



Aylesbury High School | #AHSWalksTall

Developing uniquely talented young adults, who are independent, strong and confident

Dear Parent/Carer

As we start the GCSE History journey, we thought it might be useful to give you a little more information about the course and how to navigate its requirements and demands. Please do also look at the History pages on the school website, or email me at iannat@ahs.bucks.sch.uk if you have any questions.

The Course

We will follow the OCR B GCSE History course. You can find it [here](#). The website has lots of guidance for students, as well as past papers, marked exemplars, and resource lists. The units we study are:

Y10	Migrants to Britain 1250-present	The Later Elizabethans 1580-1603	History Around Us - London's Bankside
Y11	History Around Us - London's Bankside	Living under Nazi Rule 1933-1945	The Mughal Empire

We've chosen these units very carefully to reflect our values and vision as a department, but also because we believe that together they present a rich and challenging set of stories, worthy of study in their own right. However, we also hold that these units will empower our students as critical thinkers and allow them to go on and succeed in higher studies, employment and life more generally.

Learning to think, talk and write like a historian

As with all GCSEs, there is a bit of a jump from Key Stage 3 in terms of challenge and complexity. We expect our students to make progress over the course, but they shouldn't be concerned if they find they take a little time to adjust to new standards and expectations. The big difference between KS3 and KS4 is that, of course, students will be examined after 2 years. This means that history students need to regard every lesson as a revision lesson. That means we expect them to engage, participate and reflect. Students will find that at GCSE their targets and feedback from their English GCSEs become more relevant than those from other humanities. That is because there is a huge crossover in terms of analytical and evaluative thinking, talking and writing. So students should pay close attention to any patterns that emerge in assessments and feedback.

The History team also believes that purposeful talk is one of our most powerful ways of exploring our thinking, so students must expect to use lots of small-group talk to work through the complex material and arguments we will encounter. However, quiet, focused self-study also has a place, and so we will set one 40-minute homework each week. These tasks will be critical to consolidating knowledge, introducing new content or preparing for assessments, so students should take them very seriously and make sure they stay on track.

Textbooks and resources

OCR has produced excellent textbooks for 80% of our course, and students will get to know these very well. They are used extensively in class alongside other materials, so students should expect to meet and engage with a variety of resources including podcasts, film, documentaries, online source collections, and excerpts from historical works.

Students will work in exercise books, but they will also need to manage various other printed resources, so some kind of plastic wallet or folder will help them stay organised. We will also make extensive use of Google Classroom for sharing lesson resources, setting assignments, and for any announcements or messaging. Students should check this as often as they can.

Best wishes,
Iain Annat
Head of History