

A Level History – Summer Preparation

Welcome to A Level History!

We look forward to welcoming you onto the course properly in September. You will be studying the new AQA AS and A Levels, focusing on these units:

1K: The Making of a Superpower: USA, 1865-1975

2S: The Making of Modern Britain: 1951-2007

See <http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/history/as-and-a-level/history-7041-7042> for more details.

In your AS year, you will be covering about the first half of each of these periods chronologically. If you continue onto A Level, you will cover both periods in full, as well as undertaking a separate coursework project. If you have a particular interest in other historical periods, we encourage you to join the school's History Society, where you'll have a chance to pursue aspects of ancient, medieval or modern history in a more relaxed environment.

Introductory reading

If you have the time over the summer, it would be fantastic to do some general reading on these time periods. This will help you to get to grips with the challenges that Britain and the US faced in these periods. Some good starting points would be:

- A. Marr, *A History of Modern Britain* (he has also made an accompanying TV series)
- M. Pearce, *British Political History 1867-2000: Democracy and Decline*
- H. Zinn, *A People's History of America*
- N. Ferguson, *Colossus*

Be aware that these books are far from neutral on their topics. It would be a good idea to research the writers before you start reading. Do these historians have a political agenda of their own that you need to keep in mind when you read their interpretations of the past?

Any documentaries that you could watch on any aspects of either of these two periods would also be beneficial.

Optional introductory tasks

Overleaf are two short exercises you could do to help you prepare for your first lessons. The tasks are optional but if you do decide to complete them, your teachers will be very happy to mark them for you and discuss them with you.

Challenging yourself further

If you really want to push yourself and have a strong passion for the subject, feel free to undertake some wider reading. Detailed reading lists for both of your units are available on the AQA website. You are **not** expected to work your way through these! They are intended more for the benefit of teachers but are only mentioned here in case you happen to be interested. Many of the books listed will be available to borrow from the History department from September. (See <http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/history/as-and-a-level/history-7041-7042/teaching-resources> and click on the resource lists for the relevant units).

We hope you have an enjoyable summer.

The QMGS History Department

The Making of a Superpower: USA, 1865-1975

AQA Unit Code 1K

1865 is a significant year in American History; on April 9th, Robert E. Lee, commander of the Army of Northern Virginia, surrendered his 25,765 troops to Ulysses S Grant and the Union army at Appomattox Court yard. The Civil War was over – a war which had literally divided the country North and South due to the secession of the Southern States from the United States of America in 1861; a war which economically ravaged the country, interrupted trade and destroyed infrastructure and agriculture; a war which began with Slavery and ended with emancipation.

Following the surrender, immediate attention was turned to reconstruction. Lincoln urged a spirit of generous conciliation during this reconstruction period.

Good Old Rebel

This below lyrics were written by Major James Randolph following Lincoln's speech on April 11th 1865. The speech's theme focused on forgiving the rebellious states, reunification of the United States and reconstruction of the country socially, politically and economically.

Oh, I'm a good old **rebel**,
Now that's just what I am,
And for this yankee nation,
I do not give a damn.
I'm glad I fought a ganner,
I only wish we won.
I ain't asked any pardon for anything I've done.

I hates the yankee nation and everything they do.
I hates the **declaration of independence**, too.
I hates the **glorious union, t'is dripping with our blood**.
I hates the **striped banner, and fit it all I could**

I rode with **Robert E. Lee**,
For three years, thereabout.
Got wounded in four places,
And I starved **at Point Lookout**.
I caught the **rheumatism**
A campin' in the snow.
But I killed a chance of Yankees
And I'd like to kill some more.

3 hundred thousand Yankees
Is stiff in Southern dust.
We got 3 hundred thousand

Before they conquered us.
They **died of Southern Fever**
And southern steel and shot
I wish there were 3 million
Instead of what we got.

I can't pick up my musket
And fight 'um down no more
But I ain't gonna love 'um
Now that is certain sure
And I don't want no pardon
For what I was and am
I won't be reconstructed
And I do not give a damn

Oh, I'm a good old rebel,
Now that's just what I am,
And for this yankee nation,
I do not give a damn.
I'm glad I fought a ganner,
I only wish we won.
I ain't asked any pardon for anything I've done.
I ain't asked any pardon for anything I've done.

Tasks

- 1) Read through the lyrics. For all emboldened words/lines, explain their meaning.
- 2) What is the message of the song?
- 3) What problems for Lincoln does this expose?
- 4) Has this attitude been completely eliminated from modern American society?

The Making of Modern Britain, 1951-2007

AQA Unit Code 2S

Britain was once arguably the most powerful nation on Earth, controlling the largest formal empire that the world had ever known. By the mid-twentieth century, this was no longer the case. The British were on the winning side in the Second World War but they paid a high price for this. At first, victory had created a mood of national optimism. In 1945, the Labour government of Clement Attlee was voted in and established much of the modern welfare state that millions still rely upon today. The nation created the National Health Service. Yet by 1951, disillusionment had set in and voters removed Labour from power.

Six years after the war had finished, many types of food were still being rationed in Britain, all able-bodied young men faced eighteen months of compulsory National Service and the nation was broke. In fact, Britain was so hopelessly dependent on money borrowed from the United States that these loans could not be paid back in full until December 2006! Much of the Empire had been lost or given away; Britain was embroiled in a conflict in Korea and facing mounting nationalist challenges in the Middle East that threatened its oil supply and trade. It is understandable that to many citizens, Britain did not feel like a victorious nation at all.

Ideology

The 1950s are sometimes seen as a time of 'consensus', when members of different political parties broadly agreed. Despite this, British politicians and intellectuals have often been fiercely divided over what direction the country should take. What future should Britain have?

Find out what is meant by each of these key terms. The terms describe ideologies, or systems of belief. If you can find any examples of British politicians between the 1940s and the present day who subscribe to these ideas, that would be fantastic.

Liberalism (note that some people separate social liberalism and economic liberalism)	One-nation Conservatism	Communism
Socialism (and democratic socialism – what's the difference?)	Capitalism	Social conservatism

OPTIONAL CHALLENGE

- 1. These ideologies are broad, general terms, often compassing many different beliefs! Why have people interpreted these ideologies so differently?*
- 2. Do you think ideology really motivates politicians and voters when they are making decisions? What else motivates people instead? If people really care about their own survival and success more than about theoretical beliefs, why does humanity need ideology at all?*