

Pearson Edexcel GCSE History – rationale for language amendments to the current specification

The intention is to focus on language amendments only, and not to amend content; content changes can be challenging for teachers and students to take onboard mid-cycle (and the last couple of years have already been heavily disrupted). Any content and assessment amends will be implemented at next reform, so that we have time to research, develop and test them properly.

The aim is to set a high bar for amendments, to ensure they involve **no actual or perceived content changes**.

The most significant amendments affect options P1, P2 and P3, and concern the terms **slave**, **Indians** and **Native Americans**. Other changes are being made as well; the impact of these changes in other options is very minor, but important principles lie behind them.

We plan to implement these changes to a new Issue 4 of the specification, **first teaching September 2023 and first assessment June 2025**. We have mentioned previously to publishers that we are intending to make changes, and we anticipate they will make amendments to their resources at next reprint. Previous terms will continue to be accepted when exam scripts are marked, but we will encourage teachers to adopt the amended terms.

Please note that the senior examiners are already reflecting these language changes in the indicative content in mark schemes.

Options with changes

- 10 Whitechapel, c1870–c1900: crime, policing and the city (Crime HE) (minor impact)
- 13 Migrants in Britain, c800–present (very minor impact)
- B2 The reigns of King Richard I and King John, 1189–1216 (very minor impact)
- B4 Early Elizabethan England, 1558–88 (very minor impact)
- P1 Spain and the ‘New World’, c1490–c1555
- P2 British America, 1713–83: empire and revolution
- P3 The American West, c1835–c1895
- 31 Weimar and Nazi Germany, 1918–39 (very minor impact)
- 33 The USA, 1954–75: conflict at home and abroad (very minor impact)

Summary of proposed changes

Option	Proposed change	Reason
10 Whitechapel Historic environment (p.10)	Bullet point 2: Reword second and third sentences; amend immigrants to migrants	The bullet point is reworded to remove any implication of migrants being the sole cause of tensions.
	Bullet point 3: Amend Jews to Jewish people	This is to acknowledge that attacks were experienced by individual people as well as their being directed against the community as a whole. Outside of the two specific occasions listed (here and below in Weimar and Nazi Germany), we have not changed the names of groups to “xxx people” – this can become unwieldy (e.g. in the lists of migrant groups in Migrants in Britain).
13 Migrants in Britain (p.18)	c1700-c1900 period: Remove capitals from transatlantic slavery	Preferred house editorial style.
B2 King Richard I and King John (p.24)	Key topic 1 sub-topic 4: Amend anti-semitism to antisemitism	This reflects academic practice. The hyphen allows for the idea of ‘Semitism’, which was a pseudo-scientific racial classification. Removing the hyphen clarifies the meaning of antisemitism as “prejudice against or hatred of Jews”. See, for example, <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Centre for Holocaust Education’s etymology of antisemitism • US Holocaust Memorial Museum, https://www.ushmm.org/antisemitism/what-is-antisemitism • International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance, https://www.holocaustremembrance.com/antisemitism/spelling-antisemitism

Option	Proposed change	Reason
B4 Early Elizabethan England (p.29)	Key topic 2 sub-topic 2: Amend New World to Americas	This is the geographically accurate term, and it removes the European perspective.
	Key topic 3 sub-topic 2: Add quote marks to 'problem'	This is to clarify that the poor weren't a problem as such but were perceived to be one by some contemporary observers.
P1 Spain and the 'New World' (pp.30-31)	Headings for Key topic 1 and Key topic 2 sub-topic 3: Amend 'New World' to Americas	This is the geographically accurate term, and it removes the Spanish perspective (even with quote marks that recognise this).
	Key topic 3 sub-topic 3 bullet point 2: Amend New World to Americas	<i>NB 'New World' is retained for the Option title and the Key topic 3 sub-topic 3 heading. Changing an Option title mid-cycle is problematic; the sub-topic heading is about the impact on Spain and therefore the term remains relevant because the perspective involved, but we've changed 'New World' to Americas and Spanish Empire in the second and third bullet points of this sub-topic, to reflect geographic and political aspects respectively.</i>
	Key topic 3 sub-topic 3 bullet point 3: Amend New World to Spanish Empire	
	Key topic 1 sub-topic 2: Amend America to Americas Delete ref to America from bullet point text	
	Key topic 1 sub-topic 2: Amend 'Indians' to Indigenous peoples Key topic 1 sub-topic 3: Amend the native population to Indigenous peoples	This is the widely preferred term among Indigenous peoples and many historians who study Indigenous histories.

Option	Proposed change	Reason
P2 British America (pp.32-33)	Key topic 1 sub-topic 2: Amend slave trade to transatlantic slave trade	This is the correct term.
	Key topic 1 sub-topic 2: Amend slaves to enslaved people Amend fugitive slaves and runaway slaves to fugitives and runaways	This is to reflect the person’s lack of freedom and personal rights, and to separate out the humanity of the person from what was done to them. Terms such as slave trade and slavery are not being amended at this point. This change reflects contemporary practice, e.g. <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Liverpool Museum’s transatlantic slave trade online exhibition • Museum of London Docklands’ London, Sugar and Slavery online exhibition • National Trust’s colonial and historic slavery report • Nottingham Museums’ glossary on slavery and racial terminology (this glossary goes further in its recommendations) Language continues to evolve, and further changes may come.
	Key topic 2 sub-topics 2 and 3, Key topic 3 sub-topic 3: Amend Native Americans to Indigenous peoples	This is the widely preferred term among Indigenous peoples and many historians who study Indigenous histories.

Option	Proposed change	Reason
P3 The American West (pp.34-35)	Key topic 1 sub-topics 1 and 3, Key topic 2 sub-topic 3, Key topic 3 sub-topics 2 and 3: Amend Plains Indians to Indigenous peoples of the Plains	This is the widely preferred term among Indigenous peoples and many historians who study Indigenous histories. Using the capital I is “preferred practice in articulating a political identity for a diverse group of sovereign communities that face common challenges as a legacy of colonialism” (Caroline Dodds Pennock). The term ‘of the Plains’ is included in sub-topic headings but not the main text.
	Headings for Key topic 1 sub-topic 1, Key topic 2 sub-topic 3, and Key topic 3 sub-topic 3: Amend way to ways	This is to reflect the many ways of life that existed among Indigenous peoples of the Plains.
	Key topic 1 sub-topic 3 and Key topic 3 sub-topic 1: Place ‘Permanent Indian Frontier’ in quote marks	The term is not an official one (cf. Indian Appropriations Act, 1851) but a contested concept.
	Key topic 2 heading: Capitalise Plains	This is for editorial consistency.
	Key topic 2 sub-topic 3 and Key topic 3 sub-topic 2 Amend start of bullet point 3 to Conflict on the Plains	The original wording implied a settler/government perspective to how this content should be approached.
	Key topic 3 heading: Amend ‘Conflicts and conquest’ to ‘Later developments in the West’	Conquest is a contested term in this context.

Option	Proposed change	Reason
31 Weimar and Nazi Germany (p.45)	Key topic 4 sub-topic 4: Amend 'gypsies' to Roma and Sinti, and those with disabilities to people with disabilities	These are the accurate terms. Roma people trace their heritage back to north-west India. Sinti are hereditary nomads who don't claim that heritage. Both groups live in mainland Europe and were persecuted by the Nazis We are not amending homosexuals at this point, because any alternative may imply content changes.
	Key topic 4 sub-topic 4: Amend the Jews to Jewish people	This is to acknowledge that attacks were experienced by individual people as well as their being directed against the community as a whole. Outside of the two specific occasions listed (here and above in Whitechapel), we have not changed the names of groups to "xxx people" – this can become unwieldy (e.g. in the lists of migrant groups in Migrants in Britain).
	Key topic 4 sub-topic 4: Place 'Kristallnacht' in quote marks	The term which is uncertain in origin is thought to have originated amongst ordinary Germans, describing the destruction and broken glass of Jewish properties, and was then appropriated by the regime. In its origins therefore it was adopted as the language of perpetration and is not felt to accurately reflect the violence, murders and antisemitic persecution that took place across Germany on these days in 1938. The quote marks are intended to reflect this. NB It is increasingly being referred to as the November Pogrom 'Kristallnacht', following the approach taken by German educators.
33 The USA (p.52)	Key topic 1 sub-topic 1: Capitalise Black	Preferred house editorial style – see also the comment above about capitalising Indigenous.

How the term Indigenous peoples will appear in live series

To provide a transition period to support students with the change to Indigenous peoples, the current term that is being replaced, e.g. Plains Indians, Native Americans, will be placed in brackets. This will apply for question papers for the remainder of the current specification's lifecycle.

For example, using a question from P3 The American West in the Sample Assessment Materials:

- 2 Write a narrative account analysing the destruction of the traditional ways of life of Indigenous peoples of the Plains (Plains Indians) in the years 1876–c1895.

You may use the following in your answer:

- Battle of Little Big Horn (1876)
- Dawes Act (1887)

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