



BEECHEN CLIFF

History

Curriculum Booklet

2025 - 2026

Head of History Department: Miss Mhairi Sinclair

Subject Curriculum Intent:

“Progress, far from consisting in change, depends on retentiveness. When experience is not retained, as among savages, infancy is perpetual. Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it.”

[George Santayana, 1905. Santayana was a Spanish-born American philosopher]

Our curriculum is intended to enable all students to access and enjoy the study of the past whilst equipping them with the knowledge and understanding, skills and attributes that will make them happy and successful lifelong learners. This curriculum is also designed to build a deep appreciation of the fundamental British values of democracy, the rule of law, individual liberty, mutual respect and tolerance for those with different faiths and beliefs. Similarly, it is permeated throughout with spiritual, moral, social and cultural considerations.

The transferable skills developed through studying History will enable students to take an active part in society as well-rounded citizens who will make a positive contribution to society. Our curriculum offers many opportunities for understanding, appreciating and developing the school's core values of aspiration, compassion, independence and respect. This curriculum is also a platform for the development of sophisticated communications skills. Building language [mastering command words and using specialist terminology, for example] and literacy skills is an essential component of teaching and learning History.

Building up students' confidence and skills in exploring and evaluating primary source material and historical interpretations is central to navigating the blizzard of data, opinion and propaganda which engulfs modern society. Similarly, understanding the impact of past events on the 'big picture' of human progress, stasis and regress is essential for appreciating the fundamentals of modern civilisation. Likewise, the intention of encouraging students to explore and evaluate contemporary political, economic, social and cultural issues permeates every learning activity.

At Beechen Cliff School we cater for a wide range of ability and needs, including a significant number of pupils with high prior attainment and our curriculum is designed so that all pupils are challenged, regardless of their ability, to achieve and exceed their potential. As such, we have a broad, balanced and aspirational curriculum which is founded on high expectations for all learners. The curriculum intent for History takes into account the specific needs of the learners we have the privilege to teach and the local community we serve.

While we help students to be prepared for the demands of examinations, our aim is for them to be confident in applying this knowledge so they are well prepared both for the challenges of assessment and for life beyond school.

Subject Curriculum Implementation:

Key Stage 3 (Years 7-9)

Our KS3 Curriculum exceeds the National Curriculum and covers a range of topics from the last thousand years, including many of the obvious 'landmark' stories from British history as well as some of the more challenging and charged stories of persecution and exploitation which still have a painful resonance today. We begin each lesson at KS3 by reviewing previous learning and looking at how the lesson fits within the wider context of the unit being studied, thus creating a broader, synoptic understanding of the curriculum. To ensure that all of our pupils achieve their full potential, classes are taught in mixed ability with extension tasks and support through scaffolding or differentiated materials where necessary. We use regular knowledge quizzes as well as less frequent formal assessments to check what pupils know and provide verbal and written feedback to ensure that they know what they have learned as well as what they need to do next. Pupils' historical literacy is developed by highlighting and modelling the use of keywords in lessons and through the use of extended writing tasks. In History students study some of the individuals and events that have shaped our world. Students learn to be analytical, inquisitive and articulate, and develop subject-specific skills. In Year 7 students first explore the medieval and early modern world, including the Norman conquest, challenges to medieval monarchs, medieval life, the Black Death, the Renaissance and the advent of the Tudors. In Year 8 students learn about turning-points in Tudor and Stuart England, The Civil War and the Protectorate, the Glorious Revolution, the Birth of Democracy, the British Empire and Slavery, and Civil Rights campaigns in the USA. In Year 9 students learn about the First World War, the failure of democracy in Germany, the rise of Nazism, the Holocaust and the Second World War, post-war International Relations during the Cold War, and the Troubles in Northern Ireland.

Key Stage 4 (Years 10-11)

History is taught in mixed ability classes at GCSE. While we follow the AQA specification and ensure pupils are prepared for the demands of examinations, our wider goal is to develop pupil's synoptic understanding of the subject so that they become outstanding historians. We begin each lesson at KS4 by reviewing previous learning and looking at how the lesson fits within the wider context of the unit being studied. Understanding is checked regularly through questioning in lessons, frequent low stakes knowledge tests, past exam questions, extended writing tasks and formal end-of-unit assessments. At Key Stage 4, we teach in mixed ability classes ensuring that all pupils have access to the same curriculum. Support through scaffolding of tasks and differentiated material is given where necessary and extension tasks are available for extra challenge. In Year 10 students learn about the development of healthcare in the last millennium in the Health and the people (c.1000 AD to the present day) module, and about Elizabethan England. In Year 11 students learn about opportunities and inequalities in American society between 1920 and 1973, and the Korean and Vietnam wars within the Conflict in Asia 1950-75 module.

Allocated Curriculum Time:

	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
Fortnightly lesson allocation	3	3	3	5	5

Year 7

	Curriculum Foci Areas	Assessment
Term 1	What was Anglo-Saxon life like? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is History? Why is 1066 an important date in History? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why did the Normans invade England in 1066? • Why did William win the Battle of Hastings? 	End of Term 1 Assessment
Term 2	How did medieval monarchs control England? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did William I consolidate his control over England? • How important were castles for a monarch's power? • What was the Magna Carta? 	
Term 3	Why did the peasants revolt? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did medieval people live their lives? • What was the impact of the Black Death? • What was the Peasants' Revolt? 	
Term 4	Did women rule the medieval world? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were the roles of women during the medieval time periods? • How significant were Early Female rulers? • Who was the most significant Early Female ruler? 	End of Term 3 Assessment
Term 5	How different was the Medieval Islamic Empire to Medieval Europe? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How and why did Islam spread so far, so fast? • Who were the key leaders of the Islamic Empire? • What were the English attitudes towards the Islamic Empire? 	End of Year Exam
Term 6	How far did the Reformation change England? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • How did the Tudor dynasty begin? • What was the impact of the English Reformation? • Was there a 'Mid Tudor Crisis'? 	

	Curriculum Foci Areas	Assessment
Term 1	How did Elizabeth I overcome the problems she faced as Queen? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What problems did Elizabeth I face? • How did England defeat the Spanish Armada? How did England end up at war with itself? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the gunpowder plot? • What were the causes of the English Civil War? 	End of Term 1 Assessment
Term 2	How did England become a constitutional democracy? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The course of the English Civil War [nb very local Battle of Lansdown] • Regicide • The Protectorate • The Glorious Revolution 	End of Term 2 Assessment
Term 3	How did protest lead to more democracy in Britain? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What was the impact of the Enlightenment? • To what extent was the Great Reform act 'great?' • How significant was the Chartist movement? • 	
Term 4	What is the legacy of the British slave trade? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were the origins of the Transatlantic slave trade? • How did individuals resist the slave trade? • What are Bath and Bristol's links with the slave trade? 	
Term 5	How did the empire change India? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Why did the British become Empire builders? • How did the British impact their colonies? • What is the legacy of the British Empire? 	End of Year Exam
Term 6	How were civil rights won in 20th century America? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What were the key events within the US Civil Rights movement? • How were these events mirrored in the UK? • Has equality been reached? 	

Year 9

	Curriculum Foci Areas	Assessment
Term 1	How did the First World War change the world? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Long term and short term causes • Course - Western Front focus • Consequences 	
Term 2	Why did German democracy end in dictatorship? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Post-war German politics and the failure of the Weimar Republic The rise of the Nazis <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The compelling ideology of hatred • The Great Depression Nazi Germany <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Totalitarianism in action, terror and persuasion and the racial state 	End of Term 1 Assessment
Term 3	How was the genocide of 6 million people possible? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What happened, how it happened and the reasons it happened. • What did resistance look like? 	End of Term 3 Assessment
Term 4	Why did the Allies win? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Causes, Course, Key moments and breakthrough technologies and the consequences. 	
Term 5	Frenemies to enemies: How did the Grand Alliance end? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The key flashpoints of the Cold War 	
Term 6	How did the Troubles end? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Broad history of the causes of tension up to 1921 • The trigger causes of the Troubles • The Good Friday Agreement • The impact of Brexit 	End of KS3 exam

	Curriculum Foci Areas	Assessment
Term 1	Health and the people, c.1000-present day Part one: Medicine stands still <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Medieval medicine. Medical progress. Public health in the Middle Ages: towns and monasteries; the Black Death in Britain, beliefs about its causes, treatment and prevention. Part two: The beginnings of change <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The impact of the Renaissance on Britain. Dealing with disease. Prevention of disease: inoculation; Edward Jenner, vaccination and opposition to change. 	End of Term 1 Assessment: Medieval and Renaissance medicine
Term 2	Part three: A revolution in medicine <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The development of Germ Theory. A revolution in surgery: anaesthetics, including Simpson and chloroform; antiseptics, including Lister and carbolic acid; surgical procedures; aseptic surgery. Improvements in public health. Part four: Modern medicine <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Modern treatment of disease. The impact of war and technology on surgery. Modern public health. 	End of Term 2 Assessment: Health and the People 1000-present
Term 3	Elizabethan England; 1568-1603 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part one: Elizabeth's court and Parliament. Background and character of Elizabeth I, Court life including patronage and key ministers. · Relations with Parliament. The problem of marriage and succession. Part two: Troubles at home: The question of religion, English Catholicism and Protestantism. The Northern Rebellion. Elizabeth's excommunication. 	End of Term 3 Assessment: Changes to religion and threats to rule
Term 4	Elizabethan England; 1568-1603 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Part three: Life in Elizabethan times. Living standards and fashions. Growing prosperity and the rise of the gentry. Reasons for the increase in poverty. Attitudes and responses to poverty. The reasons for government action and the seriousness of the problem. Part four: Troubles abroad: Naval warfare, including tactics and technology. The defeat of the Spanish Armada. Hawkins and Drake circumnavigation 1577–1580, voyages and trade. 	End of Term 4 Assessment: Elizabethan Golden Age
Term 5	Paper 2 Revision: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Key content and exam skills 	
Term 6	America, 1920-1973 - Part 1 - 1920 to 1929: "The Roaring Twenties"	End of Year Exam: Full Paper 2

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> The 'Boom': benefits, advertising and the consumer society; hire purchase; mass production, including Ford and the motor industry; inequalities of wealth; Republican government policies; 	
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Year 11

	Curriculum Foci Areas	Assessment
Term 1	America, 1920-1973 - Part 1 - 1920 to 1929: "The Roaring Twenties" <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Social and cultural developments. Divided society: organised crime, prohibition and their impact on society; the causes of racial tension, the experiences of immigrants and the impact of immigration. 	Term 1 Assessment: Paper 2 /40
Term 2	America, 1920-1973 - Part 2 – 1929 to 1945: The Great Depression, New Deal and WW2 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> American society during the Depression: unemployment; farmers; businessmen; Hoover's responses and unpopularity; Roosevelt's election as president. The effectiveness of the New Deal. The impact of the Second World War. America, 1920-1973 - Part 3 – 1945 to 1973: "The Age of Affluence" in post-war America <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Post-war American society and economy: consumerism and the causes of prosperity; the American Dream; McCarthyism; popular culture, including Rock and Roll and television. Racial tension and developments in the Civil Rights campaigns in the 1950s and 1960s. America and the 'Great Society': the social policies of Presidents Kennedy and Johnson relating to poverty, education and health; the development and impact of feminist movements in the 1960s and early 1970s, including the fight for equal pay; the National Organisation for Women, Roe v Wade (1973), the Supreme Court ruling on equal rights (1972) and opposition to Equal Rights Amendment. 	Mock exams: Paper 2
Term 3	Conflict in Asia, 1950-1975 - Conflict in Korea <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The causes of the Korean War. The development of the Korean War: the UN campaign in South and North Korea; Inchon landings and recapture of South Korea; UN forces advance into North Korea; reaction of China and intervention of Chinese troops October 1950; the sacking of MacArthur. The end of the Korean War: military stalemate around the 38th Parallel. 	Term 3 Assessment: America: Parts 1, 2, and 3
Term 4	Conflict in Asia, 1950-1975 - Escalation of conflict in Vietnam <ul style="list-style-type: none"> The end of French colonial rule: Dien Bien Phu and its consequences. 	Mock exams: Paper 1

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Johnson's War: the Gulf of Tonkin. <p>Conflict in Asia, 1950-1975 - The ending of conflict in Vietnam</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Nixon's War. Opposition to war: Kent State University; the importance of the media and TV in influencing public opinion; the context of the Watergate affair. The end of the war: the Paris Peace talks; the role of Kissinger; the US withdrawal; fall of Saigon; the price of conflict; problems of Vietnam in 1975. 	
Term 5 & 6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Revision and exams 	

Revision and Support:

Key Stage 3

Students will have knowledge organisers in their exercise books for each unit. Help them learn this key information by quizzing them on the facts found here.

Excellent resources are available here -

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/subjects/zk26n39>

Key Stage 4:

Students will have knowledge organisers in their exercise books for each unit. Help them learn this key information by quizzing them on the facts found here.

The AQA GCSE specification is here -

<https://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/history/specifications/AQA-8145-SP-2016.PDF>

Excellent resources are available here -

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/examspecs/zxjk4j6>

and here -

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zttypbk>

and here -

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/topics/zthf6yc>

Final Assessment Structure:

Component	Weighting (%)	Content	Proposed Examination Date (AQA)
Understanding the modern world	50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Conflict in Asia, 1950-75 America 1920-73; opportunity and inequality 	16/05/2025
Shaping the nation	50	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Health and the people, c.1000-present day Elizabethan England c.1568-1603 	05/06/2025