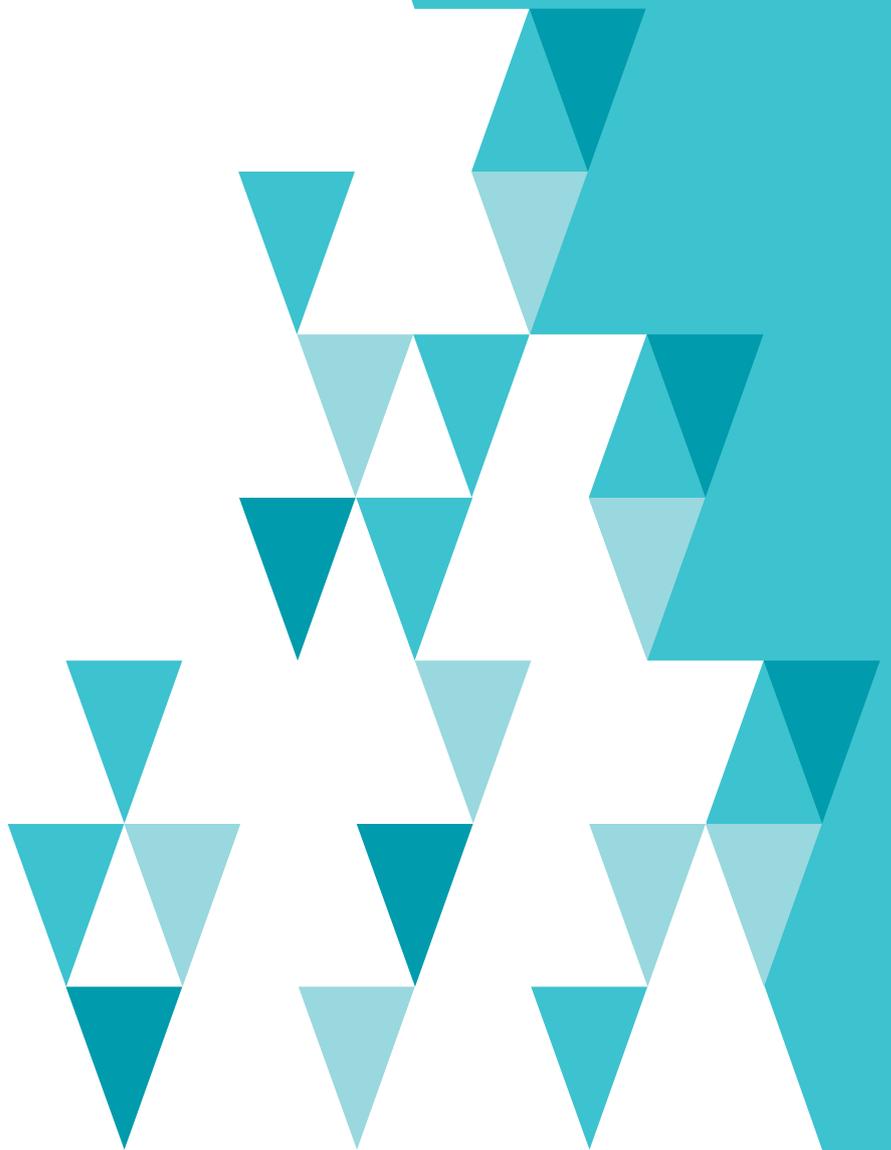


GCSE



CCEA GCSE Guidance for Students  
**History**  
Steps to Success



For first teaching from September 2017



## Steps to Success in GCSE History - Guidance for Students

To help you prepare for your GCSE History examinations, we have written some guidance on what examiners will be looking for and how to answer the questions. It begins with some general advice from examiners who see students making the same mistakes each year in GCSE History. This is followed by a step-by-step approach to unpacking the two History examination papers. By reading our *Steps to Success* guidance, you will hopefully avoid making common mistakes, know how to approach the different types of examination questions and improve your performance in GCSE History.

### General Advice

- It sounds obvious but make sure that you read each question carefully. Examiners can only reward responses which answer the question asked - not what you want the question to be. This is why it is important to read the question slowly and take a moment to understand exactly what it requires you to do.
- It is very important that you understand the key words and command words which frequently appear in History examination questions, such as how, why, cause, consequence, significance, continuity, effect and so on. If you do not know what these words mean, you will not be able to answer the question or demonstrate your historical skills to the examiner. It is a good idea to highlight/circle the command words and dates in the question; for example, is the question asking you *how* something happened or *why* something happened?
- Keep your answer relevant by sticking to the question asked. Do not simply write down everything you know about the topic. Think carefully about the focus or theme of the question. Do not waste time writing details and facts which do not help to answer the question. For example, if the question is: 'Describe two ways in which the lives of women changed in Nazi Germany between 1933 and 1939', you will not receive marks for anything you write about the lives of women in Weimar Germany before 1933. Also, if the question covers a time span from, say, 1945 to 1965, make sure that you cover the whole period.
- Students often wonder about how much they should write in their answers. You will complete your GCSE History examinations in a question and answer booklet – use the lines provided as a guide to how much you should write. However, if you require more space because, for example, you have large writing, make sure that you put your hand up in the examination to receive additional paper. As the History examination papers are marked online, do not write outside the margins or use gel pens.
- Do not spend too long on a question worth a small number of marks just because you know a lot about the topic area. For example, you should not write a detailed paragraph for a question worth two marks. You are wasting valuable time, which you will need when you get to questions requiring extended writing towards the end of the paper.
- At times, you will have a choice of questions, or a choice within questions, in the examination papers. Take time to read all parts of the question and jot down a few points for each question. This will help you to find out which question or part of the question you can answer best before making your decision.
- Good grammar, spelling and punctuation are important. Examiners know that you are writing your answers under pressure and occasional mistakes are understandable. However, you must take care to write your answers as clearly and accurately as possible. Do not write in bullet points.

- Take care with your handwriting – an examiner must be able to read it.
- As part of your examination preparation, it is a good idea to time yourself answering past examination questions and get to know the layout of the paper. This will help you when you sit the ‘live’ examination as you will get a feel of what it is like to write and think under pressure. Approximate timings are given below as a guide to help you.

## Overview of Paper 1

- One hour 45 minutes
- Total mark for this paper is 80
- There are two sections in this paper – Section A and Section B
- Worth 60% of your GCSE History

### Section A

- You have to answer all five questions on either Option 1: *Life in Nazi Germany, 1933-45* or Option 2: *Life in the United States of America, 1920-33* – depending on which option you have been taught
- You should spend about 45 minutes on Section A

### Section B

- You have to answer all six questions on either Option 1: *Changing Relations: Northern Ireland and its Neighbours, 1920–49* or Option 2: *Changing Relations: Northern Ireland and its Neighbours, 1965–98*
- You will need more time for Section B to enable you to read the source material. You should spend about one hour on Section B

## Paper 1 Section A

This is a depth study which means that you will be expected to demonstrate to examiners that you have a good factual knowledge and understanding of the period covered.

### Question 1

This is a fact question.

You have to match four words to four correct descriptions.

4 marks available (1 x 4).

You should spend approximately 4 minutes on this question.

### Question 2

This is a ‘describe’ question.

This question asks you to describe, for example, two ways, two actions or two causes of something in the past.

For each description, write one way/action/cause and then develop your point.

You should aim to write two or three developed sentences on each of your points.

Make sure that you link your sentences back to the question asked.

6 marks available (2 x 3).

You should spend approximately 5 minutes on this question.

### Question 3

This is an 'explain' question.

This question asks you to explain, for example, how something happened, why it happened or the impact of the event.

You will be given two important areas which relate to the main question. You have to choose one area to write about. It does not matter which one you choose. The important thing is that you choose the area you know more about and keep your focus on the main question.

You should aim to write a detailed paragraph.

6 marks available.

You should spend approximately 5-7 minutes on this question.

### Question 4

This is also an 'explain' question.

This question asks you to explain, for example, how or why something happened. Remember that 'why' asks you to explain reasons; for example, this happened because..... 'How' asks you to explain the way it happened; for example, it took place on .....

You should aim to write a detailed answer to this question. Make sure that your whole answer is relevant to the question asked. Do not simply write all you know - you will need to be selective to make sure that your answer is focused and relevant and that you fully explain the points which you are making.

8 marks available.

You should spend approximately 10 minutes on this question.

### Question 5

This is an essay question.

You will be given a statement and asked do agree with it.

An example of a question is:

'Nazi attempts to improve the lives of workers and the unemployed were unsuccessful'. Do you agree?

A good way to structure your answer is to have an introduction which sets the scene. For example:

*'The Nazi Party wanted to control workers and the unemployed as it needed content workers to increase output in order to develop a strong economy. However, Nazi attempts to improve the lives of workers and the unemployed experienced both success and failure'.*

In the main body of your essay, aim for at least two separate paragraphs. One paragraph should explain the ways in which the Nazis' attempts to improve the lives of workers and the unemployed could be judged to have been successful; the other should explain the ways in which Nazi attempts to improve the lives of workers and the unemployed could be judged to have been unsuccessful.

Include a conclusion, making sure that you give your viewpoint by making a judgement, since the question asks 'Do you agree?' In your conclusion, you could write, for example,

*'It is my view that Nazi policy was successful in controlling the lives of the workers but not as successful in improving their lives. Although Strength through Joy (KdF) promised a great deal, it did not bring real benefits for workers. Workers were not allowed to strike and had no voice. However, Beauty of Labour was one attempt at improving working conditions and at least the unemployed were involved in the Reich Labour Service (RAD) which gave them pocket money and a part to play in the Nazi State'.*

16 marks available.

You should spend approximately 15-20 minutes on this question.

## Paper 1 Section B

In this section, there is a mixture of source-based questions, short questions and a structured question. Make sure that you spend time reading the sources carefully and highlighting key pieces of information relevant to the questions asked. All the source material will be contemporary (from the time) and it could take various forms, such as posters, photographs, speeches, cartoons and the views of contemporaries. In all of the source questions, you are asked to use the source and *'your contextual knowledge'* to answer the question. This means that you must use the content of the source in your answer and other information which you have learned about the issue/event related to the source. Copying information directly from the source will not get you a good mark on these questions.

### Question 1 and Question 2

These are similar source-based questions.

In Question 1, you are asked to give one reason which explains something, whereas in Question 2 you are asked to give two reasons which explain something.

In both questions, you have to use the source and your contextual knowledge.

You must write a detailed sentence on each of the reasons you give; you can do this by using the source and developing your answer with what you know about the event/issue directly linked to the source.

A good way to begin your answer is to refer to the source. For example: 'Source A tells me...' or 'Source B shows that ....' 'I also know that.....'

2 marks available for Question 1 - spend approximately 2-3 minutes.

4 marks available for Question 2 (2x2) - spend approximately 5-6 minutes.

### Question 3

This question is also source-based. However, this time you will have to use the source provided and your contextual knowledge to reach a judgement as to the usefulness of the source for an historian studying a particular event/issue in the past. Remember that contextual knowledge is your knowledge of the event/issue mentioned in the source.

When assessing how useful a source is, be careful not to lose sight of the focus of the question on the particular event/issue. For example, the question may focus on the impact or causes of an event. In addition, when deciding how useful a source is for a purpose, you must also assess its limitations. For example, you might decide that a source is useful because it shows a point of view and provides information; maybe the date is significant too. Sometimes a source will not tell you very much and you can say that it leaves out some important points. This is where you include examples from your own contextual knowledge of the event/issue in the source. Remember that all sources are useful. Even if a source is biased, it can still be of use as long as the historian is aware that what it is saying or showing may be biased. Remember also that no one source can tell you everything about the topic.

### A good answer may read:

*'The content is useful because it allows the historian to see what Prime Minister O'Neill's opinions were and gives a sense of his frustration with the civil rights marchers and those who opposed them. It gives his view of the tensions at the time and shows his plea that it is time to stop the violence. The source is useful as it was printed in a local newspaper and informed the public of the Prime Minister's view. The date is also useful because it is a contemporary source. However, it fails to tell us what led to this statement or how the government reacted to the marches, e.g. the*

*Cameron Commission. The source shows only one opinion at the time and does not give the nationalist or unionist views'.*

5 marks available.

You should spend approximately 5-7 minutes on this question.

#### **Question 4**

This question uses the same source as in Question 3. However, this time you are asked to judge the reliability of the source for an historian studying a particular event/issue in the past.

In judging the reliability of a source, you should think about the following:

Author - Who wrote the source? Was it an historian, an eyewitness or a reporter? Do you trust them?

Date - When was the source written? Was it written at the time or a long time after the event? How will this affect the reliability of the source?

Motive - Why did the author produce this source? Was it to influence or to inform?

Intended audience - Who was reading or hearing this source?

Tone and content - Is the source exaggerated, critical, angry or emotional?

Type of source - Is it, for example, a newspaper article, an extract from a History textbook or a diary entry?

All of the above factors will affect the reliability of a source. Avoid writing 'the source is reliable' or 'the source is unreliable' without giving the reasons why you reached this conclusion.

Begin your answer by discussing the author/date/intended audience/tone and content, and then make an informed judgement as to the reliability of the source.

#### **A good answer may read:**

*'This source could be judged to be reliable because it shows an opinion from the time and reflects the views of the Prime Minister, who I know was a key figure in responding to the events at Burntollet. We know that O'Neill issued this statement the day before reflecting on events since 1 January 1969. He is trying to appeal for calm and the source shows his concern. His motive may therefore make us question the reliability as he may not want to look bad as Prime Minister. Since it is a statement, it is likely to be designed to get across a message to the people or to persuade them which again can affect the reliability of this source. We also have to remember that this is O'Neill's view only. He is speaking on behalf of the Northern Ireland government, although his view is clearly not representative of the government as a whole.'*

6 marks available.

You should spend approximately 6-8 minutes on this question.

#### **Question 5**

This is 4-part question.

Part (a), (b) and (c) require brief answers. In these questions, a one-word answer may sometimes be enough. For example, if the question asks you to name the leader of the SDLP in the 1980s, it is acceptable to write 'John Hume'. On the other hand, some questions may require a sentence, for example, if you are asked to give a reason for the introduction of the Ireland Act of 1949.

Part (d) is a 'describe' question which requires a more detailed answer.

5 marks available.

You should spend approximately 4 minutes on this question in total.

### Question 6

This is an 'explain' question.

The question asks you to explain events/issues/developments in the past from across the period of history you have studied. You will be given three areas to choose from; you must choose two. Circle key words in the question to help you focus your answer on, for example, the significance, impact or effects of a particular event.

18 marks available (9x2).

You should spend approximately 20 minutes on this question.

## Overview of Paper Two

- One hour 15 minutes
- Total mark for this paper is 60
- There are two sections in this paper – Section A and Section B
- Worth 40% of your GCSE History

### Section A

- You have to answer all questions (1-4) in this section
- All questions are source-based
- You should spend approximately 5 minutes reading the sources carefully before you begin and spend 40 minutes answering the questions in Section A

### Section B

- You have to answer two questions in this section; one question is structured, while the other is an essay
- You should spend 30 minutes on this section

### Section A

#### Question 1

This question asks you to read and analyse the content of a contemporary source to find out what it tells us about a particular issue. Read through the source line by line; if you do this, you will not miss any important information. In your answer, you should aim to write a paragraph using clips from the source to support what you are saying. Do not simply copy information directly from the source.

4 marks available.

You should spend approximately 5 minutes on this question.

#### **A good answer may read:**

*'Source A tells us that the terrorist attacks of September 11 were "a major reason for attacking Iraq" as the USA blamed Saddam Hussein for the attacks on the USA. The US response was to begin a "war on terror" against Iraq. The American President argued that September 11 showed clear links between Iraq and Al-Qaeda and this was a reason why the USA had to respond to remove the threat from Iraq.'*

### Question 2 Part (a)

In this question, you will be given two different sources, each reflecting a different interpretation/view about an event/issue/development in the past. You are asked to explain how the two sources differ. For example, you might explain that one source mentions a particular point, which is not contained in the other. You should also make specific references to each source.

For example:

*'Source B is the view of an American politician who believed the advice of intelligence experts that the "Iraqis had chemical weapons in their possession". This is not mentioned or shown in Source C. The USA believed the inspection reports by the United Nations. Source B focuses on the threat from the Iraqis. It suggests that the Iraqis would threaten the world by using chemical weapons "against us and their own people"; this is not mentioned in Source C.'*

4 marks available (2x2).

You should spend approximately 5 minutes on this question.

### Question 2 Part (b)

In this question, you will be asked to explain one reason why the views in two sources are different.

For example:

*'Source B is the view of a politician who was deeply involved in the war and believed that America was right to invade Iraq in 2003, whilst Source C is the view of a cartoonist who is anti-war and was against the US invasion of Iraq.'*

2 marks available.

You should spend approximately 3 minutes on this question.

### Question 3

In this question, you will be given a source reflecting a particular view of an event/issue/development and you must decide how convincing the view is. In your answer, you must include the view in the source and your own contextual knowledge to help you make your judgement.

For example:

*'I do not find this view convincing, although Tony Blair tries his best to stand by the decision he made in 2003. In Source D, Blair explains that the reason for being in Iraq was because "Saddam Hussein had used chemical weapons against his own people and against others" and this was based on expert advice. He also states: "I find it hard to apologise for removing Saddam Hussein" and this seems to be a convincing view as he is standing by his actions 12 years later. In Source D Tony Blair states: "Even today, in 2015, I think it is better that he is not in power". This is his view but it may not be convincing since he is trying to justify his actions as Prime Minister in 2003. I think that this view may not be convincing because I know that Tony Blair supported President Bush, who believed that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction, although he now accepts this was not the case. UN weapons inspectors said that vast amounts of chemical and biological poisons were in Iraq but this later turned out to be false. Some believed that the USA wanted the oil in Iraq and this was the main reason for the invasion. Others believed that the USA invaded Iraq to remove Saddam Hussein. I am not convinced by the view of Tony Blair in this source.'*

8 marks available.

You should spend approximately 10 minutes on this question.

#### Question 4

The question asks you to use three sources and your own knowledge to make a judgement about an interpretation of an event/issue/development in the past. You must analyse all three sources before deciding how far you agree with the view/interpretation given in the question. Examiners will be looking for:

Your use of all three sources, but do not simply repeat which each source states.

Your own knowledge - this should be information, which is over and above that which is contained in the sources.

A judgement on whether or not you find the view convincing.

For example:

*I agree that the invasion of Iraq was part of the “war on terror”, but I also see it as part of a bigger campaign to remove Saddam Hussein. Source D is the view of Prime Minister Tony Blair. He was the British leader at the time who ordered British troops into Iraq. He said that one reason for the invasion was because it was part of the war on terror. However, he also believed the view of those who said that Saddam Hussein had used chemical weapons against his own people. He suggests that removing Saddam Hussein was a key reason for the invasion and argues: “Even today, in 2015, I think it is better that he is not in power”. As Prime Minister, Tony Blair tried to convince the British people that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction and this was the main reason for the invasion. I know that Tony Blair was a great friend and supporter of President Bush, who claimed that there were weapons of mass destruction in Iraq which helped to justify the decision to attack and invade Iraq.*

*Source C offers an alternative view of the reasons for the war in Iraq. This is the view of a cartoonist who was against the invasion. He argues that the invasion was not about the war on terror. Instead, he suggests that President Bush wanted to invade Iraq for its oil and the other reasons given for the invasion were false. Some believed that oil from Iraq was the goal of big US companies. In my view President Bush argued that oil gave Saddam Hussein the money he needed to continue to cause trouble in the Middle East. He was determined to remove Saddam Hussein and needed the justification for doing so.*

*Source B is the view of an American politician who supported the invasion of Iraq. He explains that the reason for the invasion was that “many intelligence experts believed the Iraqis had chemical weapons”. There was a fear that Saddam Hussein would use these against the USA. Others argued that Saddam Hussein had weapons of mass destruction and this would support the view in Source D. United Nations weapons inspectors seemed to have plenty of evidence to support this view. However, this evidence has now been challenged and in my view it may have been manipulated to help President Bush obtain evidence to justify removing Saddam Hussein.*

*However, in my opinion there can be no doubt that one reason for the invasion of Iraq was to get revenge for the attacks of 9/11. It was these attacks which led to the “war on terror” and President Bush believed that the planning and the attacks that followed could all be traced to Saddam Hussein. I would argue that there is more than one reason for the invasion. It goes beyond “the war on terror” and therefore I do not find this view convincing’.*

16 marks available.

You should spend approximately 20 minutes on this question.

#### Section B

#### Question 5

This is a ‘describe’ question.

You will be asked to describe, for example, two causes or two consequences, of an event in the past. It is important that you understand the meaning of key terms such as cause, effect, reason, impact, significance and consequence.

You should aim to write one sentence with a detailed description on each of your points.

4 marks available (2x 2).

You should spend approximately 5 minutes on this question.

### Question 6

This is an essay question.

There two questions and you choose one of them.

You are given three guidelines to help you to structure your answer. Make sure that you use all three guidelines in your answer.

Remember when answering an extended writing question that it is not just a matter of telling a story of what happened. For example, if the question is on causation, you must make connections and construct an explanation as to why something happened (as there is usually more than one cause).

Below are some tips on how to approach the essay question in Paper 2.

You will not have time, nor are you required, to give a blow-by-blow account of every event in the time frame contained in the question.

Make sure that you read the question carefully. Is it asking, for example, about continuity, change, significance or impact on relations? Circle the key words in the question. Pay particular attention to the dates in the question.

Use the wording of the guideline and the question to help you start a new paragraph. An example has been provided for you:

#### ***Exemplar question and answer***

*In what ways did international relations change in the period 1979- 2003?*

- *The Soviet invasion of Afghanistan and its impact*
- *The end of the Cold War*
- *The new age of Conflict*

In a question about 'change', you must explain international relations before and after key events/developments in the period 1979-2003; it is not just about listing all the events which took place afterwards. One possible way to organise your answer is to follow the 3 'S' strategy: statement, support, summary.

**Statement** –This should explain any key terms or references in the question. So, in this case there should be a short statement about what happened in 1979 and why it had such an effect on international relations. The answer might mention that the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan ended the period of co-operation between the USA and the USSR and started a new Cold War.

**Support** – This should explain the differences between the situation before the Soviet invasion and the situation after the invasion and how international relations changed significantly in this period.

**Paragraph 1** - Explain the events just before and during the invasion and how they affected relations.

For example, there had been an improvement in international relations following the Cuban Missile crisis and there was a period of co-operation between the USA and USSR, despite some tension. However, when Brezhnev informed President Carter on 28 December 1979 that Soviet troops had entered Afghanistan to ensure the country's security, tension between the USA and USSR re-emerged. The United States banned the export of grain to Russia, ended the SALT talks, which were taking place at that time, and boycotted the Olympic Games, held in Moscow in 1980. Islamic insurgent groups called the Mujahideen were determined to fight against the Soviet troops

and were heavily armed since they were supplied by China and the USA. They also received training from the CIA. This American support for the Mujahideen obviously increased tension with the USSR.

**Paragraph 2** – When Gorbachev came to power in the USSR in 1985, he had a different approach and was determined to end Soviet involvement in Afghanistan. He was also surprised to discover that he and President Reagan got on well and this helped to improve international relations.....

**Paragraph 3** – When the Cold War ended in 1991 a new form of tension emerged. This was a new age of conflict involving the Taliban, Al-Qaeda and Western governments, including the USA, United Kingdom and others who were determined to stand up to those who talked of a ‘holy war’....

**Paragraph 4** –The world witnessed terror on a different scale with the USA and its allies experiencing attacks such as those of September 11. This resulted in the USA announcing a ‘war on terror’ and leading to the invasion of Afghanistan in 2001 and Iraq in 2003, developments which had a serious impact on international relations.

**Summary** - This is where you draw your answer to a close. It is a time to emphasise key aspects or times of change. Try to come back to the key focus of the question.

For example:

*‘In the period 1979-2003, international relations went from friendship to hostility and then to a period of hope with the end of the Cold War. However, this hope of good international relations was short-lived with the emergence of a new kind of international conflict’.*

Your conclusion/summary is your chance to identify key people and events that were significant in changing international relations. Some useful phrases to use here include ‘what made the situation worse was...’, ‘the most important reason was...’ and ‘the overall effect was...’ This shows the examiner that you are doing more than simply telling the story of everything that happened - instead, you are offering a reasoned, analytical account.

22 marks available.

You should spend approximately 25 minutes on this question.