Assessment

Key concepts

Key concepts are essential ideas that help students develop a deep understanding of their subject and make

International recognition and acceptance

Our expertise in curriculum, teaching and learning, and assessment is the basis for the recognition of our programmes and qualifications around the world. Every year thousands of students with Cambridge International AS & A Levels gain places at leading universities worldwide. Our programmes and qualifications are valued by top universities around the world including those in the UK, US (including Ivy League universities), Europe, Australia, Canada and New Zealand.

2 Syllabus overview

Aims

The aims describe the purposes of a course based on this syllabus.

The aims are to enable students to develop:

- an interest in the past and an appreciation of human endeavour
- a greater knowledge and understanding of historical periods or themes

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Content overview

AS Level

For Papers 1 and 2 Candidates study one of the following options:

European option: Modern Europe, 1750–1921

- France, 1774–1814
- The Industrial Revolution in Britain, 1750–1850
- Liberalism and nationalism in Germany, 1815–71
- The Russian Revolution, 1894–1921

American option: The history of the USA, 1820–1941

- The origins of the Civil War, 1820–61
- Civil War and Reconstruction, 1861–77
- The Gilded Age and Progressive Era, 1870s to 1920
- The Great Crash, The Great Depression and the New Deal policies, 1920–41

International option: International history, 1870–1945

- Empire and the emergence of world powers, 1870–1919
- The League of Nations and international relations in the 1920s
- The League of Nations and international relations in the 1930s
- China and Japan, 1912–45

Note: AS Level topics rotate between papers 1 and 2 year-on-year. The prescribed topic for Paper 1 in any given year is not used for Paper 2. For more information, please refer to section 4.

A Level

Paper 3

- **Topic 1: The origins of the First World War**
- **Topic 2: The Holocaust**
- **Topic 3: The origins and development of the Cold War**

Paper 4

- **European option, Depth study 1: European history in the interwar years, 1919–41**
  - Theme 1: Mussolini's Italy, 1919–41
  - Theme 2: Stalin's Russia, 1924–41
  - Theme 3: Hitler's Germany, 1929–41
  - Theme 4: Britain, 1919–39

- **American option, Depth study 2: The USA, 1944–92**
  - Theme 1: The late 1940s and 1950s
  - Theme 2: The 1960s and the 1970s
  - Theme 3: The 1980s and early 1990s
  - Theme 4: Foreign policy, 1944–92

- **International option, Depth study 3: International history, 1945–92**
  - Theme 1: US–Soviet relations during the Cold War, 1950–91
  - Theme 2: The spread of communism in East and Southeast Asia, 1945–91
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3 Subject content

Paper 1 and 2

France, 1774–1814 continued	
Why was Napoleon Bonaparte able to overthrow the Directory in 1799?	• The aims and rule of the Directory • The reputation of, and opposition to, the Directory • The military reputation and political ambitions of Napoleon Bonaparte • The coup of 1799
What were Napoleon Bonaparte's domestic aims and achievements from 1799 to 1814?	• Napoleon's initiatives as first consul • The inauguration of the Empire ✘ Nature and impact of reforms (legal, educational, s698 2 (,1ext)4 (,41()-6.59) 0 o 1MC 36s2 (,1ex9)

Civil War and Reconstruction, 1861–77

Key questions	Content
Why did the Civil War last four years?	• Changing military strategies • Changing approaches of political and military leadership • Resources available • Impact of foreign influences (Britain and France)
How significant was the immediate impact of the Civil War (1861–65)?	• Limitations on civil liberties during the War • Reasons for and responses to the Emancipation Proclamation (1863) • Life in the Confederate States including the responses of slaves • The nature of democracy in the North and the South
What were the aims and outcomes of Reconstruction?	• Presidential Reconstruction: Abraham Lincoln and Andrew Johnson • Radical Reconstruction from Congress • Reasons for and passage of Constitutional Amendments 13th, 14th and 15th
How successful was Reconstruction?	• Changing position of ex-slaves

International option: International history, 1870–1945

Empire and the emergence of world powers, 1870–1919

Key questions	Content
Why was imperialism a significant force for late nineteenth century Europe?	• Economic and political motives for imperial expansion • The emergence of 'New imperialism' • Nature and purpose of the 'Scramble for Africa' • Reasons for and extent of domestic support for overseas expansion in Britain, France and Germany
What was the impact of imperial expansion on international relations?	• Impact of growth of overseas empires on relations between European nations • Disputes with China over imperial expansion, the Boxer Rebellion • Tension between Britain and Germany over South Africa • Attempts to resolve tensions between imperial nations, the Berlin Conference (1884–85)
Why did Japan emerge as a world power and what was the impact on international relations?	• Reasons for rapid modernisation and military development • International recognition of Japan as a world power, wars with China (1894–95) and Russia (1905), treaty with Britain (1902) • Japan's role in the First World War and global position by 1918
Why did the USA emerge as a world power and what was the impact on international relations?	• Impact of the closing of the frontier on US foreign policy • Economic growth and the need for trade in the late nineteenth century • Reasons for, and impact of, the Spanish–American War (1898) • Reasons for, and impact of, the USA's entry into the First World War

Paper 3

Topic 1: The origins of the First World War

Candidates will study the following content and the differing interpretations that historians have produced, with particular focus on the over-arching key question, 'Who was to blame for the First World War?'

Content

This topic covers the following events and developments in the evoluo bl 6 (e)t

Topic 2: The Holocaust

Candidates will study the following content and the differing interpretations that historians have produced, with a particular focus on the over-arching key question, 'Why did the Holocaust occur?'

Content

This topic covers the following events and developments:

- The background of European and German anti-Semitism and racist theories
- Nazi anti-Semitism and persecution of the Jews, 1933–41
- The impact of war on Nazi policy towards the Jews
- Ghettoisation and Jewish responses to the Holocaust
- The development of Nazi extermination policies towards Jews and other minorities
- Contemporary reactions to the Holocaust

Key approaches

Candidates should explore the following issues through the interpretations and approaches of different historians:

- How far was the Holocaust a consequence of racist ideas which existed before the Nazis?
- The Intentionalist approach and the role of Hitler: was the Holocaust planned in advance by Hitler?
- The Structuralist approach: how far did the nature of the Nazi state determine how the Holocaust developed?
- The Functionalist approach: how far did contingent factors such as war determine how the Holocaust developed?
- Synthesis interpretations which aim to reconcile the Intentionalist and Functionalist viewpoints
- Perpetrators: who carried out the Holocaust, and why? Was murderous behaviour the exception or were many involved? Why did non-Germans participate in the killings?
- Victims: How far did Jews resist the Holocaust, and how can resistance be defined? Did men and women experience the Holocaust in different ways? Should definitions of the Holocaust include victims other than Jews?
- Bystanders: How did the USA and Britain respond to the Holocaust at the time?

Topic 3: The origins and development of the Cold War

Candidates will study the following content and the differing interpretations that historians have produced, with a particular focus on the over-arching key question, 'Who was to blame for the Cold War?'

Content

This topic covers the following events and developments in the evolution of the Cold War in Europe, 1941–50

- Tensions in the wartime alliance against the Axis powers
- Peace-making at the end of the Second World War
- Increasing tensions in a divided Europe
- The Truman Doctrine and the Marshall Plan
- The Berlin Blockade and Airlift

Key approaches

Candidates should explore the following issues through the interpretations and approaches of different historians:

- How far were inherent tensions between East and West bound to resurface in 1945?
- How important were the personalities of the leaders of the Great Powers in shaping the Cold War?
- How far were ideology, security and economics the factors which created Cold War tensions?
- The Traditional approach
- The Revisionist approach
- Post-Revisionist approaches
- How have the perspectives on the Cold War of Russian historians differed from those in the West?
- Reinterpretations of the Cold War in the light of new archival sources
- The emergence of the 'New' Cold War history

Theme 2: Stalin's Russia, 1924–41

Key questions	Content
Why did Stalin gain power from 1924?	• Lenin's legacy and problems of leadership • Stalin's position in the Party • Stalin's relations with Trotsky and other Soviet leaders • Stalin's control and manipulation within the Party
How was the USSR governed under Stalin?	• Stalin's aims in government and administration • 'Building socialism in one country' • Causes and impact of the Great Terror and use of purges and show trials • Aims and impact of foreign policy
How effective were Stalin's economic policies?	• Stalin's aims for the economy • The Five Year Plans • Reasons for, and impacts of, collectivisation

Theme 3: Hitler's Germany, 1929–41

Key questions	Content
Why did Hitler gain power in 1933?	• Problems facing Weimar politicians from 1929 • Growth of support for Nazism after 1929 • Hitler's appointment as Chancellor • ConsolidatisoIn 193sdflaMtDalTex04/MC961x04/M59.4 o0G.1 (

Theme 1: The late 1940s and 1950s continued	
How far were the late 1940s and 1950s a time of party political stability?	• Reasons for Truman's election in 1948 • The challenge of McCarthyism and the Red Scare • Reasons for Eisenhower's election victories in 1952 and 1956 • Eisenhower's domestic policies
How effective was the civil rights movement in the 1950s?	• Impact of key civil rights groups including the NAACP and SCLC • The role of leading African Americans • The response of the peoples and governments of Southern states • The responses of federal institutions, i.e. Congress, President and Supreme Court

Theme 2: The 1960s and the 1970s	
Key questions	Content
Why and how did the USA experience a deteriorating economic situation in the 1960s and 1970s?	• Economic impact of involvement in Vietnam • Failure of post-war economic doctrines • The impact of external challenges including foreign competition, oil crises of 1973 and 1979 and the Cold War • Stagflation
How great were the social changes of the 1960s and 1970s?	• Changes in the social class system • Growth and impact of feminism • Impact of the counter-culture movement • Growth and impact of the gay rights movement, e.g. Stonewall 1969
How far were the 1960s and 1970s a time of party political instability?	• Domestic policies of the various Presidents: Kennedy, Johnson, Nixon, Ford and Carter • Impact of the Vietnam War on party politics • The rise and fall of the 'imperial presidency'

Theme 4: Foreign policy 1944–92

Key questions	Content
How did US leadership of the global economy develop and change from 1944 to 1970?	• Establishing the Bretton Woods system from 1944: the International Monetary Fund (IMF), the World Bank and the General Agreement on Tariffs and Trade (GATT) • Rebuilding the economies of Japan (the Dodge Line and the Korean War) and Western Europe (the Marshall Plan) • Implementing the Bretton Woods system in the 1950s, e.g. GATT agreements. • Challenges to US leadership of the global economy up to 1970, e.g. competition from Japan and West Germany
Was US foreign policy towards communism between 1950 and 1963 a policy of containment or a policy of rollback?	• Relations with USSR and China • Reasons for, and impact of, involvement in Korea • Nuclear arms race • Reasons for, and significance of, the Cuban Missile Crisis

International option, Depth study 3: International history, 1945–92

Candidates will not be expected to have detailed knowledge of domestic policies, but will need to be aware of how domestic issues inform and affect international relations.

Theme 1: US–Soviet relations during the Cold War, 1950–91

Key questions	Content
How did US–Soviet relations develop between 1950 and 1980?	• Impact of the death of Stalin • Peaceful coexistence • Impact of key events in Asia and Europe, e.g. Korea, Hungary, Berlin, the Prague Spring • Détente and the outbreak of the Second Cold War
Why was there a crisis over Cuba in the 1960s and how did it affect the US–Soviet relations?	• US reaction to the Cuban revolution • Khrushchev's aims in Cuba • The crisis and its resolution • Consequences of the conflict, e.g. hotline, Test Ban Treaty
How did the arms race affect US–Soviet relations?	• The development of the nuclear arms race • The impact of the arms race on US–Soviet relations • The successes and failures of attempts to control nuclear weapons, e.g. NPT, SALT and START
Why did the Cold War come to an end in 1989?	• Problems facing the USSR: economic and political stagnation, Afghanistan and Eastern Europe • The impact of Reagan and Gorbachev • The collapse of the Soviet system

Theme 2: The spread of communism in East and Southeast Asia, 1945–91

Key questions	Content
What was the impact of the end of the Second World War on this region?	• Attempts to re-establish colonial control (British, Dutch and French) • Growth of nationalist movements • The establishment of the People's Republic of China (PRC) • Changing Sino–Soviet relations
Why was there war in Korea and what were its consequences?	• Division of Korea and subsequent tensions • US reaction to the invasion of South Korea • International involvement, e.g. UN, PRC • Growing US presence in the Eastern Pacific including the formation of SEATO
Why did the US intervene in Vietnam and what were the consequences?	• Reasons for growing US involvement in Vietnam • Importance of support from PRC and USSR for North Vietnam • Reasons for US withdrawal, e.g. military failings, heavy losses, public opinion • Unification of Vietnam (1975) and its implications
How did the Cold War affect Sino–US relations?	• Ideological divides • Issues over Taiwan • Impact of Korean and Vietnam Wars • Improvement of relations in the 1970s and 1980s including 'ping pong diplomacy'

Theme 3: Decolonisation, the Cold War and the UN in Sub-Saharan Africa, 1950–92

Key questions

How did African nations gain their independence from the colonial powers?

Theme 4: Conflict in the Middle East, 1948–91	
Key questions	Content
How and why was the state of Israel created?	•

4 Details of the assessment

Paper 3 Interpretations question

Written paper, 1 hour 15 minutes, 40 marks

Candidates will select one question from one of these options:

- Topic 1: The origins of the First World War
- Topic 2: The Holocaust
- Topic 3: The origins and development of the Cold War

One extract of no more than 600 words in length from an historian's writing will be set on each of the topics. The author of the extract will not be identified, nor will candidates be asked to identify the author.

There will be a single question, asking candidates what they can learn from the extract about the interpretation and approach of the historian who wrote it.

They will be expected to show knowledge and understanding of the events and developments included in the topic (Assessment Objective 1), but the purpose of the study will be for them to develop the ability to analyse and evaluate how aspects of the past have been interpreted and represented (Assessment Objective 4).

While candidates will be expected to have an awareness of different interpretations, their study of the topic should not be simply historiographical. Rather, by considering different interpretations, candidates should develop an understanding of the nature of the discipline of History, and the ways in which History is produced.

In particular, through studying their chosen topic, candidates will need to consider **why historians produce di□erent interpretations** of the same events, including:

- the fragmentary nature of historical evidence
- the selection and interpretation of evidence
- the ways that the passage of time can change the focus of historians' views, with the emergence of new evidence or new interpretations of other historians
- the ways that historians are influenced by the time and place in which they work.

They will also need to develop an awareness of **the di□erent approaches historians adopt** to their work, including:

- how different historians ask different questions about their field of study
- how historians' approaches are influenced by their own ideology and beliefs (e.g. by focusing on issues of class, gender, the role of structures)
- the inter-relationship between historians' interpretations and approaches.

In the context of this question paper, the meaning of **interpretation** is what the historian says in the extract, the nature of the claims made and the conclusions drawn. It is not what the extract says: it is what can be inferred from the extract.

The **approach** is what the historian brings to their study of the topic, what they are interested in, the questions they ask and the methods they use.

Interpretation and approach are closely interrelated. No distinction between interpretation and approach is required, as the interpretation will emerge from the approach. Candidates are not required to distinguish between the two.

Command words

Command words and their meanings help candidates know what is expected from them in the exam. The table below includes command words used in the assessment for this syllabus. The use of the command word will relate to the subject context.

Command word	What it means
Assess	make an informed judgement
Compare	identify/comment on similarities and/or differences
Contrast	identify/comment on differences
Discuss	write about issue(s) or topic(s) in depth in a structured way
Evaluate	judge or calculate the quality, importance, amount, or value of something
Explain	set out purposes or reasons / make the relationships between things evident / provide why and/or how and support with relevant evidence

Phrases such as 'How far do you agree…..?' and 'To what extent…?' and 'Account for…' may also be seen in the assessment for this syllabus.

5 What else you need to know

This section is an overview of other information you need to know about this syllabus. It will help to share the administrative information with your exams officer so they know when you will need their support. Find more information about our administrative processes at **www.cambridgeinternational.org/eoguide**

Before you start

Previous study

We recommend that learners starting this course should have completed a course in History equivalent to Cambridge IGCSE or Cambridge O Level.

Guided learning hours

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For candidates taking two History AS Levels, the following rules apply:

- Each topic (European, American or International History) can only contribute one credit towards the Cambridge AICE Diploma. For example, if a candidate answers questions from the European section of a paper in more than one series, only one credit will count.

Accessibility and equality

Syllabus and assessment design

Cambridge International works to avoid direct or indirect discrimination in our syllabuses and assessment materials. We aim to maximise inclusivity for candidates of all national, cultural or social backgrounds and with other protected characteristics. In addition, the language and layout used are designed to make our materials as accessible as possible. This gives all learners the opportunity, as fairly as possible, to demonstrate their knowledge, skills and understanding and 0 0 10 56.6929 6515 5 (a)-8.6 46031F 4 (d)-5.3 (0 0 10 56.(d1 6.8 (s)-i2-10.1 (n)-5 (

After the exam

Grading and reporting

Grades A*, A, B, C, D or E indicate the standard a candidate achieved at Cambridge International A Level. A* is the highest and E is the lowest grade.

Grades a, b, c, d or e indicate the standard a candidate achieved at Cambridge International AS Level. 'a' is the highest and 'e' is the lowest grade.

'Ungraded' means that the candidate's performance did not meet the standard required for the lowest grade (E or e). 'Ungraded' is reported on the statement of results but not on the certificate. In specific circumstances your candidates may see one of the following letters on their statement of results:

- Q (PENDING)
- X (NO RESULT).

These letters do not appear on the certificate.

If a candidate takes a Cambridge International A Level and fails to achieve grade E or higher, a Cambridge International AS Level grade will be awarded if both of the following apply:

- the components taken for the Cambridge International A Level by the candidate in that series included all the components making up a Cambridge International AS Level
- the candidate's performance on the AS Level components was sufficient to merit the award of a Cambridge International AS Level grade.

On the statement of results and certificates, Cambridge International AS & A Levels are shown as General Certificates of Education, GCE Advanced Subsidiary Level (GCE AS Level) and GCE Advanced Level (GCE A Level).

How students, teachers and higher education can use the grades

Cambridge International A Level

Assessment at Cambridge International A Level has two purposes:

- to measure learning and achievement
  The assessment:
  - confirms achievement and performance in relation to the knowledge, understanding and skills specified in the syllabus, to the levels described in the grade descriptions.
- to show likely future success
  The outcomes:
  - help predict which students are well prepared for a particular course or career and/or which students are more likely to be successful
  - help students choose the most suitable course or career.

Cambridge International AS Level

Assessment at Cambridge International AS Level has two purposes:

- to measure learning and achievement
  The assessment:
  - confirms achievement and performance in relation to the knowledge, understanding and skills specified in the syllabus.
- to show likely future success
  The outcomes:
  - help predict which students are well prepared for a particular course or career and/or which students are more likely to be successful
  - help students choose the most suitable course or career
  - help decide whether students part way through a Cambridge International A Level course are makir cr

Changes to this syllabus for 2024 and 2025

The syllabus has been updated. This is version 1, published September 2021.

You must read the whole syllabus before planning your teaching programme.

Changes to syllabus content	• Minor additions made in the content and identified by a black vertical line next to the addition.
Changes to assessment (including changes to specimen papers)	• The topics for Paper 1 have been rotated for 2024 and 2025.
Changes to availability	•