

A level History Transition Work 2021

Thanks for considering A level History. A level History is a fascinating subject and students enjoy it. However, it is a hard A-level – much harder than GCSE. Over the course of the A-level, you will need to commit to doing lots of independent study, lots of reading in between lessons, to research and write a 4000-word piece of coursework in your own time, and to revise for and sit 6 hours of tough History exams. The course is purely assessed through written work, and you will be receiving regular essays – probably in the region of 4 per half term.

This transition work has been designed with two purposes in mind:

- A) To give you a realistic idea of what A level History is going to be like
- B) To give you some useful context before starting the course.

This work may seem like a lot, but it is of a similar level to what you will be expected to do throughout your A-level. **At this stage we are not looking for perfection, but instead for evidence that you are motivated enough to be able to work on your own.** It's ok to make mistakes! If you're not willing or able to do these tasks, A-level History probably isn't going to be the right subject for you.

The transition work is below. All of the tasks must be fully completed. If they are not, or are not handed in on the first lesson back after the summer break, you will risk being removed from the course.

Please note – our department follows the new Edexcel A-level specification Route H 'Democracies in Change'. The precise modules are listed below. You will receive a free textbook to help you with the course so there is no need to buy your own. There are revision guides available but it is probably best to wait until September when you are 100% sure you will be taking the course.

Unit 1 – Britain Transformed 1918-1997.

1. You need to research, plan and write the following essay question.

'What was the most significant change to British society caused by the First World War?'

To answer this question, you will need to consider the changes that occurred to **Britain** during the First World War. **Please note – this is a domestic question, so please do not include significant digressions on the fighting on the Western Front.** Instead, consider the following:

- Political changes such as the rise of Lloyd George and subsequent split in the Liberal party, coalition government and the rise of the Labour party
- The changing role of women
- The economy and state control of industry
- The Representation of the People Act 1918
- Other social changes such as class etc.

You should aim to write at least 1,000 words on this question. Included are some scans of relevant reading from A-level textbooks, but you should also do some of your own research.

2. Research the three main political parties of the 20th century – Labour, Conservatives, and the Liberals (not Liberal Democrats until the 1980s). Produce a poster for each, summarising key leaders, time in government, main ideas, quotes etc.
3. There is a lot of subject specific vocabulary that you will need to learn and understand in order to be able to make sense of much of the A-level. Below is a list of key terms. Please provide definitions/explanations on each of them. You may find this useful to present in a visually appealing way as a reference guide for later use.

KEY TERMS – PLEASE PROVIDE DEFINITIONS

British Constitution	Cabinet	White paper
Parliament	Prime Minister	General election
House of Lords	Government	Local elections
House of Commons	Opposition	By elections
Bills, and how they became Acts of Parliament	Peers	Referendums
'The Queen's Speech'	Legislation	First past the post
Monarch	Royal Assent	Proportional representation
Select committees	Amendment	Majority
Constituents	Divisions	Hung Parliament
Constituencies	Filibuster	Coalition
Backbencher	Free vote	Pressure group
Executive	Green paper	Direct action
	Motion	

Unit 2 – The USA, Conformity and Challenge 1955-92

1. Produce two posters summarising the two main political parties of the USA – the Republicans and Democrats. Include information on key leaders, Presidents, control of Congress, ideas, policies, quotes etc.
2. Research a President of the USA from 1955-92. Make notes on their policies, achievements/failures. There are thousands of sites online to help with this, as well as many books. Try to read a range of accounts to avoid political bias! When you've finished, write an essay on this question:

'To what extent was President _____ a successful president?'

To write this essay, you will need to consider what makes a successful president. This usually includes the ability to deliver on their manifesto promises, their control of Congress and ability to pass laws, dealing with issues such as race, sexuality, crime, drugs, gender issues, their record on the economy, and their record on foreign relations. Try to deal with these in separate paragraphs, before delivering your final conclusion.

You should aim to write at least 1,000 words on this question.

3. Like the Britain course, the US course is full of political terminology. It would be very helpful if you started reading the news as this will get you up to speed. In the meantime, please research and find out the meaning of these terms. We have included some resources to help you.

Key terms

Federal government
Executive
President
Congress
Senate
House of Representatives
Supreme Court
States
Electoral college
Senators

Supreme Court Justices
Legislature
US Constitution
Republic
Separation of powers
Judiciary
Presidential elections
Congressional elections
Mid-term elections

Primaries
Checks and balances
Presidential veto
Budget
Two party system