

# Curriculum Overview - History

## Principles and Purpose of the History Curriculum

The purpose of the history curriculum is to help pupils gain a coherent knowledge and understanding of Britain's past and that of the wider world. We want to inspire pupils' curiosities to know more about the past and learn to ask perceptive questions, think critically, weigh evidence, assess arguments, and develop perspective and judgement. Studying history will help students to understand the complexity of people's lives, the process of change, the diversity of societies and relationships between different groups, as well as their own identity and the challenges of their time.

### The following principles have informed the planning of the United Learning curriculum across all subjects:

- **Entitlement:** All pupils have the right to learn what is in the United Learning curriculum, and schools have a duty to ensure that all pupils are taught the whole of it.
- **Coherence:** Taking the National Curriculum as its starting point, our curriculum is carefully sequenced so that powerful knowledge builds term by term and year by year. We make meaningful connections within subjects and between subjects.
- **Mastery:** We ensure that foundational knowledge, skills, and concepts are secure before moving on. Pupils revisit prior learning and apply their understanding in new contexts.
- **Adaptability:** The core content – the 'what' – of the curriculum is stable, but schools will bring it to life in their local context, and teachers will adapt lessons – the 'how' – to meet the needs of their classes.
- **Representation:** All pupils see themselves in our curriculum, and our curriculum takes all pupils beyond their immediate experience.
- **Education with character:** Our curriculum - which includes the taught subject timetable as well as spiritual, moral, social, and cultural development, our co-curricular provision and the ethos and 'hidden curriculum' of the school – is intended to spark curiosity and to nourish both the head and the heart.

### Here we explore these principles in the context of the history curriculum:

- **Entitlement:** All pupils will study a broad range of content from the past 1000 years, they will access a range of evidence and historical scholarship through their enquiries.
- **Coherence:** Our curriculum is chronologically sequenced with a focus on period, place, and people, which deliberately builds on and develops conceptual and disciplinary knowledge.
- **Mastery:** We want our pupils to be able to link new knowledge to previously taught content and understand the different ways they connect.
- **Adaptability:** Teachers can adapt our resources for their specific cohorts. Local history will be embedded by each department throughout the curriculum where it is relevant for their context.
- **Representation:** All pupils will encounter a curriculum in which they can see themselves whilst offering a range of diverse experiences that provide an opportunity to broaden their knowledge through the curriculum.
- **Education with character:** Through the curriculum, pupils are given many opportunities to debate historical controversy and to share and reflect on a range of topics. Within their school and local communities, there are moments for students to extend their learning beyond the classroom, such as remembrance and commemoration of significant events.



## Roadmap of the History Curriculum

The roadmap diagram on the following page sets out the route that we expect pupils to take through our curriculum. The roadmap shows that the curriculum is chronologically sequenced, with Year 7 grounded in the medieval period before moving to the European Renaissance. This is developed in Year 8, exploring the Renaissance in England, before moving on to the Industrial period. Year 9 then zooms in on the 20<sup>th</sup> century, or the modern period. Within each period there are opportunities to explore a variety of places, locally, nationally, and globally, whilst hearing from a range of diverse voices that consider different experiences. There are 6 units in each year with some more substantive than others. Each unit includes an overarching enquiry question that will provide the core knowledge for our summative assessment. Each enquiry has a secondary concept at its core, such as cause and consequence; change and continuity; significance, similarity, and difference; and historical interpretation.

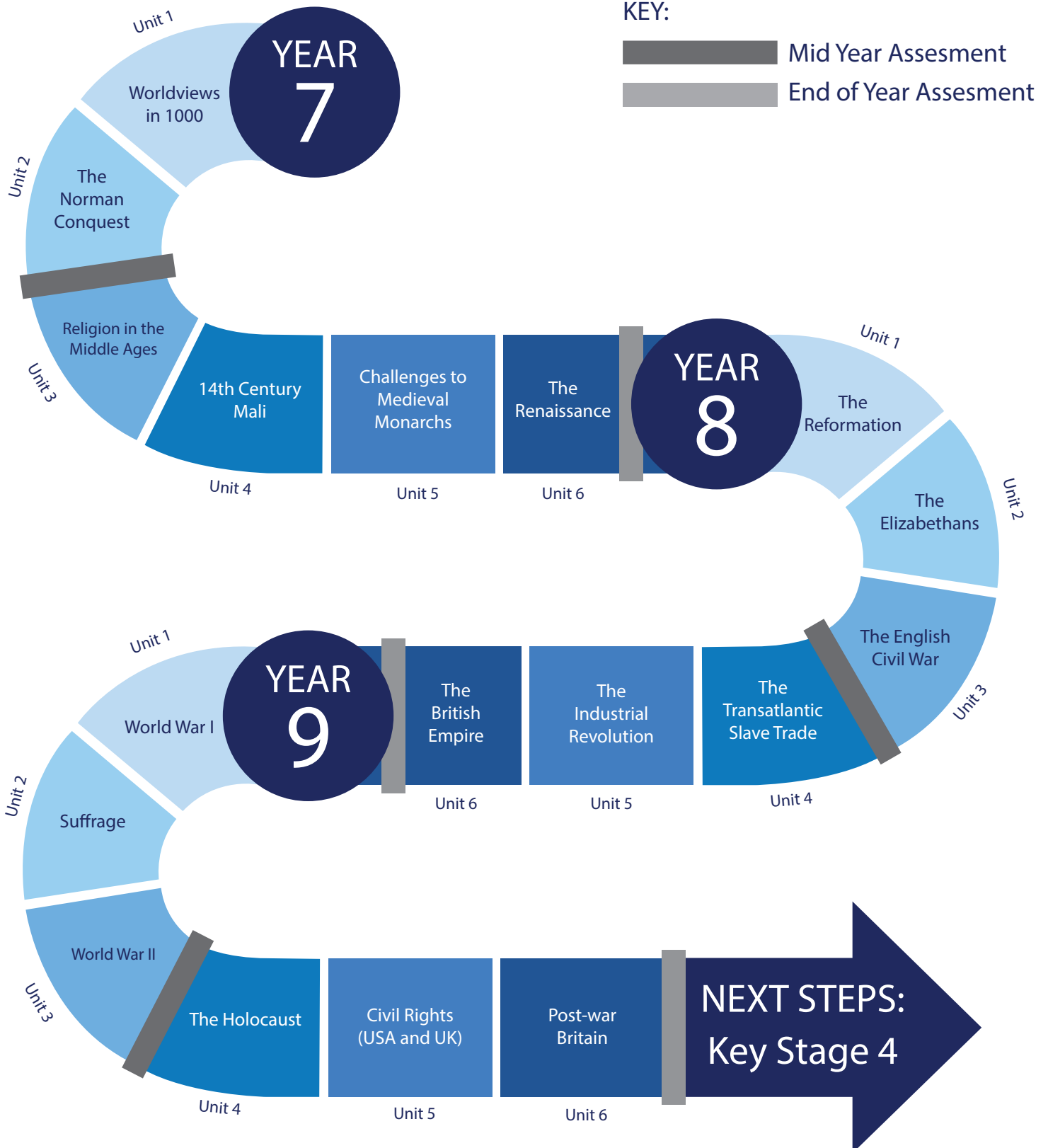




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# HISTORY

## Key Stage 3



## 'Why This, Why Now?'

In our planning, we have asked ourselves 'why this, why now?' Here we provide some examples of the curriculum choices we have made, and why the units have been placed in the order we have chosen:

- Year 7 unit 1 begins in Constantinople, where East meets West, ideas are exchanged, religions coexist, and trade flourishes. This provides an understanding of the interconnectedness between different parts of the world, such as tracking the influence of the Spice Roads from China into Europe. Students gain significant context and foundational knowledge about Christianity and Islam for later in the year when they visit this region again in unit 3 through the lens of medieval conflict and the crusades. It also prepares them with a conceptual understanding of the development of scientific knowledge and the spread of ideas. This is built on in unit 6, when they learn about the Renaissance, and explore the age of discoveries. The Year 7 curriculum comes full circle as unit 6 begins with the collapse of Constantinople in the 15<sup>th</sup> century, 400 years after they initially studied its importance and influence in the region in unit 1.
- The concepts of power and authority are present throughout Key Stage 3. For example, in Year 7 unit 3 the power struggle between the Crown and the Church are introduced. These are developed in unit 5 when individual challenges to authority are studied, such as Becket, Magna Carta and the Peasants' Revolt. This power struggle culminates in the English Reformation at the beginning of Year 8 when huge religious upheaval led to long-lasting political and social changes. This is further developed in unit 2 by examining Elizabethan conspiracies and then we consider just how England ended up in a period of civil war. In unit 3, the English Civil War explores changes in power and authority, such as the strengthening of parliament and how the commonwealth briefly interrupted the system of constitutional monarchy for the only time in our national history.
- In Year 8 the concept of Britain's emerging empire begins in unit 2 with the early days of Tudor exploration and expansionism under Elizabeth I. Unit 3 then examines how and why Charles II became involved in Royal African Company and the role trade and profit played in the development of the early empire. In unit 4, the Transatlantic Slave Trade highlights the establishment of an industrial system dehumanizing people to Britain's benefit. Links between the slave trade routes and the scale and success of the Industrial Revolution are made in unit 5. In unit 6 The British Empire is addressed at its height including the actions and consequences of colonial rule for different people in different places. A range of diverse stories from across the British Empire provides different experiences and connections are revisited to tie pockets of information throughout Year 8 together by analysing links through empire with trade, slavery, identity, migration, race, profit, and political power.
- Black history is integrated throughout Key Stage 3. In Year 7 at the beginning of unit 2, we use a bridging lesson to consider *what happened after the withdrawal of the Roman Empire from the British Isles?* and use evidence of the 'Ivory-bangle lady' for discussion around migration and to consider the role and status that Africans played in this society. This is picked up in Year 8 unit 2 when migration from Africa is explored again through Henry VIII's court. In unit 4 the role of Black people and their influence is central to the debate around abolition. In unit 6, again through the lens of migration, we meet some seemingly ordinary but highly remarkable individuals, such as William Cuffey, a black chartist deported to Tasmania whose story would never be known if it was not for the deportation records. In Year 9 we draw on the forgotten soldiers of the trenches, where we pause to consider why there is such a lack of evidence of black lives throughout all the periods they have studied. In unit 5 we explore civil rights in 20<sup>th</sup> century Britain including the roles of local grassroots activists campaigning for a fairer society in education, housing, health and in the workplace. In unit 6 we examine the consequences of Windrush and mass migration both at the time and retrospectively.
- Protest movements and campaigns feature throughout Key Stage 3 history, and importantly these units are where concepts around identity and belonging are developed. In Year 7 unit 5 the Peasants' Revolt



provides a clear moment that ordinary people, downtrodden by feudalism, challenged authority and believed they could make a change for the better. In Year 8 we consider the role of popular campaigns by working-class and middle-class people to abolish the Atlantic slave trade. In Year 9 through the suffrage movement, we explore campaigns led by women and consider which methods were the most successful and why. Through the American Civil Rights Movement, we explore grassroots campaigns, legal challenges, direct action, and the evolution of the Black Power Movement. In unit 6, Postwar Britain, we explore significant moments of social protest for different groups, and we consider how far progress was made.

- Departments are expected to teach about their local history and to thread it through units. Therefore, these do not need to be entire units of work or even lessons, for example, a case study of a local person during an event (like a soldier from WWI), or an investigation into a site study (like a castle or a canal or factory) that reveals something to the pupils about the locality they are growing up in and its significance at different moments in time that they connect to the bigger picture.

## Teaching the History Curriculum

The lessons provided within the curriculum are based on a knowledge-rich history scheme and the key concepts of knowledge-rich teaching as set out in the Rosenshine Principles of Instruction. This means there is a real focus on subject knowledge and a true understanding of historical substantive concepts e.g. revolution, monarchy, empire.

Recent cognitive research suggests that students need to have a large amount of subject knowledge stored in their long-term memory to become competent in any subject. Pupils are far better equipped to apply historical thinking and use historical skills when faced with the information they know and understand. For this reason, these lessons are designed to teach history clearly and deliberately, emphasising secure content knowledge before moving on to tasks. This is a step away from the 'student-centred learning' movement and puts value back onto the teacher and gives room for students to read and take notes and quiz themselves. This means students learn the content upfront and any misunderstanding or misconception is explained and addressed before students work independently, ensuring they feel more confident and are more focused on what is required. All central lessons follow the same pattern of I/we/you: Explanation/modelling >> guided practice >> independent practice.

As suggested in the Rosenshine Principles, all subjects are better understood when new information is related to prior learning. For example, the Peasants' Revolt is more easily understood when students have learnt and mastered the Feudal System and the Black Death. Prior learning and interleaving are therefore activated in every lesson, indicating where prior content or keywords should be revisited.

### So when we walk into a history lesson, what should we expect to see?

- **Recap** on previous learning – lessons start with a short review of previous learning. Often this will take the form of a short quiz on content from the previous lessons and any other lessons where the content may be relevant to the learning. As units progress, these quizzes become slightly more sophisticated and challenge students with more higher-order thinking as they are more confident in the content. Frequent review strengthens student memory and helps to ensure they are mastering the content.
- **Pre-teach** new material – before students read or discover new content themselves, teachers take a few minutes to explain any complicated or new concepts. This could include clearing up key language, new historical concepts or ideas, geography, or just simplifying what might seem overwhelming. Teachers may want to talk briefly (for non-specialists and new teachers there is suggested language in the accompanying teacher guidance to each lesson) or question students to pull out relevant ideas.



- **Read/discover** new material – each lesson provides a task where students are required to engage with new material. Often a worksheet, an extract from a historian or a short video clip is provided. Teachers can be as creative as they wish or have time for here. Students can work in pairs or groups or independently in their books. Extracts and worksheets can be read out by the teacher first or as a class before students begin on their own.
- **Condense** new material into an easily understood format – students will then reproduce what they have learnt into a format that will aid their understanding. Often this will be in the form of a comprehension task on what they have just discovered and again can be completed individually in a group or as a pair. Activities may also include completing a timeline, annotating a map or an image, producing a storyboard or completing a worksheet. These activities should be followed by a whole class check to ensure students have completed the task correctly. The teacher can question students, but a mini-plenary quiz is always provided with each lesson after this activity which can be self or peer-assessed.
- **Apply** new knowledge – having acquired new knowledge students must now apply it to a higher-order task. Lessons provide a range of tasks to achieve this including source analysis, further reading of a more complex piece of historical writing or extended writing (given time constraints this often takes the form of an explaining paragraph which will work towards a longer piece of writing for assessment).
- **Review material learnt** – each lesson ends with a review quiz in which students must answer a slightly more complex or open set of questions on the content from the lesson. Again, depending on time these can be bounced around the room verbally by the teacher or written in books and self or peer-assessed. However, teachers need to regularly cast an eye over these tests to make sure all students are keeping up. The more students review the content, the more student memory is strengthened.
- **In Year 11 history lessons we particularly expect to see:**
  - The same pattern of learning articulated in Key Stage 3: I/we/you.
  - Teachers guiding students on how to answer different questions stems. A few include:
    - *Explain why? What can you infer? Write an account? How useful is the source? How far do you agree? How important was it?*
  - Pupils annotating interpretations and considering the evidence it is based on and planning their answers.
  - Pupils writing their responses to ‘How far do you agree’ questions (25 mins); Teachers circulating.
  - Pupils reading out their responses and taking feedback on how to improve.
- **In Sixth Form history lessons we particularly expect to see:**
  - The same pattern of learning articulated in Key Stage 3: I/we/you.
  - Frequent opportunities for independent student responses to texts, questions, and discussion points
  - High academic expectations alongside effective support for students at different levels
  - Opportunities for a challenging, high-quality discussion between students.
  - Students referring to well-organised materials, notes, and work from previous lessons to support their learning.

Our curriculum is designed to provide a challenge for all learners. Teachers are expected to adapt resources for the needs of their students.

#### SEND adaptations:

- Consider a sequence of lessons, prioritise the central lessons of an enquiry. Identify relevant prior learning students have and use it as a link to the new enquiry to build and relevance.





- Chunk content into shorter sequences, with frequent opportunities for consolidation and checking understanding.
- In whole-class reading, a teacher reading fluidly and pausing to check understanding can be more beneficial than students struggling with reading fluently and content getting lost. When there is a significant key 'tricky' word use chanting to build confidence e.g. feudalism, the papacy, reformation.
- Revisit chronology through timelines and sorting activities weekly, e.g. can students spot the anachronism within a period. Can they put 5 events from the enquiry in the correct order? They should become fluent at changing between dates, decades, centuries and 'periods' of history e.g. medieval, renaissance, industrial.
- Homework should support the central content of every lesson and reinforce the central concept of the week. Topic summary sheets, Seneca, and fluency sheets can be used to support this learning.

### Most able adaptations:

- In a high ability setting the higher stakes learning activities should be prioritised within a lesson. If there are individuals within a mixed ability group, the additional resources (worksheets) can be printed to allow students to work independently at a quicker rate. Check understanding through extended written work.
- Reading is crucial for developing nuance, many lessons include additional reading from historian scholarship. This can challenge pupils to consider why there are different interpretations of the same event or period. Additional reading lists from your school library will help students develop their contextual knowledge.
- Allowing students to consider the complexities of chronology, such as where one period ends and another begins, and developing their sense of period will provide a solid foundation for Key Stage 4 thematic studies on which to layer their content knowledge at GCSE.
- Additional to the class homework, most able students will benefit from independent research projects that supplement central concepts.

## Assessing the History Curriculum

### Formative Assessment in History

Our curriculum emphasises secure knowledge as the foundation before progressing to the application of the skill (e.g., evaluation). Lessons begin with 'Do Now' which test new and prior knowledge and lessons end with a review quiz that also checks new and prior knowledge. There are frequent pause points in many lessons to recap and test the main concept or knowledge of a lesson.

In the notes section of resource PowerPoints, we offer guidance on the questions that should be asked in a lesson to check for understanding and provides teachers with the responses they should expect to elicit from students.

Regular extended tasks contained with the scheme of work demonstrate whether students are accurately embedding the key knowledge and applying the key skill into developed responses. By reviewing these tasks as part of whole-class feedback, teachers can identify the things that students can and cannot do. This enables teachers to adapt their teaching to ensure that they only move on when students are secure.

Every enquiry is a BIG question which needs to be answered, this means a unit of work usually culminates in the question being answered by pupils in an assessment lesson.

Quizzing platforms, like Seneca, are linked to the United Learning history curriculum resources on the curriculum website where they exist, to make using these accessible for teachers to match the content. In every unit of work



there are also Topic Summary sheets and Fluency Sheets to be used formatively: daily, weekly, termly across units.

### Summative Assessment in History

Year 7, 8 and 9 will sit a common end of year assessment. This is structured in three sections:

	Section A: chronology & knowledge	Section B: skills	Section C: extended writing
<b>Year 7</b> 60 mins	MCQ and closed questions. Sequencing activity.	Source inference. Describe.	Statement. How far do you agree?
<b>Year 8</b> 70 mins	Closed questions. Sequencing activity.	Source utility. Explain/change.	Statement. How far do you agree?
<b>Year 9</b> 70 mins	Closed questions.	Narrative account. Interpretations, what is different, which is the most convincing?	Statement. How far do you agree?

The assessments are summative, so in Year 9 there will be knowledge from across Year 7 and Year 8.

Where possible these are sat in a central exam hall, where all students in the year group sit it at the same time.

### Recovery and Catch-up in History

Once an assessment has been made of where there are gaps in either content knowledge or/ and with skills the following can be used to support the pupils to help them catch up:

- United Learning pupil curriculum website recorded lessons.
- Oak Key Stage 3 resources and catchup resources.
- Print out the United Learning teacher resources (worksheet packs) from the teacher curriculum website.
- Use Seneca to test their knowledge.

Departments will also meet to discuss where there are skills gaps and mindfully feed this forward into their planning of disciplinary history next year across the new content.

## Progression in the History Curriculum

### Progression between Key Stages

Pupils arrive at secondary history with a variable range of knowledge and skills. The Romans and Anglo-Saxons are expected to have been delivered in Year 6 and it is worth formatively checking this baseline learning in the early days of your Key Stage 3 curriculum. At Key Stage 3, we build on concepts that will be emerging such as empire, power, and rebellion. Where there is existing knowledge in separate units, we try to help students make links and adapt their thinking, so it transcends periods, places, and people.

Key Stage 3 history curriculum is an exciting place for students to connect with stories from our past. At Key Stage 4 pupils are on an academic pathway to develop their disciplinary knowledge and deepen their substantive knowledge across four key units of an exam specification. Important historical skills are developed from analysing evidence and evaluating interpretations.

At Key Stage 5 pupils develop highly sought after and transferable skills. These include being able to effectively communicate complex ideas, the ability to research, analyse and evaluate information, both orally and in writing, and the capacity to make substantiated judgements, all whilst developing independent work skills.





## Progression to University and Careers

History is one of the Russell Group Universities' 'facilitating' subjects — so-called because choosing them at A-level allows a wide range of options for degree study. One of the most flexible of qualifications, history provides an excellent pathway to degrees such as history, law, English and philosophy, and beyond that to a range of interesting careers.

Pupils can learn about researching and selecting the right history course here: [Historical & Philosophical Studies | Subject Guide | UCAS](#) and here: <https://www.thecompleteuniversityguide.co.uk/subject-guide/history>

## The History Curriculum Website

Our classroom resources are designed to put teachers in the driving seat. We provide centrally planned resources so that teachers can focus on preparing lessons for their classes and pupils. We have tried to be clear about the purpose of each resource, and all of the resources we have produced support the principles shared in this document. Ultimately, once a teacher downloads and adapts a resource it becomes their lesson.

All resources can be found on the [United Learning Curriculum Website](#).

