

# OCR A Level History A

## H106 and H506 replaces 3885 and 7835

### Information for OCR centres transferring to **new specification** **for first teaching in 2008**

This document maps the current A Level History specification to the new specification for first teaching in September 2008. It includes information on the changes, support available and an outline of the new specification. It is intended to help ease the transition for Heads of Department and Teachers involved in the teaching of History.

The full specification is available online along with a short questionnaire enabling you to share your comments on the specification and help shape the materials developed to support it. For more information including answers to frequently asked questions visit [www.ocr.org.uk/14-19alevels](http://www.ocr.org.uk/14-19alevels)

**Current specification – mapping the changes**

pages 2-4

**Outline specification for first teaching September 2008**

pages 5-6

#### **QCA Have stipulated that:**

- Number of units required to achieve GCE A Level is to be reduced from six to four. This has helped us produce a more coherent and context based A Level.
- Coursework to be retained in History. Choice for candidates to follow their own areas of interest has been retained.
- Stretch and Challenge style questions to be introduced into A2 assessment. This initiative is designed to give learners the opportunity to demonstrate their potential, and to help universities differentiate between applicants.



# Current A Level History

**3835 and 7835.** Candidates must complete 6 units; one of 2580, 2581 or 2582, one of 2583 or 2584, one of 2585 or 2586, one of 2587, 2588 or 2589, one of 2590 or 2591 and one of 2592 or 2593



**Existing specification**

**Current unit title**

**Unit code**

**What remains the same?**

**What is changing?**

**Why is it changing?**

**Guidance**

**Document Studies  
871-1099**

**2580**  
Optional  
AS 40%  
A Level 20%  
1 hr exam

Document Studies approach, maintained in the new Enquiries unit.  
  
Still have source material to read and then answer two part question in exam.

Two rather than three units, 1½ hrs rather than 1 hr examination.  
  
Choose either British or European and World (and then from within each unit, choose from either medieval/early modern or modern options.)

New opportunities to study areas of modern history.  
  
There is little change to this unit other than to enrich and extend summary topics.

For a detailed list of content see new specification.  
  
The following items will be made available before first teaching:

**Document Studies  
1450-1693**

**2581**  
Optional  
AS 40%  
A Level 20%  
1 hr exam

Structure of exam questions remain the same.

Some changes within study topic list, including new study topics.  
  
All study topics are expanded to cover an increased time period e.g. Nazi Germany topic expanded to include up to 1963.

- Updated resource and publications list
- Endorsed textbooks to tie in with the specification
- Email discussion list
- INSET
- Schemes of work
- Example lesson plans
- Summary of examiners reports

**Document Studies  
1774-1945**

**2582**  
Optional  
AS 40%  
A Level 20%  
1 hr exam

New unit codes F963 and F964.

**English History  
1042-1660**

**2583**  
Optional  
AS 30%  
A Level 15%  
45 min exam

Popular study topics have been retained to ensure continuity.

One British history unit with a choice of two options.  
  
Within each option a clear list of study topics.  
  
Candidates answer two essay questions from a choice of three given for each study topic.

Have streamlined list to add coherence to course, have retained popular areas and new 20th century topics added.  
  
To ensure equivalence with six unit specification, some study topics have been broadened to add context e.g. From Pitt to Peel.

For a detailed list of content see new specification.  
  
The following items will be made available before first teaching:

**British History  
1780 – 1964**

**2584**  
Optional  
AS 30%  
A Level 15%  
45 min exam

Six key issues and associated areas of indicative content (rather than four).  
  
New unit code F961.

- Updated resource and publications list
- Endorsed textbooks to tie in with the specification
- Email discussion list
- INSET
- Schemes of work
- Example lesson plans
- Summary of examiners reports

AS

AS

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Existing specification					
Current unit title	Unit code	What remains the same?	What is changing?	Why is it changing?	Guidance
AS <b>European History 1046 –1718</b>	<b>2585</b> Optional AS 30% A Level 15% 45 min exam	Popular study topics have been retained to ensure continuity.	One European and World History unit with choice of two options.  Within each option a clear list of study topics.  Candidates answer two essay questions from a choice of three given for each study topic.  New 20th century options featuring China and the Middle East.  Six key issues and associated areas of indicative content (rather than four).  New unit code F962.	Have streamlined list to add coherence to course, have retained popular areas and new 20th century topics added.  Updated specification to include relevant contemporary topics.  To ensure equivalence with six unit specification.	For a detailed list of content see new specification.  The following items will be made available before first teaching: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated resource and publications list</li> <li>• Endorsed textbooks to tie in with the specification</li> <li>• Email discussion list</li> <li>• INSET</li> <li>• Schemes of work</li> <li>• Example lesson plans</li> <li>• Summary of examiners reports</li> </ul>
	<b>2586</b> Optional AS 30% A Level 15% 45 min exam				
A2	<b>2587</b> Optional A Level 15% 1 hr 30 min exam	Opportunity for centres to continue studying same topics as previous specification.  Opportunity for teachers to continue to use their experience and resources from teaching units 2587-89 as the task and the skills assessed in the interpretations element remain largely the same.	Internally assessed coursework of two 2000 word essays: One essay focuses on historical interpretation; the other on personal investigation.  New unit code F965.  Open book exam removed.	To provide flexibility for centres to follow their interests from AS.  Possibility to introduce areas of particular interest not present elsewhere in the specification.	Dedicated coursework INSET.  Teacher Support and Guidance including guidance on setting tasks.  Bank of questions used previous in the independent investigations element, and advice on setting questions.
	<b>2588</b> Optional A Level 15% 1 hr 30 min exam				
	<b>2589</b> Optional A Level 15% 1 hr 30 min exam	Candidates still complete an individual investigation which builds on the interpretations unit and the AS enquiries unit.			
	<b>2592</b> Optional A Level 15% Coursework	Popular topics have been retained .			
<b>2593</b> Optional A Level 15% 1 hr 30 min Open Book exam					

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A2

Existing specification					
Current unit title	Unit code	What remains the same?	What is changing?	Why is it changing?	Guidance
<b>Themes in History 1066 –1796</b>	<b>2590</b> Optional A level 20% exam 1hr 30mins	Topics based on theories covering an extended period of approximately one hundred years, with an emphasis on continuity, development and change.	Two questions from a choice of three for their chosen theme, or themes.  Some themes merged or timelines expanded.	The emphasis is on continuity from the current specification, but some themes have been expanded to ensure equivalence with the four unit spec.	The following items will be made available before first teaching: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated resource and publications list</li> <li>• Endorsed textbooks to tie in with the specification</li> <li>• Email discussion list</li> <li>• INSET</li> <li>• Schemes of work</li> <li>• Example lesson plans</li> <li>• Guide to teaching the unit.</li> <li>• Updated timelines and tables of development</li> </ul>
<b>Themes in History 1763 –1996</b>	<b>2591</b> Optional A level 20% exam 1hr 30mins	Popular study topics returned.	2 hr exam replaces previous 1½ hr exam.  New unit code F966.		



	New unit title	New unit code	Benefits to me and my learners	Support
AS	<b>British History Period Studies</b>	<b>F961</b> Optional AS 50% A Level 25% 1 hr 30 mins Exam	<p>This unit offers study in 12 short periods of English History.</p> <p>Candidates have the choice of studying topics from either: Option 1: Medieval and Early Modern 1035-1642 Option 2: Modern 1783-1994.</p> <p>A wide range of topics allows for more choice to suit the needs of individual centres.</p> <p>Candidates will develop their use and understanding of historical terms, concepts and skills. The periods encourage candidates to develop their interest in, and understanding of, important developments.</p>	<p>The following items will be made available before first teaching:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated resource and publications list</li> <li>• Endorsed textbooks to tie in with the specification</li> <li>• Email discussion list</li> <li>• INSET</li> <li>• Schemes of work</li> <li>• Example lesson plans</li> <li>• Summary of examiners reports.</li> </ul>
AS	<b>European and World History Period Studies</b>	<b>F962</b> Optional AS 50% A Level 25% 1 hr 30 mins Exam	<p>This unit offers study in 16 short periods of European and World History.</p> <p>Candidates have the choice of studying topics from either: Option 1: Medieval and Early Modern 1095-1609 Option 2: Modern 1795-2003.</p> <p>New topics allow candidates to study history with a contemporary relevance e.g. The Rise of China 1911-1990 and Crisis in the Middle East.</p> <p>Candidates will develop their use and understanding of historical terms, concepts and skills. The periods encourage candidates to develop their interest in, and understanding of, important developments.</p>	
AS	<b>British History Enquiries</b>	<b>F963</b> Optional AS 50% A Level 25% 1 hr 30 mins Exam	<p>This is a document studies unit.</p> <p>Candidates have the choice of studying a topic from either: Option 1: Medieval and Early Modern 1066-1660 Option 2: Modern 1815-1945.</p> <p>Allows candidates to assess an historical problem through the combined use of different sources and their own knowledge.</p> <p>The focus of the unit is the critical use of evidence in investigating and assessing historical interpretations.</p>	

	<b>New unit title</b>	<b>New unit code</b>	<b>Benefits to me and my learners</b>	<b>Support</b>
<b>AS</b>	<b>European and World History Enquiries</b>	<b>F964</b> Optional AS 50% A Level 25% 1 hr 30 mins Exam	<p>This is a document studies unit.</p> <p>Candidates have the choice of studying a topic from either: Option 1: Medieval and Early Modern 1073-1546 Option 2: Modern 1774 -1975.</p> <p>Allows candidates to assess an historical problem through the combined use of different sources and their own knowledge.</p>	
<b>A2</b>	<b>Historical Interpretations and Investigations</b>	<b>F965</b> Mandatory A Level 20% Coursework	<p>The focus of the unit is the critical use of evidence in investigating and assessing historical interpretations.</p> <p>Coursework Unit with two 2000 word pieces, one focusing on Interpretations and one focusing on Investigations.</p> <p>Requires candidates to comprehend, analyse and evaluate the way in which the past may have been interpreted.</p> <p>Interpretations tasks are set by OCR.</p> <p>Internally assessed and moderated.</p> <p>Individual study investigation allows candidates to pursue own interests.</p> <p>This is a historical perspectives unit so concern is centred on links and comparisons between different aspects of the topics studied.</p>	<p>The following items will be made available before first teaching:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Updated resource and publications list</li> <li>• Endorsed textbooks to tie in with the specification</li> <li>• Email discussion list</li> <li>• INSET</li> <li>• Schemes of work</li> <li>• Example lesson plans</li> <li>• Past examiners reports.</li> </ul>
<b>A2</b>	<b>Historical Theme</b>	<b>F966</b> Mandatory A Level 30% 2 hr Exam	<p>Candidates have the choice of studying a topic or topics from either: Option 1: Medieval and Early Modern 1066-1702 Option 2: Modern 1789-1997.</p> <p>There are no restrictions on choice of topic but candidates are encouraged to study a topic linked to options they have studied previously to enrich their experience.</p> <p>This is a synoptic part of the specification that seeks to develop an understanding of connections between different elements of the subject and for candidates to draw together knowledge, understanding and skills of diverse issues centred on a common theme, covering an extended period of approximately 100 years.</p>	