AQA A Level History

Vision statement - The vision of the History department is 'Developing Enquiring Minds'.

Curriculum Intent – AQA A Level History

Our AQA A Level History curriculum is designed to develop academically successful, intellectually curious and independent students whose fascination with the past inspires many to pursue History and related disciplines beyond A Level. Through the study of political, social, economic and cultural change, students develop a sophisticated understanding of how and why societies, institutions and individuals have changed over time. They explore the complexities of the past, recognising that historical developments rarely have simple causes or consequences, and that interpretations of the past are shaped by the evidence available and the questions historians ask.

Carefully sequenced learning builds secure and increasingly sophisticated knowledge across the breadth and depth of the course. Through the study of **The Tudors, 1485–1603**, students examine the development of the English state, religion, society and monarchy across the reigns of Henry VII, Henry VIII, Edward VI, Mary I and Elizabeth I. Through **Democracy and Nazism: Germany, 1918–1945**, students explore the development and collapse of democracy, the rise of Nazism and the nature and impact of the Nazi dictatorship. Studying these contrasting periods enables students to make connections between political power, social change, economic pressures, ideology, religion and individual agency, while developing an increasingly nuanced understanding of **change and continuity, cause and consequence, significance, and similarity and difference.**

Students are taught to think and work as historians. They interrogate primary sources and evidence, assessing their provenance, utility, reliability and limitations, while recognising that sources must be understood within their historical context. They engage with historical interpretations, examining why historians reach different conclusions and evaluating the arguments and evidence that underpin competing interpretations. Through regular discussion, source analysis, interpretation questions and extended writing, students learn to distinguish between assertion and evidence, challenge assumptions, identify complexity and construct substantiated historical judgements.

The curriculum places a strong emphasis on **argument and historical reasoning**. Students progressively move from demonstrating secure knowledge to selecting, organising and deploying evidence in support of an argument. They learn to explain relationships between factors, weigh their relative importance and reach judgements that are supported by precise and relevant historical evidence. Extended analytical writing develops students' ability to construct coherent arguments, sustain lines of reasoning and respond directly to historical questions. Through this process, students develop the intellectual discipline to recognise that historical questions can have multiple defensible answers, provided conclusions are supported by rigorous reasoning and evidence.

The **NEA element of the course** provides an important opportunity for students to experience History as an independent academic discipline. Students undertake an extended investigation into a historical question, developing the ability to formulate and refine a line of enquiry, conduct independent research, and identify, select and evaluate a range of primary and secondary sources. They encounter differing historical interpretations and learn to engage critically with historians' arguments rather than simply accepting established narratives. The NEA provides valuable experience of planning and managing a substantial piece of independent work, selecting relevant evidence, referencing accurately, synthesising information and sustaining an argument over an extended period. These skills

develop students' resilience, organisation, academic independence and intellectual confidence, while providing valuable preparation for university study and other disciplines requiring extended independent research.

Across the course, students are encouraged to become **enquiring historians** who question rather than simply accept the past as presented to them. They learn to ask why events occurred, why developments took particular paths, why individuals and groups acted as they did, and why historians disagree about their significance. By combining secure chronological and contextual knowledge with critical engagement with evidence and interpretations, students develop the ability to form reasoned and independent conclusions about complex historical problems. Ultimately, the curriculum seeks to equip students not only with a detailed knowledge of the past, but also with the skills to **question, investigate, evaluate and make informed judgements** – developing enquiring minds that can apply historical thinking beyond the classroom.

Why study History at The Sixth Form at Ridgewood?

- The average ALPS grade achieved over the last four years has been a 4 ("very good").
- Students develop a burning passion for the subject and seek to pursue history at university; 66% of the students in 2021 will study history for their degree
- You have the complete freedom to choose your own coursework topic and question. The essay you write is worth 20% of your overall grade.
- The two taught elements of the course focus on fascinating topics – inter-war Germany and the Tudor Monarchs.
- Many history students join the school Debate Team; in 2019, the team won the prestigious Helena Kennedy competition hosted by Sheffield Hallam University. In 2020, the Ridgewood Team were in the lead before the competition was called off due to the pandemic.
- You will visit the University of Leeds to experience time in an undergraduate, academic environment, and have access to their resources.

What topics will I study in this subject?

Topic	What this means
Germany, 1919-1945	This is the depth paper, which looks at conditions before, and during, the Third Reich. By the end of the course, you will have conducted enquiries into these captivating questions: *How did Germany change after the loss of World War One?* *Was there a 'Golden Age' of the Weimar Republic?* *How did Hitler come to power?* *How successful were Hitler's racial, domestic and foreign policies? What is Hitler's legacy?*
The Tudors, 14851603	This is the breadth paper, which allows students to study issues of change, continuity, cause and consequence, by considering the actions of five vitally significant monarchs across the Tudor Period. You will be learning the answers to these riveting questions: *How effectively did the Tudors restore and develop the powers of the monarchy? In what ways and how effectively was England governed during this period? How did relations with foreign powers change and how was the succession secured?* *How did English society and economy change and with what effects?* *How far did intellectual and religious ideas change and develop and with what effects?* *How important was the role of key individuals and groups and how were they affected by developments?*

NEA (coursework)	This is a 4,000 word project. You choose your own question, on a topic of your choice. You conduct independent research, using both primary and secondary sources.

What skills will I need in this subject?

Skill	What this skill involves in this subject
Evaluating sources	It is important that you can understand the message a source is seeking to portray. You should also be able to consider how the provenance (type/author/date etc.) of a source affects its value, accuracy and reliability.
Extended, analytical writing	You must be able to decode essay questions, and come up with points which precisely answer the question. You will then need to be able to apply specific evidence/examples to the demands of the question, to develop your argument.
Retaining Knowledge	There are a lot of dates and examples to learn, and multiple topics to cover. It is important, therefore, that you are prepared to undertake regular retrieval practice within, and outside, lessons.

What will my lessons involve?

- There is a quiz at the start of every lesson
- There will be a lot of teacher led discussions as new information is being introduced/delivered
- We will annotate and study primary sources together, as a class
- You will plan a lot of essay questions together
- You will do a piece of extended writing every week in lessons

What will my independent study involve?

- Typing up, and consolidating, your notes from lessons
- Conducting wider reading from the work of various historians
- Retrieval practice e.g. Brain Dumps
- Planning practice questions
- Writing questions to time – c. 45 minutes each

How will I be assessed?

Percentage exam assessment: 80%	Percentage coursework assessment: 20%

Assessment	Details of assessment
Paper 1: Tudors	One exam, 2.5 hours, worth 40% of overall mark One source question, which takes 60 minutes, worth 30 marks Two essay questions, which takes 45 minutes, worth 25 marks each
Paper 2: Germany	One exam, 2.5 hours, worth 40% of overall mark One source question, which takes 60 minutes, worth 30 marks Two essay questions, which takes 45 minutes, worth 25 marks each
NEA (coursework)	4,000 word project on a topic of your choice. This will be written independently, outside of lessons. This is due by the December of Year 13.

How do I know this is the right course for me?

- You will really enjoy History if you:
  1. Enjoy reading a range of primary sources, or secondary historians' interpretations
  2. Like to write extended essays, justifying your answers to challenging questions
  3. Are prepared to spend considerable time self-testing on the key content
- History links well with Politics, Economics, English and other Humanities subjects like Geography, Sociology and Psychology.
- Potential future careers include politics, law, journalism, business and teaching