

history (dictators and imperialists)

A Level

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Exam board: Pearson Edexcel



What is this subject about?

The course offers students an opportunity to compare fascist and communist dictators, including Hitler, Stalin and Mao, and investigate the changing fortunes of British Imperialism. By studying History you learn about influential people and events in the past that have shaped the world today in important ways.

What will I study over the two years?

In the first year the topic 'Russia, 1917–1991: from Lenin to Yeltsin' covers Lenin, Stalin and other communist leaders during the Cold War until the fall of Communism. You will also look in depth at 'Mao's China, 1949–1976', which includes Mao's victory in the civil war, consolidation of his power, the Great Leap Forward and the Cultural Revolution.

In the second year you study 'Britain: losing and gaining an empire, 1763–1914' which includes the American colonies and War of Independence, the abolition of slavery, the scramble for Africa, and Australia, Canada, India and Egypt up to World War One. For coursework you will research interpretations on the popularity of Hitler and Nazi Germany.

How is the course assessed?

Assessment is 80% by examination and 20% coursework. The coursework is written in the second year. The three exam papers consist of extended writing in the form of full essay responses, source analysis and historical interpretation.

What skills will I need and develop in this course?

A wide range of skills are developed during the study of history including processing and analysing information, evaluating evidence, research and investigation. You will learn to argue effectively and intelligently, while empathising with and understanding the context of the lives of people in the past. You also learn about how to find things out and how to evaluate and criticise arguments, interpretations and ideas.

What can the course lead to in terms of higher education and future careers?

History is excellent preparation for a large variety of degree courses, including History, Law, English, and Politics. A very wide range of career options are open to history students including Journalism and the Media, Publishing, the Civil Service, Local Government, Education, Business (manufacturing, retailing and other services), the Armed Forces and many other opportunities. Studying History broadens the mind and gives you valuable research, communication and analytical skills which employers and universities really value.

What are the formal entry requirements for this course?

Aside from the general entry criteria that the College requires, you will also need to achieve a minimum of:

- Grade 4 in GCSE English Language
- Grade 4 in GCSE History

You may still be accepted if you did not study History for GCSE provided you can show evidence of good academic achievement in other subjects.

What extra support/enrichment activities are on offer?

The department run a 'Past Paper Club' offering additional support on essay writing and historical interpretation. Through 'History Extra' teachers give talks on relevant topics and bespoke skills clinics are run offering guidance on specific criteria. The department also run peer support groups and a range of external speakers are organised each year.

The department offers a residential trip to Germany and there are opportunities for workshops and London museum visits.

Subject combination advice:

History is a firm foundation for many academic courses and career choices, highly valued by universities and employers for its strong academic base and the communication and analytical skills it develops. It works well with most subjects, with no prohibited combinations. It combines particularly well with Sociology, Politics, Economics, Classics, Philosophy, English, Modern Languages and Psychology.