



# **MODERN HISTORY**

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ATAR course

**Year 12 syllabus – What’s changing: Rationale and Aims  
For teaching in 2027**

## **Acknowledgement of Country**

Kaya. The School Curriculum and Standards Authority (the Authority) acknowledges that our offices are on Whadjuk Noongar boodjar and that we deliver our services on the country of many traditional custodians and language groups throughout Western Australia. The Authority acknowledges the traditional custodians throughout Western Australia and their continuing connection to land, waters and community. We offer our respect to Elders past and present.

## **Background**

As part of the Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) Refreshment for reviewing the nomenclature of courses, the Authority has updated the rationale and aims of each syllabus.

The revised rationale and aims are aligned with the mapping of the general capabilities to provide clear connections between the rationale, aims and syllabus content. The rationale outlines what the subject is about and why it is important. It describes what students can expect to study in the course, along with the knowledge, skills and understandings they will develop throughout the course. It also explains how these can be applied in everyday life and references potential future pathways, outlining how students might connect what they learn in the course to further education, training and employment opportunities.

## **Important information**

### **WACE Refreshment: Reviewing the nomenclature of courses**

This document contains information that will be included in the syllabus effective from 1 January 2027.

Users of the syllabus are responsible for checking its currency.

Syllabuses are formally reviewed by the Authority on a cyclical basis, typically every five years.

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## Rationale

The Modern History ATAR course investigates key individuals, events, movements and forces that have shaped today's modern world and provides students with a broader and deeper comprehension of the world in which they live. It enhances students' curiosity and imagination and their appreciation of larger themes, individuals, movements, events and ideas that have shaped the contemporary world. The course develops students' knowledge of historical context, assisting their comprehension of current global issues.

In the course, students investigate crises that confronted nation-states in the 20th century, the responses to these crises and the different paths nations have taken in the modern world. The course looks at the distinctive features of world order that have emerged since World War II that are central to understanding the present. The themes covered in the course include local, national and global conflicts and their resolution; the rise of nationalism and its consequences; the decline of imperialism and the process of decolonisation; the continuing struggle for the recognition of human rights; the transformation of social and economic life; the regional shifts in power and the rise of Asia; and the changing nature and influence of ideologies.

Students make connections between formative changes from the late 18th century onwards and the changing world of the 21st century. Students develop skills to examine the complexities associated with the changing nature of evidence, its expanding quantity, range and form; the distinctive characteristics of modern historical representation; and controversial issues that have a powerful contemporary resonance. Students develop increasingly sophisticated historiographical skills and historical understanding in their analysis of particular events and close study of the nature of modern societies.

The skills students learn in the course are applicable to daily life in the modern world and their understanding of social, economic and political changes. Students learn to pose increasingly complex questions about the past and use their historical inquiry and analytical skills, and interpretation of sources, to formulate reasoned answers to those questions. They have opportunities to apply these skills sequentially and cumulatively, so they develop an increasingly sophisticated understanding of the different and sometimes conflicting perspectives of the past and how they have influenced the current modern world.

The Modern History ATAR course equips students with the skills, knowledge and understanding to pursue a range of future pathways in vocational and university education. Critical thinking, analysis, historical inquiry and effective written communication skills are transferable and applicable to a variety of future career paths in fields such as museum curation and archives, archaeology, law, politics, journalism, teaching, film and international relations.

## Aims

The Modern History ATAR course aims to develop students’:

- knowledge and understanding of particular events, ideas, people, movements and developments that have shaped the modern world
- ability to undertake historical inquiry, including skills in research, evaluation of sources, synthesis of evidence, analysis of interpretations and representations, and communication of findings
- application of historical concepts, including evidence, continuity and change, cause and effect, significance, empathy and perspectives
- capacity to become informed citizens with analytical and critical thinking skills to participate in contemporary debates.