



# MODERN HISTORY

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General course

**Year 11 syllabus for teaching from 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.

## **Important information**

As part of the Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) Refreshment, the School Curriculum and Standards Authority (the Authority) has revised the course rationale and aims, and updated the General Capabilities to create clearer connections with the syllabus content.

This syllabus is effective from 1 January 2027.

Users of this 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 General course provides students with an understanding of the driving forces behind present day local, national and global issues by investigating the past. The course helps students understand why and how groups and/or societies changed or resisted change over time.

The course provides students with opportunities to investigate a variety of people and places in history, and their own place in the historical narrative, as well as how individuals and groups attempt to influence the distribution of power and authority. The course promotes the skills of research, hypothesis testing and analysis of information as students engage with investigations. Through inquiries carried out in the course, students learn that historical judgements are provisional and tentative in nature. They are encouraged to question and evaluate historical sources to identify the various representations and versions of history.

Students develop critical thinking skills throughout the course, which encourages them to compare information, detect inconsistencies in details, recognise the manipulation of evidence, identify perspective in the presentation of graphic and textual material, and evaluate the accuracy and reliability of sources. The course gives students opportunities to reflect on the significance of past events, people, beliefs and ideas, while providing insights into the present. They learn how to use evidence from sources to formulate and support their own interpretations and to communicate their findings in a variety of ways.

The course provides students with skills, knowledge and understanding that help them develop insight into their own society and its values, and how this influences their daily lives. By studying history, students gain essential knowledge of the past, its legacy and heritage. It helps them understand why nations and people hold certain values, and why values and belief systems vary from one group to another. This knowledge is crucial to the development of active and informed citizens in any society.

The Modern History General course provides students with skills, knowledge and understanding as a basis for further study at the vocational level and may be used as an alternative entry pathway for university. Critical thinking and analysis, the ability to independently locate information and conduct inquiry, as well as effective written communication skills are transferable and applicable to a variety of future career options in fields such as working in museums and libraries, the legal field, education, journalism or the film industry.

## Aims

The Modern History General 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 be informed citizens with the skills, including analytical and critical thinking to participate in contemporary debates.

## Organisation

This course is organised into a Year 11 syllabus and a Year 12 syllabus. The cognitive complexity of the syllabus content increases from Year 11 to Year 12.

### Structure of the syllabus

The Year 11 syllabus is divided into two units, each of one semester duration, which are typically delivered as a pair. The notional time for each unit is 55 class contact hours.

#### Unit 1 – People, place and time

This unit allows students to become aware of the broad sweep of history and our place within the historical narrative.

#### Unit 2 – Power and authority

Students learn that societies consist of individuals and institutions that have various types of power and authority and that these interact with each other.

Each unit includes:

- a unit description – a short description of the focus of the unit
- electives – an elective in which the unit content could be taught
- unit content – the content to be taught and learned.

### Organisation of content

The Modern History General course continues to develop student learning in history through the two strands of Historical Knowledge and Understanding and Historical Skills. This strand organisation provides an opportunity to integrate content in flexible and meaningful ways.

#### Historical Knowledge and Understanding

In order for students to make meaning of the past, they examine a range of historical narratives to develop understandings about the chronology of a time period. They examine the defining characteristics of a society at the start of the period; the key people, ideas and events that were forces for continuity and change during the period; and the consequences of continuity and change on a society at the time, at a later time and/or upon other societies. Through the study of a range of historical narratives, they learn that historical narratives are set within a defined period of time, reflect a particular view of history that may be similar to, or different from other historical narratives, and that the narratives are supported with evidence.

#### Historical Skills

This strand presents historical skills, including skills that are used in historical inquiry. There are five skill areas that build on those learned in the Year 7–10 History curriculum and which continue to be developed in the Year 11 and Year 12 Modern History General syllabuses. These are chronology, terms and concepts; historical questions and research; analysis and use of sources; perspectives and interpretations; and explanation and communication. There is an emphasis through this strand on the development of informed and defensible responses to inquiry questions through a critical use of sources.

## Relationship between the strands

The two strands are interrelated and the content enables integration of the strands in the development of a teaching and learning program. The Historical Knowledge and Understanding strand provides the contexts through which particular skills are to be developed. The same set of historical skills is included in each of the units to provide a common focus for the teaching and learning content in the Historical Knowledge and Understanding strand.

## Progression from the Years 7–10 curriculum

This syllabus continues to develop student understanding and skills from the Years 7–10 Humanities and Social Sciences (HASS) History curriculum. The Historical Knowledge and Understanding strand focuses principally on the modern world, especially the 20th century, and provides opportunities to study world history in more depth. This includes topics related to significant developments, revolutionary change, struggles for civil rights, the history of other nations, and tensions and conflicts of international significance. This syllabus continues to develop the skills of historical inquiry, with a greater focus on skills associated with critical thinking, the analysis of sources and historical interpretation.

## Representation of the General Capabilities

The General Capabilities encompass the knowledge, skills, behaviours and dispositions that will assist students to live and work successfully now and into the future. They are not assessed unless identified within the specified unit content. Teachers should find opportunities to incorporate the following General Capabilities into the teaching and learning program for the Modern History General course.

### Critical and creative thinking

Students use critical and creative thinking to engage in the historical inquiry process by developing questions to investigate complex issues and topics. They have opportunities to delve deeply and broadly into the implications of missing or questionable information in their investigation of historical topics. Students develop the ability to pose thoughtful questions, interrogate, select and cross-reference significant information from a range of sources, and develop interpretations based on an assessment of the evidence and reasoning. They identify possible weaknesses in their own positions, and analyse, evaluate and synthesise alternative interpretations and representations of the past.

### Ethical understanding

Students develop ethical understanding by exploring, understanding and analysing the diverse perspectives and circumstances that shaped the actions and possible motivations of people in the past, compared with those of today. They have opportunities, both independently and collaboratively, to examine the values, beliefs and principles that were the basis for judgements and actions of people in the past, and to explore examples of tensions between conflicting positions of personal, social and global importance.

## Intercultural understanding

Students develop their intercultural understanding by exploring and appreciating the diverse beliefs, values and experiences of cultural groups throughout history. By examining the causes and consequences of intercultural conflict, cooperation and dispossession, students develop empathy and insight into how cultural perspectives have shaped societies and global relationships. They critically reflect on how historical contexts influence contemporary views and actions, fostering a deeper awareness of the complexities of identity, power and cultural interaction in the modern world.

## Literacy

Students develop literacy skills by accessing historical content through a variety of print, oral, visual, spatial and electronic forms, including letters, speeches, biographies, photographs, films, artefacts and archived material. They learn to interpret and extrapolate meaning from a variety of sources to identify evidence. Students analyse and evaluate texts for authority, reliability, relevance and accuracy. They have opportunities to create a wide range of texts to communicate, explore, discuss, explain and argue a point of view, selecting and employing text structure and language knowledge to express their thoughts and ideas logically and fluently, supported by evidence. Students learn to monitor their own language for accuracy in the use of historical terms, clarity of ideas and explanations, and conciseness of expression. They learn to use language effectively to articulate a position.

## Addressing the other General Capabilities

Although the following General Capabilities have not been identified as a focus in the Modern History General Year 11 syllabus, teachers may find opportunities to incorporate them into the teaching and learning program.

- Numeracy
- Digital Literacy
- Personal and social capability

Such opportunities may occur through the application of different contexts, pedagogical practices and/or assessment strategies that relate to the syllabus as part of the teaching and learning program.

## Summary representation of the General Capabilities in the Modern History General course

The unit content and assessment types for this course provide students with the opportunity to develop the General Capabilities summarised in the table below.

| Year    | Course                 | Course type | General Capabilities |    |    |    |   |   |     |
|---------|------------------------|-------------|----------------------|----|----|----|---|---|-----|
|         |                        |             | CCT                  | DL | EU | IU | L | N | PSC |
| Year 11 | Modern History (GEHIM) | General     | ✓                    |    | ✓  | ✓  | ✓ |   |     |
| Year 12 | Modern History (GTHIM) | General     | ✓                    |    | ✓  | ✓  | ✓ |   |     |

### Key

CCT: Critical and creative thinking, DL: Digital literacy, EU: Ethical understanding, IU: Intercultural understanding, L: Literacy, N: Numeracy, PSC: Personal and social capability



## **Representation of the Cross-curriculum Priorities**

The Cross-curriculum Priorities address contemporary issues that students face in a globalised world. Teachers may find opportunities to incorporate them into the teaching and learning program for the Modern History General course. The Cross-curriculum Priorities are not assessed unless they are identified within the specified unit content.

### **Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures**

Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander histories and cultures includes study of the ideas that have influenced movements for change, the impact of government policies, the progress towards recognition and equality for Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Peoples, and the focus of continued efforts.

### **Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia**

Asia and Australia's engagement with Asia includes the paths of development taken by Asian nations, the distinctive and changing character of Asia, and the growing influence of Asia in the world.

### **Sustainability**

Sustainability provides opportunities to study the effects of developments, such as the Industrial Revolution on the environment, the anti-nuclear movement, and movements for environmental sustainability in the modern period.

## Unit 1 – People, place and time

### Unit description

This unit allows students to become aware of the broad sweep of history and our place within the historical narrative. Students become aware of the values, beliefs and traditions within a society, the continuity between different societies and different time periods, and the importance of individuals within a time period.

### Unit content

This unit includes the knowledge, understandings and skills described below.

#### Historical Skills

The following skills will be developed during this unit.

##### Chronology, terms and concepts

- identify links between events to understand the nature and significance of causation, continuity and change over time
- use historical terms and concepts in appropriate contexts to demonstrate historical knowledge and understanding

##### Historical questions and research

- formulate, test and modify propositions to investigate historical issues
- frame questions to guide inquiry and develop a coherent research plan for inquiry
- identify, locate and organise relevant information from a range of primary and secondary sources
- practise ethical scholarship when conducting research

##### Analysis and use of sources

- identify the origin, message, purpose and context of historical sources
- analyse, interpret and synthesise evidence from different types of sources to develop and sustain an historical argument
- evaluate the reliability and usefulness of sources to develop informed judgements that support an historical argument

##### Perspectives and interpretations

- analyse and account for the different perspectives of individuals and groups in the past
- evaluate critically different historical interpretations of the past, how they evolved, and how they are shaped by the historian's perspective
- evaluate contested views about the past to understand the provisional nature of historical knowledge and to arrive at reasoned and supported conclusions

##### Explanation and communication

- develop texts that integrate appropriate evidence from a range of sources to explain the past and to support and refute arguments
- communicate historical understanding by selecting and using text forms appropriate to the purpose and audience
- apply appropriate referencing techniques accurately and consistently

## Historical Knowledge and Understanding

Students study **one** or **two** of the following electives which are to be taught with the requisite historical skills described as part of this unit.

- Napoleon, the Revolution and the Empire
- George Washington and the American Revolution
- Nicholas II and the decline of Tsarism
- The Dowager Empress Cixi, the Boxer Rebellion and the Republic
- Charles Perkins, Eddie Mabo, Faith Bandler and others: Aboriginal advancement since the 1950s to the Apology
- Nelson Mandela and the fight to end apartheid in South Africa
- Local history: How a selected suburb, town or area of Western Australia has changed over time with reference to the significant people of the area and relating the local history to Western Australia/Australia's history. The focus of the study could include Indigenous history, impact of wars, economic circumstances and migration.

The impact of the following forces should be considered, where appropriate, throughout the elective:

- political
- economic
- leadership
- international relations/conflicts
- social/cultural.

Students study the chosen elective(s) using the following framework.

### Elements of a society at the start of the period

- key political, social and economic structures of a society at the start of the period
- values, beliefs and traditions characteristic of a society
- chronology of the period of study according to significant events, people and ideas

### Key people, ideas, events over the period

- ideas that emerged throughout the period
- key events that occurred throughout the period
- the emergence of individuals and groups within a society
- level of support or opposition for significant individuals, groups or organisations, ideas and events

### Consequences of continuity and change over the period

- nature (types) of continuity and change
- forces that bring about continuity and change, for example, political, economic, social, military, religious, technological, leadership, collective or group pressure
- identifying forces that were more significant than others in shaping continuity and change
- identifying aspects of a society that changed and those which stayed the same

## Unit 2 – Power and authority

### Unit description

Students learn that societies consist of individuals and institutions that have various types of power and authority and that these interact with each other. Students learn how power and authority is distributed throughout a group or society, that individuals and groups seek to influence the structures of power and authority and the difficulties of using these structures in a just or equitable manner. In learning about the structures and institutions of societies, they make comparisons and judgements about other societies and their own society.

### Unit content

This unit includes the knowledge, understandings and skills described below.

#### Historical Skills

The following skills will be developed during this unit.

##### Chronology, terms and concepts

- identify links between events to understand the nature and significance of causation, continuity and change over time
- use historical terms and concepts in appropriate contexts to demonstrate historical knowledge and understanding

##### Historical questions and research

- formulate, test and modify propositions to investigate historical issues
- frame questions to guide inquiry and develop a coherent research plan for inquiry
- identify, locate and organise relevant information from a range of primary and secondary sources
- practise ethical scholarship when conducting research

##### Analysis and use of sources

- identify the origin, message, purpose and context of historical sources
- analyse, interpret and synthesise evidence from different types of sources to develop and sustain an historical argument
- evaluate the reliability and usefulness of sources to develop informed judgements that support an historical argument

##### Perspectives and interpretations

- analyse and account for the different perspectives of individuals and groups in the past
- evaluate critically different historical interpretations of the past, how they evolved, and how they are shaped by the historian's perspective
- evaluate contested views about the past to understand the provisional nature of historical knowledge and to arrive at reasoned and supported conclusions

**Explanation and communication**

- develop texts that integrate appropriate evidence from a range of sources to explain the past and to support and refute arguments
- communicate historical understanding by selecting and using text forms appropriate to the purpose and audience
- apply appropriate referencing techniques accurately and consistently

**Historical Knowledge and Understanding**

Students study **one** or **two** of the following electives which are to be taught with the requisite historical skills described as part of this unit:

- Imperial power and authority: the British in Australia and the Asia Pacific
- Imperial power and authority: the French in Indo-China
- Imperial power and authority: the Dutch in the East Indies
- International authority: the League of Nations and the United Nations
- Authoritarian state: Tokugawa Japan
- Authoritarian state: Communist Russia/USSR 1917–1953
- Authoritarian state: Cuba 1952–1990s

The impact of the following forces should be considered where appropriate throughout the elective:

- political
- economic
- leadership
- international relations/conflicts
- social/cultural.

Students study the chosen elective(s) using the following framework.

**Elements of a society at the start of the period**

- key political, social and economic structures of a society at the start of the period
- values, beliefs and traditions are linked to the identity of a society
- recognition of different kinds of power and authority that exist within a society
- identifying structures and processes of power and authority in the society
- significant events, issues, people and other factors that shaped the nature of society at the start of the period

**Key people, ideas, events over the period**

- individuals and groups present challenges to the structures of power and authority as a result of events and ideas within the time period
- motivation and actions of individuals and groups seeking to influence structures of power and authority
- the structures of power and authority respond to challenges by individuals, groups and organisations

**Consequences of continuity and change over the period**

- indicators of continuity and change
- how and why aspects of society change while other aspects remain unchanged
- the fate of those people who either supported or resisted continuity and change in a society throughout a period

## School-based assessment

The *Western Australian Certificate of Education (WACE) Manual* contains essential information on principles, policies and procedures for school-based assessment that needs to be read in conjunction with this syllabus.

Teachers design school-based assessment tasks to meet the needs of students. The table below provides details of the assessment types for the Modern History General Year 11 syllabus and the weighting for each assessment type.

### Assessment table – Year 11

| Type of assessment                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      | Weighting |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------|
| <b>Historical inquiry</b><br>Students use the relevant historical skills to plan, conduct and communicate an inquiry related to the elective they are studying. The inquiry proposition is devised by the teacher.<br><br>The final presentation can be: a written report that includes timelines, flow diagrams, photographs; an analysis of sources used in the inquiry; a multimodal presentation that could include posters, museum displays, re-enactments, PowerPoints, video, websites and which can be presented individually or in a group.                                                                                                    | 20–30%    |
| <b>Explanation</b><br>A response in the form of: a short answer or a set of short answers; an extended answer which can be scaffolded or sectionalised essay questions, and can contain timelines, flow diagrams; oral presentations that can be in the form of a debate, hypothetical, group presentation and/or re-enactment for one or more closed or open questions.<br><br>An explanation can involve: responding to propositions or points of debate; explanations or evaluations of historical evidence; and interpretations and/or representations.                                                                                             | 20–30%    |
| <b>Source analysis</b><br>A number of sources are interpreted, analysed, evaluated and/or synthesised. Questions typically use evidence from the sources when commenting on: message; origin, purpose and context; reliability and usefulness of the evidence; perspective; and relevance to the context.<br><br>The teacher can select the sources and provide the questions, or a student, or group of students, can select a range of sources to respond to questions provided by the teacher.<br><br>Source materials can include: photographs, cartoons, paintings, graphs, government papers, extracts from newspaper articles, letters, diaries. | 20–30%    |
| <b>Test</b><br>Can be conducted at the end of each semester and/or unit.<br><br>Typically, a combination of closed or open questions that are elective specific.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | 20–30%    |

Teachers are required to use the assessment table to develop an assessment outline for the pair of units (or for a single unit where only one is being studied).

The assessment outline must:

- include a set of assessment tasks
- include a general description of each task
- indicate the unit content to be assessed
- indicate a weighting for each task and each assessment type
- include the approximate timing of each task (for example, the week the task is conducted, or the issue and submission dates for an extended task).

In the assessment outline for the pair of units, each assessment type must be included at least once over the year/pair of units. In the assessment outline where a single unit is being studied, each assessment type must be included at least once.

The set of assessment tasks must provide a representative sampling of the content for Unit 1 and Unit 2.

Assessment tasks not administered under test/controlled conditions require appropriate validation/authentication processes. For example, student performance for an historical inquiry could be validated by, for example, a student/teacher interview, a declaration that all reference material is cited according to the school protocols, a learning journal or a research organiser.

## Grading

Schools report student achievement in terms of the following grades:

| Grade | Interpretation           |
|-------|--------------------------|
| A     | Excellent achievement    |
| B     | High achievement         |
| C     | Satisfactory achievement |
| D     | Limited achievement      |
| E     | Very low achievement     |

The teacher prepares a ranked list and assigns the student a grade for the pair of units (or for a unit where only one unit is being studied). The grade is based on the student's overall performance as judged by reference to a set of pre-determined standards. These standards are defined by grade descriptions and annotated work samples. The grade descriptions for the Modern History General Year 11 syllabus are provided in Appendix 1. They can also be accessed, together with annotated work samples, through the Guide to Grades link on the course page of the Authority website at [www.scsa.wa.edu.au](http://www.scsa.wa.edu.au).

To be assigned a grade, a student must have had the opportunity to complete the education program, including the assessment program (unless the school accepts that there are exceptional and justifiable circumstances).

Refer to the *WACE Manual* for further information about the use of a ranked list in the process of assigning grades.

## Appendix 1 – Grade descriptions Year 11

|   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|---|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| A | <p><b>Historical Skills</b></p> <p>Selects a range of appropriate sources and analyses for three or more of the following: message; origin, purpose, context; reliability and usefulness; perspective.</p> <p>Responds to key words in research or essay questions and is mostly accurate in applying evidence and historical understandings from acknowledged sources.</p> <p>Uses appropriate historical terms and concepts to develop clear arguments that are logical and coherent, with an attempt at analysis.</p> <p>Identifies that different historical perspectives and interpretations exist both within the time period studied and over time.</p> <p><b>Historical Knowledge and Understanding</b></p> <p>Demonstrates that one or more of the following: people, events, ideas and/or structures are more significant than the others and have direct consequences within a society.</p> <p>Demonstrates an understanding of the significance/impact of forces on continuity and change.</p> |
| B | <p><b>Historical Skills</b></p> <p>Selects a range of appropriate sources and analyses some of the following: message; origin, purpose, context; reliability and usefulness; perspective.</p> <p>Responds to key words in research or essay questions, applying a general historical understanding of acknowledged sources and evidence.</p> <p>Uses appropriate historical terms and develops a structured response which is largely narrative.</p> <p>Identifies that various perspectives and interpretations of history exist.</p> <p><b>Historical Knowledge and Understanding</b></p> <p>Demonstrates that one or more of the following: people, events, ideas and/or structures have direct consequences within a society.</p> <p>Outlines the significance/impact of forces on continuity and change.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| C | <p><b>Historical Skills</b></p> <p>Selects a narrow range of sources that generally relate to the topic, and attempts to interpret one or more of the following: message; origin, purpose, context; reliability and usefulness; perspective.</p> <p>Responds to some aspects of the research or essay question; selects and acknowledges sources, and uses some supporting evidence.</p> <p>Recounts a number of the major features of the narrative and develops a structure for the argument/discussion.</p> <p>Identifies that different perspectives and interpretations of an historical event/issue exist.</p> <p><b>Historical Knowledge and Understanding</b></p> <p>Demonstrates, to some extent, the relationship between people and/or events and/or ideas.</p> <p>Identifies the significance/impact of forces on continuity and change.</p>                                                                                                                                                   |



|   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|---|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| D | <p>Historical Skills</p> <p>Selects limited sources that may or may not be relevant, and provides a limited interpretation of one or more of the following: message; origin, purpose, context; reliability and usefulness; perspective.</p> <p>Attempts to respond to the question, but with a limited or inaccurate interpretation of the resource material.</p> <p>Demonstrates minimal knowledge of the historical narrative and the structural conventions.</p> <p>Identifies a simple perspective of an historical event.</p> |
|   | <p>Historical Knowledge and Understanding</p> <p>Identifies that there are people, events and/or ideas that characterise a time period.</p> <p>Demonstrates a limited understanding of the impact of forces on continuity and change.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| E | <p>Does not meet the requirements of a D grade and/or has completed insufficient tasks to be assigned a higher grade.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

## Appendix 2 – Glossary

This glossary is provided to enable a common understanding of the key terms in this syllabus.

### **Cause and effect**

Used by historians to identify chains of events and developments over time, short-term and long-term.

### **Continuity and change**

Aspects of the past that remained the same over certain periods of time are referred to as continuities. Continuity and change are evident in any given period of time and concepts, such as progress and decline may be used to evaluate continuity and change.

### **Concepts**

In the study of history, a concept refers to any general notion or idea that is used to develop an understanding of the past, such as concepts related to the process of historical inquiry (for example, evidence, continuity and change, perspectives, significance).

### **Contemporary world**

As defined in this syllabus, the period of modern world history from 1945 to 2001.

### **Empathy**

Empathy is an understanding of the past from the point of view of a particular individual or group, including an appreciation of the circumstances they faced, and the motivations, values and attitudes behind their actions.

### **Evidence**

In the study of history, evidence is the information obtained from sources that is valuable for a particular inquiry. Evidence can be used to help construct an historical narrative, to support a hypothesis or to prove or disprove a conclusion.

### **Historical inquiry**

Historical inquiry is the process of investigation undertaken in order to understand the past. Steps in the inquiry process include posing questions, locating and analysing sources and using evidence from sources to develop an informed explanation about the past.

### **Interpretation**

An interpretation is an explanation of the past, for example, about a specific person, event or development. There may be more than one interpretation of a particular aspect of the past because historians may have used different sources, asked different questions and held different points of view about the topic.

### **Modern world**

As defined in this syllabus, the period of time in the modern world between 1750 and 2001.

### **Perspective**

A person's perspective is their point of view, the position from which they see and understand events going on around them. People in the past may have had different points of view about a particular event, depending on their age, gender, social position and their beliefs and values. Historians also have perspectives and this can influence their interpretation of the past.

**Primary sources**

In the study of history, primary sources are objects and documents created or written during the time being investigated, for example, during an event or very soon after. Examples of primary sources include official documents, such as laws and treaties; personal documents, such as diaries and letters; photographs; film and documentaries. These original, first-hand accounts are analysed by the historian to answer questions about the past.

**Representation**

A picture or image of the past that may be a popular portrayal within society (past or present) or that may be created by historians.

**Secondary sources**

In the study of history, secondary sources are accounts about the past that were created after the time being investigated and which often use or refer to primary sources and present a particular interpretation. Examples of secondary sources include writings of historians, encyclopaedia, documentaries, history textbooks, and websites.

**Significance**

The importance that is assigned to particular aspects of the past (for example, events, developments, and historical sites). Significance includes an examination of the principles behind the selection of what should be investigated and remembered and involves consideration of questions, such as: How did people in the past view the significance of an event? How important were the consequences of an event? What was the duration of the event? How relevant is it to the contemporary world?

**Source**

Any written or non-written materials that can be used to investigate the past (for example, newspaper articles, photos, and journal entries). A source becomes 'evidence' if it is of value to a particular inquiry.

