

Appendix

A Proposed History Curriculum 11-16

The team devoted a lot of time to sketching out what a history curriculum 11-16 might look like.

It is important to be clear what such an outline can and cannot contain.

It can give a clear idea of the broad areas of study to be followed, of the organisational themes and underlying principles, and some idea of the assessment arrangements.

It cannot give a detailed list of historical content. Tempting though it might be to start with lists of major figures or events, this is not how successful curricula are constructed. Any course of study in history has to be selective in its content, and this means that some good, interesting and important topics will inevitably be omitted. **It is not feasible simply to list all the topics that one might wish for and expect them all to be taught.** Rather, we have aimed to provide pupils with a chronological framework into which they will be able to fit historical topics and events as they encounter them.

It is also important to stress that it is NOT our contention that every pupil should necessarily take GCSE in history. It would be possible to derive from the content for the full course of study an appropriate short course which would be suitable for those not best served by a full GCSE. *However, we firmly believe that every pupil, of every level of ability, needs to know about the history of the world they will live and work in. It can be positively dangerous to deny pupils, especially less academic pupils, the chance to learn their history objectively.*

This is therefore a DRAFT OUTLINE ONLY of what a single course of compulsory study in history 11-16 MIGHT look like. If it were to be adopted, there would need to be further research on aspects of the assessment, the development of appropriate guidance and resources, and eventually a more detailed programme of study.

This proposal is predicated on the basis that:

- History is made compulsory *every year* from 11 to 16
- A stated minimum of timetable time is laid down for each compulsory subject in the curriculum
- History takes on some of the more specifically political aspects of the citizenship curriculum.

We propose:

A single course of study for all pupils 11-16, based on three main themes:

- **Government**
- **Society**
- **Belief**

'Government' would include, as appropriate, monarchy, parliament, political rights, empire, democracy and dictatorship. It would also address the political aspects of citizenship.

'Society' will cover social and economic history, including the development of technology and, where schools wish to cover it, local or family history. This too can address issues relating to citizenship.

'Belief' will cover religious belief and political ideology where these have played a major part in history. This could be used to address issues of citizenship relating to the role of faith and ideas in society.

The structure of the course would be:

Year 7	Britain and Britons		
Year 8	Britain and Britons		
Year 9	Britain and Britons		
Year 10	GCSE: Britain and Britons	GCSE: Source-based investigation	GCSE: Themes from 20 th century history
Year 11	GCSE: Britain and Britons	GCSE: Source-based investigation	GCSE: Themes from 20 th century history

The current National Curriculum structure based on History Study Units (HSUs), thematic studies of around a term's length, has not proved robust enough to guarantee pupils coverage of all the content theoretically contained within them. Therefore, we propose dropping the HSU structure and moving instead to a structure based on topics requiring, typically, two or three lessons' teaching.

Britain and Britons – *British Narrative History*

An understanding of Britain's distinctive history is crucial to any sense of national identity and shared values. These are often identified as including a sense of liberty, freedom of expression and tolerance.

Of course, not everyone would agree that British history shows Britain to be a tolerant or liberal country: British history has a long heritage of radicals and dissenters who have protested against the established order and who often suffered badly in the name of freedom of conscience or expression. It is a debate that carries on today.

This is why teaching British history should encourage debate and discussion about major figures and events in Britain's past. Rulers, military leaders and other traditional hero figures should certainly be taught about, but we should avoid anything looking like an "official" history of Britain. Indeed, official histories are usually the hallmark of unfree societies which stifle debate and freedom of opinion.

Is it really British?

We are also committed to ensuring that 'British History' actually *is* British. To show how this might affect the teaching of some familiar topics, take the example of the events of 1066.

Making it British – the case of 1066

1066 is easily the most famous and memorable date in English history. This is partly because the date trips neatly off the tongue, but mainly because it was identified as a "revolution" in English constitutional history in the English whig tradition, the point when a mythical balanced "Anglo-Saxon constitution" was overthrown by the more autocratic Normans.

However, since the Norman Conquest of England had major implications for Wales, Scotland and Ireland, it is a major date in British history too. It might therefore be presented in schools in a significantly different way.

Traditionally, the Norman Conquest has been taught as a *starting* point, often the opening topic in the HSU *Medieval Realms*. It is an engaging story with a simple structure which children can relate to: a straight contest between King Harold II Godwinsson and Duke William of Normandy for the throne of England.

However, it could also be taught in much more of a British context. For example, a figure usually left out of the story is Edgar the Ætheling. Edgar had by far the best blood claim to the English crown, but as he was only fourteen at the time of the Battle of Hastings he played no role in the events of 1066. After Hastings, however, he led the most serious rebellion the Normans faced before he fled to Scotland where he played a major role in Scottish politics. The story of Edgar the Ætheling therefore provides a rich case study which extends the traditional content coverage across national boundaries in a way which is entirely consonant with the history.

This can be taken a step further. 1066 did not happen in a vacuum: it was the climax of a series of challenges to reigning monarchs in the eleventh century, some of which mark dates in Irish and Scottish history every bit as important as 1066 is to the English. Thus:

In 1013 the High King of Ireland, Brian Boru, broke the power of the Vikings in Ireland (the Dublin Norse, as they are called) at the Battle of Clontarf, though he died in the fighting.

Five years later, King Malcolm II defeated the English at the Battle of Carham and drove them out of Scotland. Malcolm II was succeeded by his grandson Duncan, the same Duncan who appears in Shakespeare's *Macbeth*. Duncan was indeed overthrown and killed by Macbeth, but the real figures were very different from the characters in the play: there is a useful learning activity in a comparison between the history and the drama.

These events could fit into the overall theme "Government" as follows, with each topic designed to be taught in one or two lessons:

Theme: Government
Kingship and Succession in Eleventh Century Britain

The Viking invasions
Brian Boru and the Battle of Clontarf
Scotland: the Battle of Carham
Duncan and Macbeth
Ethelred II of England and the Vikings
The Danish kings of England and Edward the Confessor
1066 – the Disputed Succession
Challenges to William: Edgar the Ætheling and Hereward the Wake

Resourcing

Although this would make for a strong narrative, with a number of themes linking the experiences in England, Scotland and Ireland, clearly some teachers would feel uncomfortable with teaching unfamiliar material. The resourcing implications are therefore:

- a) Textbooks for classroom use, covering the topics.
- b) Short guides, possibly online, for teachers to give them a good grasp of the narrative of events.
- c) An online bank of materials from museums, archives or from archaeology to support the topics, with suggestions for activities based on the materials. These could be designed for classroom use or for homework tasks.

In addition there would be a need for subject-based CPD to ensure teachers felt confident with the historical topics and were aware of areas to explore.

In time, this sort of material will no doubt be available commercially, but in the short term, and especially for "new" topics, some material and guidance might need to be provided centrally.

There are plenty of other examples of familiar topics which could be taught in much more of a British context, including:

Magna Carta 1215 Among the barons at Runnymede were representatives of Ireland and Scotland, and the charter's terms specifically enjoined King John to make peace with the Welsh – on their terms

The Tudor period saw the 1535 Act of Union between England and Wales; the effect of the defeat at Flodden on Scotland; the religious conflict within Scotland that led Mary, Queen of Scots to flee to England; the beginnings of the Ulster plantations

The English Civil War has long been seen by historians as an event which involved all parts of Britain, but this idea has not fully taken root in schools. The wars began with a major rebellion in Ireland and a war of religion in Scotland. The Scots in particular played a crucial role in the events of the 1640s, and it was their decision to hand Charles I over to Parliament that essentially sealed his fate.

In addition to ensuring an appropriately 'British' coverage, the course will also follow its three threads of Government, Society and Belief through each element, with a series of key questions which will shape the programme of study.

European History

The relationship between Britain and Europe is the subject of ongoing debate both among historians and in the population at large. It is clear, however, that at certain points major events in European history have had an important impact on Britain, and pupils should learn something about these.

There will never be time to teach everything we might want pupils to know about, but it is important that some elements of European history should feature within the largely British narrative outline.

Britain and Britons:

British Narrative History Years 7-9

This gives an idea of the chronological coverage and some of the key questions around which lessons might be based.

	Period	Government	Society	Belief
Year 7	Romans	Did Britain gain from being in the Roman Empire?	How can we find out what peoples lived in Britain in Roman times? Were the Romans really more technologically advanced than the Celts?	What can we deduce about the Romans from their different beliefs?
	Saxons and Celts	How did the Celts react to the arrival of the Angles and Saxons? What powers did an Anglo-Saxon king have?	In what ways were the Saxons like us?	How did the arrival of Christianity affect the peoples of Britain in Saxon times?
	Vikings	How successfully did the Irish, English and Scots resist the Viking invasions?	Do the Vikings deserve their violent reputation?	How did the Viking wars affect people's faith in God?
	Early medieval	Why were there so many challenges to the thrones of Britain in the 11 th century? Why did England grow so powerful?	How fair was feudalism? What did medieval people understand by "Christendom"?	What can we tell about people's beliefs and fears from the churches and cathedrals they built? What did Thomas à Becket die for?
	The Crusades	What was the purpose of the Crusader Kingdom of Jerusalem?	Why did people go on crusade? What can we learn from the story of the Children's Crusade?	Why did Christians fear the spread of Islam? Why did the Crusades spark off anti-Semitism?
Year 8	Medieval – peasants and plague	How important were Magna Carta and Parliament? Did medieval kings believe in law? Why did the Kings of England try to conquer Wales, Ireland and Scotland?	Why didn't peasants revolt more often?	How did people make sense of the Black Death?
	The 100 Years' War	What did the Kings of England want the crown of France for?	Did the wars with France give the English people a sense of unity?	How did people reconcile warfare with their Christian beliefs?

	The 15 th century	Why was it so dangerous to be king in 15 th century England and Scotland? Why did Wales not win its independence?	Is Chaucer a reliable guide to the people of 14 th and 15 th century England?	What did the Church mean to people in the late Middle Ages? Why were the Lollards suppressed?
	Renaissance and Reformation	Why did Henry VIII make himself Head of the Church?	What was so new about Renaissance art? What was life like at the courts of James IV and Henry VIII?	Why did some people become Protestants but others didn't? Why were some people prepared to kill for their faith?
	The Elizabethan Years	Why did Elizabeth I stay on her throne while Mary Stuart lost hers? How dangerous was the Spanish Armada?	What can we learn from Shakespeare about people in Elizabethan England?	Why did the Irish stay Catholic? How effective were the Ulster plantations?
	Exploration and Settlement	Why did so many explorers feel they had to <i>conquer</i> the lands and peoples they encountered? Were the Sea Dogs heroes – or pirates?	How did the Jamestown settlement survive?	Why did some people feel God wanted them to settle overseas?
Year 9	The civil wars	Why did Charles I lose his throne? Why did Cromwell become so powerful?	How did people decide which side to fight on in the civil wars?	Who won the Putney debates?
	Restoration and Revolution	What freedoms did English people have by the end of the 17 th century that they didn't have at the start?	What lessons were learnt from the plague and fire in London?	Why did people in the seventeenth century want to know more about science?
	A New Britain	Why did government get involved in reforming social conditions?	How well did eighteenth century Britain feed its population? How did the new machinery change people's lives?	Why did people have such different beliefs about economic life and social class?
	Slavery	Why did it take so long to abolish slavery in the British Empire? What part Britain play in combating the slave trade after abolition?	How did British people make money out of African slavery?	Why did Africans, slave owners and abolitionists have such different ideas about equality?
	American independence	Were the American colonists right to declare themselves independent?	How popular was the war with America?	What did 18 th century people understand to be their "rights"?
	The French Revolution and Napoleon	Why did Britain go to war with the French Revolutionaries and with Napoleon?	Did the wars with France help create a united kingdom? Why did Nelson and Wellington become national heroes?	What did people in Britain believe they were fighting for and against?

GCSE History

This would consist of three main components:

- **Britain and Britons**
- **Themes from 20th Century history**
- **Investigations**

Britain and Britons would focus on two aspects:

- the creation of the modern state
- the British Empire.

Themes from Twentieth Century History would look at two broad periods, with options for looking at specific examples in depth:

- First World War to Second World War (including the Holocaust)
- AND EITHER
- Communism and Democracy 1917-1991
- OR
- Conflict in the Middle East 1917-2001

Investigations would focus on Society and Belief and would be based on source material made available online. Centres would free to construct inquiries from any period of history, including local and family history.

The course structure would therefore look like this:

Government	Society	Belief
Britain and Britons: nation-building		
Britain and Britons: the British Empire and its legacy		
Themes from 20 th century history	Source-based Investigation	Source-based Investigation

Course Content

Britain and Britons: Nation-building

- Acts of Union (Wales, Scotland and Ireland)
- The vote: the Great Reform Act; the Chartists; women's suffrage
- Nationalism in modern Britain – conflict in Northern Ireland; devolution

Britain and Britons: The British Empire and its Legacy

- Africa: Scramble to Boer War
- The British Empire in World War II
- Independence: India and Pakistan OR an African country OR a Caribbean country
- The impact of Empire on post-war Britain and its people

Themes from 20th Century History

- First World War to Second World War
- AND EITHER
- Communism and Democracy 1917-1991
- OR
- Conflict in the Middle East 1917-2001

Society and Belief

For this component, schools would be provided with an on-line archive of historical material, to which they would be encouraged to add from other sources, such as other websites, organised trips to museums or heritage sites, further reading etc. Schools would be free to select from the archive according to the ability level of their pupils. Pupils would be encouraged to use this material, and to explore beyond it, in order to build up a picture of life and belief at different periods in the past.

Pupils would complete one task on Society and one on Belief.

Pupils will be set open-ended tasks in which they will be required to display their knowledge using the source material they have studied.

Such tasks might look like this:

Using the source material you have studied:

What can you learn from looking at Lincoln Cathedral about what medieval people believed in? Did poor people and rich people believe the same things?

Describe what religious beliefs people had in Elizabethan England. Why did religion cause so much conflict?

Describe how people lived in Cromwell's New Model Army. Why do you think it was so successful in battle?

What sort of crimes did people commit in Victorian times? Were the Victorians tough enough on the causes of crime?

Describe how some doctors worked out what caused cholera. Why did it take so long for most doctors to agree with them?

What did fascists and communists believe in the years between the wars? How did people decide which group to join?

Describe what you have found out about life for immigrants into Britain in the 1950s and 1960s. Why were there so many arguments for and against immigration?

Tasks drawn from family, local or community history

Assessment

Assessment objectives would focus on:

- Historical Knowledge
- Construction of historical narrative
- Construction and presentation of historical argument
- The evaluation and deployment of historical source material

GCSE assessment would be based on two written examination papers, one on British History and one on Twentieth Century History. Assessment in Society and in Belief would be through written test undertaken in controlled conditions at two appropriate points during the course.

Further Research

The main areas for further research are:

- Pupils' construction of historical narrative and how it might best be assessed
- The most effective way to integrate online archival resources with teaching and assessment. We would hope to research this in conjunction with the Churchill Archives Centre in Cambridge.