

A LEVEL
Teacher Guide

HISTORY A

H505
For first teaching in 2015

**Transition guide
from old to new
specification**

Version 1



TRANSITION GUIDE FROM OLD TO NEW SPECIFICATION

COMPONENT 1

Component 1 is a period of British History, covering approximately 75 years.

There are two parts to the Component:

- A Period Study style essay; candidates will be required to answer ONE question from a choice of two. These will be similar to the current F961 questions.
- An Enquiries style question which extends the time scale of the Period Study by approximately 15 years, therefore providing greater coherence. Candidates will answer one question using four sources which will be similar to the present (b) question on the Enquiries papers F963 and F964.

Each Period Study will be made up of four Key Topics, rather than the present six, but the Topics will not be phrased as questions. As in the present Specification, guidance as to indicative content will be given, but as at present this is NOT exhaustive.

Each Enquiry will be made up of three Key Topics, rather than the present four, but the Topics will not be phrased as questions. As in the present Specification, guidance as to indicative content will be given, but as at present this is NOT exhaustive.

The Period Study question will test AO1 and unlike the present Period Study Mark scheme only one mark will be awarded with no separation for the use of knowledge and analysis, but the skills being tested remain unchanged.

The types of question set will be the same as the Present Period Studies Units with similar expectations and command words such as:

- Assess – where candidates should weigh up the relative importance of factors
- To what extent – where candidates should judge the extent to which the issue in the question is valid
- How far – where candidates should judge the extent to which the issue in the question is valid.

It is not our intention to use new styles of questions. As in the present Specification, questions may be set that are drawn from more than one of the Key Topics.

All the Enquiry topics will extend the time scale of the Period Study option either at the start or end of the time scale of the Period Study; for example the Mid Tudor Crisis will extend the Early Tudor Period Study Option which is from 1485 to 1547 by a further 11 years to 1558, the Period Study on the reign of Henry III 1216-1272 will be extended by an enquiry on King John, 1199-1216.

In the Enquiry section there will be only ONE question and this will use all FOUR sources.

The Enquiry Study question will test AO2, which requires candidates to evaluate primary sources in their historical context. Unlike the present Specification where two marks are awarded for sub question (b) only one mark will be awarded which will combine source analysis, argument and the use of own knowledge in a holistic judgement. All four sources used will be primary sources.

The wording of the question will change and the stem will now be: *Using these four sources in their historical context, assess how far they support the view that..*

However, candidates will not be required to group the sources to reach any level. Candidates will be required to consider the nature of the sources, their provenance and apply own knowledge to reach a judgement as to whether the sources support the view in the question.

COMPONENT 2

Component 2 is a period of non-British History, with options across a wide range of countries, not just Europe. The periods covered vary depending on the nature of the topic, many are very similar to the present F962 topics but the choice has been widened considerably.

There will be two questions set on each option, each question will have two sub questions and candidates must answer both sub questions from the same question.

There are two parts to the Component:

- Sub question (a) will be a shorter answer question where candidates will be required to explain the importance, impact or significance of two important events, issues or people from their period of study and then reach a judgement as to the most important.
- Sub Question (b) will be a Period Study style essay. These will be similar to the present F962 questions.



This will allow a wider area of the Study Topic to be examined.

Each Period Study will be made up of four Key Topics, rather than the present six, but the Topics will not be phrased as questions. As in the present Specification, guidance as to indicative content will be given, but as at present this is NOT exhaustive.

The Period Study question and the shorter question will both test AO1 and unlike the present Period Study Mark scheme only one mark will be awarded with no separation for the use of knowledge and analysis, but the skills being tested remain unchanged.

The new, shorter question will be worth half the marks of the traditional Period Study essay and candidates are expected to spend approximately 15 minutes on this element. The question will always require candidates to analyse two factors/issues/events/people and they should not consider issues that are not mentioned in the question.

Questions will be phrased in this format:

Which of the following was of greater importance in....?

(i)

(ii)

Explain your answer with reference to both (i) and (ii)

Candidates can either write discretely about each issue and then reach a supported judgement about the relative importance or can produce a constantly comparative answer; either approach may be awarded full marks.

The types of question set for the Period Study element will be the same as the Present Period Studies Units with similar command words such as and expectations:

- Assess – where candidates should weigh up the relative importance of factors
- To what extent – where candidates should judge the extent to which the issue in the question is valid
- How far – where candidates should judge the extent to which the issue in the question is valid.

It is not our intention to use new styles of questions for the full essay. As in the present Specification, questions for both elements may be set that are drawn from more than one of the Key Topics.

COMPONENT 3

Component 3 is a Thematic period of History covering at least 100 years with three named in-depth topics drawn from within the Theme studied.

There are two parts to the Component:

- Three Thematic essays which will take the same format as the current F966 essays, from which candidates will be required to answer two questions.
- An in-depth question on one of the three named topics. This will require candidates to consider the views of two Passages about an issue central to the in-depth topic and through critical evaluation, using own knowledge, reach a judgement as to which Passage offers the more convincing view of the issue in the question (this is similar to the skills required for the Interpretation element of the present F965).

Each Thematic topic will be made up of four Key Topics and as at present these will not be phrased as questions. In many instances the Themes and indicative content have remained either unchanged from the present F966 or have undergone only minor revisions. The content guidance is, as at present, only indicative. Similarly, the nature of a thematic paper means that Questions may be drawn from more than one Key Topic.

The Thematic essays will test only AO1, with only one mark awarded, unlike the present F966 where separate marks are awarded for the use of knowledge and synthesis/analysis. However, the skills tested remain unchanged. The type of questions set will also remain unchanged and candidates will be expected to cover the whole period in their responses unless the question specifically states otherwise. Candidates are advised to spend 45 minutes on each essay, unlike the present Specification where there is an hour for each essay.

There will be three in-depth topics for each Theme. These topics will be central to the Theme and will, wherever possible, cut across all four theme areas. This is best illustrated by the example of an in-depth topic from the Tudor Rebellions Theme. One of the in-depth Topics is the Pilgrimage of Grace and passages could be set that consider the cause, nature, impact and effect on stability of the rising.

Candidates will need to have studied all three in-depth topics as only one question per Theme will be set each year. The level of knowledge required for the in-depth topic is no greater than that found in a standard A level text (for example Seminar Studies) on the Theme. The two Passages set will offer contrasting views about an issue associated with the topic, but candidates do NOT require knowledge of the historiography of the in-depth topic. The two Passages will be no longer than 600 words in length in total and candidates should spend 15 minutes reading the Passages.



The question will test AO3 and marks for analysis, knowledge etc. are subsumed into that AO. Unlike the present Coursework (F965) where three marks are awarded for the Interpretation element, only one mark will be awarded which will combine analysis of the Passages, argument and the use of own knowledge in a holistic judgement. All the Passages used will be secondary sources.

The question will be worded as follows:

Evaluate the views in both the passages and explain which you think is more convincing in explaining the reasons.....

COMPONENT 4

The Independent Investigation: This is similar in some ways to the present F965 Investigation, but there are also a number of significant differences.

This is not intended to be a taught unit, but, as the title states a piece of independent investigation.

The present Investigation allowed the opportunity for free choice of topics, this is now central as OCR will not be setting any titles, although possible suggestions and guidance will be given. In the present Investigation element of coursework questions are phrased such that candidates are able to show an awareness of, and analyse a range of different interpretations about an event; this will continue to be a requirement of the new coursework. Therefore, as with the present coursework, candidates will need to discuss a range of different interpretations of how the past has been interpreted, but not the historiography of the topic, and reach a judgement. This means that topics chosen, as with the present coursework, should have a historical debate surrounding them. The current Investigation is one piece of work of 2,000 words and in the new Specification it will continue to be one piece of work BUT of 3000-4000 words length. The Investigation will, as with present coursework, be centre marked and externally moderated.

The Investigation will test ALL three, which means that candidates will be required to use both a range of sources and consider a variety of Interpretations. This will be reflected in the marking of the work, where Centres will be required to award a mark for each Assessment Objective. However, the relative weighting for the Assessment Objectives reflects a change in emphasis as half the marks will be awarded for AO1, so the response is driven by knowledge, argument and judgement,

rather than the heavy emphasis in the current Specification on the critical evaluation of sources. The remaining half of the marks will be split equally between AO2 and AO3, but critical evaluation will be less important than the discerning use of evidence to support the analysis, rather than just critical comments on the sources, although there will still need to be a critical sense of the evidence used. The current Coursework does not require the use of primary sources, but the new Specification will require the use of primary sources (AO2 has to be "primary and/or contemporary to the period") as well as Interpretations (AO3).

The Independent Investigation will provide a range of opportunities for Candidates and it might be helpful for Centres to consider the following approaches. Candidates could use the Investigation to extend their knowledge of aspects of the past already studied or to build on what they know to study related aspects not specifically required by the specification. However, they could decide to study a topic which is not related to other topic studied in order to extend the range of their historical knowledge or study a topic which involves a different sort of history than they have studied. There may be some candidates who have an interest in, even a passion for a particular topic for its own sake and this provides an opportunity for them to develop that love.

Coursework offers wonderful opportunities for personal and independent study which promotes a love and interest in the subject and which may be life-changing and lead to candidates choosing particular topics for study in further education or even in shaping career choices. However, centres do have to offer help and guidance to students when choosing a topic and framing a question to ensure that:

- there are real issues to analyse and evidence to evaluate
- answers do not become merely descriptions, however interesting in themselves
- that there is an appropriate range of evidence which will offer genuine intellectual change
- that the research will be into a real historical topic and involve engagement with historical evidence
- that the research and the work that it leads to will offer a real extension of candidates' knowledge and understanding.





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