

History

Curriculum Principles

- Our unifying 'sentence' is: "The History Department ensured that all students acquired the knowledge and the disciplinary concepts that enabled them to be successful at university or a real alternative."

By the end of their education, a student of History at Dixons Croxteth Academy will:

- Know how an understanding of the past is developed from the available evidence and how that understanding contributes both to their personal development and to their deeper engagement with the world around them. Students will appreciate the importance of developing and extending a broad body of historical knowledge. Students will demonstrate awareness that rigorous History is rooted in evidence and will know how to use sources critically and constructively for a specific purpose. The students will appreciate why people, events and developments have been accorded historical significance and how and why different interpretations have been constructed about them. Finally, students will know how to organise and communicate their historical knowledge and understanding in different ways and reach substantiated conclusions.
- Understand why the study of History is a valuable pursuit in itself; that it has immense cross-curricular importance; and that the academic skills it requires are eminently transferable.

To achieve a true understanding of History, topics have been intelligently sequenced based on the following rationale:

- Academic and popular history deals mainly with the substance of the past – content, arranged according to perspective and interpretation. The DCR History Department recognises that whilst AO progression would suggest a clear distinction between first (knowledge) and second (process) order concepts, the two are intrinsically linked, mutually reinforcing and consequently will be presented in conjunction. We place great emphasis on key concepts but never at the expense of substantive knowledge. To this end the pedagogy deployed is much informed both by M. Riley's 'enquiry question' and C. Counsell's 'hinterland' of knowledge.
- As a departmental philosophy we start with the understanding that the past and present are not the same and that people in the past were therefore different in their attitudes and beliefs in ways that were determined by the contexts in which they lived. By way of shorthand this is termed 'understanding of people in the past', a designation which includes concepts such as chronological understanding, empathy and diversity. This understanding is used to ask further questions centred on concepts of cause, consequence, change and continuity – we call this category of concepts 'describing and explaining the past'. Finally, we explore how history is and has been constructed, which includes concepts of significance and interpretations, which is termed 'interpreting the past'.
- Enquiry questions knit together longer sequences of lessons and as such lend structure and direction to a series of activities. Such enquiries provide the goal for a final, substantial and motivating activity through which students demonstrate understanding gleaned in the prior lessons.
- Within individual lessons there is recognition that the quality of historical thinking is profoundly influenced both by pupils' grasp of substantive knowledge and their use of second-order or procedural concepts that provide the foundation of History. Consequently, the importance of both is made explicit and consistently modelled so that students understand both what History is and how they can construct it for themselves. It is also by making these things explicit that students are able to understand how to get better at History as opposed to simply knowing more information.
- How the departmental philosophy, use of enquiry questions and individual lessons interact within the curriculum is well illustrated by the example of 'substantive concepts'. Substantive concepts are used to refer to the way people and societies work and include, for example, political concepts such as state, government and power and economic concepts such as trade, wealth and tax. These concepts can cause difficulty for pupils because they are abstract in nature and their meaning can shift over time. As such substantive concepts are continually revisited throughout the key stages and old learning interleaved with new in order to develop a coherent understanding of specialised terminology. The 12 substantive concepts that the curriculum is based around are; Revolution, Empire, Invasion, Conflict, Social Hierarchy, Government, Attitudes and Beliefs, Taxation, Peasantry, Migration, Technological Innovation and Resistance. (See Curriculum Mapping)

The History curriculum will address social disadvantage by addressing gaps in students' knowledge and skills":

- No subject is better placed than History to academically advantage students otherwise impeded by social and personal circumstances. History can help in two keyways, though of course each is a composite of various elements. The basic distinction is between content and skills. In neither area is History the only contributor, but it is a major force in both. Whilst its content and skills are vital for all students, its importance in challenging disadvantage is worth stressing.
- Content is the most obvious characteristic of any subject. History, dealing as it does with the sum of human experience, involves familiarity with a body of information and ideas shared by educated citizens. In detail or in passing key personalities, events, concepts and controversies are visited and revisited both over time and space. The defining characteristics of democracy, for example, can be considered and argued about in a host of historical perspectives, including franchise extension in Britain. The vocabulary of such a discussion – ballot, parliament, referendum, Act of Parliament, Council, Cabinet, Lords, consent and so forth is the common



- currency of involved citizens. In the same way, political and economic concepts such as socialism, fascism, capitalism, totalitarianism, nationalism routinely figure in debate. Specific events are also part of the shared understanding which arise from the acquisition of powerful knowledge, some are national – 1066 and some are more universal, such as the Holocaust. Our History Curriculum gives Disadvantaged students access to the cultural, religious, scientific and political history that otherwise would only be accessible to those from an advantaged background. As a department, we are sensitive both to the fact that individual students come to the subject with different frames of reference and bodies of knowledge and to the opportunities we have to widen students' horizons.
- Literacy is a key part of the Historian's armoury. Throughout our teaching we prioritise handling written sources at the most sophisticated level possible, guiding students in accordance with their individual needs. Oral and visual sources are also used extensively, and here too we help students to grasp and critique the ideas and information offered. In a world awash with ideas and information, both reliable and otherwise, our careful consideration of how sources can be judged and arguments challenged, or articulated and evidenced, is of vital importance. Of value for all students, but in particular for students with English as an EAL issue, is our development of vocabulary. This of course includes a body of specific terms – Industrial Revolution or Act of Parliament, for example – but also the nuances central to historical exposition and debate, such as rebellion/rising/mutiny/war of independence. The literacy and critical skills thus developed are regularly used and tested in written work, discussion and debate, with support and pursuit of growing confidence always to the fore. This last is a key part of our sensitivity in dealing with SEND students. History is an excellent field for exploring material likely to enthuse students and susceptible of being accessed in different ways and at different levels.
- Students are, of course, individuals. By helping them to access the range of human experience recorded in History everyone acquires better perspective both on their own needs and experiences and those of others. Empathy is a central requirement for any genuine understanding of the past and its value informs the present. On a broader scale, learning about the differences and similarities between cultures and societies enhances students' understanding of the present as well as the past.

We fully believe that History can contribute to the personal development of students at Dixons Croxteth Academy:

History leads to great personal development as it changes the way students see the world by providing a wider frame of reference than the present – aiding both our students and their communities.

- At DCR students are prepared to flourish in a society that exhibits high levels of literacy, numeracy and scientific and historical understanding. The History Department supports this through the purposeful development of a body of substantive knowledge that provides students with not just an ordered understanding of the past but a usable past: one that equips them with the knowledge and understanding to place themselves in a context and to appreciate where they have come from and where they might be going.
- This knowledge is continually questioned, organised, analysed and interpreted in a multiplicity of arenas so that students develop micro- and macro-understandings of the human experience – not fragmented knowledge of individual narratives. In this way the study of History undertaken by students provides a forum for exploring issues of identity and inherited cultures, a means to understand the present, and a method of developing the knowledge and skills essential to the functioning of an educated citizen in a complex society. Furthermore, it liberates our students as individuals as they are provided with the intellectual weapons to guard against intolerance and create doubt in closed minds.
- The students' development of a detailed understanding of the identity of differing communities, cultures and nations, and knowledge of the past – however that past be constructed - provides our students with the tools to moderate their ever developing personal beliefs and philosophies via informed and responsible scepticism. Coming to grips with the way that rival arguments can be constructed in good faith and require careful and considered judgements encourages an attitude of mind is thus of inestimable value for individuals and for the societies of which they are a part

Our belief is that homework should be interleaved revision of powerful knowledge that has been modelled and taught in lessons. This knowledge is recalled and applied through a range of low stakes quizzing and practice.

Opportunities are built in to make links to the world of work to enhance the careers, advice, and guidance that students are exposed to:

- Throughout KS3 and KS4 students will encounter a wide-range range of both historic and current vocations.
- Links between historical knowledge and skills and specific professional expertise will be explicitly highlighted. Of particular relevance here are the promises of a career in law, politics, journalism, research, or the media.
- Guest speakers will be invited to speak to the students and model the value of a historical understanding.
- During KS4 students explicitly study the development of medicine in Britain and the department will liaise closely with the Science department to promote STEM jobs.
- A true love of History involves learning about various cultural domains. We teach beyond the specification requirements, but do ensure students are well prepared to be successful in GCSE examinations:
- Out of class resources are promoted to extend students' knowledge and to encourage intrinsic curiosity.



- Authentic sources – both pictorial and written – are used at all opportunities to invite debate about artistic and linguistic evolution.
- Students are exposed to historiography and further reading is promoted.
- The ever-changing relationship between the present and the past is emphasised to show the continuing relevance of the discipline and its profound depths.