



The beginning of your journey to becoming an A Level Historian

Exam board: OCR

Your summer task is to complete the activities outlined in this booklet for the two units you will study in Year 12:

1. Britain 1930-1997
2. Democracy and Dictatorships in Germany 1919-1963

These activities are designed to help build some of the key skills (building blocks) that you will need for A-level History:

- I. Building Block 1: Chronology
- II. Building Block 2: Causation and Consequence
- III. Building Block 3: Significance

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 two examination units you will be completing in Year 12.

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

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?

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?