



AS/A Level History A

(Available for teaching from September 2008)

Through this specification candidates develop expertise in historical skills and acquire knowledge and understanding through the ability to study a wide range of topics in British, European, American and World History from the medieval period through to the late twentieth century.



What are the benefits to me and my students of delivering these OCR specifications?

- The ethos and strengths of OCR's previous specification have been maintained in a new four unit (two at AS level, two at A2) format.
- The best features of existing units have been retained, maintaining the possibility to specialize in particular periods.
- New areas have been added to the specification making it possible to construct more coherent courses. For example, at AS, there are new Enquiries (document studies papers) on Gladstone and Disraeli, Churchill, Dictatorship and Democracy in Germany 1933-63, and the Cold War in Asia; and new period studies on China and the Middle East; providing exciting new opportunities to study 20th Century history. Equally, it is still possible to study an entirely medieval course, and there are, for example, new options at A2 on Justinian and Alfred.
- There is a new style of coursework, which separates the unit into two, separately assessed tasks (interpretations and investigations) and so makes the coursework unit more accessible to candidates and easier for teachers to deliver. Preparation to teach this revised unit will be straightforward as much of the existing specification will continue and the style of assessment will be largely unchanged.
- For the **interpretations** element of the coursework, candidates from one centre can all analyse the same set of passages or sources, using models provided by OCR on a wide range of topics.
- Plenty of coursework material will be provided for teachers. In addition to advice and guidance on constructing interpretations tasks, this will also include suggested essay titles for the **investigations** element, with bibliographies of books in print, plus useful websites.
- While the study of British History comprises a substantial element, candidates will study the history of more than one country or state.

AS Level

Mandatory/Optional?	Unit title and description	Assessment method and weighting
Mandatory (if choosing this unit, candidates take the European and World Enquiries option)	F961: British History Period Studies Candidates have a choice of a wide range of subjects from the Anglo-Saxons up to Post-War Britain in two components (1035 - 1642, and 1783 - 1994) including the transition to Norman England, Church and State in the 16th century, and the origins of the English Civil War, from Pitt to Peel, Foreign and Imperial Policies 1856 -1914 and Britain from 1951 - 1994.	1 hour 30 min exam AS Level – 50% A Level – 25%
Mandatory (if choosing this unit, candidates take the British Enquiries option)	F962: European and World History Period Studies The unit offers topics in two components; Medieval and Early Modern 1095 – 1609, exploring themes such as the Crusades, the Renaissance and Spain in the 16th and 17th centuries, and Modern European and World History from 1795 -2003 including Napoleon, the USA in the 19th century, the Rise of China in the 20th century and the Crisis in the Middle East since 1948.	1 hour 30 min exam AS Level – 50% A Level – 25%
Mandatory (if European and World History Period Studies is chosen)	F963: British History Enquiries This unit offers documentary and some passage study on seven options (including for example the Normans, The Mid-Tudor Crises, or Churchill). Candidates should study how to interpret and evaluate source material, to compare sources as evidence and arrive at a judgment, and to assess an historical interpretation through the combined use of different sources, passages and their own knowledge.	1 hour 30 min exam AS Level – 50% A Level – 25%
Mandatory (if British History Period Studies is chosen)	F964: European and World History Enquiries This unit offers documentary and some passage study on seven options (including for example the Crusades, the Reformation in Germany, the French Revolution and Dictatorship and Democracy in Germany 1933-1963). Candidates should study how to interpret and evaluate source material, to compare sources as evidence and arrive at a judgment, and to assess an historical interpretation through the combined use of different sources, passages and their own knowledge.	1 hour 30 min exam AS Level – 50% A Level – 25%

Candidates must either take F961 and F964, or F962 and F963.

A2 Level

Mandatory/Optional?	Unit title and description	Assessment method and weighting
Mandatory	F965: Historical Interpretations and Investigations Internally assessed and externally moderated coursework. Candidates will produce 2 x 2000 word essays: a task based on interpretations in passages set by OCR and an individual investigation.	Coursework A Level – 20%
Mandatory	F966: Historical Themes A choice of 12 key themes covering a period of at least 100 years. Candidates will demonstrate synoptic skills by drawing together appropriate techniques, knowledge and understanding to evaluate developments over the whole of the period. There is an emphasis on patterns of change and continuity.	2 hour exam A Level – 30%

How is this qualification assessed?

The AS level exams are externally assessed through a timetabled written examination. The Historical Interpretations and Investigations unit at A2 is externally set, internally assessed and externally moderated whereas Historical Themes is externally assessed.

Dates of first examinations

AS

First examination will be available in January 2009.

A2

First examination will be available in January 2010.

What support will I receive?

Training

A series of OCR courses to introduce the new specification will be available as well as an annual INSET programme to support teachers and provide feedback on recent examinations.

Publishers

Developed in close consultation with OCR, Harcourt is publishing materials for the 2008 A Level History A specification.

Resources

You will be able to download all the following resources from the OCR website – www.ocr.org.uk.

- Schemes of Work
- Sample Assessment Materials
- Resource lists
- Sample lesson plans
- A summary of past examiner reports

For more information please contact the OCR Customer Contact Centre on **01223 553998** or visit www.ocr.org.uk