

history (power and belief)

A Level

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Exam board: Pearson Edexcel



What is this subject about?

The course offers students an opportunity to compare the Tudor monarchs, from King Henry VIII to Queen Elizabeth I, as well as investigate the significance of Martin Luther in the German Reformation, which divided Europe and resulted in thirty years of war and the craze for witch hunts. 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 you will study the increase in power of Henry VIII and the actions to maintain control through the reigns of Edward VI, Mary I and Elizabeth I in the face of changes in society and significant Tudor rebellions. You will also look in depth at the struggles of the Emperor Charles V to stamp out the threat of Lutheranism that divided Germany, whilst dealing with the fear of invasion by the Ottoman Turks. You will investigate the economic, political and social impact of religious changes in England and Europe.

In the second year you will study the witch craze in Britain, Europe and North America, c.1580–c.1750, considering the reasons for belief in witches and the nature of witchcraft accusations as well as the growth of scepticism due to scientific discoveries and frauds that caused people to question long held fears. For coursework you will research different interpretations of Oliver Cromwell, who ruled as Lord Protector from 1653 to 1658 after the execution of King Charles I.

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.

There are opportunities for workshops at Hampton Court and London conference and 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.