



United Learning

History Curriculum

The Cornerstone Academy

Published 6th July 2026



The Cornerstone Academy History Curriculum for Years 7-11

KS3=Key stage 3

KS4=Key stage 4

The Cornerstone Academy History Curriculum is studied by all students in Key Stage 3. At KS4 options students study Edexcel GCSE History; Medicine Through Time 1250-present, Early Elizabethan England 1588-1588, Superpower relations and the Cold War 1941-91 and Weimar and Nazi Germany 1918-1939.

1. Intent of the History curriculum

The lessons within this new KS3 curriculum are based on a knowledge-rich history scheme and the key concepts of knowledge-rich teaching as set out in the Rosenshine Principles of Instruction. This means there is a real focus on subject knowledge and a true understanding of historical substantive concepts, e.g. revolution, monarchy, empire.

The purpose of study for the United Learning KS3 History Curriculum is the same as that of the September 2013 History National Curriculum purpose of study:

'A high-quality history education will help pupils gain a coherent knowledge and understanding of Britain's past and that of the wider world. It should inspire pupils' curiosity to know more about the past. Teaching should equip pupils to ask perceptive questions, think critically, weigh evidence, sift arguments, and develop perspective and judgement. History helps pupils to understand the complexity of people's lives, the process of change, the diversity of societies and relationships between different groups, as well as their own identity and the challenges of their time.'

(Department for Education, History Programmes of Study Key Stage 3, September 2013, DFE-00194-2013)

Aims

As for the purpose of study, the aims of the United Learning KS3 History Curriculum are the same as those of the September 2013 History National Curriculum. The curriculum for history aims to ensure that all pupils:

- Know and understand the history of these islands as a coherent, chronological narrative, from the earliest times to the present day: how people's lives have shaped this nation and how Britain has influenced and been influenced by the wider world.
- Know and understand significant aspects of the history of the wider world: the nature of ancient civilisations; the expansion and dissolution of empires; characteristic features of past non-European societies; 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 the methods of historical enquiry, including 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.

(Department for Education, History Programmes of Study Key Stage 3, September 2013, DFE-00194-2013)

The United Learning History Curriculum provides:

- A knowledge-based curriculum for the whole KS3.
- A clear and coherent structure for each unit in each of Years 7, 8 and 9 to strengthen students' historical knowledge and chronological understanding.
- An enquiry-based question focus for each unit encompassing a combination of depth and overview enquiries.
- An explicit focus in each enquiry question upon substantive and disciplinary knowledge.
- An end of year overarching enquiry which brings together themes explored in the year and, at the end of Years 8 and 9, also links together work from the preceding academic year or years.
- Assessment outcomes through key performance indicators linked to each enquiry question and focused upon the learning that all students should be able to demonstrate at the end of each unit.

At KS4 students follow the Edexcel scheme of learning and the curriculum knowledge from KS3 will be built upon. Students will develop more specific knowledge around their 4 units of study. At KS4 students are assessed using knowledge tests (self-quizzing) and summative assessments based on GCSE past papers and specimen papers. In order to support students with their learning knowledge is consolidated through the use of online platforms such as Seneca.

2. Implementation of the History Curriculum

In years 7,8 and 9 History is taught in a 1x100 minute lesson per week (normally double lessons). Year 10 and 11 have 3x50 minutes per week (usually a double lesson and a single lesson).

The History curriculum at The Cornerstone Academy is implemented according to the teaching and learning policy of the school. Rosenshine and 'Teach Like a Champion' techniques are the basis of the school's teaching and learning practice. Staff will follow dedicated schemes of work to ensure that all students follow The Cornerstone Academy History Curriculum.

All lessons at each key stage should use quizzing to promote recall, retention, application and mastery of content. Students at KS3 will have knowledge organisers with key subject content and key vocabulary which will be set for homework. This low stakes assessment for learning will be used by staff to inform their planning and class interventions.

Students at KS4 will have dedicated homework booklets which help to develop students' long term recall and encourage their use of revision guides.

Modelling should be used frequently with the aid of visualisers to guide student practice and improve the quality of student responses.



United Learning
The best in everyone™

■ Ambition

■ Confidence

■ Creativity

■ F

Ambition

■ Confidence

■ Creativity

■ Respect

■ Enthusiasm

■ Determination

Stretch and Challenge for Grammar Stream Students in History:

Grammar stream students are stretched and challenged through in-depth exposure to the second order concepts of History, such as significance, causation, similarity and difference, change vs continuity. The teaching of these skills is informed by the most up to date teaching and learning guidance and our own trust's subject specialists, who regularly visit and hold meetings with each school in the trust to further support the development of this knowledge.

Furthermore, students are introduced to more advanced subject specific vocabulary and academic language, enabling them to discuss complex ideas with a greater sense of confidence and ambition. Complex language is taught explicitly by teachers, using choral recall and concrete examples to build students' confidence in their use of this language, subsequently preparing them for higher level study.

Year 8:

Our grammar stream offering ensures a greater level of access to historical scholarship, with there being a greater depth of analysis on historiography – the study of *the study of History*. In Year 8, we use scholarship which has competing views around specific events, such as the differing interpretations of the British Empire by scholars such as Ferguson, Tharoor, and John Darwin. Students will be expected to critically assess these views, reach a judgement and then assess and utilise these interpretations.

Year 9:

In Year 9, Scholarship will include well-known Historians such as Arthur Marwick, June Purvis and Martin Pugh. Furthermore, grammar stream students will be encouraged to engage with this scholarship outside of the classroom.

Furthermore, teachers within the History department have provided students from the grammar stream with opportunities for historical writing competitions which were part of The Historical Association, enabling our students to participate and engage with History at a national level. We aim to do this again. Teachers within the History team welcome students' curiosity and would be highly willing to discuss areas of historical interest with the students and to recommend further reading to students.

3. Impact of the History Curriculum

By the end of KS3: Students will be confident and competent in the core skills of source analysis, understanding causation, significance, chronology, change and continuity, diversity and interpretation; all key skills used and tested throughout their GCSEs. Students will be comfortable with a variety of strategies used in the classroom such as group work, pair work and independent study and research opportunities. The use of ICT is also promoted both in and out of school to develop historical knowledge. Students will have key understanding of English History from the Norman Invasion, subsequent challenges to power of the church and monarchs, the Tudors, The English Civil War and The Slave Trade and how these events help to shape the world that we live in today. Importantly these topics provide a foundation for those intending to study History at KS4 and KS5. Students at KS3 will also have opportunities to study world history topics and experience residential and day trips to help make the study of History relevant to 21st century students.

By the end of KS4: students will have strengthened and consolidated skills and knowledge learnt in KS3 to allow them to have a more in-depth understanding of key concepts at KS4. Cornerstone students will have a clear picture of the key themes in medicine in Britain in the 1000-year period c1000-2000AD. They will have looked in depth at the key features of Early Elizabethan England, as well as the Cold war period and Weimar Nazi Germany. Cornerstone Students will be able to confidently apply their knowledge to make clear inferences from source analyses, articulate their position on a topic, as well as express their opinion clearly using key knowledge to argue for or against a point.

Y7 topics	Y8 topics	Y9 topics	Y10 Topics	Y11 Topics
Topic 1: Empires East and West Topic 2: Norman Conquest Topic 3: Medieval Religion Topic 4: Medieval Monarchs Topic 5: Medieval England and Her Neighbours Topic 6: Medieval Mali Topic 7: European Renaissance	Topic 1: The Tudor Reformation Topic 2: Elizabethan England Topic 3: The English Civil War Topic 4: The Transatlantic Slave Trade Topic 5: The Industrial Revolution Topic 6: The British Empire Potential Topics: The [re]discovery of The New World and The French Revolution.	Modern Depth Study 1 : WW1, causes, significance, experiences. Topic 2: Suffrage, including female suffrage. Topic 3: World War 2, causes, significance, experiences. Topic 4: The Holocaust	Medicine Through Time 1250-present, Weimar and Nazi Germany 1918-1939 Superpower Relations 1940-1990	Superpower Relations 1940-1990 Early Elizabethan England 1588-1588

Programmes of study for KS3 History Curriculum

Y7	Overarching Themes	Enquiry questions	Knowledge
1	Empires East and West		• The continuity between the classical world and the medieval period. • Byzantine Empire and western Christendom were all connected. • silk roads, which ran from China to the Mediterranean. • Some rulers of the Islamic Empire and Byzantine Empire seized power by force, gathering supporters to defeat their rivals. • Christianity was divided: the Roman Catholic Church and the Eastern Orthodox Church • The fall of the Roman Empire. • The Church in Western Europe; saints, relics, monasteries, tithes.
2	The Norman Conquest	Why were the Normans able to conquer and control Anglo-Saxon England?	• Challengers for the throne. • Invasion: Battle of Hastings. • The role of Castles, and their evolution. • Changes to land ownership. (The Feudal System) • The Domesday Survey. • Concept of causation. • Links to local areas local. Norman castle – Corfe Castle.
3	Religion in the Middle Ages	How significant was religion in medieval England?	• The structure of the Catholic church. • The impact of the church on day-to-day life. • The role of monasteries in society. • The significance of the Crusades and the consequences.

4	Challenges to Medieval Monarchs	Who posed the greatest challenge to Medieval Monarchs?	• Religious challenges (Henry II and Thomas Becket, or John and Stephen Langton). • Political challenges (John and Magna Carta and/or Henry III and Simon de Montfort). • Social challenges (Richard II, Black Death and the Peasants' Revolt). • Concepts of similarity and difference.
5	Medieval Mali	What does Mansa Musa's life reveal about the Mali Empire in 16 th Century?	• Using visual and written evidence to make inferences about African civilizations. • Exploring Mansa Musa's ambition, devotion to Islam, and wealth. • Evaluating which of these were his greatest characteristic.
6	Renaissance Europe	How far was the European Renaissance a <i>revolution</i> in thinking?	• Identify inventions and events that led to change. • How to make a judgment based on evidence.



United Learning
The best in everyone™

■ Ambition

■ Confidence

■ Creativity

■ F

Y8	Overarching Themes	Enquiry questions	Knowledge
1	The Tudors:	Why and how did Henry VIII break with Rome?	• Development of 'Protestant' ideas; role of Martin Luther; criticisms of Catholicism; similarities and differences with Catholicism. • Henry and the Reformation in England: ○ Personal and dynastic factors: Henry's relations with Catherine of Aragon, Anne Boleyn, desire for a son. ○ Power factors, including the role of Thomas Cromwell and the role of parliament. ○ Financial factors. • Concept of causation. • Edward VI and the popularity of Protestantism. • The impact of 'Bloody Mary'. • The impact of Elizabeth I's 'Middle Way'. • Mary, Queen of Scots, uprisings, and plots. • England's wars with Spain and the Spanish Armada. • The Gunpowder Plot.
2	The English Civil War	How and why did a civil war break out in 1642?	• The role of parliament by the early C.17th. • Charles' 'Personal Rule' and its problems regarding finance and power. • The breakdown of relations between Charles and Parliament between 1640 and 1642. • Concept of causation. • The Restoration of the Monarchy and motives for its return.

3	The Transatlantic Slave Trade	How was the slave trade challenged and finally abolished by different groups?	• Nature of Atlantic slave trade. • The role of British Campaigners (e.g. Clarkson, Wilberforce). • Economic factors explaining the end of the slave trade. • The role of slave rebellion in ending the slave trade. • Concept of interpretations.
4	The Industrial Revolution	How much progress was made during the Industrial Revolution?	• Causes of the Industrial Revolution. • Social and political responses to the Industrial Revolution. • The changing social conditions as a consequence of the Industrial Revolution, e.g changes to child labour. • Make links to local case studies
6	The British Empire	When, where and who was the British Empire for?	• The British Empire in its different forms. • The role of the empire in different locations. • Differing experiences across the empire. • Make judgments based on historical evidence. • Make links from the historical presence of the British Empire to the present day.



United Learning
The best in everyone™

■ Ambition

■ Confidence

■ Creativity

■ F

Y9	Overarching Themes	Enquiry questions	Knowledge
1	World War One	How and why did a World War break out in 1914?	• International relations and Alliances in the early C.20th. • The rise of militarism and the concept of arms race (the Anglo-German Naval Race) • Sarajevo and the July Crisis, 1914. • Concept of causation.
2	Female Suffrage	How and why did women gain the right to vote in 1918?	• Explore causes of the 1918 Representation of the People Act. • Analyse the link between suffrage and WW1. • Make links to the participation of women during World War One and their expanded suffrage post-war.
3	The Second World War	How significant was the Second World War for British society?	• Pre-war Britain • The Blitz • Children during WW2 • Women during WW2 • Government responses during WW2 •
4	The Holocaust	Who was responsible for the Final Solution?	• Long-term history of Anti-Semitism across Europe as well as in Germany. • Nazi persecution of the Jews from 1933-1941. • Genocide and the Holocaust, 1941-1945. • Responses to the Holocaust and responsibility • Aftermath and legacy of the Holocaust.



United Learning
The best in everyone™

■ Ambition

■ Confidence

■ Creativity

Ambition

■ Confidence

■ Creativity

■ Respect

■ Enthusiasm

■ Determination