INTERNATIONAL ADVANCED LEVEL HISTORY

TOPIC GUIDE

Unit 3 WHI03 - Thematic Study with Source Evaluation
Option 1B: The British Experience of Warfare, 1803-1945

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Introduction

Option 1B: The British Experience of Warfare, 1803-1945

The option is divided into the following five key topics and one of these will be the subject of the sources question in section A. The five key topics are linked by five themes which will form the basis of the essays in section B, each of which will address at least two of the key topics.

Assessment details such as assessment rationale, Assessment Objectives, question styles and examples and mark schemes are in the *Getting Started* guide available on the IAL History web page [here](#).

**Question papers and mark schemes** with indicative content are also available on-line and are published following each examination session [here](#). This will allow centres to build up a bank of assessment materials.

**Principal Examiner Reports** for each Paper Option are written for each examination session. These Reports give feedback on overall candidate performance and usually include example response with commentaries reflecting the Level of Response achieved. Principal Examiner reports with Exemplification are [available](#).

The five key topics are:

1. Britain and the Napoleonic Wars, 1803-15
2. The Crimean War, 1854-56
3. The Second Boer War, 1899-1902
4. Trench Warfare on the Western Front, 1914-18
5. Britain and the Struggle with Nazi Germany, 1939-45

The five themes are:

1. The political leadership and the mobilisation of support
2. The military leadership and the conduct of battle
3. The problems and importance of financing war
4. The changing technology of war and its impact
5. The public attitudes and opposition to war and its impact
Content guidance

This section provides additional guidance on the specification content. It should be remembered that the official specification is the only authoritative source of information and should always be referred to for definitive guidance.

Overview

The focus of this unit is on the key developments in the conduct of war by the British state between 1803 and 1945. The focus of the unit is essentially on breadth and hence the five itemised themes which run from 1803 to 1945. It is essential that these themes be grasped and addressed in each of the key topics. Students must have a sufficient grasp of content detail within the delimited key topics to be able to answer questions that target knowledge and understanding of the particular period (AO1), requiring comparisons, contrasts and appreciation of significance, causation and change. Knowledge of the intervening periods is not required. The clarification below has indicated some of the opportunities to make thematic links within each key topic. In addition, students must develop a sufficient sense of period to contextualise and analyse and evaluate sources rooted in a particular key topic area (AO2).

The military side of this option requires a sound grasp of the historical geography and relevant aspects of technology to enable students to make sense of the complex events and evaluate the roles of individuals in these conflicts.

Key Topic 1. Britain and the Napoleonic Wars, 1803-15

This begins in 1803 with Britain's renewal of the war with Napoleonic France. Students should appreciate the relative power of the Royal Navy and the problems this posed for France. There should be an awareness of the technology involved in its efficiency (T4) and the quality of leadership particularly that of Nelson (T2). Clearly the significance of Trafalgar must be addressed (in the words of the famous quote of Earl St Vincent as head of the British admiralty 'I do not say that the French cannot come. I only say that they cannot come by sea.'). The enhanced superiority of the Royal Navy after Trafalgar and its strategic implications should also be appreciated. The role of the British army in Spain and Portugal from 1808 and under Wellington's leadership from 1809 (T2) should be analysed and the significance of Wellington and the army in the Waterloo campaign of 1815. Students should appreciate the scale of the expansion of the army and its remarkable efficiency in terms of supply and fire-power.

The achievements of the politicians in Britain in organising the nation for war should be addressed, in particular the roles of Pitt as Prime Minister to 1806 and then that of Castlereagh, first as head of the war office, 1807-09 and then as Foreign Secretary from 1812 (T1&T3). The emergence of a remarkably efficient governmental machine, in the context of the period, for the conduct and support of the war effort should be analysed (T1) as should the very successful raising of money to pay for the war waged directly by Britain and its allies (T3).

Finally, students must address the role of public opinion both as patriotic support for the conflict and in some cases as ideological opponents (T5). The economic strains of the conflict should be addressed and its role in fomenting discontent in some years appreciated.
Key Topic 2. The Crimean War 1854-56

This deals with the conduct of a very different scale of conflict, far from British shores and of limited impact compared to the Napoleonic Wars. The numbers of British troops involved were comparable to those at Waterloo but far smaller than those under Wellington's command in Spain. The strain on the nation's finances was minimal but students should be aware of how the war was financed (T3) and the application of new technologies such as the railway to solve problems of supply and prefabrication to help tackle the problems of health and welfare (T4).

Students should be aware of the nature of this limited conflict, mostly concentrated around the Russian Naval base of Sevastapol as a siege with only two major field battles named in the specification. The military leadership of Lord Raglan from 1854 to June 1855 should be assessed and analysed (T2) as should the political leadership, of Aberdeen, usually held up as the scapegoat for initial shortcomings, and Palmerston, often held up as the 'new broom' rectifying deficiencies (T1).

Clearly new technologies such as the telegraph and photography, combined with a growing press, brought an immediacy to warfare not present at the beginning of the nineteenth century and public opinion played an increasing role in consequence (T5). Students should be aware of the impact of the publication of Fenton’s and Russell’s work, the strident patriotism embodied by Palmerston and most of the press but also the bitter critics of the war symbolised by the Quaker radical, John Bright.

Key Topic 3. The Second Boer War 1899-1902

This requires a focus on the South African War which began in the autumn of 1899 and continued as a conventional war until the summer of 1900 when it morphed into a long drawn out guerrilla campaign which did not end until May 1902. Although far more troops were involved than in the Crimea and it cost £217million, the conflict was small scale when compared with those in Key topics 1, 4 and 5. Despite this candidate should be aware of how the war was financed (T3) and the success in transporting and supplying large numbers of men to a distant part of the globe.

Students should study and assess the quality of military leadership (T2) and the reasons for both the initial defeats of December 1899 and January 1900 and then the victorious advance to Bloemfontein and Pretoria in the Summer. The career of Buller is particularly instructive, often held up as a model of incompetence in the early stages of the war, he eventually proved innovative and successful. The application and impact of new technologies, such as smokeless powder and improved artillery, should be assessed (T4). Kitchener's conduct of the long struggle against the Boer guerrillas must be judged in terms both of its military competence (T2) and the moral dimension which clearly had repercussions on public support for the War (T5).

Students should be aware of the contributions of specified civilian figures in this study, notably Joseph Chamberlains (so much so that it was known as 'Joe's War')
Opposing him and securing a major public standing was the young Lloyd George and the not-so-young Liberal Party leader Campbell Bannerman. Emily Hobhouse's fact-finding mission and letters home in January 1901 had a considerable effect in stimulating concern over the conduct of the later stage of the war (T5). As with the Crimean War, but more so, the British press played a major role in shaping the public response to the war.

**Key Topic 4. Trench Warfare on the Western Front 1914-18**

Here the central issue is a conflict on an unprecedented scale, the war in France from 1914-18. Students must be aware of the scale and the transformation of the British contribution. In 1914 the well-trained BEF under Sir John French was smaller than any of the five armies fielded by France. By 1918 Sir Douglas Haig commanded five British Armies each one considerably larger than the original BEF. The military leadership of French and Haig must be analysed but within the context of this transformation (T2). The role of Kitchener in bringing about this transformation should be understood. Only two battles are itemised in the specification, both conducted under Haig’s leadership, but students must be able to have sufficient knowledge to reach a judgement on the leadership of French in 1914-15. The massive application of new technologies to warfare such as aircraft, tanks, and radio should be encompassed (T4) as should the unprecedented concern with the health welfare and morale of the troops.

The Home Front is equally important, and students must study the role of the political leaders of Britain, notably Asquith, often held up as falling short of the dynamic leadership required in such a struggle and his replacement as prime minister in 1916, Lloyd George, the 'man who won the war'(T1). The growth in the government machine, feeding and directing the war effort is vital and here Lloyd George's role as Minister of Munitions in 1915 must be considered. The mobilisation of women and their contribution should be studied. As in all these topics, the crucial issue of financing conflict should be understood and there should be an appreciation of the scale of tax increases and extensive raising of loans to cover the £3,819 million cost (T3).

Finally, the role of public opinion and the press should be studied (T5) with an appreciation of the shifting government approach to the handling of news and of government attempts to restrict and direct reportage by journalists from the Western Front. The role of opposition to the war must figure and its extent should be appreciated, including opposition to conscription, but it is important to maintain a sense of perspective with only 16,500 conscientious objectors compared to the millions who volunteered.

**Key Topic 5. Britain and the struggle with Nazi Germany 1939-45**

This topic might appear daunting in its vast scope. Exemplification, rather than coverage, is required and careful selectivity and close attention to the specification is vital. The enhanced scale of this war can be illustrated by the cost £34,423million. The raising of taxation and the economic impact and the must be addressed (T3),
including the impact of war damage, but there should be awareness that some benefits accrued from new inventions or developments accelerated by the needs of war (nylon, for example). The assessment of military leadership (T2) should be confined to the two figures itemised in the specification (Field Marshal Montgomery and Air Chief Marshall-Harris) and centres are not required to attempt a full-scale coverage of the entire war. Likewise, the political leadership (T1) must be focused on Churchill and in particular his vital contribution in 1940. Thereafter there should be a selective appreciation and exemplification of his strengths and weaknesses and his tense relationship with Alanbrooke.

The application of science and technology provides a particularly rich field of study in the use of radar, in code breaking at Bletchley Park, in facilitating the bombing of Germany or in defeating German U boats. (T4). The creation of a 'total war machine' with the involvement of the entire population should be appreciated. While coverage of the entirety of the female contribution to the war effort is not required, students should appreciate, and be able to exemplify, the significance of the female workforce in maintaining production. Similarly, the significance of civilian morale to the war effort should be appreciated and the nature of the sophisticated steps taken to maintain it. As in all these topics the extent of opposition to the war should be considered. (T5).
**Week 1**

**Britain and the Napoleonic Wars, 1803–15**

**Fighting the French**

**Aim:**
Students to understand and explain the significance of the military leaders Nelson and Wellington in securing victories.

**Topics covered:**
The significance of Nelson and the Royal Navy, including the Battle of Trafalgar; the impact of technology on sea power, including carronades and copper bottoms; the significance of Wellington as a general in both the Peninsular War and the Waterloo campaign; the nature and impact of the growing skills of the British Army in Spain and Portugal.

**Suggested activities/resources:**

**Teaching points to note:**
At the beginning of the course it is advisable to establish the key themes to be addressed across the topics. Students also need to use skills of analysis and evaluation in relation to two sources in Section A of the exam paper

Opportunities to address themes: 2) the military leadership and the conduct of battle; 4) the changing technology of war and its impact.

**Week 2**

**Britain and the Napoleonic Wars, 1803–15**

**Organising the nation for victory**

**Aim:**
Students to understand the importance of the government in organising the war effort.

**Topics covered:**
The roles of Pitt and Castlereagh; the significance of the ability to raise money for war, including the subsidising of allies; the role of the government machine in organising and supplying the fleet and army.

**Suggested activities/resources:**

**Teaching points to note:**
Key themes to address: 1) the political leadership and mobilising support; 3) the problems and importance of financing war. Key themes will be examined in Section B of the exam paper. Students may begin to chart developments in the themes that they can add to during the course.
### Week 3
**Britain and the Napoleonic Wars, 1803–15**

**Opposition to war**

| Aim: | Students to understand and explain reasons for opposition to the war and its impact. |
| Topics covered: | The impact of economic strains of war; the significance of French sympathisers and radical critics of war. |
| Suggested activities/resources: | Alan Farmer *The British Experience of Warfare 1790-1918*, (Hodder); Roger Knight, *Britain against Napoleon: The Organisation of Victory* (Penguin, 2013), Part 3 covers the defence of the realm. |
| Teaching points to note: | Key themes to address: 5) the public attitudes and opposition to war and its impact. Students often find impact a difficult concept; there is an opportunity here to distinguish between reasons and impact. In evaluating contemporary source material relating to these topics, students could explore the relative usefulness of sources of different types, for example a speech and a personal account. |

### Week 4
**The Crimean War, 1854–56**

**Fighting the Russians**

| Aim: | Students to understand the nature of warfare in the Crimea and to explain its impact on the troops. |
| Topics covered: | The limited size and importance of the British force; the military leadership of Lord Raglan during the Battles of the Alma, Balaclava and the siege of Sevastopol; the role of new technologies, including the railway for supply; attempts to solve the problems of the health and welfare and morale of the troops in the Crimea. |
| Teaching points to note: | Key themes to address: 2) the military leadership and the conduct of battle; 4) the changing technology of war and its impact. Students may take the opportunity to focus on the relative weights that can be attached to two contrasting contemporary accounts of the Battle of Balaclava in order to develop the skills needed to tackle the source question in Section A of the exam paper. |
**Week 5** | **The Crimean War, 1854–56** | The political roles of Aberdeen and Palmerston and the role of the government machine

**Aim:**
Students to understand the importance of the political leadership in organising the war effort.

**Topics covered:**
The political roles of Aberdeen and Palmerston and the role of the government machine in organising and supplying the fleet and army; the methods adopted of financing the war.

**Suggested activities/resources:**

**Teaching points to note:**
Key themes to address: 1) the political leadership and mobilising support; 3) the problems and importance of financing war. Key themes will be examined in Section B of the exam paper. Students may compare and contrast the role of the political leadership in the Crimean War with that of the Napoleonic Wars.

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**Week 6** | **The Crimean War, 1854–56** | Changing attitudes of the public in Britain to the war and the conduct of the war

**Aim:**
Students to understand and explain reasons for opposition to the war and the role of key individuals.

**Topics covered:**
Changing attitudes of the public in Britain to the war and the conduct of the war, including the impact of the photography of Roger Fenton and the reportage of William Russell; the significance of the opposition of John Bright

**Suggested activities/resources:**

**Teaching points to note:**
Key themes to address: 5 the public attitudes and opposition to war and its impact. Students should be developing their skills in writing in breadth. There are opportunities here also to examine the usefulness of different types of source material – newspaper reports and official dispatches for example.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 7</th>
<th>The second Boer War, 1899–1902</th>
<th>Fighting the Boers</th>
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**Aim:**
Students to understand the key events and the importance of leadership and technology in the outcomes.

**Topics covered:**
The quality of British military leadership as illustrated by Field Marshalls Roberts and Kitchener, and General Sir Redvers Buller; the significance of new technologies and the need to adjust, including smokeless powder and improved artillery; the significance of Black Week and initial defeats, the victorious drive to Pretoria and the long campaign against Boer guerrillas; the problems of the health and welfare of the troops.

**Suggested activities/resources:**

**Teaching points to note:**
Key themes to address: 2) the military leadership and the conduct of battle; 4) the changing technology of war and its impact. Students may take the opportunity here to chart technological developments from the Napoleonic to the second Boer War to prepare for Section B.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Week 8</th>
<th>The second Boer War, 1899–1902</th>
<th>The role of Joseph Chamberlain in orchestrating support for the war and the role of the government machine</th>
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</table>

**Aim:**
Students to understand and explain the role of the government in organising the war effort.

**Topics covered:**
The role of the Joseph Chamberlain in orchestrating support for the war and the role of the government machine in organising, transporting and supplying an army at such distance; the methods adopted of financing the war.

**Suggested activities/resources:**
Source skills focusing on the role of the government in organising the war effort; Alan Farmer, *The Experience of Warfare in Britain: Crimea, Boer and First World War 1854–1929*; Thomas Pakenham, *The Boer War*.

**Teaching points to note:**
Key themes to address: 1) the political leadership and mobilising support; 3) the problems and importance of financing war. Students may focus on integrating contextual knowledge in the process of testing contemporary sources for weight.
**Week 9**  
The second Boer War, 1899–1902  
Attitudes of the public in Britain to the conflict.

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<tr>
<th><strong>Aim:</strong></th>
<th>Students to compare and contrast support and opposition to the war.</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Topics covered:</strong></td>
<td>Attitudes of the public in Britain to the conflict, including the impact of the reportage and the work of Emily Hobhouse; the roles of Lloyd George and Campbell Bannerman as critics of government policy.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Suggested activities/resources:</strong></td>
<td>Creation of key individuals and groups cards with a focus on attitudes to war; Rosemary Rees and Geoff Stewart, <em>The Experience of Warfare in Britain 1854–1929</em> (Pearson); Alan Farmer, <em>The British Experience of Warfare 1790-1918</em>, (Hodder).</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching points to note:</strong></td>
<td>Key themes to address: 5) the public attitudes and opposition to war and its impact. These topics could be examined in breadth in a thematic essay question comparing two periods or in depth using contemporary sources relevant to the topic only.</td>
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**Week 10**  
Trench warfare on the Western Front, 1914–18  
Fighting the Germans

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<th><strong>Aim:</strong></th>
<th>Students to understand the role of the military leadership and assess its importance in the conduct of the war.</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Topics covered:</strong></td>
<td>The quality of British military leadership as illustrated by Field Marshals Kitchener, French and Haig; the significance of creating a mass army and its conduct in the Battles of the Somme and the Last Hundred Days Campaign;</td>
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<td><strong>Teaching points to note:</strong></td>
<td>Key themes to address: 2) the military leadership and the conduct of battle; Students may find it helpful draw up links between decisions made by the leadership and their impact on the relevant battles. Students should also be becoming more confident in applying contextual knowledge to their analysis of contemporary source material</td>
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<td>Week 11</td>
<td>Trench warfare on the Western Front, 1914–18</td>
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<td><strong>Aim:</strong></td>
<td>Students to understand and explain the impact of new technologies and the effectiveness of measures to solve issues affecting the troops.</td>
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<td><strong>Topics covered:</strong></td>
<td>The impact of the application of new technologies; the significance of the attempts to solve the problems of health, welfare and morale of the troops.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching points to note:</strong></td>
<td>Key themes to address: 4 the changing technology of war and its impact. Students may compare and contrast the armies and technologies of second Boer War and the First World War.</td>
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<tr>
<th>Week 12</th>
<th>Trench warfare on the Western Front, 1914–18</th>
<th>The roles, as political leaders, of Asquith and Lloyd George and the development of the government machine</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Aim:</strong></td>
<td>Students to assess the significance of the leadership and the government machine in managing the war effort.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Topics covered:</strong></td>
<td>The roles, as political leaders, of Asquith and Lloyd George and the development of the government machine in raising, organising and supplying an army of such size; the significance of the female contribution to the war effort; the significance and impact of the methods adopted to finance the war.</td>
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<td><strong>Suggested activities/resources:</strong></td>
<td>Comparison activity of the roles of Asquith and Lloyd George; Alan Farmer, <em>The Experience of Warfare in Britain: Crimea, Boer and First World War 1854–1929</em>; Rosemary Rees and Geoff Stewart, <em>The Experience of Warfare in Britain 1854–1929</em> (Pearson); Kate Adie, <em>Fighting on the Home Front: The Legacy of Women in World War One</em>, 2014 (Hodder); the film: <em>Testament of Youth</em> 2015, is a biopic of Vera Brittan’s role in the war.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching points to note:</strong></td>
<td>Key themes to address: 1) the political leadership and mobilising support; 3) the problems and importance of financing war; Students should be increasing in confidence in planning and writing essays that cover themes in breadth.</td>
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Source evaluation skills could be developed enabling students to gain confidence in applying criteria for making judgements about the usefulness of differing sources. |
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<tr>
<th>Week 13</th>
<th>Trench warfare on the Western Front, 1914–18</th>
<th>British public perception of, and attitudes to, the war on the Western Front</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Aim:</strong></td>
<td>Students to understand the reasons for and the measures taken by the government to limit opposition to the war and their impact.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Topics covered:</strong></td>
<td>British public perception of, and attitudes of the war on the Western Front. government attempts to restrict and direct reportage by journalists from the Western Front; the extent of opposition to the war.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching points to note:</strong></td>
<td>Key themes to address: 5) the public attitudes and opposition to war and its impact. Students should be increasingly confident in using two sources in combination with their knowledge to reach a judgement based on the weight attached to the evidence.</td>
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<th>Week 14</th>
<th>Britain and the struggle with Nazi Germany, 1939–45</th>
<th>Fighting the Germans</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Aim:</strong></td>
<td>Students to assess the effectiveness of the leadership and technology in fighting the war.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Topics covered:</strong></td>
<td>The quality of British military leadership as illustrated by Field Marshal Montgomery and Air Chief Marshall Harris; the significance of the application of science and technology to war on land, sea and air, and intelligence gathering.</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>Teaching points to note:</strong></td>
<td>Key themes to address: 2) the military leadership and the conduct of battle; 4) the changing technology of war and its impact. There are many opportunities here to develop analysis of the key themes by referring back to material covered in the second Boer War and the First World War in preparation for the essay in Section B. Students should also be becoming more confident in the application of criteria in their evaluation of contemporary source material. The higher levels of the mark schemes indicate the qualities they should seek to develop in their work.</td>
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<tr>
<td>Week 15</td>
<td>Britain and the struggle with Nazi Germany, 1939–45</td>
<td>The significance of Churchill and the role of the government machine</td>
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**Aim:**
Students to understand and assess effectiveness of the role of the government in managing the war effort.

**Topics covered:**
The significance of Churchill as a political leader, including his relationship with Alanbrooke. The role of the government in creating and maintaining a vast war machine for fighting on land, sea and in the air across the world; the significance of the female contribution to the war effort; the economic impact of the war, including increased taxation, damage and the benefits of innovation.

**Suggested activities/resources:**

**Teaching points to note:**
Key themes to address: 1) the political leadership and mobilising support; 3) the problems and importance of financing war. To address the significance of Churchill as a political leader, students may consider both his own contribution to the war effort and compare him to previous war leader e.g. Lloyd George.

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<th>Week 16</th>
<th>Britain and the struggle with Nazi Germany, 1939–45</th>
<th>British public perception of, and attitudes to the war</th>
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**Aim:**
Students to understand and assess attitudes to the war and the significance of the opposition.

**Topics covered:**
British public perception of, and attitudes to the war: the significance of civilian morale and government attempts to maintain it and the threats posed to it by enemy bombing; the extent of opposition to the war.

**Suggested activities/resources:**
Andrew Marr, *The Making of Modern Britain* episode 6 (BBC)

**Teaching points to note:**
Key themes to address: 5) the public attitudes and opposition to war and its impact. Students will have an opportunity to compare the impact of the war on public support and opposition across the topics.

Students should be increasingly confident in using two sources in combination with their knowledge to reach a judgement based on the weight which can be attached to the evidence.
**Week 17** | **Revision**
---|---
**Topics:**
Weeks 1-7 of this unit.

**Suggested activities/resources:**
The programme of revision will depend on the perceived gaps in the student’s knowledge and skill.

**Teaching points to note:**
Students will appreciate the opportunity to re-visit the key themes across the period 1803-1945. Source skills should be addressed with the focus on comparing the weight attached to the opinions and information in the sources.

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**Week 18** | **Revision**
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**Topics:**
Weeks 8-16 of this unit.

**Suggested activities/resources:**
The programme of revision will depend on the perceived gaps in the student’s knowledge and skills.

**Teaching points to note:**
Students often have difficulty in grasping the chronology of in the period 1803-1945 because it is a long period in which there was much change. Use timelines to ensure that your students are clear about the period as a whole. Students can create a series of timelines to trace the key themes.

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**Resources List**
- the 2015 Specification for the IAL in History
- a detailed scheme of work as outlined in the planning and delivery section of this document
- an appropriate text book for students
- appropriate supplementary graded exercises resourced by the teacher
- sample assessment materials for 2015 Specification for the IAL in History

**Option 3B The British Experience of Warfare, 1803-1945**

Geoffery Stewart et al *The experience of warfare in Britain 1854-1929* (Harper Collins 2012)


J. Keegan, *The Second World War*

**Resource mapping document**