

# History 'A' level

# General Introduction

Welcome to your 'A' level history course. This course is aimed at students expecting to complete their studies in **2004** or later years.

This general Introduction aims to give you all the background information you need to make a satisfactory start on your studies. More detailed information about many aspects of your studies is to be found in the first lesson of each of the modules which make up the course.

## The Syllabus

This course has been designed as far as possible to give you a full and thorough preparation for the 'A' Level History syllabus (9264), set by Edexcel for final examinations in June 2004 and beyond.

It is essential that you should study the syllabus itself (which can be obtained from Edexcel) and bear in mind its requirements at all times. Some of the salient points are set out below, but there are a number of details and alternatives to consider if you are to give yourself the best chance.

Here are the six modules which have been selected by OOL:

Module	Code	Title
<b>AS</b>		
M1	4a	Votes for Women 1880-1918
M2	5b	France in Revolution 1776-94
M3	10a	Conflict, Depression and Opportunity: British Society between the Wars 1919-39
<b>A2</b>		
M4	6a	Tory Men and Tory Measures: the Age of Lord Liverpool, 1815-27
M5	5a	Representation and Democracy in Britain 1830-1931
M6	3a	Radicalism and the British State: the Chartist Experience 1838-50



Oxford Open Learning

## The Examination

The 'A' level examination requires candidates to take six units (or exam papers) in total. The first three represent the AS level (usually the first year of study) and the remainder are at A2 level (the second year).

Edexcel syllabus 9264 offers two primary routes or "options", the first with 30% coursework, the second without. This course assumes you are following Option 2 which is examined by six written "exam" papers only – no coursework. Written papers 3 and 5 would be omitted if you were to take the coursework option.

The syllabus offers a broad range of options for each of these six units. Inevitably, this course has already made most of the necessary choices for you.

### AS Units

**Unit 1: Votes for Women 1880-1918**

Exam entry code: 6521

1 hour 30 mins

40% of the total AS marks

One source-based question will be set, comprising normally five sub-questions. Students will be provided with 4–6 sources of about 500 words in total. Sub-questions will focus on comprehension, abstraction, cross-referencing, evaluation and analysis. The last sub-question will ask students to use one or two sources in conjunction with their own knowledge.

**Unit 2: France in Revolution 1776-94**

1 hour

30% of the total AS marks (exam entry code: 6522)

Two questions will be set. Students will be required to answer one question. The question will comprise two sub-questions. One sub-question will focus on identification of key issues. The other will focus on causation.

**Unit 3: Conflict, Depression and Opportunity: British Society between the Wars 1919-39**

1 hour

30% of the total AS marks (exam entry code: 6523)

One question will be set, comprising three sub-questions. Students will be provided with one or two sources (150 words in total). One sub-question will focus on the extraction of information from sources.

## A2 Units

**Unit 4: Tory Men and Tory Measures: the Age of Lord Liverpool, 1815-27**

1 hour 15 mins 30% of the total A2 marks (exam entry code: 6524)

Two questions will be set. Students must answer one essay question, which will have an analytical focus.

**Unit 5: Representation and Democracy in Britain 1830-1931**

1 hour 15 mins 30% of the total A2 marks (exam entry code: 6525)

**The process of change over time.**

One question will be set, comprising three sub-questions which will focus on the process, nature or extent of change/continuity and turning points. Students will be provided with two or three sources of 250–300 words in total.

**Unit 6: Radicalism and the British State: the Chartist Experience 1838-50**

1 hour 45 mins 40% of the total A2 marks (exam entry code: 6526)

This unit provides evidence of synoptic assessment. Students will be tested on their ability to make links between the sources provided, their knowledge of the topic studied and their understanding of the basis upon which historians have reached their differing views. Two source-based questions will be set for each option, both of which must be answered. Students will be provided with 5 or 6 sources which will be both contemporary to the period studied and secondary sources and will total 750–800 words. The questions will explore a key area of historical debate. This paper will require students to reach substantial judgements which demonstrate their synoptic understanding of the essential characteristics of historical study at Advanced GCE.

You will need to study the syllabus for yourself but brief details are to be found below.

## What's in the Course?

The Oxford Open Learning course is divided into six modules. Those modules are as follows:

### Module One: Votes for Women 1880-1918

- |   |              |
|---|--------------|
| 1. Making History                         |              |
| 2. The Right to Vote: A Historical Review |              |
| 3. Votes for Women, 1880-1907             | <b>TMA A</b> |
| 4. Votes for Women, 1907-1918             | <b>TMA B</b> |

### Module Two: France in Revolution 1776-94

- |                                       |              |
|---------------------------------------|--------------|
| 5. The Crisis of the Old Regime       |              |
| 6. The Onset of Revolution, 1789-1794 | <b>TMA C</b> |
| 7. The Revolution in Perspective      | <b>TMA D</b> |

### Module Three: Conflict, Depression and Opportunity: British Society between the Wars 1919-39

- |   |              |
|---|--------------|
| 8. Industry and Unemployment, 1919-1939 |              |
| 9. Trade Unions and the General Strike  | <b>TMA E</b> |
| 10. Social Class and Conditions         |              |
| 11. Government and Party Politics       | <b>TMA F</b> |

### Module Four: Tory Men and Tory Measures: the Age of Lord Liverpool, 1815-27

- |   |              |
|---|--------------|
| 12. The Government of Lord Liverpool: Government, Party and Opposition, 1815-1822 |              |
| 13. Domestic Policy, 1815-1822  |              |
| 14. Liberal Toryism at Home   | <b>TMA G</b> |
| 15. Foreign Policy under Lord Liverpool   | <b>TMA H</b> |

### Module Five: Representation and Democracy in Britain 1830-1931

- |   |              |
|---|--------------|
| 16. The pre-1832 Electoral System and the 1832 Reform Act |              |
| 17. Parliamentary Reform in the mid-Victorian Period      | <b>TMA I</b> |
| 18. Late Victorian Reform                                 |              |
| 19. Twentieth-century Reform                              | <b>TMA J</b> |

## Module Six: Radicalism and the British State: the Chartist Experience 1838-50

- 20. The Emergence of Chartism and its Leaders
- 21. Chartist Membership and Activity
- 22. The Collapse of Chartism **TMA K**
- 23. The Police and Public Order
- 24. Robert Peel and the Chartists **TMA L**

## The New 'A' level and AS level System

Students should be aware that the 'A' level system in the UK was changed in 2000. As a result, all the awarding bodies, including Edexcel, introduced new Advanced Subsidiary (AS) as well as revised Advanced ('A') level syllabuses and examinations across the full subject range.

### The Advanced Subsidiary (AS) Level

Advanced Subsidiary (AS) courses may be used in one of two ways:

- As a final qualification, allowing candidates to broaden their studies and to defer questions about specialism;
- As the first half (50%) of an Advanced Level qualification, which must be completed before an Advanced Level award can be made.

Advanced Subsidiary is designed to provide an appropriate assessment of knowledge, understanding and skills expected of candidates who have completed the first half of a full Advanced Level Qualification.

### The Advanced Level (AS + A2)

The Advanced Level examination is in two parts:

Advanced Subsidiary (AS) - 50% of the total award;  
A second examination, called A2 - 50% of the total award

Most Advanced Subsidiary and Advanced level courses are modular. The AS level normally comprises three teaching and learning modules and the A2 comprises a further three teaching and learning modules. These modules generally match the Units of Assessment (or Exam Papers).

### Examination Flexibility

The new style 'A' levels allow for more flexibility in the taking of exams:

- Assessment units may be taken at stages throughout the course, at the end of each year or at the end of the total course;
- AS may be completed at the end of one year and A2 by the end of the second year;
- AS and A2 may be completed at the end of the same year.

All these options are open to students following this course as it is divided into two halves and follows the same modular sequence as the syllabus.

Each assessment unit may be re-sat once only. The better result will count towards the final award.

### Grading and Shelf-Life

The **grading system** has not changed much from the old 'A' level system. For both AS level and the full 'A' level qualification, there is a 5-grade scale: A, B, C, D and E. Candidates who fail to reach the minimum standard for Grade E will be recorded as U (unclassified).

The **shelf-life** of individual unit results, prior to the award of the qualification, is limited only by the shelf-life of the specification. As long as the syllabus stays in its present form, grades can therefore be carried forward indefinitely.

## Studying the Syllabus

You should be sure to acquire your own copy of the syllabus, either via the Edexcel Publications Dept or from the website [www.edexcel.org.uk](http://www.edexcel.org.uk).

The syllabus can be purchased from

Edexcel Foundation,  
Stewart House,  
32 Russell Square,  
London WC1B 5DN (tel: 020 7393 4444)(fax: 020 7393 4445)

or downloaded from the website.

We advise that you obtain a copy of the syllabus so that you can assess which topics you have covered in the most detail and which ones you will feel happiest about in the exam. As you approach the examination, it will also be helpful to purchase and tackle past papers from Edexcel.

## Aims of the Edexcel Specification

The specification aims to enable students to:

- acquire and effectively communicate knowledge and understanding of selected periods of history
- develop their understanding of historical terms and concepts
- explore the significance of events, individuals, issues and societies in history
- understand the nature of historical evidence and the methods used by historians in analysis and evaluation
- develop their understanding of how the past has been interpreted and represented
- develop their understanding of the nature of historical study; for example, that history is concerned with judgements based on available evidence and that historical judgements may be provisional
- develop their interest in and enthusiasm for history.

## Using the Internet

All students would benefit from access to the Internet. You will find a wealth of information on all the topics in your course. As well as the Edexcel website ([www.edexcel.org.uk](http://www.edexcel.org.uk)), you should get into the habit of checking the Oxford Open Learning site ([www.ool.co.uk](http://www.ool.co.uk)) where you may find news, additional resources and interactive features as time goes by. If you have not already done so, you may register for your free copy of *How to Study at Home*, our 200-page guide to home learning, or enrol on further courses. Put it on your Favourites list now!

## Should the Modules be Studied One at a Time?

That is up to the individual student. If this means submitting answers to TMAs out of sequence, this should be possible by negotiation with your tutor.

Many students will tackle Module Two before Module One and Module Five before Module Four. If you are taking all the exam papers at once, you may consider working on Module Five before Modules One and Three (remembering that you cannot take the exams in that order!). Or you may stick to the sequence of the syllabus and refer ahead occasionally to topics dealt with more fully later in the course, as seems appropriate.

But it is probably best to leave the sixth module until you have completed the other five. A thorough knowledge of the historical context is required before you can tackle the material in Module Six effectively and you will get that knowledge from the first five modules.

Your priority at first is to gain a general grasp of the subject and the period in question but, as time goes by, you will find it necessary to specialise more and more, so that you become an expert in the particular topics that you intend to tackle in the examination. But there is no short cut. If you try to specialise too early, it will be apparent to the examiners that you are not really able to place a question in its wider context.

## How to Use this Course

Many people, when they think of history, think of long dry books which they have to read word for word and lists of meaningless facts which they have to memorise. This course will take you away from that kind of studying and show you how to learn efficiently.

Learning efficiently — for the purposes of an 'A' level examination — means gathering in as little time as possible enough information and ideas to tackle the various exam papers — *and no more*. That is learning efficiently. If you want to daydream over your books or see every event from the point of view of Queen Victoria's coachman or write a brief treatise on plumbing in Victorian England — alongside your basic 'A' level work — that's fine. But this must be a choice you make, not an accident. What we don't want is for you to spend three months reading about Victorian plumbing thinking it's going to help you with every question on the exam paper when in fact it'll only give you a couple of sentences in one essay.

The key to learning efficiently is to be conscious of what you are doing. That's why it's hard, that's why it's fascinating and that's why meeting this challenge will help you with every other thing you try to do for the rest of your life.

Before you read a chapter of a text book you need to ask yourself, "What do I want to find out from this chapter?" The answer to this question might be quite specific, for example: "I want to list the main laws passed by parliament in this period." So you will read and note down the laws as you come to them. But it might be more general: "I want to know what the most important changes were in this period." In this case you will wait till you have read the whole chapter and then write down from memory the big changes.

But then you must also ask yourself: "Is this the quickest way to obtain the information I need?" Do you really need to read a text book or could you just use a datelist? Can you find a shorter chapter in another book that covers the same topic?!

This course helps you by giving you a broad introduction to a topic so that you have some understanding of what the issues are before you come to the more detailed material in your text book. The Activities in each lesson of the course give you questions to ask of your text book so that you note down the useful facts and skip the less useful parts — although the activities in a later lesson may require you to go back to that same bit of your text book to ask a new question. Following the activities will also help you to see where the text book isn't telling you enough and where you need to find another book to give you more information. Each lesson provides you with a list of back-up books.

You may find sometimes that none of it — course book, text book, supplementary book — makes any sense to you because there's something you simply don't understand. For example, you might read three authors writing about working class protest and none of them tell you why the working classes were unhappy in the first place or who the working classes were. Every student has basic questions like this that bother them and prevent them from understanding what they are reading. *Do not ignore these questions.* These are the most important ones. Following up on these questions, making sure you understand what's at the heart of the events — this is what makes a good historian. You are now conscious — aware of what you don't know and what you need to know.

To follow up on a question of your own you can try going back to an earlier chapter or reading the introduction to the whole book. Or try a different book — but just read for the answer to your particular question. Use contents pages, indexes, encyclopaedias, children's books — whatever it takes. If it's a single word that you don't understand, try the dictionary.

## Written Work

You will find that there are several tutor-marked assignments with each part of the course. Your answers should normally be submitted to your tutor for marking. When the marked script is returned, you should receive a "Suggested Answer". More on the Suggested Answers later.

Besides the tutor tests, there are a number of Activities and Practice Tests to be found at certain points in the course. Activities are usually located in mid-lesson and you will see that they are ruled off from the rest of the lesson. This is an indication that you should stop your reading at this point and attempt the activity, which may involve pondering on a problem or producing a set of notes on a particular topic. That topic may well be considered in the next part of the lesson so it is a way of getting you to think about and research the problem for yourself. Most activities are open-ended and there are no suggested answers provided.

Practice tests are generally located at the end of those lessons where there is no tutor-marked assignment. But they take the same form as the TMAs and you should attempt them with the same formality and seriousness before comparing your answers (usually in essay form) with the suggested answers given at the end of the module. Only after you have done what is asked to the best of your ability should you look at the Suggested Answers provided.

Probably the single most important thing about History 'A' level is that you should form your own judgments on what you study. It is no use regurgitating somebody else's opinion, even if you have found it in these lessons! It is difficult to argue a point well unless you have thought of it for yourself and believe in it. Have the courage to form your own opinions.

You can see that there is plenty of work to be done before you will be in a position to take the examination. See how many months are available to you and how much you have to manage in that time. Divide the time available into smaller segments and work out what ground you are going to cover and which assignments you will submit each month. It is only by sticking to a disciplined plan that you can hope to succeed.

## Reading

This course introduces you to the important issues and events of the periods you are studying. But the more you know already the easier it is to read any piece of historical writing. So we advise you to find the most basic, easy, readable introduction possible as preparation for this course. Browse around in libraries and pick up whatever appeals to you that touches vaguely on nineteenth century British (and European) history. Read bits of books that seem interesting - shocking or sad or funny, etc - whatever you personally like. Children's history books are a good starting point. At this stage it doesn't have to be relevant to the exam paper. You are getting a feel for the period.

Then start at Lesson One, assuming you have decided to follow the course through in the order of lessons (rather than, say, chronologically). We imagine that you will work through a lesson as it is laid out, reading the text and doing the activities in the order you find them.

Text book reading comes after OOL course reading. We suggest a variety of text books because it is often hard to get hold of a particular book. On some topics you may want to consult more than one text book. Text books are written for students so they have the right amount of detail and they cover core topics.

We also offer suggestions for supplementary reading. These books may be more detailed than your text book or more full of ideas and opinions; or they might be written by men and women of the time

and so are useful as evidence. These extra books are optional. You can use them if you feel your text books have not answered your questions or if you need a broader view on something or if you want to follow an interest. You may come back and use them when you are further on in the course. One easy way of acquiring accompanying textbooks is through the Oxford Open Learning website ([www.ool.co.uk](http://www.ool.co.uk)).

The most essential book is as follows:

Derrick Murphy, Richard Staton, *et al.*: *Britain: 1783-1918* ...Collins Educational (ISBN: 0-00-715078-4)

This is also called *Flagship Britain: 1783-1918*. After that, we recommend:

Norman Lowe: *Mastering Modern British History* ...Macmillan  
Wood: *Nineteenth-Century Britain, 1815-1914* ...Longman

Unfortunately, history texts tend to go out of print very quickly. If you can't get hold of these books in a library or book shop, don't panic. There are plenty of books containing roughly the same information. You will just have to use your own judgement in deciding which ones will be most useful to you.

You are allowed to disagree with anything you read. Perhaps the historian is wrong because he hasn't considered all aspects of the situation or because his facts have been proved false by a later historian. Perhaps what he says isn't based on facts at all. Perhaps it is a value judgement which you feel he shouldn't be making. Why are you right and he wrong? Give your reasons. In an exam you don't have to be right but you have to have reasons for what you think.

## A History Essay

You have been given a question. Your essay answers that question. It must provide an answer to the question. It must do absolutely nothing else.

Try writing essays in the following way:

Paragraph 1: my answer

Paragraphs 2,3,4 etc: Why my answer is right

Last Paragraph: So for this, this and this reason (2, 3, 4, etc.), this is my answer.

*For example:*

Question: To what extent did British imperial policy change in the period 1815 to 1880?
---

Paragraph 1: British foreign policy changed very little in the period 1815 to 1880. In every area of the world in which Britain had influence she sought to promote British trade without taking over governments.

Paragraph 2: In the Far East..(chief events 1815-1880 showing Britain anxious to support trade without taking over governments)

Paragraph 3: In Africa.....(similar to paragraph 2)

Paragraph 4: In South America.....("")

Paragraph 5: In Australia and Canada..("")

Paragraph 6: Britain's dealings with the European powers also demonstrate that she was not looking to build a political empire but merely to protect her trade.

Last Paragraph: So looking at Britain's behaviour in the Far East, in Africa, in South America, Australia, Canada and in Europe we can see that British imperial policy changed very little in the period 1815 to 1880. It was always to promote British trade without extending political control.

- N.B: (1) The wording of the question is repeated.  
(2) The question word 'to what extent' is answered with 'very little'.  
(3) The answer keeps strictly within the period of the question and uses material from the whole of that period.  
(4) The introduction defines British imperial policy before going on to see whether it changed in this period.

### Complications

You could make your essay more complicated by building in an exception to your general rule like this:

Paragraph 7: We do, however, see an exception to this with British behaviour in India.....

Or you might want to expand on your phrase 'very little' like this:

Paragraph 1: British foreign policy changed very little in the period 1815 to 1880. In every area of the world in which Britain had influence she sought to promote British trade without taking over governments. Towards the end of the period, however, we can notice a slight change in British policy: Britain becomes more willing to take control of governments of countries which could threaten her trade routes.

Paragraph 2: In the Far East..(chief events 1815-1880 showing Britain anxious to support trade without taking over governments but growing more willing to take over governments towards the end of the period)

Paragraph 3: In Africa.....(similar to paragraph 2)

Paragraph 4: In South America.....(")

Paragraph 5: In Australia and Canada..(")

Paragraph 6: In India.....(")

Paragraph 7: Britain's dealings with the European powers also demonstrate that she was not looking to build a political empire but merely to protect her trade. Towards the end of the period however

Last Paragraph: So looking at Britain's behaviour in the Far East, in Africa, in South America, Australia, Canada and in Europe we can see that British imperial policy changed very little in the period 1815 to 1880. It was always to promote British trade without extending political control. *Towards the end of the period, however, she becomes more willing to take control of governments that threatened her trade routes.*

## Tricky Questions

### Comparisons

How important is economic distress as a factor in working class protest in the period 1815 to 1850?

Paragraph 1: It is the most important factor because....But there were other factors — x, y, z

Paragraph 2: factor x

Paragraph 3: factor y

Paragraph 4: factor z

Paragraph 5: Nevertheless economic distress was the most important factor.....(Explain)

Paragraph 6: Various factors contributed to working class protest in the years 1815 to 1850..(list them). However, economic distress was the biggest single cause....(give the reason why you say that).

### Putting Both Sides of the Case

Who was the more successful politician, Gladstone or Disraeli?

Paragraph 1: In some ways Gladstone was the more successful politician (list the ways). But if you look at x, y, z Disraeli was more successful than Gladstone.

Paragraphs 2,3,4 (or more): the ways in which Gladstone was successful

Paragraphs 5,6, 7 (or more): the ways in which Disraeli was successful

Last Paragraph: If you look at these aspects (2, 3, 4 etc.), Gladstone was the more successful politician. If on the other hand you look at these aspects (5,6,7), Disraeli was the winner.

You don't have to give a balanced answer like this one. You could go through each aspect and show that Gladstone was the winner every time.

There's no magic to writing a history essay. You have to make up your mind what the answer is to the question. Then you have to give evidence to back up your answer. So you have to know some key facts and to have thought about them. This course will help you to do that.

## Evidence

What is evidence? Evidence shows something. If you see shoe prints in the snow the chances are that someone has walked there. The shoe prints are *evidence* that someone has walked there. If you go to the East End of London you will find a string of nineteenth century docks — Jamaica wharf, Tobacco wharf, Canary wharf. Their names indicate the different regions from which boats came. These docks are *evidence* that in the nineteenth century Britain traded on a grand scale all round the world.

The fact that factory workers always made political protests in times of low wages or high unemployment is *evidence* that economic needs influenced their thinking about political matters (such as having the vote). If you used the last sentence in an essay you would have to back it up with facts: "In the first half of the nineteenth century, factory workers always made political protests in times of low wages or high unemployment." What times? You have to go through the main instances of political protest from factory workers and say what the economic problem was at each time. Then you can say: "This is evidence that economic needs influenced their thinking about political matters."

It is not sufficient evidence, however. Because if factory workers were making protests at times of prosperity as well, then economic problems perhaps don't have much to do with it. So you would have to say: "On the other hand, they also protested in times of relative prosperity, for example...."

Every paragraph of your essay should begin with a clear statement. The rest of the sentences in that paragraph give *evidence* for the first statement. This sounds heavy going but it's not really. It'll come naturally to you because it's common sense.

## Spelling

The examiners report that, as a rule, those who cannot spell exhibit other signs of incompetence in writing. This suggests that many spelling errors could easily be eradicated by greater concentration on the word attempted. Allowances are made for occasional errors in general spelling, but there is little or no sympathy for the four following types of error:

- (a) Ignorance of basic grammatical usage like the confusion of 'there' and 'their', 'its' and 'it's', 'were' and 'where'.
- (b) Failure to think about the sound of a word, which leads to errors like 'dinning room' or 'opion' (for 'opinion').
- (c) Evidence that words which might be expected to be part of the vocabulary of an 'A' level student have been half-heard from speech, but not encountered visually in reading. This gives rise to erroneous associations like 'co-inside' (for 'coincide) or eye queue' (for 'I.Q.').
- (d) Failure to spell correctly the names of historical figures or words forming part of the examination question.

Examiners tersely remark that such errors are very frequent and count heavily against a candidate.

Copyright © Oxford Open Learning, 2003