up especially important key words at the start of the lesson before starting to cover the content.

Another practical example is to ask students to use two highlighters to go through a model answer, or their own answer to a practice exam question, identifying firstly technical historical terms, like names of events or subject specific terminology, and secondly analytical language. You could use an example of a strong answer from a recent examiner's report for this.

Teaching in practice:

Kate Gibson, St. Cuthbert's Catholic High School. Paper 2 options – Henry VIII and his ministers, and Superpower Relations and the Cold War

One challenge we find is in the students gaining the depth of knowledge to allow them to distinguish between key individuals and events. For example, in the Henry VIII topic, students often confuse Cromwell and Wolsey. We address this by colour coding activities and 'who did what' sorting tasks. We come up with acronyms to summarise the key points of their roles.

Another challenge is helping students to construct arguments for 'how far do you agree' questions. One technique we use is to present the exam-style question but without bullet point stimulus material. Students create their own statements to respond to the question, and this forms the centre of a class debate in which students can challenge and support opinions. When the bullet points are added back into the question, students have already formed opinions about the question before writing.

Teaching second-order historical concepts

Being successful on Paper 2 requires more than simply knowing the key features of the period. The papers are also assessed on AO2, using second-order historical concepts to explain and analyse historical events. Therefore, students need to be taught how to use these concepts effectively.

There are a number of second-order historical concepts which historians need to be able to use to make analytical and evaluative judgements about historical events. Some examples of second-order historical concepts are identified here:

- Cause and consequence - This is about the link between events and factors, specifically how one or more developments not only cause subsequent events or developments to happen, but also affect their nature.
- Change and continuity – This is about analysing the change resulting from events, or the lack thereof.
- Significance – Some events are of greater significance, or importance, than other events. This could be due to the nature, size or time scale of the consequences, for example. An event or development may have a different significance when considered in relation to different consequences.

Teaching in practice:

Kirsty Connor, Aylsham High School. Paper 2 options – Anglo-Saxon and Norman England, and Superpower Relations and the Cold War.

We have found that it is useful to get the chronology of events clear before looking at the second-order concept. I tend to use a lot of worksheets which focus on the order of events and then use these sheets to look at a second-order concept, such as causation. We tend to find that having the timeline with a clear narrative on the table makes it easier for the students to make the links they need. We support this by providing weekly multiple-choice quizzes in booklets which recap the main learning points. For some questions, we allow more than one correct answer if the student can justify this, which allows scores of over 100% – it can be useful at times to have a healthy competitive spirit.

Examples of tasks that help students to think in terms of second-order concepts:

One way of helping students to learn to handle second-order concepts well is to create tasks that address specific second-order concepts. Below you will find a small selection of examples. Each one is a simple task, designed to help students to think about a second-order historical concept analytically. These could be adapted to suit other options.

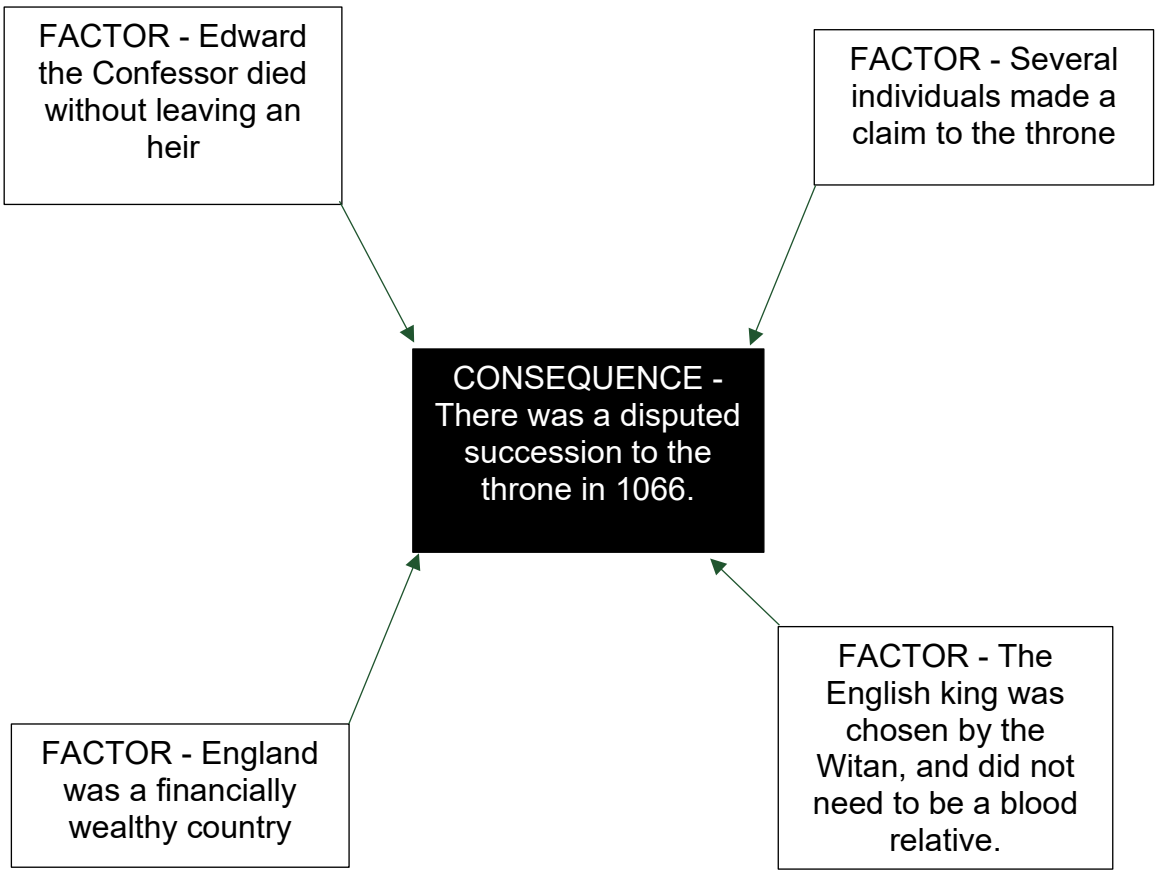
The tasks on the subsequent pages are not designed to address answering specific exam style questions, though the concepts involved relate to those used in exam questions. Therefore, they should not be used as models for planning or answering exam questions. The examples of topics used are for exemplification of the historical concept and, since the author of this guide has not seen live materials, should not be considered to indicate future exam papers. All example topics used are based on questions taken from past papers, sample assessment materials or specimen papers.

Cause and consequence

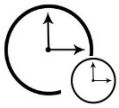
Whilst students usually grasp simple cause and consequence, they can struggle to explain that an event or development can be the consequence of a range of causes acting in combination. It can also be hard to grasp that the causes may operate on different time scales. This is an example of a task that could be used to help students think about cause and consequence. Simple tasks like this will help students to see the connection between different factors and their consequences.

Option in this example	B1: Anglo-Saxon and Norman England, c1060–88

Historical events often have more than one cause. Sometimes the causes can be events, or decisions, but other times they might be the result of a gradual change or popular attitude. Some causes can run for a long-time period before leading to the consequence, whilst others could be short-term and have an immediate impact.



1) Label the lines connecting each factor (the white boxes) with the consequence (the black box) by saying how the factor led to the consequence.
2) Can you link any of the factors (the white boxes) together? Draw lines and label them.
3) Next to each factor draw a clock face. Make it larger for factors that were long-term issues, and smaller next to factors that were short term.

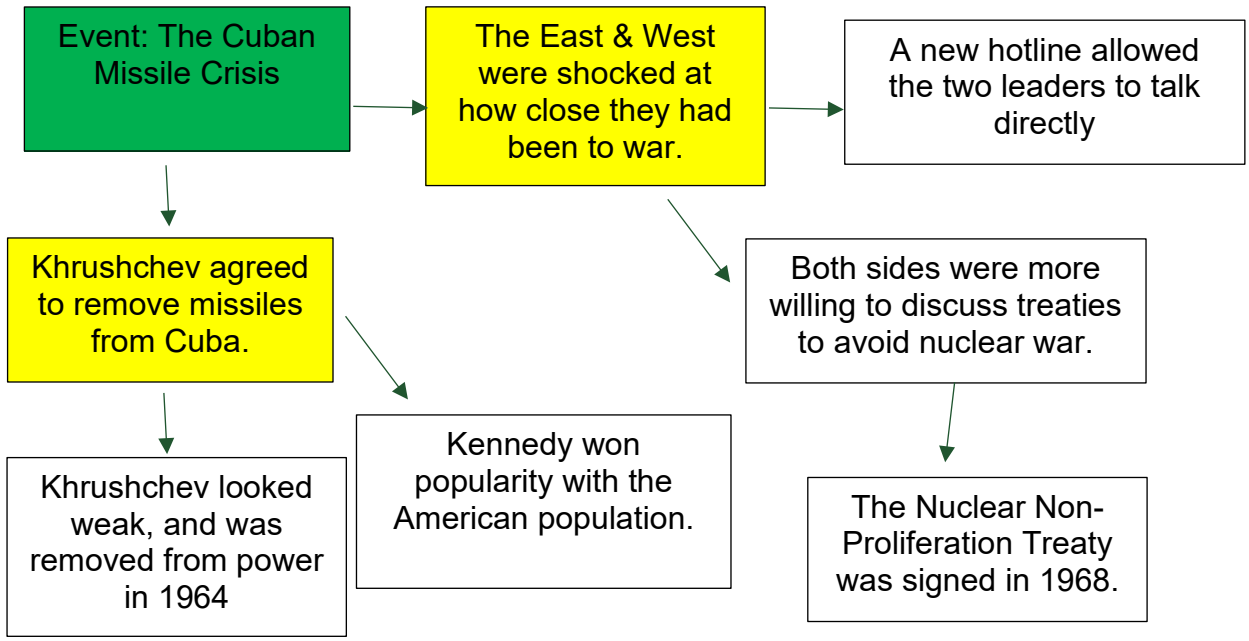


Cause and consequence

A challenge in considering the second-order historical concept of cause and consequence is that students can fall into the trap of thinking that an event leads to on consequence, in a linear fashion. This task is an example of how you can help your students to think in terms of events having multiple consequences. Not only is this skill important for the questions on consequence and importance, but it will help to write effective analytical narratives. The teacher could extend this line of reasoning further by showing the narrative connection to subsequent events or by using class discussion to judge whether all the consequences were of equal significance.

Option in this example	P4: Superpower relations and the Cold War, 1941–91

Historical events and developments can have obvious consequences. But sometimes the consequences stretch beyond the immediate consequences.



1) This diagram shows some consequences of the Cuban Missile Crisis in 1962. Do you think the list of consequences is complete? What is missing?
2) Did the consequences increase or decrease tensions between East and West?
3) Which consequences do you think were intentional? Were any consequences unexpected?
4) Write an exam question which would require a student to use all the information in this diagram.

Cause and consequence

For higher-attaining students, it can be a worthwhile exercise to consider that some consequences can be intended, whereas other consequences can be unintentional. Equally, a policy or action can fail in its intended purpose and still have consequences as large as successful events or actions. The first event has been given as an example, the teacher can add examples for the other two events. Being able to distinguish between unintended and intended consequences can help students to think analytically. If students are only able to link decisions and policies to specific intended outcomes, they may struggle to write with a breadth of analysis and knowledge.

Option for this example	P3: The American West, c1835–c1895

Consequences may be deliberate. However, often the consequences may also be unintended. Even events that did not succeed in their aims may have significant consequences.

The Fort Laramie Treaty, 1851	Intended consequence: Tribal territories were clearly marked out, which was the first step toward reservations.	/5
	Unintended consequence: With the end of the 1834 Permanent Indian Frontier, more white settlers moved into tribal territory.	/5
	Intended consequence:	/5
	Unintended consequence:	/5
	Intended consequence:	/5
	Unintended consequence:	/5

1) For each of the events above, identify:
   a) One consequence that was intended.
   b) One consequence that was unintended (e.g. something that was not deliberate).
   c) In the small box at the end of each answer space, assign the consequence a score from 1–5 for how significant you consider it to be (1= a minor consequence with little significance, 5= a major consequence with significant impact).
2) In your opinion, do the intended or unintended consequences of these developments seem more significant? Explain your answer.

Cause and consequence

Sometimes students treat causes and consequences as if they were inevitable, rather than seeing developments as occurring only because of the factors that led up to them. This challenging task can be used to help students to realise that events need not have happened in that precise manner, and that dramatically different outcomes were possible.

A suggestion for higher-attaining students in assessing the significance of an event or decision is to consider the possible impact of it not happening. This will help students to understand that the way that the events happened was not simply an inevitable consequence but that it was the result of deliberate decisions.

Option for this example	P4: Superpower relations and the Cold War, 1941–91

Events and consequences are rarely inevitable. Often, whether deliberate or unintended, events are the consequence of the decisions made by political and military leaders.

One example is the Cuban Missile Crisis. Nuclear warfare was threatened and subsequently avoided by the decisions taken by the political leaders. One way to assess them is to ask 'what if'. Even though we can't be certain what would happen, it is a way of thinking through the significance of the consequences of a decision or event.

What if…	Possible consequence?	How significant was the decision they really made?
…America had not stopped aid and imports of Cuban sugar when Castro took power and nationalised American companies?	Cuba could have carried on trading with USA. They probably wouldn't have asked for support from USSR, so the USSR would not have established a military presence there.	The decision to stop trade was crucial as it gave the USSR an ally which resented the USA and that was within reach of North America. The Cuban Missile would not have happened without this relationship.
… Kennedy had not agreed to the CIA plans for the Bay of Pigs?		
… American military forces had attacked the Russian ships carrying the warheads?		
… Khrushchev did not back down but continued to try to place warheads on Cuba?		
…Khrushchev had publicised that the USA was also removing warheads from Turkey.		

a) For each of the 'what if' decisions, think about what the possible consequences could have been. The first example has been done for you.
b) Once you have thought about the possible outcomes of a different decision, make a judgement about how significant the real decision was. The first example has been done for you.

Extension – Which decision made by a political leader during the Cuban Missile Crisis do you think had the most significance for the events of the crisis? Explain your choice.

Change and continuity

Change and continuity is an important assessment for a historian, but not all change proceeds at an even rate. Students can sometimes think about turning points, like a battle, treaty or election, as being a moment when everything changes. Whilst this can be helpful, it can be an oversimplification to think that one event can change everything. Helping students to look for the bigger patterns in change will help them to move beyond describing events into looking for patterns. This task is aimed at helping students to compare changes. In the example below, the teacher would select the areas to be compared in the table.

Option for this example	B1: Anglo-Saxon and Norman England, c1060–88

Change happens all the time in history. Leaders change, battles and wars are fought, laws are passed. However, not every event is a significant historical change. For example, even though the Anglo-Saxons lost the Battle of Hastings, many parts of everyday life stayed the same whilst other things changed significantly. This task will help you to assess the change and continuity before and after 1066.

	Similarities between Anglo-Saxon and Norman England	Differences between Anglo-Saxon and Norman England
Royal power	• Edward the Confessor and William I had absolute power. •	• Edward ruled with the aid of a Witan; William did not. • William used regents as he held land in Normandy as well as England. •

1) For each aspect of society in the table above, identify at least one similarity and difference. The first row has some examples for you.
2) Which aspect of society has the:
   a) most significant changes?
   b) most continuity?
3) Overall, how similar were Anglo-Saxon and Norman England?

Significance

Significance, or importance, is an essential second-order historical concept. Whilst it is easy to think of significance in absolute terms, in reality a development can be very significant in one area whilst having little or no impact in another area. Students need to be able to think flexibly about significance. To be able to explain the importance of an event, students need to be able to focus on the importance in relation to a key focus, such as how important it is for a particular group or country, or for tensions between groups. This will help them to avoid generalised and subjective statements about importance which are not relevant to the question being asked. The task below has one question focus, teachers can add other foci into the spaces.

Option for this example	P5: Conflict in the Middle East, 1945–95

The importance of an event will depend upon the focus of the question. For example, an event or development might be significant for changing how a government runs its country, but less significant for the relationship that the country has with other countries. This means that when thinking about significance, we cannot just have a fixed answer for each event, individual or development in the key topic. Instead, we need to think about importance in relation to the focus of the question.

The Cairo Conference in 1964

How was it important for the Arab States, 1964-73?

How was it important for…

How was it important for…

Judgement – in what way was the Cairo Conference most important?

1)	2)	3)
Reason:		

1) Read back over your notes on the Cairo Conference, 1964.
2) In each box, summarise two examples of how the Cairo Conference was important, or significant. Make sure that your examples are relevant to the topic focus.
3) In the three spaces at the end, put the three different topic foci (the three boxes from task 2) into priority order from most to least significant. Give a reason for your choice.

Conflict in the Middle East: why consider this topic for your students?

Conflict in the Middle East, c1945–95 is an exciting period study option for GCSE History Paper 2. **Hugh Castle, Head of History at Lancaster Royal Grammar School**, gave us his viewpoint on what makes this topic a great option. He has taught history for twenty-nine years, is active in curriculum planning and coordinates Parallel Histories in schools.

Interview and article by Ben Armstrong

1. Why do you consider the Conflict in the Middle East option an excellent choice for your students?

Because they learn so much from this topic, and not just about Israel and Palestine – they learn about the very nature of history, about why conflicts persist, and about how to debate strongly-held viewpoints robustly but respectfully. I don't think it is an overstatement to say that this topic is the mother of all controversies. It is history, but it is so relevant today to students because the continuing conflict between Israelis and Palestinians remains controversial, not only as a matter of foreign policy but also for intercommunal relations. When you teach this unit, you really draw out the view from your students. I can understand why some schools do not want to teach this, but it is the right thing to do. If we do not engage with controversial topics, we are sidestepping our responsibility.

As well as the skills that are taught in all of the options for Paper 2 that all GCSE students gain, this topic has great scope for covering big concepts like empire, radicalisation, siege mentality, intergenerational causation and legacy, proliferation of conflict, living under occupation, ethnic nationalism, superpower rivalry and how opinions are formed. I can't think of a better vehicle for engaging in these historical, political and social issues because it is real.

Additionally, Conflict in the Middle East creates some great opportunities for classroom debate. We use **Parallel Histories** materials to help prepare the two sides with source evidence on which they can base opposing arguments. Very often we swap which sides the students are on at the next debate so they begin to see how arguments are created and rebutted, how contrasting perspectives can be justified, and how different types of source evidence can be utilised and interpreted.

2. So why do you think some teachers could be put off from selecting this topic?

The main concern is fear of accusations of bias, leading to fear of not being enough of an expert to take on the topic. But this is the very reason that this topic should be openly taught, and the many resources on the Parallel Histories website can help teachers to approach the topic from multiple angles. It allows them to let the evidence do the talking and avoid playing the moral umpire. Additionally, there are many other resources, like textbooks and websites, that can support planning. Once students see how the topic links to modern people and events, for example starting a lesson with a declaration made by a political leader like Donald Trump, students quickly grasp its interest and relevance.

3. How have you planned to effectively teach this unit as part of your GCSE scheme of work?

I think the key is to make this relevant to the wider curriculum planning, rather than treating it as an isolated topic. Within the GCSE, we have selected units that harmonise together. With Paper 1, we teach the Warfare and British society option, which helps to set the wider military context of the twentieth century; for the British period study in Paper 2, we cover the reigns of Richard I and

John, which includes the Third Crusade, and for Paper 3, we teach Weimar and Nazi Germany, which provides the Holocaust in Europe as context for events in Palestine from 1945. However, we also fit the topics in within the wider curriculum. In Year 9, we address the period as an enquiry based upon the Parallel Histories resources. We focus particularly on an overview of events and contrasting the differing interpretations of the period. We then return to the topic in Year 11 as the last GCSE unit. By this point, the students have an awareness of the Middle East from Year 9, but also a broader contextual understanding from the other GCSE events which means they can really engage with the ideas of narrative and importance. We also link this further than GCSE as part of the Edexcel History A Level, we use the Middle East as the basis of the enquiry topic for Unit 4. One thing that has helped has been to adjust how we teach the lessons. We have moved away from making lots of notes. Instead, students generally receive a set of notes which they can highlight and keep. Much of the lesson focuses on discussion and debate around the knowledge, which helps to engage with ideas of consequence and importance. Writing is presented as something special and important, as it is not continual – students are encouraged to do their best when they write, so that they write the most important things, not everything. Writing after in-depth debates produces a much higher quality of understanding.

4. What resources have you found to be particularly helpful?

Obviously Parallel Histories is at the centre of our resources. We also make regular use of textbooks. One thing we like to do with the textbooks is to ask students to read the text and decide if the content is in the 'right place' or whether they would amend the content on the basis of the differing viewpoints that they have considered. The internet has a great range of resources for this. There are some specific resources, such as the Balfour Project, the Israel Forever Foundation or the Quaker 'Razor Wire and Olive Branches' pack. There are also several YouTube clips of documentaries as well as the BBC *Our Man from the Middle East*. However, we often like to use the news as a topical lesson starter, such as BBC or DailyMotion clips showing statements by politicians or events in the region.

5. What do you consider to be the greatest challenges and opportunities in teaching this topic?

I think that the challenges are also the opportunities; the very things that require thought to address are the source of the best outcomes. It is not a quick route to results, but an investment in the children that we teach. I think it is about what you want as a teacher. It is not an easy narrative to cover, and creating the investigation requires time. But done well, it is of immense value to the students, the school and the community. One challenge and opportunity is that some students will already have some knowledge of this history, but likely with a strong view of what is right, whereas other students will have little knowledge, even of where the Middle East is. It is great to be able to even this out, helping those with firm views to see another perspective and those with little awareness to have an injection of geographical and linguistic knowledge. Another challenge and opportunity is to help students think in terms of a spectrum of viewpoints, not two simple sides. To give one example – religious conservatism is an important concept to understand for this topic and for life in a modern society, but as students investigate they will see that even within the two prime views, that of the Arab and Israeli camps, there are differing opinions and demands. At the end of the day, it is not like other topics taught in GCSE History – but that is the point.

Section 3: 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 2: • B1 Anglo-Saxon and Normans England • B4 Early Elizabethan England • P3 The American West • P4 Superpower relations and the Cold War An Edexcel Online login is required. *All KBs updated for 2025–26 changes.*
Student walkthroughs • Paper 2B playlist • Paper 2P 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*.
Case studies	Case studies on various aspects of teaching history, including: • Women in the American West • Teaching Conflict in the Middle East
Pearson Professional Development Academy	Book a place on upcoming events, and access recordings of recent past training sessions (on YouTube).
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.