



PiXL Gateway: Progression

History

A Transition Unit of Work

The beginning of your journey to becoming an
A Level Historian

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Building Block 1: Chronology

During your A Level studies you will be exploring new time periods, topics and themes in both breadth and depth. Understanding the key chronology of your units will be central to your ability to both analyse sources in their context and engage critically and meaningfully with essay questions.

Step 1: Identify which three examination units you will be completing as part of your A Level studies.

Step 2: Create a timeline on A3 paper which spans the entire time period you will be studying for each of your three units.

Step 3: On your timeline, plot on the key events with full dates and titles.

Step 4: For each event, can you write a brief description of what happened and the consequences of it?

Step 5: In a separate colour, draw and annotate arrows explaining the connections between the events in your timeline – how are key events/changes connected?

Step 6: Counterfactual analysis is a key component of A Level study. For 5 of the events on your timeline, can you explain how history would have been different if this event had not occurred? Can you predict how your timeline might have looked different? What does this tell you about the importance of this event within this unit of work?

Challenge: Can you now begin to explain the strengths and limitations of timelines? How far, and in what ways, will they be useful to you in studying the past?

Building Block 2: Causation and Consequence

A majority of the essays you write throughout Year 12 and Year 13 will address the conceptual focuses of causation and consequences – why do events happen, and what are the implications of them?

Step 1: From your timeline for each of your examination units, identify 5 key events (if in doubt, double check with your History teacher for Year 12 to see if the events you have chosen are suitable!).

Step 2: Create a mind map, with the event in the middle, divided into two sections – causes and consequences.

Step 3: On the left hand-side, identify between 5-10 causes as to why this event happened. For each event use the “shades of likelihood” scale to explain how far, and in what ways, this cause led to the event occurring:

1	2	3	4	5
Partially	Noticeably	Dramatically	Certainly	

Step 4: For your causes, now categorise your factors into the following themes: political; social; economic; long-term cause; and short-term cause.

Step 5: From your causation map, can you now identify what you think is the most important cause behind this event, and justify your decision?

Step 6: On the right hand-side, identify between 5-10 consequences that occurred as a result of this event.

Step 7: For your consequences, now categorise them into the following themes: political; social; economic; long-term consequence; and short-term consequence. Can you explain the links between your consequences?

Step 8: Can you identify what you think is the most important consequence of this event, and justify your decision?

Building Block 3: Significance

One of the central recurring themes in A Level History is the role and significance of individuals in shaping events. Why is it that some individuals are more significant than others? In what ways, if at all, can the contributions of some individuals to the past be unprecedented? In what ways are some events in the past inevitable, unaffected by human agency?

Step 1: From your timeline, identify 5 key individuals from each of your examination units (if in doubt, double check with your History teacher for Year 12 to see if the people you have chosen are suitable!).

Step 2: For each of your individuals, complete the grid below, explaining the ways that they are significant:

In what ways was this individual's actions or ideas remarkable, both at the time and since?

Why are the actions of this person remembered today and in the past?

What do the actions and ideas of this individual reveal to us about the values and concerns of the time period in which they lived?

In what ways did the actions or ideas of this individual result in short or long term consequences?

Step 3: Based upon your grids, which of your individuals do you think was most significant and why? If you had to rank them into an order of significance, what would your criteria be for what makes an individual significant in the past?

Building Block 4: Interpretation

A Level History will not only require you to study the past, but also to engage critically with the interpretations of different historians about the past: historiography.

Task 1: Select one of the texts from the reading list below. You might want to select something that will help you prepare for your A Level units in Year 12, or explore something new – speak to your teacher for advice!

Task 2: Write a book review of your text, addressing the questions below:

- What are the key arguments of this historian?
- How convincing do you find these arguments, and why?
- What surprised you about this historian's interpretation of the past, and why?
- What did this text reveal to you about the nature and the challenges of studying History?

David Abulafia, *The Great Sea: A Human History of the Mediterranean*, 2011

R.J.B Bosworth, *Mussolini*, 2002

C.Browning, *Ordinary Men: Reserve Police Battalion 101 and the Final Solution in Poland*, 1992

David Cannadine, *What is History Now?*, 2000

D.Carpenter, *The Struggle for Mastery: Britain 1066-1284*, 2003

E.H.Carr, *What is History?*, 2001

William H.Chafe, *The Unfinished Journey: America since World War II*, 1999

Peter Clarke, *Hope and Glory: Britain 1900-2000*, 2004

D.Crouch, *The Normans: The History of a Dynasty*, 2002

Frank Dikotter, *The Cultural Revolution: A People's History 1962-1976*

R.J.Evans, *In Defence of History*, 2001

R.J.Evans, *The Coming of the Third Reich*, 2003

R.J.Evans, *The Pursuit of Power: Europe 1815-1914*, 2016

N.Ferguson, War of the World: History's Age of Hatred, 2006

N.Ferguson, The Pity of War: Explaining World War I, 1998

Orlando Figes, A People's Tragedy: The Russian Revolution 1891-1924, 1996

Shelia Fitzpatrick, The Russian Revolution 1917-32, 1994

E.H.H.Green, Thatcher, 2006

Yuval Noah Harari, Sapiens: A Brief History of Humankind, 2015

E.J.Hobsbawm, Age of Extremes: The Short Twentieth Century, 2006

E.J.Hobsbawm, The Age of Revolution 1789-1848

Simon Jenkins, A Short History of England, 2012

T.Judt, Postwar: A History of Europe since 1945, 2005

D.Kynaston, Austerity Britain: 1945-51, 2007

M.Mazower, Dark Continent: Europe's Twentieth Century, 1998

Andrew Marr, The History of Modern Britain, 2017

John Morrill, Oxford Illustrated History of Tudor and Stuart England, 1996

D.Reynolds, One World Divisible: A Global History since 1945, 2000

J.M.Roberts, Penguin History of the Twentieth Century: The History of the World, 1901 to the present, 2004

Edward Said, Orientalism, 1978

D.Sandbrook, Never had it So Good, 2005

Robert Service, Stalin: A Biography, 2004

Mike Sewell, The Cold War, 2002

Jonathan Sperber, Revolutionary Europe 1780-1850, 2000

David Starkey, The Reign of Henry VIII, 1985

Robert Tombs, The English and Their History, 2014

Stephen Tuck, We Ain't What We Ought To Be: The Black Freedom Struggle from Emancipation to Obama, 2010

Gordon Wood, Empire of Liberty: A History of the Early Republic 1789-1815, 2011



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