



Verulam School History Department

Year 11 into Year 12:

Preparing for A Level History

There are 4 units we study for A Level History over two years, but for now, you need to focus on the two units of work we cover in Year 12:

Unit 1: In search of the American dream: the USA, c1917-96

This is a 'breadth' study of the USA throughout the 20th century from their participation in the First World War. Many themes are explored, including war, economic depression, civil rights, media and technology. There is a separate case study about the Reagan Presidency of 1981-89 and students will analyse historians' interpretations of Reagan as President.

Unit 2: India, c1914-48: the road to independence

This is a 'depth' study about the 'jewel in the crown' of the British Empire; India. We will examine why this colony was so important to Britain economically, politically and strategically. The role of India in both world wars is examined, along with rising nationalism and British attempts to grant reform to India. Finally, we will examine why Britain granted Independence and partitioned India in 1947.



*This **Preparing for A Level History** pack contains three many activities: reading and research tasks, writing tasks and video tasks. These will be highlighted by the three icons:*



A Level History Course Textbooks and Reading Activities

Textbooks



Official Course Textbook:

Searching for Rights and Freedoms in the 20th Century by Rosemary Rees, Jane Shuter and Professor William Beinart, Pearson Education (2015)

This is the textbook we will use in school. Although there are department copies to use in school, we highly recommend you purchase this for yourself. There might be cheaper second hand copies to purchase online.

Alongside this official textbook, the following texts are also extremely useful to ensure you successful in both parts of the course:

Unit 1: In search of the American dream: the USA, c1917–96

- Access to History: In search of the American Dream: the USA, c1917–96 for Edexcel by Vivienne Sanders, Hodder Education (2018)
- My Revision Notes: Edexcel AS/A-level History: In search of the American Dream: the USA, c1917–96 by Alan Farmer, Hodder Education (2018)

Unit 2: India, c1914-48: the road to independence

- Access to History: Indian Independence 1914-64 Second Edition, Tim Leadbeater, Hodder Education (2015)
- Edexcel GCE History: Britain and the Nationalist Challenge in India 1900-1947: Unit 2, Rosemary Rees, Pearson (2009)
- Raj: The Making and Unmaking of British India, Lawrence James, Abacus (2010)

Reading activities

If you do manage to get hold of these texts, choose a chapter to read and summarise the key points by making a mind map and listing any key terms from the text in a **subject specific vocabulary list**, researching their meanings (if not clear from the text) and recording these.

A Level History Preparation Written Activities

These written tasks will be your first piece of A Level assessed work. The deadline for these tasks is your first Year 12 lesson in September.



Unit 1: In search of the American dream: the USA, c1917–96

1) Explain the key features of the USA's system of government today.

You should consider

- The role and power of the President (the executive)
- The role and power of Congress (the legislative)
- The role and power of the Supreme Court (the judiciary)
- The role and power of individual states (federalism)

2) Consider any **one** president of the USA between 1917 and 1996. To what extent do you **approve** of his record whilst President? Create a **chart** to organise your research.

Task 1 should be in the form of a mind map. Task 2 should be done as a table, with two headings (I approve, I disapprove) to organise your evidence.

Unit 2: India, c1914–48: the road to independence

3) **To what extent was the Indian Mutiny of 1857 caused by the grievances of the sepoys (Indian troops working for the East India Company)?**

For this task, you will need to conduct some research.

You should consider:

- Why the sepoys were so angry by the 1850s?
- Whether they were right to be so angry? In other words, to what extent did their officers and the East India Company contribute to this catastrophe?
- Were there other causes of discontent felt by other Indians who were not soldiers?
- The doctrine of lapse and how that alienated some of the princes, normally loyal allies of the East India Company.

Task 3 should be between 500 to 600 words and done as a piece of extended writing.

Each task above answer should begin on a separate page.

A Level History Preparation Video Activities

Watch the videos below and create a document that lists discussion points and questions it raises.

Unit 1: In search of the American dream: the USA, c1917–96



Videos and documentaries:

Crash Course US History (found on You Tube):

Videos #30 - #45 are relevant for our course.

<https://www.youtube.com/playlist?list=PL8dPuuaLjXtMwmepBjTSG593eG7ObzO7s>

Eyes on the Prize

A worthy documentary about the civil rights movement.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Tsl0IVzUDVw>

The Century: America's Time (found on You Tube):

A three part series of programmes about the USA over the 20th century.

Part 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=RN7ftyZigYs>

Part 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=EWg2xghlbnc>

Part 3: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ZPP0ae2zrXY>

BBC Storyville 'Ronald Reagan'

A comprehensive documentary about the Regan era— a biographical look at Reagan, but also explores the historians' debate about his presidency.

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=tDf7_YXF_So

Films:

- The Vietnam War: a film by Ken Burns and Lynn Novick (Netflix)
- Platoon (Netflix)
- Who Killed Malcolm X? (Netflix)
- 13th (Netflix)
- Selma (Film, should be able to find it online)
- The Freedom Riders (YouTube)

Unit 2: India, c1914–48: the road to independence



Videos and documentaries:

The Armchair Historian

A useful clip about how Britain conquered India.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=DzDwz18ng7w>

Crash Course World History

Video #228 – Nonviolence and peace movements.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=eP-mv5IjFzY>

The British Empire in Colour (India)

Contemporary film footage restored in colour, documenting the occupation of India by the British during the time of the Raj.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=nhKYg641K3c>

Jeremy Paxman documentary ‘Empire’

The full documentary: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vu5jPlsGYfo>

An extract about how the British ruled in India during the Raj:

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=F7GOh8qLLwQ>

Amritsar Massacre

On the 100 year anniversary of the Amritsar Massacre (in 2019), BBC Newsnight investigates what happened and whether the British should formally apologise to India for the massacre.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=9pDezGwGt28>

Partition: The Day India Burned (BBC documentary)

Compelling documentary about the reasons for independence of India, and the horrific conclusion to partition of India and Pakistan.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0ZS40U5yFpc>

The Last Days of the Raj (Channel 4 documentary)

This 90-minute drama-documentary, filmed entirely on location in India, charts the events of six traumatic months in 1947 that saw the end of the British Raj in.

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vlAgUoyalq0>

My Family, Partition and Me: India 1947

This two part series witnesses Anita Rani presenting the extraordinary and emotional stories of three British families - one Muslim, one Hindu and one British colonial - who lived in India 70 years ago, at the time of Partition.

Part 1: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0nvl6F8Kix4>

Part 2: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=vB1OTfkW2C0>

A Level History Preparation Extra Activities

Concepts and ideas

It would be useful to get an understanding of the following ready for September. You could make four mind maps, or make notes in general after some independent research:

- The US Constitution, including the function of government;
- The Cold War and the USA's part in this;
- The British Empire in 1900, including membership and advantages for Britain;
- The British Raj, how India was ruled; the role of the viceroy, the Secretary of State and the Indian Civil Service, including the relationship with the Princes.

Example essay questions

Here are some examples of A Level examination questions. They are all worth 20 marks. Why don't you give them a go?

Unit 1: In search of the American dream: the USA, c1917–96

How far do you agree that the personality of the president was the most significant factor in changes in the presidency in the years 1917-80?

Present evidence to show that the personality of the president mattered—but be careful to weigh that against other elements that affected the presidency.

How far had legal action advanced the position of black Americans between 1917 and 1955?

Consider what the legislation says and how that helped. Also consider previous legislation (such as the Plessy case) that might restrict advancement. Also, consider the differences between legislation and implementation.

Unit 2: India, c1914–48: the road to independence

To what extent was Gandhi responsible for the failure of the London-based Round Table Conferences held in the years 1930-32?

Consider the role Gandhi had in these conferences, along with the leader of the Muslim League; Muhammed Ali Jinnah, as well as the role of the British government.

How accurate is it to say that the Second World War was the most significant factor driving Indian nationalism in the years 1935-45?

Consider the ways in which the aims and methods of the different nationalist groups changed during the period, and the extent to which this was due to the war.