

GCSE History FAQs

Are classes set or mixed ability?

All History classes are mixed ability groups, this is partly down to the nature of the options process but also there are no tiers in the History exams so all students sit the same exams at the end of the course.

Is there any coursework? How much writing is there in the exam?

The GCSE is all examined with no coursework element. There are 4 exams, details of which can be found in the course information online or on the AQA website. The GCSE includes a range short questions which focus on knowledge recall, as well as longer more essay style questions which are focused on the analysis and evaluation of sources and interpretations. The longest questions are worth 16 marks but they do not have to write more than 1.5 pages in order to achieve full marks.

Are there any trips?

A trip to New York is run every other year so students will have the opportunity to spend 4 days in New York either in Year 10 or 11.

What are the mix of topics?

The GCSE covers a mixture of medieval to modern knowledge. For their first paper students start the course looking at America from 1920-1973 and then move on to the Korea and Vietnam wars. The second paper is focused on Britain and covers a 1000 year period on how health and medicine has changed. There is also a depth study on the reign of Edward I. Within these papers they include knowledge questions and evaluation of sources and interpretations.

What are the lessons like?

Lessons include a mix of teacher led activities as well as independent work. All students are provided with core textbooks at the beginning of each new module, as well as exercise books and an assessment book. All classes are taught by History specialist teachers.

Are the exams challenging and is there a lot of dates to learn?

Throughout the course of the two years students are provided many opportunities to practise the different exam skills of which they have already laid a foundation in KS3. The key skills needed begin in their assessments in Year 7 so students already have a

grounding of what is expected of them for GCSE. There is a wide amount of content covered in the course but revision activities and strategies are provided in Year 11 to help consolidate and prepare for the summer examinations. Creating timelines throughout the courses is always recommended!

Is it possible to do it if you didn't do History in Year 9?

Yes it is possible. Even though we do begin the America course at the end of Year 9, it is only in the last few weeks and this content is re-visited at the beginning of Year 10. Students will easily be able to catch up on any work missed.

What other subjects does it work well with?

History works well with a wide range of subjects including other Humanities such as Geography and RE as similar skills are developed. You may also find it helps your study in subjects such as English.

For any questions not answered here, please feel free to email Mrs Hopkins shopkins@stbarts.co.uk