



Cambridge Assessment
International Education

Syllabus

Cambridge O Level History 2147

Use this syllabus for exams in 2023, 2024 and 2025.
Exams are available in the June and November series.



Version 1

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Important: Changes to this syllabus

For information about changes to this syllabus for 2023, 2024 and 2025, go to page 35.

The latest syllabus is version 1, published September 2020.

Any textbooks endorsed to support the syllabus for examination from 2020 are still suitable for use with this syllabus.



1 Why choose this syllabus?

Key benefits

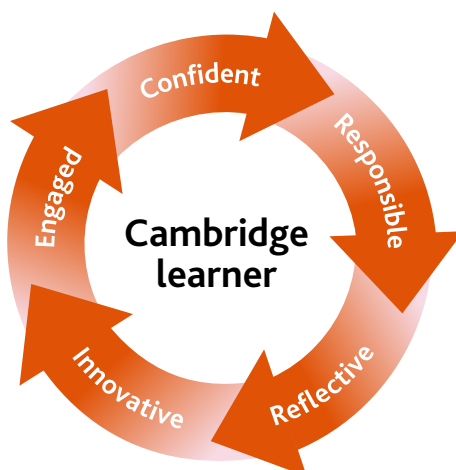
Cambridge O Level is typically for 14 to 16 year olds and is an internationally recognised qualification. It has been designed especially for an international market and is sensitive to the needs of different countries. Cambridge O Level is designed for learners whose first language may not be English, and this is acknowledged throughout the examination process.

Cambridge O Level History offers the opportunity to study world history from the nineteenth century to the beginning of the twenty-first century. It encourages learners to raise questions and to develop and deploy historical skills, knowledge and understanding in order to provide historical explanations. Learners will explore history from a diversity of perspectives, including social, economical, cultural and political, and are given the opportunity to:

- develop an interest in and enthusiasm for learning about and understanding the past
- explore historical concepts such as cause and consequence, change and continuity, and similarity and difference
- appreciate historical evidence and how to use it
- gain a greater understanding of international issues and inter-relationships
- learn how to present clear, logical arguments.

Our programmes balance a thorough knowledge and understanding of a subject and help to develop the skills learners need for their next steps in education or employment.

Our approach encourages learners to be:



'Cambridge O Level has helped me develop thinking and analytical skills which will go a long way in helping me with advanced studies.'

Kamal Khan Virk, former student at Beaconhouse Garden Town Secondary School, Pakistan, who went on to study Actuarial Science at the London School of Economics

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Our expertise in curriculum, teaching and learning, and assessment is the basis for the recognition of our programmes and qualifications around the world. The combination of knowledge and skills in Cambridge O Level History gives learners a solid foundation for further study. Candidates who achieve grades A* to C are well prepared to follow a wide range of courses including Cambridge International AS & A Level History.

Cambridge O Levels are accepted and valued by leading universities and employers around the world as evidence of academic achievement. Many universities require a combination of Cambridge International AS & A Levels and Cambridge O Levels or equivalent to meet their entry requirements.

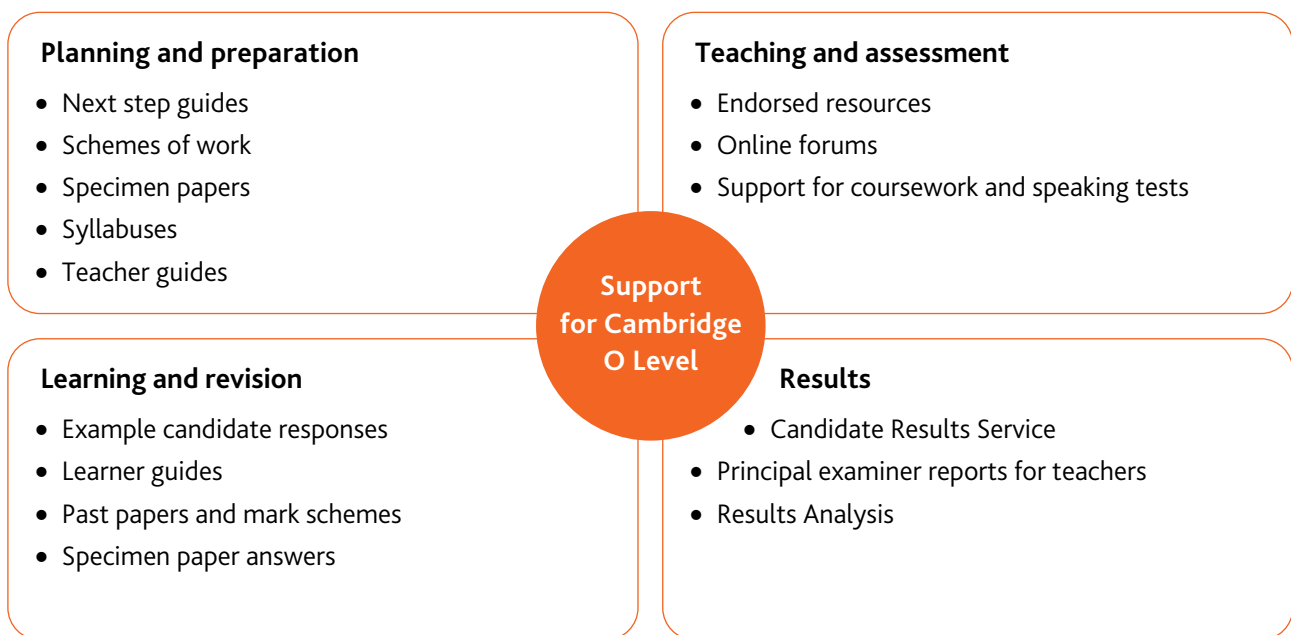
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2 Syllabus overview

Aims

The aims describe the purposes of a course based on this syllabus.

The aims are to:

- stimulate an interest in and enthusiasm for learning about the past
- promote the acquisition of knowledge and understanding of individuals, people and societies in the past
- ensure that learners' knowledge is rooted in an understanding of the nature and use of historical evidence
- promote an understanding of key historical concepts: cause and consequence, change and continuity, and similarity and difference
- provide a sound basis for further study and the pursuit of personal interest
- encourage international understanding
- encourage the development of historical skills, including investigation, analysis, evaluation and communication skills.

Cambridge Assessment International Education is an education organisation and politically neutral. The contents of this syllabus, examination papers and associated materials do not endorse any political view. We endeavour to treat all aspects of the exam process neutrally.



Content overview

All candidates study all the Core Content in **either**:

Option A

The nineteenth century: the development of modern nation states, 1848–1914

The content focuses on the following Key Questions:

- Were the Revolutions of 1848 important?
- How was Italy unified?
- How was Germany unified?
- Why was there a civil war in the United States and what were its results?
- Why, and with what effects, did Europeans expand their overseas empires in the nineteenth century?
- What caused the First World War?

or:

Option B

The twentieth century: international relations since 1919

The content focuses on the following Key Questions:

- Were the peace treaties of 1919–23 fair?
- To what extent was the League of Nations a success?
- Why had international peace collapsed by 1939?
- Who was to blame for the Cold War?
- How effectively did the United States contain the spread of Communism?
- How secure was the USSR's control over Eastern Europe, 1948–c.1989?
- Why did events in the Gulf matter, c.1970–2000?

In addition, all candidates must also study **at least one** of the following Depth Studies:

- The First World War, 1914–18
- Germany, 1918–45
- Russia, 1905–41
- The United States, 1919–41
- China, c.1930–c.1990
- South Africa, c.1940–c.1994
- Israelis and Palestinians since 1945

This O Level syllabus shares content with other History syllabuses. For further support see the School Support Hub for IGCSE History. Textbooks endorsed to support IGCSE History are suitable for use with this syllabus.



Assessment overview

All candidates take **two** components. Candidates will be eligible for grades A* to E.

| All candidates take: | | and: | |
|---|---------|--|---------|
| Paper 1 | 2 hours | Paper 2 | 2 hours |
| Written paper | 55% | Written paper | 45% |
| 60 marks | | 50 marks | |
| Candidates answer two questions from Section A (Core Content) and one question from Section B (Depth Studies) | | Candidates answer six questions on one prescribed topic taken from the Core Content. There is a range of source material relating to each prescribed topic. The prescribed topic changes in each examination session – see Section 4 | |
| All questions are in the form of structured essays, split into three parts: (a), (b) and (c) | | Externally assessed | |
| Externally assessed | | | |

Information on availability is in the **Before you start** section.

Assessment objectives

The assessment objectives (AOs) are:

AO1

An ability to recall, select, organise and deploy knowledge of the syllabus content.

AO2

An ability to construct historical explanations using an understanding of:

- cause and consequence, change and continuity, similarity and difference
- the motives, emotions, intentions and beliefs of people in the past.

AO3

An ability to understand, interpret, evaluate and use a range of sources as evidence, in their historical context.

Weighting for assessment objectives

The approximate weightings allocated to each of the assessment objectives (AOs) are summarised below.

Assessment objectives as a percentage of the qualification

| Assessment objective | Weighting in O Level % |
|----------------------|------------------------|
| AO1 | 28 |
| AO2 | 36 |
| AO3 | 36 |
| Total | 100 |

Assessment objectives as a percentage of each component

| Assessment objective | Weighting in components % | |
|----------------------|---------------------------|---------|
| | Paper 1 | Paper 2 |
| AO1 | 33 | 20 |
| AO2 | 67 | – |
| AO3 | – | 80 |
| Total | 100 | 100 |

3 Subject content

This syllabus gives you the flexibility to design a course that will interest, challenge and engage your learners. Where appropriate you are responsible for selecting topics, subject contexts, resources and examples to support your learners' study. These should be appropriate for the learners' age, cultural background and learning context as well as complying with your school policies and local legal requirements.

All candidates study all the Core Content in either:

Option A **The nineteenth century: the development of modern nation states, 1848–1914**

or

Option B **The twentieth century: international relations since 1919**

In addition, all candidates must also study **at least one** of the Depth Studies.

The Core Content is structured by **Key Questions** and **Focus Points**. The Focus Points provide guidance on what is involved in addressing each Key Question. There are times when a Focus Point is used to set the scene for a Key Question, but without apparently bearing on the Key Question itself. This helps to indicate what is required for the Key Question itself to be addressed adequately.

Candidates will be expected to demonstrate an understanding of the Key Questions and Focus Points, using knowledge of relevant historical examples.

The following description of content is not intended to be rigidly prescriptive of a school course.

Core Content: Option A

The nineteenth century: the development of modern nation states, 1848–1914

The Core Content in Option A focuses on six Key Questions:

- 1 Were the Revolutions of 1848 important?
- 2 How was Italy unified?
- 3 How was Germany unified?
- 4 Why was there a civil war in the United States and what were its results?
- 5 Why, and with what effects, did Europeans expand their overseas empires in the nineteenth century?
- 6 What caused the First World War?

1 Were the Revolutions of 1848 important?

Focus Points

- Why were there so many revolutions in 1848?
- Did the revolutions have anything in common?
- Why did most of the revolutions fail?
- Did the revolutions change anything?

Specified Content

- The nature of revolutions in 1848, and the influence of liberalism and nationalism
- Causes and events of revolutions in France, Italy, Germany and the Austrian Empire
- Reasons for the failure of the revolutions

2 How was Italy unified?

Focus Points

- Why was Italy not unified in 1848–49?
- How important was Garibaldi's contribution to unifying Italy?
- Did Cavour help or hinder the unification of Italy?
- How important for other European countries were moves towards Italian unification?

Specified Content

- Austrian influence over Italy
- Italian nationalism and the role of Mazzini
- Events of 1848–49
- Victor Emmanuel II and Cavour: Plombières, war with Austria in 1859
- Garibaldi and the invasion of Sicily and Naples
- The creation of the Kingdom of Italy, completion of unification by 1870

3 How was Germany unified?

Focus Points

- Why was Germany not unified in 1848–50?
- How did Bismarck bring about Austria's defeat of 1866?
- How did Bismarck bring about France's defeat of 1870?
- How far was Bismarck responsible for the unification of Germany?

Specified Content

- German nationalism
- The Zollverein
- The 1848 revolution in Prussia
- The setting up and eventual failure of the Frankfurt Parliament
- Re-establishment of Austrian influence in Germany by 1850
- Bismarck as Prussian Minister–President
- Bismarck's foreign policy to 1871:
 - Schleswig–Holstein
 - the Austro–Prussian War and its consequences
 - relations with France
 - the Spanish Succession and the Franco–Prussian War
 - the creation of the German empire

4 Why was there a civil war in the United States and what were its results?

Focus Points

- How far did slavery cause the Civil War?
- What was the significance of Lincoln's election as president?
- Why was the North able to win the war?
- Did the war change anything?

Specified Content

- Causes and consequences of the American Civil War, 1820–77:
 - differences between North and South
 - slavery, slave states and free states
 - abolitionism
 - the 1860 election and secession of the Southern states
 - reasons for the North's victory
 - the role of Lincoln
 - reconstruction
 - how successful was reconstruction?

5 Why, and with what effects, did Europeans expand their overseas empires in the nineteenth century?

Focus Points

- What were the motives behind European imperialism?
- How varied were the impacts of European imperialism on Africans?
- Why, and with what effects, did Indians resist British rule?
- Why, and with what effects, did the Chinese resist European influence?

Specified Content

- Reasons for imperialism: economic, military, geopolitical, religious and cultural motives
- Europeans in Africa: case studies of French, British and Belgian imperialism, and their impacts on Africans:
 - the French model of assimilation and direct rule; Faidherbe and Senegal
 - the British model of indirect rule; Lugard and Nigeria
 - the Belgians and private imperialism; Leopold II and the Congo
- The British in India: the Mutiny, and changes it brought to British rule
- Europeans and China: the Opium Wars, the Boxer Rising and their results

6 What caused the First World War?

Focus Points

- Did the Alliance System make war more likely or less likely?
- How far did colonial problems create tensions between the Great Powers?
- Why were problems in the Balkans so difficult for the Great Powers to solve?
- How did the assassination of Franz Ferdinand lead to war?

Specified Content

- The origins of the First World War, 1890–1914:
 - the Alliance System
 - the arms race
 - colonial rivalries
 - developments in the Balkans
 - the crisis of June–July 1914 and the outbreak of war

Core Content: Option B

The twentieth century: international relations since 1919

The Core Content in Option B focuses on seven Key Questions:

- 1 Were the peace treaties of 1919–23 fair?
- 2 To what extent was the League of Nations a success?
- 3 Why had international peace collapsed by 1939?
- 4 Who was to blame for the Cold War?
- 5 How effectively did the United States contain the spread of Communism?
- 6 How secure was the USSR's control over Eastern Europe, 1948–c.1989?
- 7 Why did events in the Gulf matter, c.1970–2000?

1 Were the peace treaties of 1919–23 fair?

Focus Points

- What were the motives and aims of the Big Three at Versailles?
- Why did all the victors not get everything they wanted?
- What was the impact of the peace treaty on Germany up to 1923?
- Could the treaties be justified at the time?

Specified Content

- The peace treaties of 1919–23:
 - the roles of individuals such as Wilson, Clemenceau and Lloyd George in the peacemaking process
 - the impact of the treaties on the defeated countries
 - contemporary opinions about the treaties

2 To what extent was the League of Nations a success?

Focus Points

- How successful was the League in the 1920s?
- How far did weaknesses in the League's organisation make failure inevitable?
- How far did the Depression make the work of the League more difficult?
- How successful was the League in the 1930s?

Specified Content

- The League of Nations:
 - strengths and weaknesses in its structure and organisation: work of the League's agencies/ humanitarian work
 - successes and failures in peacekeeping during the 1920s
 - the impact of the world depression on the work of the League after 1929
 - the failures of the League in the 1930s, including Manchuria and Abyssinia

3 Why had international peace collapsed by 1939?

Focus Points

- What were the long-term consequences of the peace treaties of 1919–23?
- What were the consequences of the failures of the League in the 1930s?
- How far was Hitler's foreign policy to blame for the outbreak of war in 1939?
- Was the policy of appeasement justified?
- How important was the Nazi–Soviet Pact?
- Why did Britain and France declare war on Germany in September 1939?

Specified Content

- The collapse of international order in the 1930s
- The increasing militarism of Germany, Italy and Japan
- Hitler's foreign policy to 1939:
 - the Saar
 - remilitarisation of the Rhineland
 - involvement in the Spanish Civil War
 - Anschluss with Austria
 - appeasement
 - crises over Czechoslovakia and Poland
 - the outbreak of war

4 Who was to blame for the Cold War?

Focus Points

- Why did the US–Soviet alliance begin to break down in 1945?
- How had the USSR gained control of Eastern Europe by 1948?
- How did the United States react to Soviet expansionism?
- What were the consequences of the Berlin Blockade?
- Who was the more to blame for starting the Cold War: the United States or the USSR?

Specified Content

- The origins of the Cold War:
 - the 1945 summit conferences and the breakdown of the US–Soviet alliance in 1945–46
 - Soviet expansion into Eastern Europe to 1948, and American reactions to it
 - the occupation of Germany and the Berlin Blockade
 - NATO and the Warsaw Pact

5 How effectively did the United States contain the spread of Communism?

Focus Points

This Key Question will be explored through case studies of the following:

- The United States and events in Korea, 1950–53
- The United States and events in Cuba, 1959–62
- American involvement in Vietnam.

Specified Content

- Events of the Cold War
- Case studies of:
 - American reactions to the Cuban revolution, including the missile crisis and its aftermath
 - American involvement in the Vietnam War, e.g. reasons for involvement, tactics/strategy, reasons for withdrawal
 - American reactions to North Korea's invasion of South Korea, involvement of the UN, course of the war to 1953

6 How secure was the USSR's control over Eastern Europe, 1948–c.1989?

Focus Points

- Why was there opposition to Soviet control in Hungary in 1956 and Czechoslovakia in 1968, and how did the USSR react to this opposition?
- How similar were events in Hungary in 1956 and in Czechoslovakia in 1968?
- Why was the Berlin Wall built in 1961?
- What was the significance of 'Solidarity' in Poland for the decline of Soviet influence in Eastern Europe?
- How far was Gorbachev personally responsible for the collapse of Soviet control over Eastern Europe?

Specified Content

- Soviet power in Eastern Europe:
 - resistance to Soviet power in Hungary (1956) and Czechoslovakia (1968)
 - the Berlin Wall
 - 'Solidarity' in Poland
 - Gorbachev and the collapse of Soviet control over Eastern Europe

7 Why did events in the Gulf matter, c.1970–2000?

Focus Points

- Why was Saddam Hussein able to come to power in Iraq?
- What was the nature of Saddam Hussein's rule in Iraq?
- Why was there a revolution in Iran in 1979?
- What were the causes and consequences of the Iran–Iraq War, 1980–88?
- Why did the First Gulf War take place?

Specified Content

- The rise to power of Saddam Hussein in Iraq
- The rule of Saddam Hussein up to 2000, and the consequences of his rule for different groups in Iraq
- The nature of the Shah's rule in Iran and the Iranian Revolution of 1979
- The causes and consequences of the Iran–Iraq War, 1980–88; Western involvement in the war
- The causes, course and consequences of the Gulf War, 1990–91

Depth Studies

Candidates must study at least **one** of the following Depth Studies:

- A The First World War, 1914–18
- B Germany, 1918–45
- C Russia, 1905–41
- D The United States, 1919–41
- E China, c.1930–c.1990
- F South Africa, c.1940–c.1994
- G Israelis and Palestinians since 1945

Depth Study A: The First World War, 1914–18

1 Why was the war not over by December 1914?

Focus Points

- How was the Schlieffen Plan intended to work?
- How important was Belgium's reaction to the Schlieffen Plan?
- How successful was the British Expeditionary Force (BEF)?
- Why did both sides introduce trenches?

2 Why was there stalemate on the Western Front?

Focus Points

- Why did the war become bogged down in the trenches?
- What was living and fighting in the trenches like?
- How important were new developments such as tanks, machine guns, aircraft and gas?
- What was the significance of the Battles of Verdun and the Somme?

3 How important were other fronts?

Focus Points

- Who won the war at sea?
- Why did the Gallipoli campaign of 1915 fail?
- Why did Russia leave the war in 1918?
- What was the impact of war on civilian populations?

4 Why did Germany ask for an armistice in 1918?

Focus Points

- What was the importance of America's entry into the war?
- Why was the German offensive of 1918 unsuccessful?
- Why did revolution break out in Germany in October 1918?
- Why was the armistice signed?

Specified Content

- The Schlieffen Plan in operation
- The Battles of Mons, the Marne and Ypres:
 - the reaction to the 'stalemate'
 - the nature and problems of trench warfare
- The main battles of the war including the Somme and Verdun:
 - the leadership and tactics of Haig at the Battle of the Somme
 - the nature and problems of trench warfare
 - the use and impact of new methods of warfare
- The war at sea:
 - the Battle of Jutland and its consequences
 - the use of convoys and submarines and the U-boat campaign
- The reasons for, and results of, the Gallipoli campaign
- The impact of war on civilian populations
- Events on the Eastern Front and the defeat of Russia
- The German offensive and the Allied advance:
 - the impact of American entry into the war
- Conditions in Germany towards the end of the war:
 - the Kiel Mutiny and German Revolution
 - the abdication of the Kaiser
- The armistice

Depth Study B: Germany, 1918–45

1 Was the Weimar Republic doomed from the start?

Focus Points

- How did Germany emerge from defeat at the end of the First World War?
- What was the impact of the Treaty of Versailles on the Republic?
- To what extent did the Republic recover after 1923?
- What were the achievements of the Weimar period?

2 Why was Hitler able to dominate Germany by 1934?

Focus Points

- What did the Nazi Party stand for in the 1920s?
- Why did the Nazis have little success before 1930?
- Why was Hitler able to become Chancellor by 1933?
- How did Hitler consolidate his power in 1933–34?

3 The Nazi regime

(a) How effectively did the Nazis control Germany, 1933–45?

Focus Points

- How much opposition was there to the Nazi regime?
- How effectively did the Nazis deal with their political opponents?
- How did the Nazis use culture and the mass media to control the people?
- Why did the Nazis persecute many groups in German society?
- Was Nazi Germany a totalitarian state?

(b) What was it like to live in Nazi Germany?

Focus Points

- How did young people react to the Nazi regime?
- How successful were Nazi policies towards women and the family?
- Did most people in Germany benefit from Nazi rule?
- How did the coming of war change life in Nazi Germany?

Specified Content

- The Revolution of 1918 and the establishment of the Republic
- The Versailles Settlement and German reactions to it
- The Weimar Constitution, the main political divisions, the role of the army
- Political disorder, 1919–23:
 - economic crises and hyper-inflation
 - the occupation of the Ruhr
- The Stresemann era
- Cultural achievements of the Weimar period
- The early years of the Nazi Party:
 - Nazi ideas and methods
 - the Munich Putsch
 - the roles of Hitler and other Nazi leaders
- The impact of the Depression on Germany:
 - political, economic and social crisis of 1930–33
 - reasons for the Nazis' rise to power
 - Hitler takes power
 - the Reichstag Fire and the election of 1933
- Nazi rule in Germany:
 - the Enabling Act
 - the Night of the Long Knives
 - the death of Hindenburg
 - the removal of opposition
 - methods of control and repression
 - use of culture and the mass media
- Economic policy including re-armament
- Different experiences of Nazi rule:
 - women and young people
 - anti-Semitism
 - persecution of minorities
 - opposition to Nazi rule
- Impact of the Second World War on Germany:
 - the conversion to a war economy
 - the Final Solution

Depth Study C: Russia, 1905–41

1 Why did the Tsarist regime collapse in 1917?

Focus Points

- How well did the Tsarist regime deal with the difficulties of ruling Russia up to 1914?
- How did the Tsar survive the 1905 Revolution?
- How far was the Tsar weakened by the First World War?
- Why was the revolution of March 1917 successful?

2 How did the Bolsheviks gain power, and how did they consolidate their rule?

Focus Points

- How effectively did the Provisional Government rule Russia in 1917?
- Why were the Bolsheviks able to seize power in November 1917?
- Why did the Bolsheviks win the Civil War?
- How far was the New Economic Policy a success?

3 How did Stalin gain and hold on to power?

Focus Points

- Why did Stalin, and not Trotsky, emerge as Lenin's successor?
- Why did Stalin launch the Purges?
- What methods did Stalin use to control the Soviet Union?
- How complete was Stalin's control over the Soviet Union by 1941?

4 What was the impact of Stalin's economic policies?

Focus Points

- Why did Stalin introduce the Five-Year Plans?
- Why did Stalin introduce collectivisation?
- How successful were Stalin's economic changes?
- How were the Soviet people affected by these changes?

Specified Content

- The main features of Tsarist rule and Russian society before the First World War:
 - the 1905 Revolution and its aftermath
 - attempts at reform
- The First World War and its impact on the Russian people
- The March Revolution of 1917
- The Provisional Government and the Soviets, the growing power of revolutionary groups
- Reasons for the failure of the Provisional Government
- The Bolshevik seizure of power, the role of Lenin
- The main features of Bolshevik rule, the Civil War and War Communism, and reasons for the Bolshevik victory
- The Kronstadt Rising and the establishment of the New Economic Policy
- Lenin's death and the struggle for power
- Reasons for Stalin's emergence as leader by 1928
- Stalin's dictatorship:
 - use of terror
 - the Purges
 - propaganda and official culture
- Stalin's economic policies and their impact:
 - the modernisation of Soviet industry
 - the Five-Year Plans
 - collectivisation in agriculture
- Life in the Soviet Union:
 - the differing experiences of social groups
 - ethnic minorities and women

Depth Study D: The United States, 1919–41

1 How far did the US economy boom in the 1920s?

Focus Points

- On what factors was the economic boom based?
- Why did some industries prosper while others did not?
- Why did agriculture not share in the prosperity?
- Did all Americans benefit from the boom?

2 How far did US society change in the 1920s?

Focus Points

- What were the 'Roaring Twenties'?
- How widespread was intolerance in US society?
- Why was Prohibition introduced, and then later repealed?
- How far did the roles of women change during the 1920s?

3 What were the causes and consequences of the Wall Street Crash?

Focus Points

- How far was speculation responsible for the Wall Street Crash?
- What impact did the Crash have on the economy?
- What were the social consequences of the Crash?
- Why did Roosevelt win the election of 1932?

4 How successful was the New Deal?

Focus Points

- What was the New Deal as introduced in 1933?
- How far did the character of the New Deal change after 1933?
- Why did the New Deal encounter opposition?
- Why did unemployment persist despite the New Deal?
- Did the fact that the New Deal did not solve unemployment mean that it was a failure?

Specified Content

- The expansion of the US economy during the 1920s:
 - mass production in industries for cars and consumer durables
 - the fortunes of older industries
 - the development of credit and hire purchase
 - the decline of agriculture
- Weaknesses in the economy by the late 1920s
- Society in the 1920s:
 - the 'Roaring Twenties'
 - film and other media
 - Prohibition and gangsterism
 - restrictions on immigration, the 'Red Scare', religious intolerance
 - discrimination against black Americans
 - the Ku Klux Klan
 - the changing roles of women
- The Wall Street Crash and its financial, economic and social effects
- The reaction of President Hoover to the Crash
- The presidential election of 1932; Hoover's and Roosevelt's programmes
- Roosevelt's inauguration and the 'Hundred Days'
- The New Deal legislation, the 'alphabet agencies' and their work, and the economic and social changes they caused
- Opposition to the New Deal:
 - the Republicans
 - the rich
 - business interests
 - the Supreme Court
 - radical critics like Huey Long
- The strengths and weaknesses of the New Deal programme in dealing with unemployment and the Depression

Depth Study E: China, c.1930–c.1990

1 Why did China become a Communist State in 1949?

Focus Points

- Why did the Communists undertake the Long March in 1934?
- What was the importance of the Communist settlement at Yanan?
- How far did the Second World War weaken the Nationalist government?
- Why was there a civil war and why did the Communists win it?

2 How far had Communist rule changed China by the mid-1960s?

Focus Points

- What changes in agriculture did Communist rule bring?
- What was the impact of the Communists' social reforms?
- How successful were the Five-Year Plans in increasing production?
- Did the Chinese people benefit from Communist rule?

3 What was the impact of Communist rule on China's relations with other countries/regions?

Focus Points

- What have been China's changing relationships with neighbouring states?
- Why did China try to improve relations with the USA after 1970?
- How far was China established as a superpower by the time of Mao's death?
- How far have China's relations with other powers improved since Mao's death?

4 How far had Communist rule changed China by c.1990?

Focus Points

- Why did Mao launch the Cultural Revolution?
- What was the impact of the Cultural Revolution in China?
- How was the issue of leadership after the death of Mao resolved?
- How far did the economic development of the 1980s accompany social and political change?

Specified Content

- Kuomintang and Communist conflict:
 - the Shanghai Massacre and the five extermination campaigns
 - the Long March
 - life in Yanan
 - impact of Japanese incursions on the Nationalist government and the Communists
 - Xian Incident, 1936
 - causes and events of the civil war
- The nature of Chinese Communism
- Communist rule in the 1950s and 1960s:
 - agrarian reform from 1950
 - people's courts and the treatment of landlords
 - the establishment of collectives and communes
- Industrial developments:
 - the Five-Year Plans
 - the Great Leap Forward
- Social change:
 - the role of women
 - health
 - education
 - propaganda and the destruction of traditional culture
- China's relations with other countries/regions:
 - changing relations with the USSR
 - relations with other neighbouring countries/regions: India, Taiwan, Vietnam
- Closer relations with the USA from 1970
- Hong Kong
- Impact of China's relations with the rest of the world on its economic liberalisation since 1976
- The Communist Party dictatorship:
 - repression of political opposition
 - the Hundred Flowers campaign
 - treatment of minority groups
 - the Cultural Revolution
 - the role and status of Mao
 - the issue of leadership after Mao's death and the re-emergence of Deng
 - the social and political consequences of economic change in the 1980s and 1990s

Depth Study F: South Africa, c.1940–c.1994

1 What were the foundations of the apartheid state?

Focus Points

- How far had segregation been established by 1940?
- What was the impact of government policies on the non-white population by 1940?
- How successful was the economic development of South Africa by 1945?
- Why did the National Party win the election of 1948?

2 How successfully was apartheid established between 1948 and 1966?

Focus Points

- What were the main features of the apartheid system set up by the National Party after 1948?
- What consequences did apartheid have for the people of South Africa?
- How did opposition to apartheid develop between 1948 and 1964?
- What were the effects of the government's response to opposition by 1966?

3 To what extent did South Africa change between 1966 and 1980?

Focus Points

- How significant were the policies of the National Party governments from 1966 to 1980?
- To what extent did black opposition change in this period?
- How far did economic factors improve lives by 1980?
- What was the impact of external opposition to apartheid?

4 Why did white minority rule come to an end?

Focus Points

- What were the effects of the policies of P W Botha?
- What was the significance of individual leaders in the collapse of apartheid?
- Why did violence increase between 1980 and the early 1990s?
- To what extent was there a smooth transition of power between 1989 and 1994?

Specified Content

- Existing policies and social, economic and political effects of:
 - pass laws
 - black 'locations'
 - colour-bar on employment
 - land acts
 - restrictions on political rights
- Developments in mining, manufacturing and agriculture; state involvement
- Impact of the Second World War on South Africa
- British and Afrikaner regional differences and the 1948 election
- Legislation and methods of enforcement after 1948
- Effects on employment, families, location, education, coloureds
- Response of white population
- Development and effects in South Africa of:
 - ANC aims and campaigns
 - women's resistance
 - ANC and PAC split
 - Umkhonto we Sizwe and Rivonia Trial
 - Sharpeville and Langa
- International effects; 1961 South African Republic
- Changes in methods of suppression and effects from 1966
- Divisions in ANC and PAC in exile; significance of Black Consciousness
- Differing effects of economic developments
- Organisation for African Unity and bases; UN sanctions; government response
- 'Total strategy' and reforms; social and political effects
- The role and motives of:
 - President de Klerk
 - ANC leaders
 - Desmond Tutu
 - Chief Buthelezi
- School boycotts and township unrest
- White extremism
- Economic and international factors
- Power-sharing aims and responses
- 1994 general election

Depth Study G: Israelis and Palestinians since 1945

1 How was the Jewish state of Israel established?

Focus Points

- What was the significance for Palestine of the end of the Second World War?
- What were the causes of conflict between Jews and Arabs in Palestine?
- Why did the Arabs reject United Nations plans to partition Palestine?
- Why was Israel able to win the war of 1948–49?

2 How was Israel able to survive despite the hostility of its Arab neighbours?

Focus Points

- Why was Israel able to win the wars of 1956, 1967 and 1973?
- How significant was superpower involvement in Arab–Israeli conflicts?
- How important was oil in changing the nature of the Arab–Israeli conflict?
- By the 1990s, how far had problems which existed between Israel and her neighbours been resolved?

3 What was the impact of the Palestinian refugee issue?

Focus Points

- Why were there so many Palestinian refugees?
- How effective was the PLO in promoting the Palestinian cause?
- Why did Arab states not always support the Palestinian cause?
- How did international perceptions of the Palestinian cause change over time?

4 Why has it proved impossible to resolve the Arab–Israeli issue?

Focus Points

- Why has the United Nations been unable to secure a lasting peace?
- How far have international diplomatic negotiations improved Israel's relations with Arab states and the Palestinians?
- How have divisions within Israel affected the peace process?
- How have rivalries among Palestinians affected progress towards a settlement?

Specified Content

- The Arab and Jewish peoples of Palestine:
 - different cultures, races, languages
- The aftermath of the Second World War:
 - Jewish immigration
 - Jewish nationalism and the ending of the British mandate
 - the declaration of the state of Israel and the war of 1948–49
- Israel and its Arab neighbours:
 - the Suez War (1956)
 - the Six-Day War (1967)
 - the Yom Kippur War (1973) and Israeli incursions into Lebanon
 - the oil weapon: changes in US and Western thinking
- The Palestinians to c.1992:
 - the refugee problem
 - Palestinian nationalism and the formation of the PLO
 - activities of the PLO, and international acceptance
 - the role of Arafat
 - relations between the PLO and Arab states
 - relations with Israel and moves towards the creation of a Palestinian state
- Moves towards peace:
 - United Nations: resolutions, aid and peacekeeping duties
 - Camp David meetings; the Oslo Accords
 - the establishment of the Palestinian Authority, 1994
- Divisions that restricted progress towards peace:
 - political parties: Likud, Labour
 - how elections in Israel affected the peace process
 - religious issues
- Rivalries among Palestinians:
 - the nature of the PLO at its founding
 - Intifada, and the rise of Hamas
 - Hezbollah and Gaza

4 Details of the assessment

For information on the assessment objectives (AOs), see section 2.

Paper 1 Written paper

Written paper, 2 hours, 60 marks

Candidates answer two questions from Section A and one question from Section B.

Section A contains eight questions: four questions will be set from the nineteenth century Core Content in Option A and four questions will be set from the twentieth century Core Content in Option B. Candidates answer any **two** questions.

Section B contains two questions on each of the seven Depth Studies. Candidates answer **one** question.

All questions are in the form of structured essays, split into three parts: (a), (b) and (c).

This is a compulsory component.

The paper is an externally set assessment, marked by Cambridge International.

Paper 2 Written paper

Written paper, 2 hours, 50 marks

Candidates answer six questions on either the prescribed topic from the Core Content in Option A or the prescribed topic from the Core Content in Option B.

Each option includes a range of source material relating to the prescribed topic, and the six questions are based on the source material provided.

The prescribed topic changes in each examination session.

For the examination in 2023, the prescribed topics are:

Nineteenth century Core Content (Option A):

- Why, and with what effects, did Europeans expand their overseas empires in the nineteenth century? (*June examination*)
- What caused the First World War? (*November examination*)

Twentieth century Core Content (Option B):

- Why had international peace collapsed by 1939? (*June examination*)
- How secure was the USSR's control over Eastern Europe, 1948–c.1989? (*November examination*)

For the examination in 2024, prescribed topics are:

Nineteenth century Core Content (Option A):

- What caused the First World War? (*June examination*)
- Why, and with what effects, did Europeans expand their overseas empires in the nineteenth century? (*November examination*)

Twentieth century Core Content (Option B):

- Why did events in the Gulf matter c.1970–2000? (*June examination*)
- Who was to blame for the Cold War? (*November examination*)

For the examination in 2025, prescribed topics are:

Nineteenth century Core Content (Option A):

- How was Germany unified? (*June examination*)
- Why was there a civil war in the United States and what were its results? (*November examination*)

Twentieth century Core Content (Option B):

- To what extent was the League of Nations a success? (*June examination*)
- Why had international peace collapsed by 1939? (*November examination*)

This is a compulsory component.

The paper is an externally set assessment, marked by Cambridge International.

Command words

Command words and their meanings help candidates know what is expected from them in the exam. The table below includes command words used in the assessment for this syllabus. The use of the command word will relate to the subject context.

| Command word | What it means |
|-----------------|---|
| Describe | state the points of a topic / give characteristics and main features |
| Explain | set out purposes or reasons / make the relationships between things evident / provide why and/or how and support with relevant evidence |

Additional guidance

Phrases such as 'How far do you agree...?' and 'How significant...?' may also be seen in the assessment for this syllabus.

5 What else you need to know

This section is an overview of other information you need to know about this syllabus. It will help to share the administrative information with your exams officer so they know when you will need their support. Find more information about our administrative processes at www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide

Before you start

Previous study

We recommend that learners starting this course should have studied a history curriculum such as the Cambridge Lower Secondary programme or equivalent national educational framework.

Guided learning hours

We design Cambridge O Level syllabuses based on learners having about 130 guided learning hours for each subject during the course but this is for guidance only. The number of hours a learner needs to achieve the qualification may vary according to local practice and their previous experience of the subject.

Availability and timetables

Cambridge O Levels are available to centres in administrative zones 3, 4 and 5.

You can enter candidates in the June and November exam series. You can view the timetable for your administrative zone at www.cambridgeinternational.org/timetables

Check you are using the syllabus for the year the candidate is taking the exam.

Private candidates can enter for this syllabus. For more information, please refer to the *Cambridge Guide to Making Entries*.

Combining with other syllabuses

Candidates can take this syllabus alongside other Cambridge International syllabuses in a single exam series. The only exceptions are:

- Cambridge IGCSE History (0470)
- Cambridge IGCSE (9–1) History (0977)
- Cambridge IGCSE American History (0409) (for centres in the United States)
- Cambridge O Level History (Mauritius) (2162)
- Cambridge O Level History (Singapore) (2174)
- syllabuses with the same title at the same level.

Cambridge O Level, Cambridge IGCSE™ and Cambridge IGCSE (9–1) syllabuses are at the same level.

Making entries

Exams officers are responsible for submitting entries to Cambridge International. We encourage them to work closely with you to make sure they enter the right number of candidates for the right combination of syllabus components. Entry option codes and instructions for submitting entries are in the *Cambridge Guide to Making Entries*. Your exams officer has a copy of this guide.

Exam administration

To keep our exams secure, we produce question papers for different areas of the world, known as administrative zones. We allocate all Cambridge schools to one administrative zone determined by their location. Each zone has a specific timetable. Some of our syllabuses offer candidates different assessment options. An entry option code is used to identify the components the candidate will take relevant to the administrative zone and the available assessment options.

Support for exams officers

We know how important exams officers are to the successful running of exams. We provide them with the support they need to make your entries on time. Your exams officer will find this support, and guidance for all other phases of the Cambridge Exams Cycle, at www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide

Retakes

Candidates can retake the whole qualification as many times as they want to. Information on retake entries is at www.cambridgeinternational.org/entries

Equality and inclusion

We have taken great care to avoid bias of any kind in the preparation of this syllabus and related assessment materials. In our effort to comply with the UK Equality Act (2010) we have taken all reasonable steps to avoid any direct and indirect discrimination.

The standard assessment arrangements may present barriers for candidates with impairments. Where a candidate is eligible, we may be able to make arrangements to enable that candidate to access assessments and receive recognition of their attainment. We do not agree access arrangements if they give candidates an unfair advantage over others or if they compromise the standards being assessed.

Candidates who cannot access the assessment of any component may be able to receive an award based on the parts of the assessment they have completed.

Information on access arrangements is in the *Cambridge Handbook* at www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide

Language

This syllabus and the related assessment materials are available in English only.

After the exam

Grading and reporting

Grades A*, A, B, C, D or E indicate the standard a candidate achieved at Cambridge O Level.

A* is the highest and E is the lowest. 'Ungraded' means that the candidate's performance did not meet the standard required for grade E. 'Ungraded' is reported on the statement of results but not on the certificate.

In specific circumstances your candidates may see one of the following letters on their statement of results:

- Q (PENDING)
- X (NO RESULT).

These letters do not appear on the certificate.

On the statement of results and certificates, Cambridge O Level is shown as GENERAL CERTIFICATE OF EDUCATION (GCE O LEVEL).

How students and teachers can use the grades

Assessment at Cambridge O Level has two purposes:

- to measure learning and achievement

The assessment:

- confirms achievement and performance in relation to the knowledge, understanding and skills specified in the syllabus, to the levels described in the grade descriptions.

- to show likely future success

The outcomes:

- help predict which students are well prepared for a particular course or career and/or which students are more likely to be successful
- help students choose the most suitable course or career.

Grade descriptions

Grade descriptions are provided to give an indication of the standards of achievement candidates awarded particular grades are likely to show. Weakness in one aspect of the examination may be balanced by a better performance in some other aspect.

Grade descriptions for Cambridge O Level History will be published after the first assessment of the syllabus in 2020. Find more information at www.cambridgeinternational.org/2147

Changes to this syllabus for 2023, 2024 and 2025

The syllabus has been updated. This is version 1, published September 2020.

You must read the whole syllabus before planning your teaching programme.

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- Changes to syllabus content**
- The prescribed topics for Paper 2 have been changed for 2023, 2024 and 2025. Please see section 4 of this syllabus for the prescribed topics for 2023, 2024 and 2025.
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Any textbooks endorsed to support the syllabus for examination from 2020 are still suitable for use with this syllabus.



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