Pyrland School

History

Curriculum Booklet for 2026 – 2027

Subject Lead: Ms M Sylvian

Midsomer Norton Schools Partnership

History Curriculum Intent:

David McCullough (Historian): "History is a guide to navigation in perilous times. History is who we are and why we are the way we are."

The history curriculum at Pyrland School is an ambitious journey through over a thousand years, telling the story of humanity. In line with our school's vision, we want students to "live life in all its fullness" by engaging with stories and debates about the past to try and make sense of the world around them.

The curriculum is bound together by three ambitious golden threads that create our students' learning journey: **Empires and Colonialism, Beliefs & Ideologies and Power & Protest.** They are the rhythms that beat throughout our story and drive forward our learning to give our curriculum purpose. They scaffold the curriculum to help our students make sense of the world in different contexts and promote a chronological study of the past. This approach empowers our young people to be ambitious and helps them to make connections between those contexts such as national and global history.

Reflection threads help students imbibe the cultural capital necessary to succeed in the world beyond school. This approach empowers our young people to deploy historically abstract terms into different contexts and help make connections between those contexts such as national and global history.

The History curriculum is studied through the second-order concepts: Cause & Consequence, using evidence, Interpretations, Significance, Change & continuity and Similarity & difference. These concepts help students to experience History as an academic subject and engage with the discipline of studying history. Students engage with the contestations around the past, promote analytical thinking and move beyond a simple narrative of events. Students should be able to identify and deploy subject-specific language. By critically engaging with evidence and interpretations, we help students recognise that History is a construct that is neither certain, nor static and enables young people to engage with the demands of historical inquiry.

Ultimately, our intent is to provide all students with an ambitious, coherent and chronological narrative of Britain and the wider world. We want young people to be enthusiastic historians instilled with a love of learning about the past that they can take into the future.

History Curriculum Implementation:

The foundation of our History implementation is that it is taught chronologically. To help our students encounter historical knowledge in broader contexts. Our classes are mainly mixed ability, but with a top set in key stage three to ensure the most able receive additional challenges. Nevertheless, we push all students to fulfil their potential by frequently posing "*challenge*" questions. We also use stories to engage students in the study of the past, this could be centred around an object, a place or person. Narratives bring history to life and help contextualise complex historical events.

The History department has a spiral curriculum to interleave historical knowledge. We deploy our golden threads throughout the curriculum so that students can experience them in different contexts. For example, the golden thread of beliefs and ideologies is encountered in Year 7 by focusing on religion in the Middle Ages and in Year 9, by examining political ideologies by looking at communism and fascism.

The students embed their disciplinary concepts by framing enquiries around historical skills such as using evidence or historical significance. The students use contemporary evidence to help with critical engagement and to challenge competing narratives. Building on this, students engage with academic historians such as Simon Scharmer and David Olusoga to engage with debates about the past. Students revisit skills so that they can build on these concepts in more challenging ways.

The curriculum is implemented to challenge students and promote progress for every pupil every lesson. We use both formative and summative assessments to identify areas of strength and development. Such as using low-stakes knowledge tests to help the recall of core knowledge. Students are challenged by analysing bigger curriculum themes by using "7Up" questioning and challenges. This is particularly useful for students who choose to study History at GCSE and Post-16.

Allocated Curriculum Time:

	Year 7	Year 8	Year 9	Year 10	Year 11
Lessons per fortnight	**3**	**3**	**3**	**6**	**6**

Year 7 Programme of Study

Term	Curriculum Foci	Formal Assessment
1	**What really happened in 1066?** *Golden Thread: Empire and Colonialism* *Focus skill: Using Evidence* ● Why is it challenging studying Early Medieval History? ● What are the contesting narratives behind the crucial events of 1066? ● Why did William win the Battle of Hastings? ● How did William establish control? How did William change England? ●	**Assessment 1:** **Anchor Assessment** **Normans** **Time:** 40 mins
2	**What can blood and guts tell us about who we are?** *Golden Thread: Chronology* *Focus skill: Change and Continuity* ● What have British societies been like from the Iron Age to now? ● How do we overcome the challenges of carrying out surgery?	
3	**Why could no-one ignore the Church?** *Golden Thread: Beliefs and Ideologies* *Focus skill: Similarity and Difference* ● What did people believe in the Middle Ages? ● How did people's beliefs affect their behaviour? ● Why couldn't the East ignore the church?	**Assessment 2:** **Power in Medieval England assessment** **Time:** 40 mins
4	**What really happened at Canterbury Cathedral in 1170?** *Golden Thread: Beliefs and Ideologies* *Focus skill: Interpretations* ● Why did Henry II quarrel with the Church? ● What happened to Thomas Becket? ● How has Becket's story been presented? ● What were John's challenges when ruling England? ● How has John been presented?	
5	**Why were the Peasants revolting?** *Golden Thread: Power and Protest* *Focus skill: Causation* ● What was the Black Death? ● Why were people angry with their King? ● What happens when the people turn on their Medieval King? ● What are the consequences of treason?	**Assessment 3:** **End of Year assessment** **Time:** 1 hour

6	**Why did Henry really break from Rome?** *Golden Thread: Power and Protest* *Focus skill: Change and Continuity* ● How did a small change shape a country? ● Why was the reformation so important? ● How did Henry's legacy live on through his children?	

Year 8 Programme of Study

Term	Curriculum Foci	Formal Assessment
1	**How did Elizabeth settle her country?** *Golden Thread: Beliefs and Ideologies* *Focus skill: Interpretations* ● What problems did Elizabeth I face because of religious division in England, and how did she try to deal with them? ● Why was the defeat of the Spanish Armada important for England and Elizabeth? ● Why did people rebel against the Stuart Kings, and how did events like the Gunpowder plot and the English Civil war show these tensions?	**Assessment 1:** **Reformation and the Civil war** **Time:** 40 mins
2	**How was the world turned upside down?** *Golden Thread: Beliefs and Ideologies* *Focus skill: Using evidence* ● What happened to a deposed King? ● What was the Commonwealth? ● Was Cromwell a hero or a villain? ● What does the evidence say about Oliver Cromwell? ● How did the power of Kings change after the Civil War?	
3	**Did the Restoration allow new ideas to flourish?** *Golden Thread: Empire and Colonialism* *Focus skill: Cause and Consequence* ● What was changing during the Renaissance? ● What led to a new age of ideas? ● What were the consequences of enlightenment?	
4	**How did the growth of the British Empire fuel slavery and inspire the US Civil Rights Movement?** *Golden Thread: Empire and colonialism* *Focus skill: Using Evidence* ● What is slavery? ● What was the triangular trade? ● How did the growth of the British Empire under James I lead to the development of enslavement? ● What do historical sources tell us about the conditions faced by enslaved people? ● Why did the Civil rights movement develop in the USA after the abolition of Enslavement, and how did individuals like Rosa Parks, Emmett Till, the Little Rock Nine and Martin Luther King Jr. help bring about change?	**Assessment 2:** **Anchor Assessment Enslavement** **Time:** 40 mins

5	**Why is the assassination of JFK still debated about today?** *Golden Thread: Power and Protest* *Focus skill: Analysing Sources* ● What happened on 22nd November 1963, and why was it such a significant event? ● What different explanations exist for who was responsible for Kennedy's assassination? ● Why is the assassination of JFK still debated today, and how can historical sources help us understand why?	**Assessment 3:** **End of year Assessment** **Time:** 40 mins
6	**Why did a spinning wheel change the world?** *Golden Thread: Power and Protest* *Focus skill: Causation* ● What was the industrial revolution? ● How did people's lives change in the 1800s? ● How did people fight for their rights?	

Year 9 Programme of Study:

Term	Curriculum Foci	Formal Assessment
1 2	**How did the outbreak and events of World War One change British society?** *Golden Thread: Empire and Colonialism* *Focus skill: Using evidence, consequence, similarity and differences* ● What were the ideologies that formed the 20th century? ● How did the shooting of an Archduke pave the way for war? ● What is suffrage? ● What was fighting like on the Western Front? ● What was the experience of women during the First World War? ● What was the experience of colonial troops? ● How did women win the right to vote?	**Assessment 1:** **The First World War assessment** **Time:** 40 mins **Marks:** 40 marks
3	**How far did all Americans benefit from the opportunities of the 1920s?** *Golden Thread: Beliefs and Ideologies* *Focus skill: Cause and Consequence* ● What new opportunities were available to Americans in the 1920's and how did these help the USA become a world power? ● Why was life in ISA not equal for everyone between the wars? ● The 1920's was a time of opportunity for all Americans.	**Assessment 2:** **1920s America assessment** **Time:** 40 mins
4	**Was appeasement a sensible policy or a dangerous mistake?** *Golden Thread: Beliefs and Ideologies* *Focus skill: Causes and Consequence* ● How was Germany affected after WW1? ● What is Appeasement? ● How did Hitler Rise to Power? ● How were people affected by dictatorships?	
5	**Was the Holocaust planned from the start?** *Golden Thread: Beliefs and Ideologies* *Focus skill: Interpretations* ● What is anti Semitism? ● What did Nazis believe about race? ● What was the Jewish experience of Nazi Germany? ● What have Historians said about the Holocaust?	**Assessment 3:** **End of KS3 Exam** **Time:** 45 mins

6	**How did the World Turn "Cold"?** *Golden Thread: Empire and Colonialism* *Focus skill: Using evidence* ● What were the superpower ideologies? ● How close did we get to nuclear war?	

Year 10 History Programme of Study
Exam Board: AQA
Exam Specification: 8145

Term	Curriculum Foci	Formal Assessment
1	**Elizabeth: Court and Parliament** *Golden Thread: Power and People* The first section of the GCSE is on power within Elizabethan England. Students study how power was distributed and challenged.	The assessment consists of a knowledge test, source analysis and an extended essay.
2	**Health: Medicine Stands Still and The Beginnings of Change** *Golden Thread: Beliefs and Ideologies* The students move on to their study of how medicine, public health and surgery developed over time. These first two sections look at change and continuities between the year c.1000 - 1750.	The assessment consists of a knowledge test, source analysis, examination of significance and forming a comparison between periods.
3	**Elizabeth: Life in Elizabethan Times** *Golden Thread: Power and People* The second section of the Elizabethan topic focuses on life in Elizabethan England. This allows the students to study fashion, theatre and hierarchy. The unit finishes by examining the impact of global exploration and the impact this had on people's lives.	The assessment consists of a knowledge test, source analysis, impact of a specific event and assessing an aspect of Elizabethan England.
4	**Health: A Revolution in Medicine** *Golden Thread: Beliefs and Ideologies* The health study continues by examining the Industrial Revolution and how the growth of towns and cities affected medical development, mixed in with suffrage increasing to a larger portion of society.	The assessment consists of a knowledge test, an examination of significance and looking at the factors impacting change.
5	**Health: Modern Medicine** *Golden Thread: Beliefs and Ideologies* The final unit of the health topic examines how change has happened between 1900 to the present day. This includes looking at the impact the world wars had and how society changed with growing equality.	The assessment consists of a knowledge test, an examination of significance and looking at the factors impacting change.
6	**Elizabeth: Troubles at Home and Abroad** *Golden Thread: Empire and Colonialism* The final section of the Elizabeth topic examines religious issues within the country and how Elizabeth tried to resolve these; focusing on the Religious Settlement, Mary, Queen of Scots and the Spanish Armada.	The final assessment of the year is the End of Year Exam and covers everything learnt in Year 10.

Year 11 GCSE History Programme of Study
Exam Board: AQA
Exam Specification: 8145

Term	Curriculum Foci	Formal Assessment
1	**Conflict and Tension: The Causes of World War One** *Golden Thread: Empire, Colonialism and Power* Students start Year 11 by studying the causes of the First World War in both the short and long term, taking in events starting in 1870 up until 1914 and the role they had in increasing tension within Europe.	The assessment consists of a knowledge test, source analysis, and explaining cause and consequence.
2	**America, 1920 - 1973: American's experiences of the Depression and New Deal** *Golden Thread: Power and People* Having seen what the USA was like in the 1920s, the students next examine the impact the Wall Street Crash had on society and how the Democratic Government tried to help the economy recover.	The assessment is a mock exam covering everything covered from the beginning of Year 10.
3	**Conflict and Tension: The First World War, Stalemate** *Golden Thread: Empire and Colonialism* Students return to their students of World War One by examining the event of the war itself. This includes looking at weapons development, key battles and the changing tactics throughout the War.	The assessment consists of a knowledge test, source analysis, and explaining cause and consequence.
4	**America, 1920 - 1973: Post War America** *Golden Thread: Beliefs and Ideology* The final unit of the America topic examines the changes occurring in the USA between 1945 - 1973. This includes looking at the economic growth, growth of the Civil Rights Movement and the rise of feminism.	The assessment is a mock exam covering everything covered from the beginning of Year 11.
5	**Conflict and Tension: Ending the War** *Golden Thread: Empire, Colonialism and Power* Students complete their study of GCSE History by examining the reasons for World War One ending at 11am on 11th November 1918. This is broken down into studying Russia leaving the War, the US entering World War One and the change to fighting on the Western Front.	The students end the year by sitting their formal GCSE examination.

Final GCSE Assessment Structure – AQA History

Exam	Weighting	Content	Proposed Date of Examination
Paper 1 **Time:** 2 hours	50%	**Understanding the Modern World** **Wider World Depth Study** Conflict and Tension: The First World War, 1894 – 1918 **Period Study:** America, 1920 - 1973: Opportunity and Inequality	20th May 27
Paper 2 **Time:** 2 hours	50%	**Shaping the Nation** **Thematic Study** Britain: Health and the people, c1000 to the present day **British Depth Study** Elizabethan England, c1568 - 1603	28th May 27

Revision Material:

There are many ways in which you can support your child in the study of History such as:

- Watching relevant documentary programs and History podcasts
- Taking out a subscription to a periodical such as National History Magazine
- Please see individual Google classrooms for your class support
- Seneca
- GCSE revision podcasts
- AQA GCSE History: https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/history/gcse/history-8145
- BBC Bitesize revision: https://www.bbc.co.uk/bitesize/subjects/zj26n39

Please see exam board websites for up-to-date information:
https://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/history/gcse/history-8145/specification