

A-Level History at Abingdon School

Unit 1

- **Early Stuarts & Civil War
1603-1660**

OR

- **Early Tudors 1485-1558**

Unit 1: Early Stuarts & Civil War

1603-1660

This British depth study explores the Stuart Era which saw changes in the way monarchy and parliament interacted with one another on a political and religious level. The course starts with us examining the reign of James I, who was the first monarch to rule over the United Kingdom of England and Scotland. During his reign there were many threats made against his life due to his abuse of the divine right of kings, the most famous being the Gunpowder Plot. Our study then leads us to explore the reign of Charles I and how his abuse of personal rule led to a war with parliament. The English Civil Wars tore apart families, led to the emergence and growth of radicalism, the Leveller debate and the trial and execution of Charles I. Cromwell's Commonwealth followed with more political intrigue and conflict due to Royalist plots and the problems in Ireland. The end of the course examines the restoration of Charles II and the monarchy within England. Due to this unit being source based there will be a great opportunity to explore a range of different historical perspectives on the key events and character it encompasses. Written Exam 25% of A Level



Unit 1: Early Tudors 1485-1558

The government of Henry VII and threats to his rule

Henry's claim to the throne; Yorkist opposition, Lovel, Stafford and Suffolk, the Pretenders, Simnel and Warbeck; relations with the nobility, rewards and punishments; royal finances and their administration, opposition to taxation in Yorkshire and Cornwall; administration, the personnel, Councils, local government and parliament.

Henry VII's foreign policy

England's position in Europe in 1485, Henry VII's aims; relations with Burgundy, France, Scotland and Spain; treaties of Medina del campo, Redon, Etaples and Ayton; marriage negotiations; trade agreements, including Magnus Intercursus and Malus Intercursus.

Henry VIII and Wolsey

Henry VIII's personality; his role in government to 1529; aims and policies in foreign affairs to 1529, Wolsey's role in foreign affairs; Wolsey's administration of government, finances, law and social reforms; the Church and its condition under Wolsey; the divorce and Wolsey's fall.

The reign of Henry VIII after 1529

Religious change and opposition, religious legislation in the 1530s and 1540s, the Dissolution of the Monasteries, the Pilgrimage of Grace; the rise and fall of Thomas Cromwell; the extent of Henry VIII's role in government in the 1540s; faction in 1540s; foreign policy in the 1540s, war with France and Scotland and its impact.

A-Level History at Abingdon School

Unit 2

• **American Revolution 1740-1796**

OR

• **French Revolution & Napoleon 1774-1815**

Unit 2: American Revolution 1740-1796

The development of British hegemony in America

- British, French and Spanish colonies in North America in 1740; socio-economic development and relations with settlers and Native
- American Indians; territorial expansion to 1765; wars with France, reasons for British success including War of Austrian Succession,
- Seven Years War.

Causes of the American Revolution

- The relationship between Britain and the colonies in 1763; British policy and America reaction including Proclamation Act (1763),
- Stamp Act (1765), Declaratory Act (1766), Townshend Duties (1767) and their repeal, the Boston Massacre (1770); Tea Act (1773) and
- response including the 'Intolerable Acts' (1774– 1775); developments in political thought and emerging leaders, including Locke,
- Jefferson, Dickinson, John Adams and Samuel Adams; colonial and political ideas including views on trade and taxation.

The American Revolution 1774–1783

- The move towards independence 1774–1776 including the first and second Continental Congresses, Declaration of Independence
- (1776); outbreak of hostilities, key military developments, their role in British defeat; American unity, including Washington, French
- entry to the war, quality of British military leadership; 1783 Peace of Paris.

The early Republic 1783–1796

- Move towards the creation of a constitution and challenges faced; Articles of Confederation; relations with Britain, Spain and France,
- economic problems, civil disobedience, Shay's rebellion 1786–1787, 1787 Philadelphia Convention; nature of the 1787 Constitution of
- the United States; struggle for ratification, divisions between Federalists and Anti-Federalists; formation of the first government (1789),
- Washington and the Executive; 1791 Bill of Rights; the problem of finding a successor to Washington in 1796



Unit 2: French Revolution & Napoleon 1774-1815

The causes of the French Revolution from 1774 and the events of 1789

The Revolution from October 1789 to the Directory 1795

Napoleon Bonaparte to 1807

The decline and fall of Napoleon 1807–1815



Unit 3: Thematic studies

China and its rulers, 1839-1989

Unit 3: China and its rulers 1839-1989

The government and rulers of China 1839-1989

- Nature of Manchu rule in 1839; reasons for and response to rebellions; obstacles to reform under Xi Xi, reforms after 1900; reasons for the 1911 Revolution; Sun Yat Sen and the new Republic; the rule of Yuan Shikai; the Guomindang and Jiang Jieshi; the Communist takeover; the government of China under Mao Zedong; changes after 1975; Deng Xiaoping.

The economy of China 1839-1989

- The Chinese economy in 1839; developments in Manchu China: railways, trade and industry, agrarian problems; the industrial and urban development under the Guomindang; Land reform under Communism; the Four Year Plans; the Great Leap Forward; economic policy in the later years of Mao and its impact; changes in the economy under Mao's successors; regional variations after 1975. \

Society in China 1839-1989

- Society in China under Manchu rule; Confucianism; the role of women; rural society; social changes in the later Manchu period; the Boxers; social developments after 1911; social factors in the rise of Communism; social change after 1949; the Cultural Revolution and Chinese society; social development after 1975; the rise of the middle class.

China and the wider world

- Foreign influence in Manchu China: the Opium Wars, the sack of Beijing and the Unequal Treaties; the international reaction to the Boxer Rebellion; Japanese aggression and war 1898-1945; Jiang Jieshi and relations with the USSR and the USA; the Korean War; relations with the West after 1949; China as a regional power in South Asia.



Unit 4: Coursework – c.4000 words.

Examples of questions:

- Assess the view that French involvement in the US War of Independence was the main reason for American victory
- Assess the view that Charles I's personal rule was a success
- Assess the view that religion was the main cause of the English Civil War
- Assess the view that Hamilton was primarily responsible for the viability of a young United States by the early 1800s.
- Assess the view that Cixi modernised China
- Assessed the view that Deng Xiaoping modernised China
- Assess the view that Mao modernised China in the period 1949 to 1966
- Assessed the view that Deng Xiaoping modernised China
- Assess the view that the English Civil War was a Puritan revolution
- Assess the view that Chiang Kai Shek was a successful leader
- Assess the view that Deng modernised China in the period 1976-1997
- Assess the view that the 1911 revolution in China was a failure

Timeline magazine!

- Hone your historical writing skills.
- Publish a termly magazine of genuine quality.
- This will be printed and issued to all parents, boys and teachers!



Trips visits and speakers – 2021/22

The Opium Wars and narcotic culture in China

Professor Lars Laamann

School of Oriental and African Studies

Why did Britain win the Seven Years War but not the American Revolutionary Wars?

Professor Jeremy Black

University of Exeter
Emeritus Fellow

The French Revolutionary and Napoleonic Wars

Dr Neil Sanghvi

University of Oxford

The rise and fall of Napoleon Bonaparte

Professor Michael Broers

University of Oxford

Upcoming lecture:

Professor Steven Gunn, Oxford - The early Tudors

Trips visits and speakers – 2021

Dr Rana Mitter

University of Oxford

**China: from conflict to
Confucius**

January 2021

Alex Beeton

University of Oxford

Life in Stuart Britain

Dr Neil Sanghvi

University of Oxford

Napoleon: man and legend

Trips visits and speakers – 2020

Professor Michael Lynch

Mao's Cultural Revolution

Stalin's Purges

Mr Nicholas Kinloch

**Analysing the rule of
October Revolution**

Professor Orlando Figes

Birkbeck, University of London

Professor Gary Sheffield

**Why the Allies won the First
World War**

**War Studies Dept, University
of Wolverhampton**

GCSE results – setting the platform for A-Levels:

		Grade 9	Grade 8	Grade 7	Grade 6	5	4	3	
2019	146 entries	88 pupils	35	17	5			1	
		60%	84%	96%	99%			100%	

Results since the new, linear A-Level specification:

2020 and 2021 were 'COVID years', so results not included here. These can be found on the school website.

Cumulative %	Total Entry	A*	A	B	C	
2017	55	13	23	13	5	1
		24%	66%	90%	99%	100%
2018	40	14	19	7		
		35%	82%	100%		
2019	50	15	22	13		
		30%	74%	100%		

History applicants to universities

2019:

- 19 pupils were awarded places to read History at Russell Group universities.
- Two pupils gained places to read History at Oxbridge.

2020:

- 17 pupils progressed to read History or History combined honours at Russell Group universities.
- One pupil gained a place to read History at Oxbridge.

2021:

- 17 pupils progressed to read History or History combined honours
- One pupil gained a place to read History at Oxbridge.

Wider reading and extension:

<https://abingdon.fireflycloud.net/online-library-resources/upper-school-resources/history/general-resources>

- Subscription to History Today.
- Subscription to Massolit
- JSTOR
- Dan Snow's History Hit TV
- Orlando Figes' Revolutionary Russia website
- Modern History Review

Extension programme from January through to December.

<https://abingdon.fireflycloud.net/history/sixth-form>

Getting a flavour of the Chinese history unit

The Opium War!

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0dfe7ct3Xvs>

