

What will my child learn for Higher History?

All Higher History students study a British, a Scottish, and a European and World topic. We have tried to pick topics that will interest students, take advantage of departmental expertise, and that have thematic links. For these reasons we will look at:

- **Britain and Ireland, 1900 – 1985:** This unit covers why tensions existed at the turn of the century; how these tensions bubbled over during and after the First World War in Ireland; what caused the Troubles in Northern Ireland at the end of the 1960s; and what the main obstacles to peace were in Northern Ireland between 1969 and 1985.
- **Scottish Wars of Independence, 1286 – 1328:** We study how Scotland became more unstable after the death of Alexander III and how that was ultimately exploited by Edward I of England; we'll study in depth the opposition of resistance leaders such as William Wallace and Robert Bruce, focusing on why the Scots ultimately defeated the English, whilst attempting to critically question some of the myths that surround these giants of Scottish history.
- **Russia 1881 – 1921:** We'll look at how Tsarist Russia was governed; what caused the attempted Revolution in 1905, and the successful revolution of 1917; why the Bolsheviks were able to take power and destroy their opponents in the Russian Civil War

How is the course assessed?

At the end of the year pupils will sit two exams. One is an essay based paper, where they write one essay on Irish history and one on Russian history. For each topic, three questions will be chosen for the exam out of six potential questions.

There is also a Scottish history paper that asks four questions. This will check pupils' ability to consider sources, as well as their knowledge of Scottish history.

After pupils have completed the Irish and Russian units, they will sit an assignment. They will pick a question, research it further, and write an extended essay in class in exam conditions. This is worth over a third of the final exam. The rest of the pupil's grade is based on their exam performance.

How are pupils prepared for Higher History in school?

Pupils will look the Irish topic, which is essay based, first. Teachers will cover the historical content, taking one essay topic at a time. They will teach pupils how to write a good essay. At the end of each essay topic, roughly every fortnight, they will ask pupils to put together and learn an essay plan. This normally happens as a homework

assignment. Pupils will write up the essay in school. Although they might be allowed their plan with them for the first essay, we will generally ask pupils to learn their essay at home and write it up in exam conditions. Pupils will get feedback on each essay, and we hope to see their essay writing technique improve with each essay.

There will be 4 essays for both the Irish history topic and for Russia (out of six potential questions for each). By the time each unit is complete, pupils should have:

- Full notes for each issue (essay question)
- An essay plan for each issue
- A marked essay, with feedback, for each issue.

After looking at the Irish History topic we will move on to Scottish History, which should be around mid September. We will teach the History in class, along with the question technique pupils need. Pupils will complete exam style questions as homework, and will hopefully build on the feedback they receive.

It is anticipated the pupils will have completed both the Irish and Scottish topics by the time of the Winter Assessments, at the end of November. After this they will move to the Russian History topic, where they will revisit essay skills. As with the Irish history topic, pupils can expect to prepare and write one essay a fortnight, to be completed in test conditions in class.

Pupils will write their assignment at the end of the course, in March, when their essay writing skills are as developed as possible.

How often can we expect homework, and what form will it take?

When pupils are working at the essay based topics (Ireland and Russia), they will have one formal test essay per fortnight. Prior to this they will be expected to write an essay plan and learn it in their own time. They may be set small, additional tasks (such as reading something, or taking a short knowledge quiz), but the essay preparation will be their main homework.

When pupils are working on the Scottish (source) element of the course, homework will consist of learning the key knowledge at home, and regular exam style questions. They can expect to get a source question every other week.

When it comes to assignment time, we expect pupils to be researching for their chosen question, bringing together their findings to create an essay plan, and, crucially, learning their response ahead of the assignment write up. Parents will be sent a groupcall with the assignment date ahead of time so they are aware when this will be happening.

All homeworks will be set as an assignment on Teams.

What websites are useful for my child to use?

The most useful place for your child to find information online is the class Team/ Class Notebook. It's worth checking that your child has access to this. Reminders about assignments, revision classes or other updates are shared on here, and it might be useful to make sure notifications are turned on. Please note, we sometimes use the History Department Instagram to share things (@linlithgowacademyhistory), but there will not be any updates here that won't also be shared in the class Teams.

Each class has a OneNote (Class Notebook) associated with it where pupils can find relevant historical information, tips on how to answer essay and source questions, and tasks they can complete to consolidate knowledge. Although pupils in Higher History are given paper copies of key notes, all these can be accessed on Class Notebook/ Teams too.

When it comes to using the internet for building historical knowledge, we would urge pupils to be cautious. Some websites, such as BBC Bitesize, are incredibly helpful and balanced. Others, however, can be less rigorous and can bring in bias and, at times, factual inaccuracies. This is especially true of the Wars of Independence and Irish History topics. If pupils are going to use the internet, we would urge them to consider the sources carefully, and double check anything that seems off.

What can I do to support my child

Your child is a senior pupil, and ultimately responsibility for their grade rests with them. There are some things you can do, if you wish, in order to support them. These include:

- Asking them about their learning. Let them tell you about the history 'stories' they have been hearing, and ask follow up questions where you can.
- Be aware of when their next essay write up will be (when we are studying Russia and Ireland). Ahead of this, ensure they have a plan. You might want to test them on their plan
- Ask about their most recent essay mark, what their feedback was, and what their target for improvement is next time. Pupils will have copies of their marked essays in a plastic binder that you can ask to see.
- During the Scottish topic (Sept – Nov) check that pupils are on top of their exam style homework. You can check in with them, or check the assignment section of their class team (they will need to show you this, since there is not a way to give parents the password independently)

- If they seem stuck, encourage your child to use the materials available on Teams/ Class Notebook in the first instance to check for support. If they are still concerned, encourage them to speak to their class teacher
- Ensure that their history materials / notes are organised.
- If your child misses class for whatever reason, remind them that it is their responsibility to get caught up. They can check Teams, check in with classmates, or speak to their class teacher. If a pupil fails to catch up immediately, it often creates a problem further down the line.
- It might be helpful to encourage your children to engage in materials that support the topics we are studying in class, eg watching the movie 'Belfast' when we look at The Troubles, or reading the novel Doctor Zhivago when we look at the Russian Revolution. Beware though, materials that contain huge inaccuracies can be counter productive: we do not recommend pupils watch 'Braveheart'!