

Year 8 Humanities & Social Science

Semester 1 Unit Outline

Throughout Semester 1, students will engage in inquiry-based learning as they explore key concepts in history. They will develop critical thinking skills, learn how to analyse information, and build an appreciation for diverse perspectives.

In Term 1, students study Medieval Europe, focusing on the period between the end of the ancient world and the beginning of the modern era. They explore how life in medieval societies was shaped by religion, power, conflict, and social structures such as feudalism. Students investigate how beliefs, ideas, and institutions influenced daily life and contributed to both change and continuity over time. A key focus of the term is learning how historians use sources as evidence. Students develop questions about the past and work with a range of primary and secondary sources, including written records, legends, artworks, and chronicles. They learn how to describe the origin, content, context, and purpose of sources and how to decide what each source can and cannot be used as evidence for.

In Term 2, students broaden their understanding by studying societies beyond Europe. They explore Japan under the Shoguns (c.794–1867), examining how political structures, cultural traditions, and belief systems shaped Japanese society across centuries. Students also investigate Polynesian expansion across the Pacific (c.700–1756), focusing on navigation, migration, and strong connections to land and sea. Across these studies, students compare societies, examine different perspectives, and consider how environment, culture, and leadership influenced historical change and continuity. Students continue to strengthen their inquiry skills by evaluating sources, sequencing events, and constructing historical explanations and arguments using evidence.

Learning Outcomes

Students will be assessed on the following Learning Outcomes:

- Develops questions about the past to inform historical inquiry
- Locates and identifies primary and secondary sources as evidence in historical inquiry
- Describes the origin, content and context of sources, and explains the purpose of primary and secondary sources
- Uses historical knowledge, concepts, terms and evidence from sources to create descriptions, explanations and historical arguments

Assessment Tasks

Students will be assessed on their participation and completion of classwork and assessment tasks.

Task	Week Due*
Classwork	Ongoing
Participation in discussions	Ongoing
Source Analysis	Week 4, Term 1
Paragraph	Week 9, Term 1
Historical Investigation	Week 8, Term 2

*Due dates are an estimate only

Teachers: Tobias Hughes-Brown, Melinda Jenkins and Cath Eurell

Executive Teacher: Prue Gill

