

# *English history teachers' views on what substantive content young people should be taught*

Article

Accepted Version

Harris, R. ORCID: <https://orcid.org/0000-0001-8606-5515> and Burn, K. (2016) English history teachers' views on what substantive content young people should be taught. *Journal of Curriculum Studies*, 48 (4). pp. 518-546. ISSN 1366-5839 doi: <https://doi.org/10.1080/00220272.2015.1122091> Available at <https://centaur.reading.ac.uk/49559/>

It is advisable to refer to the publisher's version if you intend to cite from the work. See [Guidance on citing](#).

To link to this article DOI: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/00220272.2015.1122091>

Publisher: Taylor & Francis

All outputs in CentAUR are protected by Intellectual Property Rights law, including copyright law. Copyright and IPR is retained by the creators or other copyright holders. Terms and conditions for use of this material are defined in the [End User Agreement](#).

[www.reading.ac.uk/centaur](http://www.reading.ac.uk/centaur)

**CentAUR**

Central Archive at the University of Reading

Reading's research outputs online

## Appendix A – History National Curriculum proposals

### History

#### Purpose of study

A high-quality history education equips pupils to think critically, weigh evidence, sift arguments, and develop perspective and judgement. A knowledge of Britain's past, and our place in the world, helps us understand the challenges of our own time.

#### Aims

The National Curriculum for history aims to ensure that all pupils:

- know and understand the story of these islands: how the British people shaped this nation and how Britain influenced the world
- know and understand British history as a coherent, chronological narrative, from the story of the first settlers in these islands to the development of the institutions which govern our lives today
- know and understand the broad outlines of European and world history: the growth and decline of ancient civilisations; the expansion and dissolution of empires; the achievements and follies of mankind
- gain and deploy a historically-grounded understanding of abstract terms such as 'empire', 'civilisation', 'parliament' and 'peasantry'
- understand historical concepts such as continuity and change, cause and consequence, similarity, difference and significance, and use them to make connections, draw contrasts, analyse trends, frame historically-valid questions and create their own structured accounts, including written narratives and analyses
- understand how evidence is used rigorously to make historical claims, and discern how and why contrasting arguments and interpretations of the past have been constructed
- gain historical perspective by placing their growing knowledge into different contexts, understanding the connections between local, regional, national and international history; between cultural, economic, military, political, religious and social history; and between short- and long-term timescales.

#### Attainment targets

By the end of each key stage, pupils are expected to know, apply and understand the matters, skills and processes specified in the relevant programme of study.

#### Subject content

##### Key Stage 1

Pupils should begin to develop an awareness of the past and the ways in which it is similar to and different from the present. They should understand simple subject-specific vocabulary relating to the passing of time and begin to develop an understanding of the key features of a range of different events and historical periods.

Pupils should be taught about:

- simple vocabulary relating to the passing of time such as 'before', 'after', 'past', 'present', 'then' and 'now'
- the concept of nation and of a nation's history
- concepts such as civilisation, monarchy, parliament, democracy, and war and peace that are essential to understanding history
- the lives of significant individuals in Britain's past who have contributed to our nation's achievements – scientists such as Isaac Newton or Michael Faraday, reformers such as Elizabeth Fry or William Wilberforce, medical pioneers such as William Harvey or Florence Nightingale, or creative geniuses such as Isambard Kingdom Brunel or Christina Rossetti
- key events in the past that are significant nationally and globally, particularly those that coincide with festivals or other events that are commemorated throughout the year
- significant historical events, people and places in their own locality.

##### Key Stage 2

Pupils should be taught about the ancient civilisations of Greece and Rome.

In addition, across Key Stages 2 and 3, pupils should be taught the essential chronology of Britain's history. This will serve as an essential frame of reference for more in-depth study. Pupils should be made aware that history takes many forms, including cultural, economic, military, political, religious and social history. Pupils should be taught about key dates, events and significant individuals. They should also be given the opportunity to study local history.

Pupils should be taught the following chronology of British history sequentially:

- early Britons and settlers, including:
  - the Stone, Bronze and Iron Ages
  - Celtic culture and patterns of settlement
- Roman conquest and rule, including:
  - Caesar, Augustus, and Claudius
  - Britain as part of the Roman Empire
  - the decline and fall of the Western Roman Empire
- Anglo-Saxon and Viking settlement, including:
  - the Heptarchy
  - the spread of Christianity
  - key developments in the reigns of Alfred, Athelstan, Cnut and Edward the Confessor
- the Norman Conquest and Norman rule, including:
  - the Domesday Book
  - feudalism
  - Norman culture
- the Crusades
- Plantagenet rule in the 12th and 13th centuries, including:
  - key developments in the reign of Henry II, including the murder of Thomas Becket
  - Magna Carta
  - de Montfort's Parliament
- relations between England, Wales, Scotland and France, including:
  - William Wallace
  - Robert the Bruce
  - Llywelyn and Dafydd ap Gruffydd
  - the Hundred Years War
- life in 14<sup>th</sup>-century England, including:
  - chivalry
  - the Black Death
  - the Peasants' Revolt
- the later Middle Ages and the early modern period, including:
  - Chaucer and the revival of learning
  - Wycliffe's Bible
  - Caxton and the introduction of the printing press
  - the Wars of the Roses
  - Warwick the Kingmaker
- the Tudor period, including religious strife and Reformation in the reigns of Henry VIII, Edward VI, and Mary
- Elizabeth I's reign and English expansion, including:
  - colonisation of the New World
  - plantation of Ireland
  - conflict with Spain
- the Renaissance in England, including the lives and works of individuals such as Shakespeare and Marlowe
- the Stuart period, including:
  - the Union of the Crowns
  - King versus Parliament
  - Cromwell's commonwealth, the Levellers and the Diggers
  - the restoration of the monarchy
  - the Great Plague and the Great Fire of London
  - Samuel Pepys and the establishment of the Royal Navy
- the Glorious Revolution, constitutional monarchy and the Union of the Parliaments.

### Key Stage 3

Building on the study of the chronology of the history of Britain in Key Stage 2, teaching of the periods specified below should ensure that pupils understand and use historical concepts in increasingly sophisticated ways to make connections, draw contrasts, analyse trends, frame historically-valid questions and create their own structured accounts. They should develop an awareness and understanding of the role and use of different types of sources, as well as their strengths, weaknesses and reliability. They should also examine cultural, economic, military, political, religious and social aspects and be given the opportunity to study local history. The teaching of the content should be approached as a combination of overview and in-depth studies.

Pupils should be taught about:

## The development of the modern nation

- Britain and her Empire, including:
  - Wolfe and the conquest of Canada
  - Clive of India
  - competition with France and the Jacobite rebellion
  - the American Revolution
- the Enlightenment in England, including Francis Bacon, John Locke, Christopher Wren, Isaac Newton, the Royal Society, Adam Smith and the impact of European thinkers
- the struggle for power in Europe, including:
  - the French Revolution and the Rights of Man
  - the Napoleonic Wars, Nelson, Wellington and Pitt
  - the Congress of Vienna
- the struggle for power in Britain, including:
  - the Six Acts and Peterloo through to Catholic Emancipation
  - the slave trade and the abolition of slavery, the role of Olaudah Equiano and free slaves
  - the Great Reform Act and the Chartists
- the High Victorian era, including:
  - Gladstone and Disraeli
  - the Second and Third Reform Acts
  - the battle for Home Rule
  - Chamberlain and Salisbury
- the development of a modern economy, including:
  - iron, coal and steam
  - the growth of the railways
  - great innovators such as Watt, Stephenson and Brunel
  - the abolition of the Corn Laws
  - the growth and industrialisation of cities
  - the Factory Acts
  - the Great Exhibition and global trade
  - social conditions
  - the Tolpuddle Martyrs and the birth of trade unionism
- Britain's global impact in the 19th century, including:
  - war in the Crimea and the Eastern Question
  - gunboat diplomacy and the growth of Empire
  - the Indian Mutiny and the Great Game
  - the scramble for Africa
  - the Boer Wars
- Britain's social and cultural development during the Victorian era, including:
  - the changing role of women, including figures such as Florence Nightingale, Mary Seacole, George Eliot and Annie Besant
  - the impact of mass literacy and the Elementary Education Act.

## The twentieth century

- Britain transformed, including:
  - the Rowntree Report and the birth of the modern welfare state
  - 'Peers versus the People'
  - Home Rule for Ireland
  - the suffragette movement and women's emancipation
- the First World War, including:

- causes such as colonial rivalry, naval expansion and European alliances
  - key events
  - conscription
  - trench warfare
  - Lloyd George's coalition
  - the Russian Revolution
  - The Armistice
  - the peace of Versailles
- the 1920s and 1930s, including:
  - the first Labour Government
  - universal suffrage
  - the Great Depression
  - the abdication of Edward VIII and constitutional crisis
- the Second World War, including:
  - causes such as appeasement, the failure of the League of Nations and the rise of the Dictators
  - the global reach of the war – from Arctic Convoys to the Pacific Campaign
  - the roles of Churchill, Roosevelt and Stalin
  - Nazi atrocities in occupied Europe and the unique evil of the Holocaust
- Britain's retreat from Empire, including:
  - independence for India and the Wind of Change in Africa
  - the independence generation – Gandhi, Nehru, Jinnah, Kenyatta, Nkrumah
- the Cold War and the impact of Communism on Europe
- the Attlee Government and the growth of the welfare state
- the Windrush generation, wider new Commonwealth immigration, and the arrival of East African Asians
- society and social reform, including the abolition of capital punishment, the legalisation of abortion and homosexuality, and the Race Relations Act
- economic change and crisis, the end of the post-war consensus, and governments up to and including the election of Margaret Thatcher
- Britain's relations with Europe, the Commonwealth, and the wider world
- the end of the Cold War and the fall of the Berlin Wall.

## Appendix B

Statements about the history National Curriculum proposals with which we asked respondents to indicate their level of agreement (from 'strongly agree' to 'strongly disagree')

1. The statement of the purposes of history in the proposed curriculum provides an appropriate rationale for the teaching of history in school.
2. The statement of aims in the proposed curriculum presents an appropriate series of goals for history education.
3. The statement of aims in the proposed curriculum adequately represents the conceptual structure of history as a discipline
4. Teaching the chronological sequence of events as set out in the content of the curriculum proposal will help young people to develop a clear historical framework or map of the past.
5. Covering history from the Stone Age to 1700 at Key Stage 2 will provide young people with a secure basis from which to go on learning history in Key Stage 3.
6. The amount of prescribed content in the proposed curriculum is just about right
7. There is an appropriate proportion of British history within the proposed curriculum.
8. There is an appropriate proportion of European and world history in the proposed curriculum

9. There is an appropriate balance between political, economic, social, religious and cultural history in the proposed curriculum.
10. The content of the proposed curriculum will effectively equip young people with the knowledge and understanding they need as British citizens in the 21st century.
11. The content of the proposed curriculum will effectively prepare young people for life and work in an increasingly globalised society.
12. The presentation of the proposed curriculum content will help teachers to achieve the stated aims of the curriculum.
13. The extent of the curriculum changes will not impact significantly on teachers' workload
14. My school is likely to follow the new curriculum very closely
15. My school is well resourced to teach the new curriculum
16. The planned timetable for implementation (from September 2014) means that schools will have enough time to prepare for teaching the new curriculum.
17. I am looking forward to teaching the new curriculum