

teacher's handbook

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GCSE History B

J417 – Full Course J117 – Short Course

This handbook is designed to accompany the OCR GCSE History B specification for teaching from September 2009. This booklet contains the following support materials:

- Subject specific guidance
- Resource list
- Publisher partner resources
- Frequently asked questions
- Other forms of support.

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Introduction

OCR is offering new GCSEs for first teaching in September 2009.

We have taken this opportunity to improve the quality of our GCSEs for teachers and students alike.

We have made improvements in three key areas: updated and relevant content, a focus on developing students' personal, learning and thinking skills, and flexible assessment, so you can choose the best learning approach for the job.

We want to make the introduction of these new GCSEs as easy for you to manage as possible.

The main changes are:

- Controlled assessment will be introduced for most subjects
- The opportunity will be taken to bring course content up to date
- Examinations should provide opportunity for extended writing and more varied question types
- All GCSEs will meet the requirements of the Disability Discrimination Act.

Our approach is to provide consistency across all our GCSEs by offering the flexibility that unitised qualifications bring, allowing teaching and assessment to be either a linear or unitised fashion.

OCR offers a range of support materials, developed following extensive research and consultation with teachers. We've designed them to save you time when preparing for the new specification and to support you while teaching them.

It is important to make the point that this Teacher Handbook plays a secondary role to the specifications themselves. The GCSE History B specification is the document on which assessment is based: it specifies what content and skills need to be covered. At all times therefore, the Teacher Handbook should be read in conjunction with the Specification. If clarification on a particular point is sought, then that clarification must be found in the Specification itself.

Subject specific guidance

Unit A971: Aspects of International Relations, 1919–2005 and the chosen Depth Study

The purpose of this unit is to enable students to engage in meaningful and relevant developments, events and individuals of the twentieth century that have contributed to the world in which they live. It involves the study of the past in two different scales: international, through the study of aspects of international relations and national, by offering the opportunity to study in depth a significant time period from the history of one country.

The Content

Students have to study Aspects of International Relations and a Study in Depth.

The study relating to Aspects of International Relations, 1919-2005 is **one** study chosen from:

- The Inter-War Years, 1919-1939
- The Cold War, 1945-1975
- A New World? 1948-2005

The Study in Depth is **one** study chosen from the following:

Germany, 1918-1945
Russia, 1905-1941
The USA, 1919-1941
Mao's China, c.1930-1976
Causes and Events of the First World War, 1890-1918
End of Empire, 1919-1969
The USA, 1945-1975: Land of Freedom?

Assessment

Assessment is by one written paper lasting 2 hours. This paper is worth 45% of the total marks for GCSE History. The paper will be marked out of 75 marks. Candidates answer four questions. It can be taken by students in January and June. Candidates may re-sit the unit once prior to certification.

The question paper is divided into two parts.

Part 1: Aspects of International Relations, 1919-2005

This is divided into three sections and candidates answer the section for which they have been prepared.

Candidates must answer one compulsory question. This question has two parts, the first part being based on an historical source. The total mark for the question is 15.

Candidates must also answer one structured question from a choice of two. Each question is structured into three parts and carries a total of 20 marks.

Part 2: Study in Depth

Candidates must answer one compulsory sourced based question. This question is structured into three parts and carries a total of 20 marks.

Candidates must also answer one structured question from a choice of two. Each question is structured into three parts and carries a total of 20 marks.

Teaching the course

The specified content is defined through a series of Key Questions, Focus Points and specified content.

The Key Questions define the over-arching issue of that part of the specification content. The Focus Points identify the issues that need to be addressed if candidates are to gain an understanding of the topic. This approach encourages an issues-based and investigative approach to the delivery of the content. Candidates should have the course introduced and delivered to them through these Key Questions and Focus Points rather than through the coverage of a block of content. In addressing the Key Questions and Focus Points, teachers are expected to prepare candidates using different interpretations from a variety of perspectives which will enable candidates to form their own opinions and conclusions. All the questions in the examination paper will be related to the Key Questions and Focus Points and will demand a sound understanding of the issues, rather than just a regurgitation of the specified content.

There are a number of possible routes through the specification and, in planning an approach, the demands of controlled assessment and Unit A972 should be considered.

The traditional approach, which covers the first half of the twentieth century with international relations during the inter-war years linked with a Study in Depth such as Germany or the USA, is available. Those wishing to develop other permutations such as coverage of more recent history may link A New World with 'The USA: Land of Freedom.

Modern World History does not have a set text to follow. There are number of quality textbooks readily available from major publishing companies. In addition, there are many web-based sites which offer historical sources together with sound and moving images. The value of a digital projector in the classroom cannot be underestimated. There are also examples of film and documentary approaches to historical events which can offer aspects of topics for classroom discussion. Using a variety of materials and approaches will aid candidates in developing a greater understanding of a period of history and an awareness of the value of sources in constructing, or challenging, that picture of the past. The confidence to handle such material will assist them with a feel for the period. Students should understand that historical evidence offers much more than just information.

In addition, it is important that students develop the ability to offer explanations and to be aware of the difference between identification and explanation. More able students will always have the ability to understand how to reach a judgement rather than a summary.

It is crucial that students are helped to develop a bird's eye view of what is a story of a particular time period. One of the most common weaknesses in examination answers is a poor grasp of chronology. Opportunities should be taken to consider an overview of the full picture when introducing a new aspect or period and this should continually be reinforced. It may be helpful if a time-line is developed into a chart as the period of the League of Nations, for example, runs partly alongside the Key Question dealing with the collapse of international peace.

It is important to allow students access to a wide range of different types of sources during the teaching. Students are often less confident with source skills than with knowledge and understanding. Source skills take time to develop. Sources can be vivid, fascinating and sometimes amusing, and can provide students with a real feel for the period. They should not be

bolted-on to learning to provide a few examination type source questions. They should be integral to the study of the topic and can be used to deliver part of the content especially in relation to people's feelings, motives, attitudes and opinions in the past. Sources can readily contribute to many classroom activities including sequencing, sorting and evaluating message and purpose.

Adding detail: International Relations

Each individual section of the core offers different challenges in planning and delivery. The teaching of international relations is perhaps not as straightforward as it may appear. Students are part of a twentyfirst century with very different values and attitudes to those which existed at, say, the end of the First World War. A feel for the time period of the events they are studying is essential. An awareness of the climate in which the Peace Treaties of 1919-23 were agreed, or the tension created by the Cold War, will enhance understanding.

The Inter-War Years

The Key Question relating to the peace treaties considers the immediacy of motives, aims, conflict, justification and impact at a time of great turmoil and recrimination. Students tend to be well versed in the Treaty of Versailles but limited in their awareness of the other peace treaties.

Studying the impact of the League of Nations requires an understanding of why the operation of the League was ill thought out and thus in difficulties from the start. Students should understand why the League had success in the 1920s but failed in the different climate of the 1930s. Awareness of the value of the League to its main members will contribute to a fuller understanding.

Students may find the study of the collapse of international peace revolves around individual motives and attitudes and internal politics. This Key Question could well be approached through personalities.

The Cold War

Students again may find it advantageous to consider this period through personalities involved and conflicting ideologies. The final two Key Questions offer an opportunity for case studies. Here students may, in relation to Cuba, follow the personality / ideology route. This is a particularly useful study in which to consider choices / decisions and impact. The Vietnam case study allows for the exploration of the idea of commitment, together with dilemmas faced in pursuit of ideology.

A New World?

Students should become familiar with the concept of 'control' in relation to Eastern Europe, and consider how the USSR exercised its control and how changes reduced the effectiveness of that control. Key Question 8 is slightly different in its demands. Students should be encouraged to explore and debate issues surrounding the theme of 'terrorist or freedom fighter'. The different Focus Points can be exemplified by using the IRA, PLO and Al-Qaeda. The Focus Points set the parameters so that this Key Question does not become a detailed study of the history of the three groups. The final Key Question returns to the more familiar approach looking at international and national politics, the role of state leaders and the changing nature of life for the Iraqi people.

Adding detail: the Study in Depth

The Study in Depth provides students with a contrast to the developmental aspect of international relations by looking at a significant period of history of one country. The core content follows a single theme whilst the Study in Depth is designed to enable students to develop and enrich their understanding of people and problems in the past through the study of political, social, economic, cultural and religious aspects of a country over a relatively short period of time.

Germany, 1918-1945

This study focuses on the establishment of the Weimar Republic and the problems it faced politically, economically and culturally. The rise to, and consolidation of, power by Hitler and the Nazis. The effectiveness of Nazi control and consideration of the experience of living in Nazi Germany.

Russia, 1905-1941

This study focuses on the reasons for the collapse of the Tsarist regime in 1917, the failure of the Provisional Government, the rise of the Bolsheviks and the impact of Stalin's dictatorship.

The USA, 1919-1941

This study focuses on the economic and social impact of the boom years of the 1920s, together with issues of racial intolerance within a changing society. The causes and consequences of the Wall Street Crash and the resulting New Deal complete the study.

Mao's China, c.1930-1976

This study focuses on the establishment of a Communist state, Mao's impact, economically, socially and culturally together with the impact of the changing nature of China's links with near neighbours and the wider world.

Causes and Events of the First World War, 1890-1918

This study focuses on the increasing tension between the world powers in the early years of the twentieth century and the more immediate causes of the First World War. The significance of the Western Front and other fronts together with the war at sea contribute towards an understanding of why the war ended.

End of Empire, c.1919-1969

This study focuses on the increasing demands for independence in the twentieth century. The unit uses case studies of India and Kenya to exemplify the Focus Points.

The USA, 1945-1975: Land of Freedom?

This study focuses on the fear of Communism during this period together with how individuals and groups contributed to the struggle to improve the rights of American citizens.

The Examination Paper Structure

Part 1 – Aspects of International Relations

It is recommended that candidates spend about 50 minutes answering this part of the paper. There are three sections to Aspects of International Relations. Candidates select the section for which they have been prepared. Within the chosen section there will be one question on each of the Key Questions in the specification.

Candidates have to answer two questions, one of which is compulsory. The compulsory question comprises two parts.

Question 1 part (a) relates to a source and is worth 7 marks. Here candidates are required to use their knowledge of a topic to interpret the source, usually a cartoon.

Question 1 part (b) will be related to explanation / causation. There are 8 marks available for this question. The answer should focus directly on the question and not on the wider events of the period. Better answers tend to use paragraphs each containing one explanation of 'why'. Candidates are not expected to prioritise reasons.

Candidates then answer either Question 2 or Question 3 on their chosen section. These questions both follow the same structure and target the same assessment objectives. There are three parts to the question. Part (a), worth 4 marks, requires recall and selection of knowledge. Although preferable, it is not necessary to respond in sentences. Part (b) requires explanation of reasons, not just listing, and is very similar to the demands of 1(b) although in this instance with a maximum mark of 6. Care should be taken to avoid unnecessarily lengthy answers. Part (c) increases the demand on the candidate who is expected not only to produce explanation but in doing so both support and challenge a hypothesis posed in the question.

Part 2 – The Study in Depth

The specification offers seven Studies in Depth and candidates should be prepared for one of these. On the day of the examination the candidate will receive only the Study in Depth for which they have been prepared (and entered). It is recommended that 70 minutes be spent answering the questions in this part of the question paper. The question pattern for each of the seven Studies in Depth is the same. Each of the Studies in Depth has four Key Questions. Each year the questions set will be based on three of the Key Questions. Candidates have to answer two questions, one of which is compulsory and a choice of one from two structured questions.

The compulsory question comprises three parts, with each part based on one piece of source material. The compulsory question will test the ability to interpret, evaluate and make inferences from sources in context. Each part of the question will require the use of a source and the use of contextual knowledge. There will be at least one visual source. The total mark for this question is 20, sub-divided into marks of 7, 7 and 6, although not necessarily in this order. The style of question used will vary from examination to examination and does not follow a predictable pattern.

Questions styles used in the past include;

- What is the message of this source?
- How useful is this source as evidence of...?
- Why was this source published in....?
- Are you surprised by this source?
- Does this source prove that...?
- How far does this source explain...?

This is not an exhaustive list and the question styles will vary from examination to examination. Candidates need to have the confidence to display mental agility with sources so they are able to answer the questions as set.

Answering the Questions

Sourced- based questions

Candidates have to answer these in both Part 1 and Part 2.

A range of different types of sources will be used: written (e.g. extracts from letters, dairies, reports, newspapers, legislation, and secondary sources); images: (e.g. posters, advertisements, cartoons, paintings and engravings).

All the source-based questions have one very important thing in common - answers to all of them will require both an interpretation of the source and knowledge of the historical context. Both source and context should be used in all answers.

The skills demanded include the ability to:

- use contextual knowledge and understanding to inform a use of a source
- interpret sources
- infer from sources
- extrapolate from sources
- evaluate sources.

It is important that students are encouraged to read sources as a whole. The important message of many sources, especially cartoons, is usually greater than the individual details in the source. For example, cartoons can be full of detail and have many sub-messages, but they will normally also have one big point, one big message, that the cartoonist wants to put across. The same is often true of written sources. Students should try and ask themselves 'what is the big point that this source is making?'

Examination of a number of past papers will indicate the range of different types of questions used but most can be fitted into one of the following broad categories.

Interpreting the message of a source

Example: ' Study Source A. What is the message of this cartoon? Use the source and your knowledge to explain your answer'.

Make sure of getting straight to the main or 'big message' of the cartoon. Many cartoons are very busy, they have a lot of detail in them and they have a lot going on. Try not to be distracted by one detail in the cartoon, and never base your answer on just one detail. You need to try and use everything in the cartoon together to work out the 'big point' of the cartoonist. Why has he gone to

this trouble to draw this cartoon? What is the point he wants to make? Explain the message using the cartoon and your knowledge. Candidates are encouraged not to waste time describing the cartoon in detail and to only mention details which support the main message. Candidates may find the cartoon attribution useful in this process. To support their interpretation of the main message they should use relevant detail from the cartoon and use their knowledge to put the cartoon into its historical context. The historical knowledge used to support the message of the cartoon should relate specifically to the period / events related to the cartoon. They should not be generalities about a wider period of time. Candidates may find it useful to start their answer, 'The message of this cartoon is...' and then write a second and third paragraph to support the message from the cartoon and then from contextual knowledge. Contextual knowledge should not be the first part of an answer.

Evaluating sources for their usefulness

Example: 'Study Source C. How useful is this source as evidence of Stalin's use of terror? Use the source and your knowledge to explain your answer.'

First, see what can be inferred from the source. It will provide some facts. Own knowledge can also be used to answer the 'how useful?' part of the question. In the example are there other important things about Stalin's use of terror that you know but the source does not tell you about? If there are, they can be used to show how the source is limited in its usefulness. These should be explained. Never make general claims, for example, you can never learn much from one source, or more sources are needed.

Evaluating sources for reliability

Example: 'Study Source B. Does this source prove that the New Deal was successful? Use the source and your knowledge to explain your answer.'

Questions like this are never straightforward. It may appear that there is something obvious in the source that suggests that it does prove that the New Deal was successful. However, check if other evidence in the source suggests the opposite. You also need to ask whether the source can be trusted: who wrote it, were they biased, would they know, does your knowledge tell you that the claims in the source are wrong? Not all these approaches can be used with every reliability question; it depends on the source and its provenance. But some of them will work. Never evaluate a source just by its type, for example, 'I do not trust it because it is secondary', or 'I do not trust it because it is from a newspaper.' Remember, reliability questions can come in different forms. Each requires a slightly different type of answer. This question is asking whether the source proves that something is successful - you must answer this question.

'Are you surprised?' questions

Example: 'Are you surprised by this source? Use the source and your knowledge to explain your answer.'

These questions are really about the historical context - work out what the source says, and then think 'am I surprised that this is being said?' or 'am I surprised that a particular person/organisation is saying that then?' Make sure you use the source and your knowledge in your answer.

One final point

Try and encourage candidates to answer source questions in the first sentence of their answers.

- This means that they have to think carefully about the questions and answer first, rather than start without a clue what their answer is going to be and so resort to describing the source and perhaps gradually working round to a nod towards the question near the end of the answer.
- It also means that having focused on the question in the opening sentence, there is a strong chance that the rest of the answer will be focused in the same way. The rest of the answer should use the source and knowledge of the context to support the opening sentence.

The structured essay questions

Candidates have to answer these in both Part 1 (Aspects of International Relations) and Part 2 (Study in Depth).

Some aspects of these questions never change:

- they are divided into three parts (a), (b) and (c)
- all three parts will be connected, e.g. they will be on a similar topic or theme or idea
- part (a) carries 4 marks, part (b) 6 marks, part (c) 10 marks
- part (a) tests recall and selection
- part (b) tests the ability to write an explanation
- part (c) tests the ability to explain and support a judgement.

Part (a) questions

These questions are always worth 4 marks and test recall and selection. The questions will use key words such as 'Describe' or 'State' or 'What'. Candidates are expected to do no more than provide relevant and correct knowledge. Candidates often know more than they need for this question and sometimes have problems in selecting what is relevant. An example of this is if asked 'How was Germany affected militarily by the Treaty of Versailles?' they put detail in about wider aspects of the Treaty. Many candidates waste time on part (a) questions by writing too much, by writing about things that are irrelevant, or by writing explanations or analyses that are not required. Selection is a key skill in part (a) and students need practice to develop their ability to select what is relevant and to leave out what is not. It is important to build candidates' confidence to leave out things that they know but which are not relevant to the question.

One mark is awarded for each relevant point. If a point is developed, for example, described in more detail, then a total of 2 marks can be awarded for that point. Candidates, and these are often the better candidates, do sometimes struggle to keep their answers to a reasonable length. These candidates can be helped by being told to write down five points or a couple of developed points, and then move on to part (b). Answers to part (a), if totally relevant, can score full marks within three or four lines. More than a few candidates write well over half a page.

Examples of part (a) questions

What military restrictions did the Treaty of Versailles impose on Germany?

What was decided at the Yalta Conference of February 1945?

What was the Warsaw Pact?

Describe the main events of the Munich Putsch.

Part (b) questions

These questions always ask candidates to write an explanation and are worth 6 marks. Many are causation or motivation questions but they do not have to be, e.g. they might ask candidates to explain the nature of something. The questions nearly always begin with the word 'Explain'. Four important points should be remembered:

(i) candidates need to answer the question. Selection is a key skill. More candidates do poorly because they have written detailed but irrelevant answers, than do badly because they do not know enough. Teaching and learning should include regular exercises that develop students' abilities to select what is relevant and to leave out anything that is not. The importance of the skill of selection cannot be emphasised enough. Improvement in this area is the most important way in which candidate performance could be improved.

(ii) candidates need to base their answers on precise factual examples. Some answers that examiners see appear to answer the question, make sense and contain some interesting points. Unfortunately, they are completely general, i.e. they lack content examples.

(iii) candidates need to write an explanation rather than a description or a narrative. It is important that candidates understand the difference between explanation on the one hand, and description and narrative on the other. Time should be spent in class on developing an understanding of the difference. A number of students assume that if they describe what happened, they are explaining why it happened. Many of the (b) questions will be causation questions and these require candidates to explain how a cause actually contributed to the outcome. Candidates are more likely to do this successfully if they do this from the beginning of their answer. Many candidates start their answers with general description and as a result struggle to move on to explanation later in the answer. Some candidates identify causal factors but then resort to describing them, rather than explaining how they acted as causal factors.

(iv) candidates do not need to write about the relative importance of the causal factors or motives nor do they need to show how they interact with each other. They just have to explain some causes or motives. It is possible to score full marks by explaining two causes or motives, but to be on the safe side candidates should try and explain three as they are more likely to achieve full marks.

Examples of part (b) questions

Explain why Germany and the USSR signed the Nazi Soviet Pact in 1939.

Explain how the structure of the League of Nations made it weak.

Explain why Mao introduced the first Five-Year Plan in 1953.

Explain why Hitler turned on Rohm and the SA in the Night of the Long Knives.

Part (c) questions

These questions are always worth 10 marks. They will require candidates to either compare the relative importance of several causes or motives, or more often, reach and support a judgement.

The best answers to these questions often answer the question in the first sentence and then spend the rest of the answer explaining and supporting. This can only be done if the candidate first thinks about the question, and draws up a rough plan. This nearly always leads to a good answer that is focused on the question. This approach also avoids the mistake that some candidates make which is to drift into description or narrative and never get to grips with the question.

When candidates are asked to compare the relative importance of several causes or motives they should first tell the examiner which one they think is more important (or they could argue that they are all equally important). They should then explain the importance of each factor. If the candidate has made up his or her mind which is more important then it is best to start with that one. When the candidate moves on to the second factor, he or she should try to compare its importance with that of the first one. This needs to be done through argument, not assertion. It should involve more than simply repeating what has already been said about the one chosen as more important. This can then be repeated with other factors. If candidates find this difficult, then they should be advised to explain the importance of each factor and then compare their importance in a conclusion. This needs to be substantial and should do more than assert. It should explain and argue why one factor is more important than both the others. Candidates should be reassured that there is no one 'correct' answer to these questions. Examiners want to see candidates developing their own answers and any answer that is valid will be rewarded.

Both sides of the argument need to be present to access the higher levels of the mark scheme. The highest level demands an evaluation of relative importance. The best answers will, where appropriate, develop links between factors to reach their own judgement. If the judgement is made at the end of the answer it needs to be argued and supported. It should not be a repetition of aspects of earlier parts of the answer. Candidates might find it beneficial to think in terms of a three part answer, in addition to any brief introduction.

Examples of part (c) questions

'By 1929 the Weimar Republic had overcome its problems.' How far do you agree with this view? Explain your answer.

Who was more to blame for starting the Cold War, the USA or the USSR? Explain your answer.

To what extent was the League of Nations a success in its peacekeeping role? Explain your answer.

'The most important reason for the failure of the Great Leap Forward was the loss of Soviet technicians.' How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer.

Revision

When marking examination scripts examiners often come across candidates who appear to have been taught the Study in Depth in enormous detail but who have misunderstood the basics. Revision should focus on helping students be clear about the basics, for example, what were the main groups, what were their main characteristics, how did they react to change? Charts, diagrams and time-lines can be very helpful in establishing a clear understanding of the main points. Revision that loses sight of the 'wood for the trees' will simply make a student's task harder. Revision should also focus on helping students to use what they know effectively in response to examination questions.

Key Terms and Common Misunderstandings

There are some key terms that are basic to the course. These terms are fundamental to good understanding of the course content and examination questions. They need to be introduced, revisited and reinforced in a variety of different contexts.

- Social, economic, political, foreign (as in policy as opposed to domestic), culture
- (Great) Depression (often interchangeable with Wall Street Crash)
- Cold War
- Communism, capitalism
- Terrorism
- Republic, constitution, government, parliament
- Dictator
- Intolerance, repression

Common misunderstandings include the following:

- Hitler being part of the Treaty of Versailles delegation.
- With regard to the Treaty of Versailles, 'fair' and 'just' mean the same.
- That Germany lost the Rhineland in the Treaty.
- The reasons for the signing of the Nazi-Soviet Pact.
- Berlin blockade with Berlin Wall.
- The Ruhr with the Rhineland.
- Events relating to the two revolutions in Russia.

Unit A972: British Depth Study

The purpose of this unit is to enable students to focus on an important, formative and interesting period of British history. The unit allows students to appreciate the diversity of British society during the period studied and some of the major factors and developments that have shaped British society. The unit also focuses on developing the students' critical use of historical sources.

The Content

Students have to study **one** from two British Depth Studies. These are:

- How was British society changed, 1890-1918? This consists of three strands: social reform, the struggle for the vote for women, and the Home Front during the First World War.

And

- How far did British society change between 1939 and 1975? This consists of three strands: immigration into Britain and experiences of the immigrants, the changing lives of women, and the changing lives of young people.

Assessment

Assessment is through one written examination paper of 1 hour 30 minutes in length. The paper is marked out of 50 marks. It can be taken in January or June.

This paper will involve the detailed investigation of an historical issue taken from the chosen British Depth Study. This issue will be investigated through a range of source material. There will be no fewer than five and no more than seven questions. All the questions are compulsory.

Teaching the course: The Content

It is important to remember that knowledge has an important, but secondary, role in this unit. Knowledge should be used to help the students interpret, evaluate and use the sources more effectively. The students do need to be taught the content of the British Depth Study but they only need to know the main developments, events, individuals and issues. Unlike the demands made on knowledge in some of the questions in Unit A971, in the Source Investigation paper one particular piece of knowledge is rarely required. If knowledge of context is being used to analyse a source, different candidates will legitimately be able to use different examples of contextual knowledge depending on what they have covered and what they can remember. This takes the pressure off the student and the teacher in terms of 'having to cover everything.'

The content is organised in the specification under an overarching key question and a series of focus points. The students should be aware of the key question and be working towards developing their own response to it as study of the British Depth Study continues.

The content should be introduced to students through the focus points. These focus points raise issues to be debated. Use of the focus points helps to engage the students with the content in an issue-led way - they are studying the content to develop responses to the focus points. This will lead to more interesting and challenging lessons, and will help the students to develop skills that will be valuable across the whole course.

The content is best addressed and organised through the three strands or themes as shown below. However, it is important that the themes are not taught in isolation from one another. There are natural links between them (e.g. women's work on the Home Front and the granting of the vote in 1918), and these should be explored. An effort should also be made to help students understand that the developments in the themes were happening alongside each other at the same time and within the same society. For example, British society could be studied across all themes at a particular date.

British Depth Study, 1890-1918

Theme 1: social reform

Focus Points

- What were working and living conditions like for the poor in the 1890s?
(Content: poverty and distress in the 1890s)
- How were social reformers reacting to the social problems of the 1890s?
(Content: the work and impact of Booth and Rowntree)
- Why did the Liberal government introduce reforms to help the young, old and unemployed?
(content: reasons for the Liberal victory in 1906, factors for reform, e.g. the work of social reformers in the 90s, the extent of poverty and growing awareness of it, New Liberalism and the roles of Lloyd George and Churchill, the threat from the Labour Party)
- How effective were these reforms?
(Content: the reforms, e.g. the Children's Charter, medical inspections in schools, free medical treatment and free school meals for the poor, juvenile courts and borstals, old age pensions, Labour exchanges, the National Insurance Act, reform of the Poor Law)

Theme 2: the struggle for the vote for women

Focus Points

- What was the social, political and legal position of women in the 1890s?
(Content: an overall introductory survey of the position of women in the 1890s)
- What were the arguments for and against female suffrage?
(Content: the main arguments for and against female suffrage and the groups that held these different views, e.g. Millicent Fawcett and the NUWSS, the Pankhursts and the WSPU)
- How effective were the activities of the suffragists and the suffragettes?
(Content: the tactics and activities of the two groups and reactions to them including the police, the government and Parliament, the press and the public. The attempts to get a bill through Parliament. The situation in 1914 and the issue of the vote through the war)
- Why were some women given the vote in 1918?
(Content: the 1918 Representation of the People Act and the factors leading to it including the importance of the work women did in the war)

Theme 3: the Home Front

Focus Points

- How did women contribute to the war effort?
(Content: the contribution of women towards the war effort, including employment)
- How were civilians affected by the war?
(Content: recruiting in the early years of the war, new government powers: the Defence of the Realm Act, conscription, rationing and their impact on the lives of people)
- How effective was government propaganda during the war?
(Content: the different uses of propaganda by the government and its effectiveness)
- What was the attitude of the British people at the end of the war towards Germany and the Paris Peace Conference?
(Content: the mood of the British people at the end of the war and the different attitudes about what should happen to Germany)

British Depth Study, 1939-1975

Introduction: the British people during the Second World War

- What impact did the Second World War have on the British people?
(Content: Britain as a multi-cultural society in 1939, the experiences and impact of groups such as Italian and German prisoners of war, GIs and commonwealth soldiers. The changing role and the contribution of women during the Second World War, the experiences of children during the war, the Blitz, evacuation, rationing, diet, children's health and education, the absence of fathers)

Theme 1: immigration into Britain and experiences of the immigrants

Focus Points

- What immigrants were living in Britain in 1945?
(Content: survey of immigrant population in Britain in 1945)
- Why did different groups migrate to Britain between 1948 and 1972?
(Content: Immigration from the Caribbean, India, Pakistan and Uganda. Different reasons for immigrating)
- What were the experiences of immigrants in Britain?
(Content: The experiences of different groups and attitudes towards them. The riots in 1958 and the activities of the British National Party. Legislation relating to immigration and race in the 1960s and early 1970s. Enoch Powell in 1968)
- What contribution had immigrants made to British society by the early 1970s?
(Content: The contribution of immigrants to different areas of British life and society. The emergence of a multi-cultural society by the mid 1970s)

Theme 2: the changing lives of women

Focus Points

- What was life like for most women in the 1950s?
(Content: the impact of the changes during the war on women in the 1950s, the nature of the lives of most women in the 1950s - family and work)
- What was the impact of the National Health Service on people's lives?
(Content: the impact of the National Health Service on the lives of women)
- How were women discriminated against in the 1960s and the early 1970s?
(Content: the nature, range and extent of discrimination against women)
- What factors led to changes in the roles of women?
(Content: the impact of the pill, the 'women's lib' movement. The issue of abortion. The 1969 Divorce Law Reform Act, the 1975 Sex Discrimination Act)
- How much change had taken place for women by 1975?
(Content: the extent by which women's lives had changed by 1975)

Theme 3: the changing lives of young people

Focus Points

- What was it like growing up in the 1950s?
(Content: the lives of teenagers in the 1950s, continuation of wartime restrictions and austerity, the beginning of changes)
- What was the impact of the National Health Service on people's lives?
(Content: the impact of the National Health Service on the lives of children)
- Why were there changes in the lives of teenagers in the 1960s?
(Content: the impact of increased affluence, the impact of American culture on young people)
- How did teenagers and students behave in the 1960s and early 1970s?
(Content: student protest, the development of a youth culture, for example, Mods and Rockers, the growing popularity of rock music, clothes and fashion. Teenagers as consumers. The reactions of the authorities to these changes.)
- How far did the lives of all teenagers change in the 1960s and early 1970s?
(Content: the extent of the changes - did they affect most teenagers, or just a few?)

Teaching the course: The Skills

There is no need to teach narrowly to the examination. Developing source skills does not necessarily involve endless coaching based on past examination questions. Indeed, this can be counter-productive as candidates can struggle when faced with sources they have not met before and with questions slightly different from the ones they have been prepared for. It is more useful to develop source skills in a broader sense, make students confident in using sources, encourage them to take risks with the interpretation of sources. Done well, it can be great fun. Done badly, it can turn into drudgery for students.

The approach advocated above will lead to a wide range of different types of activities involving, e.g. group work, work in pairs, classifying sources on cards, student presentations of their analysis of sources to the rest of the class, devising their own cartoons, posters, choosing a number of sources that best represent an age or a topic, choosing sources and using them for a political campaign. This work will gradually foster a genuine understanding of issues relating to historical sources. Students can be introduced to the demands of different types of examination questions during revision.

Students need to be introduced to the full range of different types of sources, e.g. pictorial - advertisements, cartoons, photographs, posters; written - diaries, extracts from history books, government documents, newspapers, private letters, reports, speeches; graphs and diagrams. While there are issues that can be discussed about the issues raised by particular types of sources, students should not be encouraged to learn generic statements to use about types of sources, e.g. newspapers cannot be trusted. Such statements never lead to good marks in the examination. Instead, students should be encouraged to analyse each source on its own unique qualities.

It is important to plan the use of sources and the development of students' source skills into the teaching of the whole course. Using historical sources should not be limited to lessons on the British Depth Study but should be a regular aspect of all parts of the course. Source skills are assessed in both of the other full course units. It takes time for students to master these skills and they need regular experience of such work. It can be too easily assumed that students have mastered these skills. However, when they have to apply them to a new set of sources they will often appear to go backwards. Different sources often raise different issues and challenges for students. This is why it is important for them to use a wide range of different sources.

Students need to be given opportunities to:

Use their contextual knowledge to help them analyse sources: contextual knowledge should be used to help the student interpret a source. The student's knowledge and understanding of the context will help them work out, e.g. a source's intended message. Contextual knowledge can also be used to evaluate sources. Students should make sure that they explicitly refer to precise knowledge (instead of vague statements) in their answers, and use it to explain their answer to the question. They should never include knowledge in an answer for its own sake. The knowledge must always add to the answer.

Use sources to support their answers: students need to get used to explicitly referring to features of a source to support their answers. Vague references will not be enough. The questions will be about the sources, therefore the answers need to be focused on the sources.

Make inferences from sources: can they go beyond surface comprehension of sources to interpret them, can they infer the message of sources, can they infer the purpose of sources, can they infer the intended audience, can they infer the likely reaction of certain groups to a source?

Evaluate sources: there are several strategies that can be used to evaluate sources but they are not always possible with every source. The important skill is to be able to decide which strategy will work best with a particular source. The strategies are: (i) checking the claims made by a source against your own contextual knowledge; (ii) using contextual knowledge to consider the provenance and content of the source together to work out what the purpose of the particular author/artist is - this will raise issues about whether the source can be trusted; (iii) use other sources in the paper to check the claims made by a source; (iv) use the language or tone of the source.

Cross reference sources: students should get used to using two or more sources together to compare them for agreements and disagreements. They should realise that some sources may agree and disagree at the same time.

Use sources together to test a hypothesis: students should be able to use sources together to test a hypothesis and be able to explain how some sources support it while other sources disagree with it. Precise references to the sources are required as are clear explanations (not assertions) of how the sources do, or do not, support the hypothesis.

Practise 'surprise' questions: students should be familiar with being asked whether they are surprised by a source. To respond to this they need to be able to work out the message or purpose of the source and then ask themselves: am I surprised that that person/organisation wanted to say that then? The historical context will play an important part in the analysis.

Particular things some students find difficult:

- Working out the 'big point' of a source: when students are asked about the message of a source they often get distracted by minor details in the source and arrive at a sub-message of the source. They need to consider the source as a whole and ask themselves what is the 'big point' that the author/artist wants to get across? This can be a particular problem with cartoons but is also important when using written sources.
- Usefulness: students often struggle with 'usefulness questions' because (i) they simply assume that a source's usefulness depends on how much surface information it contains, and (ii) they assume that if a source is biased, it cannot be useful. It is important for students to understand that many sources are useful because they tell us things the author/artist did not intend to tell us. This is usually something about themselves.
- The differences between message and purpose: some students explain the message of a source when they are being asked about its purpose. For example, 'Why was this source published in 1918?' is a purpose question. It will be necessary to work out the message of the source, but students should not stop there. They should go on and ask themselves what is the author/artist hoping achieve? This will usually involve attempting to change the behaviour or opinions of the intended audience. To understand this it will also be necessary to consider the historical context.

Assessment

- Probably the most important point of all is to get candidates used to answering questions in the first sentence of their answers (this does not apply to the last question). They should then spend the rest of the answer supporting this first sentence by explaining their answer through references to the source and to relevant knowledge. This will help candidates focus their answers on the question. Many candidates spend so much of their answers describing the sources and writing about the background events, that they only begin to directly address the question in the last few lines of their answers.
- Candidates should be encouraged to read the complete paper (including all the sources) before they start writing any answers. As they read the sources they should make brief notes about the sources, e.g. what is the message, do they disagree? Developing an overall understanding of the paper will put individual questions and sources into context and help candidates to write better answers. Examiners want one thing only - an answer to the question. They do not want candidates to display their vast knowledge and their ability to, e.g. evaluate sources, if they are not used to answer the question.
- Remind candidates that the Background Information can be used in answers in the same way that they use the sources.
- Candidates should be encouraged to always base their answers on the content of the sources. Some candidates try and base answers just on the provenance and ignore what the sources are actually saying. They do not get good marks. Questions will often require

all three elements in answers: what the source is saying, informed use of the provenance, relevant use of contextual knowledge. Whether or not all of these are required in a particular answer depends on the crucial issue 'What is this question asking?' The most important thing to remember is to answer the question. Some candidates write a lot but fail to do this.

- Candidates should be reminded not to put contextual knowledge into their answers just because they know it. It will not impress the examiners and will gain no extra marks. Knowledge should only be used when it leads to a better answer to the question - which will always be about the sources.
- When contextual knowledge is used it should be precise. People, events, developments and dates should be named. Vague and general assertions will not be good enough. When sources are referred to, candidates should make it clear which sources are being used and make references to sources explicit.
- Candidates should remember that examiners are looking for focused, relevant and intelligent answers. There is not one 'right' answer that they have to find. They must: answer the question with a response that is consistent with the sources and with the historical context. Above all - examiners want the question answered.
- Candidates should be reminded to leave a reasonable amount of time for the last question. It carries a lot of marks. It is not a good idea, however, to answer this question first. Candidates are in the best position to answer this question after they have completed the rest of the paper.
- Candidates need to be familiar with the key words used in questions, e.g. 'How', 'How far' and 'To what extent' mean that there will be two sides of the argument to explain.

The questions

The questions will not be the same in every examination session, for instance, e.g. there will not always be a 'usefulness' question or a 'reliability' question. Nor will the questions always be in the same order, e.g. Question 2 will not always be about usefulness, Question 3 will not always be a comparison question. However, each paper will cover a range of source skills. In the past the following skills have been tested:

1. Inference questions

What does this source tell you about...?

Hints - go beyond the surface information and look for attitudes, for example, or for what the source tells you about the artist/author.

What impression does this source give of...?

Hints - do not describe the source. It will give an impression of something, it will be suggesting that something is, e.g. good, or successful or a mistake. Look for this impression, and explain it using the source.

What point is the cartoonist making about...?

What is the message...?

Hints - the big point that the source is trying to make should be looked for. This involves going beyond individual details in the source and interpreting the source as a whole.

Why was this source published in...?

Hints - work out the message of the source and then move on. Ask yourself - why does that person want to give that message at that time/in those circumstances? This will involve using contextual knowledge about the context and the person who produced the source. This should then lead you to suggesting what impact they want to have on the behaviour or attitudes of the intended audience. This will be the purpose.

How far would X have been happy with the report in this source...?

Would the artist of Source X been pleased with the person who wrote Source Y?

Hints - these questions ask the candidates to go a little bit further, to infer more from the sources. The starting point is still the source. First work out what the message of the source is. The questions ask candidates to explain how another person would have reacted to a source. This is not inviting speculation, the answer should be consistent with the source, what is known about the person, and the historical context. Evidence from all of these should be used in the answer. Time should not be wasted describing the source or writing pages on the historical context. When these are referred to they should be used to support the answer to the question. Candidates should also look out for the possibility that there might be a case for arguing that the reactions would be mixed.

Is this a Liberal or a Labour Party poster?

Hints – again, the key is to first work out the message and the purpose of the source. Then use contextual knowledge to answer the question 'Which of these two parties would want to put out such a message?' Both the source and knowledge should be used to explain the answer.

2. Evaluating sources for reliability

Do you believe what this cartoon says about...?

How far do these sources prove...?

Are you convinced by X's explanation in Source Y...?

How reliable is Source X...?

Do you agree with Source X that...?

Hints - these questions require candidates to evaluate the reliability of a source. The most common weakness in answers to these questions is to either evaluate simply by the type of source, e.g. 'This is an eye-witness account and so will be correct', or to evaluate on the basis of assertion about the person who produced it, e.g. 'This was by a Liberal and he would be biased so the source cannot be trusted'. Answers like these do not receive many marks. There are several legitimate ways to evaluate sources and candidates need to work out which one will work best with a particular source and a particular question. It is possible to use the tone or language of the source, but not all sources lend themselves to this. Candidates are free to use other sources in the paper to compare with what the source is saying, but there might not be other sources in the paper that fulfil this role. The other methods require the use of contextual knowledge: checking the claims made in the source against one's knowledge, and using knowledge of the person/organisation who produced the source to look at why they are saying what they are saying in the source. Both references to sources and to knowledge should be precise and give examples.

3. Evaluating sources for usefulness

How far does this source help you to understand why...?

How useful is this source in understanding...?

Hints - these questions are often much trickier than they look. There is a tendency to simply claim that a source is useful because of all the information it contains. This approach will gain some marks. However, it is necessary to go beyond the surface information of the source and see what it tells you about views, beliefs or attitudes, especially those of the author. As has already been said, do not dismiss a source because it is biased. Biased sources often tell you a lot about the author. However, sources do need to be evaluated and the usefulness of a source about a particular subject may be reduced because of the purpose of the author. Such an approach will need to be based on developed and informed evaluation.

4. 'Are you surprised?' questions

Are you surprised by this source?

Hints - these questions involve, first, working out the message/purpose of the source, and then asking 'Am I surprised that that person/organisation is saying that then?' You can see from this that contextual knowledge plays a crucial part - knowledge of the author and knowledge of the context. All of these, message and knowledge of author and context, should be used in the answer.

5. Using sources together

How similar are the points made in these sources...?

How far do these two sources agree about...?

Hints - these questions require candidates to interpret the sources and work out their messages. Usually there are two levels of comparison - surface detail and overall message or purpose. The latter will gain more marks. However, sometimes sources will be used in the examination because they will, for example, disagree on overall message but agree on some surface details. Candidates should look out for this. The greatest weakness in answering this type of question is a tendency to summarise one source, then the other, and then claim that they agree or disagree. The best way to answer is to compare the sources point by point. Such comparisons must be precise, and must use references (these could be quotations) to the sources. However, the crucial part of the answer is the explanation of how they agree or disagree. It is also important for candidates to realise that when a question asks 'How similar...?', this involves looking for differences as well. In this type of question there will nearly always be similarities and differences.

Which source do you trust more as evidence about...?

Is one of these sources more reliable than the other about...?

Is one source more useful than the other as evidence about...?

Hints - candidates can be asked, not just to evaluate sources, but to compare sources for reliability or usefulness. These are demanding questions, and require the points given above about evaluating sources to be followed, and also the points about comparing sources to be followed.

Why do these two sources show different attitudes towards...?

Hints - this is a different type of question. It is not asking candidates to spend pages explaining how the sources differ (many do this). Instead it is asking for the reasons why they disagree. It is legitimate to briefly state how the sources differ (no more than a line or two), but the bulk of the

answer should be about why they disagree. This will normally involve examining the provenance of the source and using one's knowledge of the context, e.g. are the sources by different authors who had different political views or differed in purpose, are the sources from different dates, did the authors have different access to evidence? The purpose approach, based on contextual knowledge and good use of the provenance, will normally gain most marks.

6. The last question

Hints - this question will always ask candidates how far the sources in the paper support a hypothesis. Candidates should remember that there will always be some sources that support the hypothesis, and some that will disagree with it. It is a good idea to quickly go through all the sources, noting which support and which disagree with the hypothesis. Then the candidate is in position to start by writing about the sources that support the hypothesis. It is necessary to clearly explain how each of these sources supports the hypothesis. This must be explained and not asserted. A paraphrase of the sources will not be sufficient. Explanation, using clear reference to important parts of the sources, is essential. The same should be done with the sources that disagree with the hypothesis. Candidates should also evaluate some of the sources, as there are marks for this. Some sources will have been evaluated in earlier answers. Candidates should not simply refer to these, the evaluations need to be carried out again. The question will normally ask 'How far?' and so candidates should try and come to a conclusion about this. It is also important that candidates test the hypothesis given. Sometimes, they wander away from this and appear to be testing a slightly different hypothesis. They need to make sure they understand exactly what the hypothesis is saying and stick to it. Finally, candidates should understand that this question is about the sources. They are being asked how far the sources support the statement, not how far they think the statement is correct. Answers must be based on the sources. The only role for contextual knowledge in this answer is to improve the analysis and evaluation of the sources.

Unit A973: Historical Enquiry

For this unit please refer to the GCSE History B Guide to Controlled Assessment document published on <http://www.ocr.org.uk/qualifications/type/gcse/history/b/documents/index.aspx>

Resources

Unit A971: Aspects of International Relations, 1919–2005 and the chosen Depth Study

The following list is not exhaustive but indicates some textbooks which teachers may find useful.

A resource list for teachers

Walsh, Ben *GCSE Modern World History* Hodder Education

Kelly, Nigel & Lacey, Greg *Modern World History* Heinemann

Waugh, Steven *Essential Modern World History* Nelson Thomas

Rae, Tony & Wright, John *International Relations 1914–1995* Oxford University Press

McAleavy, Tony *International Relations Since 1919* Cambridge University Press

Walsh, Ben *Essential Modern World History* John Murray

McAleavy, Tony *Superpower Rivalry – The Cold War 1945–1991* Cambridge University Press

McDonald, Fiona & Staton, Richard *The Cold War 1945–1989* Collins Educational

Aylett J F & DeMarco Neil *The Cold War and After* Hodder

D Clare, John *Vietnam 1939–75* Hodder

Grey, Paul & Little, Rosemary *Germany 1918–1945* Cambridge University Press

Lacey, Greg & Shephard, Keith *Germany 1918–1945* John Murray

Radway, Richard *Germany 1918–45* Hodder

Ingram, Philip *Russia and the USSR 1905–1991* Cambridge University Press

Mantin, Peter & Lankester, Colin *From Romanov to Gorbachev* Hutchinson

Fiehn, Terry *Russia & the USSR 1905–1941* John Murray

Fiehn, Terry & others *The USA Between the Wars 1919–1941* John Murray

Campbell, Ian *The USA 1917–1941* Cambridge University Press

Ward, Harriet *The USA 1917–1975* Collins Educational

Davies, Paul *China – A Modern World Study* Holmes McDougall

Ward, Harriet *China in the 20th Century* Heinemann

Brooman, Josh *China Since 1900* Longman

Brooman, Josh *The End of Old Europe – The Causes of the First World War* Longman

Hetherington, Greg *Britain and the Great War* John Murray

Wrenn, Andrew *The First World War* Cambridge University Press

Walsh, Ben *The Struggle for Peace in Northern Ireland* Hodder

Rees, Rosemary *India 1900–47 (Teacher text)* Heinemann

Aldred, John *British Imperial and Foreign Policy (Teacher text)* Heinemann

Stewart, Geoff *China 1900–76 (Teacher text)* Heinemann

Saunders, Vivienne *Race Relations in the USA 1863–1980 (Teacher text)* Hodder

Lowe, Norman *Modern World History (Teacher text)* Palgrave

Walsh, Ben & Birks, Wayne *Revision for OCR Modern World History* John Murray

Lacey, Greg *Revise Modern World History* Heinemann

Unit A972: British Depth Study

A resource list for teachers

Shephard, Colin & Rees, Rosemary *OCR British Depth Study 1906–1918* Hodder

Walsh, Ben *OCR GCSE Modern World History* Hodder (Contains sections covering both British Depth Studies)

Shephard, Colin & Rees, Rosemary *OCR British Depth Study 1939-1975* Hodder (To be published in 2010)

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- More resources for specifications with lower candidate entries
- Materials that are subject to a thorough quality assurance process to achieve endorsement

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Heinemann has produced the following resources for OCR GCSE History B for first teaching in September 2009:

Modern World History Student Book with Active Book CD-ROM

ISBN: 978- 0435510 2 2 0 (Available from May 2009)

Modern World History Teacher Guide with editable CD-ROM

ISBN: 978- 0435510 2 0 6 (Available from June 2009)

Modern World History Active Teach CD-ROM
ISBN: 978- 0435510 2 1 3 (Available from June 2009)

Active Revise
ISBN: 978- 0435510 2 3 7 (Available from October 2010)

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Frequently Asked Questions

Unit A971: Aspects of International Relations, 1919–2005 and the chosen Depth Study

What has changed?

In Part 1: The Core Content, there are now three alternatives instead of two. The 'Inter War Years' section remains the same. The 'Cold War' section now covers the origins of the Cold War and both the Cuban Missile Crisis and the failure of the USA in Vietnam. The new Section C has the issue of the USSR's control over Eastern Europe taken from the current core together with two new areas of content. One of these considers the effectiveness of terrorism whilst the other section considers the significance of the Iraq War, 2003.

The Depth Study relating to China has been changed slightly. It now starts in 1930 and ends with the death of Mao. The number of Depth Studies has been increased with three completely new ones being added.

How will the new Key Question on terrorism be assessed?

The structure of the questions posed will be of the same format as currently exists. It is anticipated that the teaching of the Key Question relating to terrorism will be more issue-based than the others, as indicated by the Focus Points. In this Key Question the content should be used to exemplify the Focus Points. The questions, particularly part (c), will reflect this approach to the teaching.

How different is the Short Course written paper?

The Short Course is based on the same Part 1 'Core Content: Aspects of International Relations, 1919-2005' as the full course. As for the full course, candidates will be prepared for one of the three sections of the Core. The paper is 1 hour 45 minutes long and has 50 marks. This paper represents 50% of the total assessment.

The paper has three questions. Question 1 is compulsory. This question is made up of the two questions from the full course equivalent question together with two additional questions based on three sources. The total mark for this question is 30. Questions 2 and 3 will be exactly the same as those on the full course. Candidates will answer one of these for the remaining 20 marks.

Can I enter my candidates for the whole assessment at the end of the course?

Yes, you can. However, you can also enter them for some units earlier. This allows them to get some of the assessment out of the way and also provides opportunities for re-sits. It should be remembered that at least 40% of the marks have to be awarded at the end of the course. In practice this means that the assessment of either Unit A971 or of Units A972 and Unit A973 have to be left until the end of the course. This is because Unit A971 carries 45% of the total marks.

Whether or not your students take some units early depends on their progress. Examinations in Year 10 would be far too early for some, who make the bulk of their progress in the second year of the course. However, many candidates might benefit from taking an examination in one of the units in January of the second year of the course. Remember, if they take Unit A971 then, they should not be entered for the other two units until the end of the course.

Unit A972: British Depth Study

Will we know what the topic is in the examination?

No. The British Depth Study should be studied as a whole and no attempt should be made to guess which part will appear on the examination paper. Examination papers for this unit work best when they have a clear focus and for this reason each paper will clearly focus on one of the three themes in the British Depth Study. However, there are places when these themes overlap, for example, Women and the Vote, and the Home Front. In this case it would be clear to the candidate what the main theme is, but there could well be parts of the paper that overlap with the other theme. It should be noted that the three themes are not necessarily covered from paper to paper in a simple rotation system.

Can I enter my candidates for the examination for this unit before the end of the course?

You can, but this needs to be thought through carefully. Most candidates would not benefit from being entered for this unit too early in the course, e.g. in January of the first year. This is because the skills required by the examination paper are ones that take some time to develop. It would be possible to cover the content within a term, but not the development of skills. Taking the examination for this unit in June at the end of Year 10 or January of Year 11 would seem to be more sensible. Whatever you do, it is important to remember to leave at least 40% of the assessment until the end of the course.

How much detail do I have to go into?

This is related to the next question. This unit differs from Unit A971 in that the focus is on the interpretation, evaluation and use of historical sources. The main focus in Unit A971 is on recall and the ability to use this recall to write explanations, analyses and support judgements. In Unit A972 knowledge of the historical context plays a secondary, but still important, role (this is explained in the response to the next question). For the examination, the candidates need to be familiar with main events and developments in each of the three themes. They do not need to know them in the same detail as is required with the content in Unit A971.

How should candidates use their knowledge in their exam answers?

Students should not be encouraged to bring knowledge into their answers in a mechanistic way. Nor should they let their knowledge take the place of the sources. Every question in this paper is about sources. It follows from this that the answers should also be about the sources. However, sources are understood better, they are evaluated better, and they are used better when knowledge and understanding of the historical context is used. So when a candidate is asked to interpret a source, their interpretation will be more satisfactory if it is informed by their knowledge and understanding of the context. They will also be able to explain their interpretation to the examiner more clearly and effectively if knowledge is used in a relevant way to help explain and justify the answer.

The short answer to this question is - to make the answer to the question better. Knowledge should never be added to an answer for its own sake. It only gains more marks when it improves the quality of the answer.

I haven't come across 'are you surprised' questions before. How do they work?

These are relatively straightforward and are a good example of how contextual knowledge can be used to write a good answer. Normally, these questions are based on a source that represents a practice or an idea that made perfect sense at the time but might look a bit odd today. The candidate needs to (i) explain the source, (ii) use their contextual knowledge and understanding to explain how, at the time, the practice or idea in the source made perfect sense. Candidates should also look out for the possibility of reasons for being both surprised and not surprised by the source.

What is the best way of preparing candidates for the examination?

During the teaching and learning programme for Unit A972 the focus should be on developing the source skills necessary for the examination. Students should be given regular experience of interpreting, evaluating and using historical sources. This does not mean a simple diet of examination questions in every lesson. This would soon turn the students off. There are many exciting, varied and imaginative ways of using sources in class to develop the relevant skills.

It is also important to remember that these skills take time to develop and should also be a focus when teaching Unit A971. Remember, the examination paper for this unit also has some source questions. Of course, at some stage, students need to become familiar with the types of questions that appear in the examination papers for Unit A972. They also need to be familiar with the overall format of the paper. The former can be achieved by careful planning - by making sure that the full range of questions is built into the normal work set for the students. Careful scrutiny of four or five past papers will make the range of questions used clear. The second point can be dealt with during revision. Students should have the opportunity of examining the structure of a past paper and should also have the experience of completing a couple of papers within the time allowed (one and a half hours per paper).

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