

Edexcel GCSE History is an exciting and relevant course that explores the world you live in right now. GCSE History is an exciting, relevant and challenging subject that helps students make sense of power, protest, crime, conflict and change. If you enjoy asking why, debating ideas, and forming your own opinions, **History is a great choice.**

The course covers critical global issues such as:

- GCSE Edexcel History explores how societies have changed and how the past shapes today's world.
- Students study British and international history through thematic, depth, and period studies.
- Key topics include crime and justice, power, conflict, protest, and everyday life.
- Explore Nazi Germany, Elizabeth I, the American West, and Britain's approach to crime and punishment.
- Develop skills to analyse sources, question evidence, and build arguments.
- Understand what happened, why it happened, and why it matters today.

By studying GCSE History, students will develop **a powerful understanding of how the world they live in has been shaped by the past**. They will explore how power is gained and challenged, why societies punish crime in different ways, how ordinary people are affected by government decisions, and how conflict, belief and ambition drive change. **History helps students recognise that today's issues** – such as extremism, inequality, justice, propaganda and international tension – did not appear overnight. Instead, they are the result of choices made by people in the past.

Students will learn to **question information, spot bias, and judge reliability in a world full of headlines, social media and misinformation**. They will understand that history is not just one story, but many competing viewpoints, and that evidence must be analysed carefully before conclusions are reached. **GCSE History empowers students to think independently**, form well-reasoned opinions, and understand their role as informed citizens in a changing world.

Course structure:

The Edexcel GCSE History course is divided into four main components.

Crime and Punishment in Britain (c.1000–present)

Why were people punished so brutally in the past? How did prisons and the police develop? Why did punishments change?

You'll investigate shocking crimes, dramatic punishments and key turning points in British history – from medieval trials and witch hunts to modern debates about justice and human rights.

This topic links directly to modern crime, law and justice.

Weimar and Nazi Germany (1918–1939)

How did Hitler rise to power? Why did ordinary people support the Nazis? What was life really like under a dictatorship?

You'll explore propaganda, fear, resistance and control in one of the most powerful and disturbing periods of modern history.

This topic helps you understand dictatorship, extremism and propaganda – issues that still affect the world today.

The American West (c.1835–1895)

Was the Wild West really wild? Who benefited from expansion – and who suffered?

You'll study cowboys, Native Americans, lawlessness, railroads and frontier towns, discovering the reality behind the myths of the Wild West.

A fast-paced topic full of conflict, action and dramatic change.

Early Elizabethan England (1558–1588)

How did a young queen survive threats from all sides? How did religion divide England? What was life like for ordinary people?

You'll uncover plots, spies, religious tension and international rivalry during the reign of Elizabeth I. Politics, danger, drama and power struggles – all in Tudor England.

How Will I Be Assessed?

Paper 1: Thematic Study and Historic Environment

Written examination: 1 hour 20 minutes

Weighting: 30% of the qualification

This paper focuses on: - Crime and Punishment in Britain, c1000–present

- Whitechapel, c1870–c1900: crime, policing and the inner city (historic environment)

Paper 2: Period Study and British Depth Study

Written examination: 1 hour 50 minutes

Weighting: 40% of the qualification

This paper covers: - Early Elizabethan England, 1558–1588 (British depth study)

- The American West, c1835–c1895 (period study)

Paper 3: Modern Depth Study

Written examination: 1 hour 30 minutes

Weighting: 30% of the qualification

This paper focuses on: - Weimar and Nazi Germany, 1918–1939

Skills Gained:

By studying History, students gain skills that are essential for success beyond school:

Critical thinking: learning how to question information rather than accept it at face value

Strong communication: writing clearly, persuasively and with confidence

Analysis and judgement: weighing up evidence and reaching balanced conclusions

Independence: forming your own opinions and defending them with evidence

Post-16 Opportunities:

GCSE History is a highly respected qualification that keeps options open long after Year 11. Students who study History frequently progress to A-Level History as well as subjects such as Law, Politics, Sociology, Economics, Philosophy and Psychology. It also works extremely well alongside English, Geography, Maths and STEM subjects, making it a flexible and strategic choice for a wide range of pathways. History is recognised by leading universities, including Oxbridge and Russell Group institutions, as a strong academic subject because it develops the ability to think critically, construct well-supported arguments and write with clarity and precision.

History students are in demand because they gain exactly the skills that universities and employers value most. Through studying History, students learn how to analyse complex information, question reliability and bias, weigh up evidence and reach balanced judgements. They become confident

communicators who can explain ideas clearly and persuasively, both in writing and discussion. These transferable skills prepare students for success in further education and support progression into careers such as law, journalism, politics, the civil service, education, business, media, heritage and international relations. Studying History does not limit future choices – it strengthens them.

Careers Supported by History

History students go on to a wide range of careers, including:

- Law and the legal profession
- Journalism, media and publishing
- Politics, government and the civil service
- Teaching and education
- Museums, heritage and archaeology
- Business, management and marketing
- International relations and public policy

History graduates are valued because they can **research effectively, think logically, and communicate ideas clearly** – skills that are useful in almost every profession.