AS/ A-level DfE requirements
The DfE GCE AS and A-level history subject content stipulated that AS/A-level specifications must:
• entail the study of the history of more than one country or state, including at least one outside of the British Isles
• comprise at least 20% British history and/or the history of England, Scotland, Ireland or Wales
• require the study or aspects of the past in breadth and in depth

Additionally, the DfE stipulated that A-level specifications must:
• require the study of topics that encompass a chronological range of at least 200 years
• require students to carry out a historical enquiry that is independently researched and that investigates specific historical questions, problems or issues

AQA AS/ A-level History (7041, 7042)
In order to meet these requirements, our AS and A-level specification1 requires that all students:
• study one Breadth study from a choice of eleven (Component 1)
• study one Depth study from a choice of nineteen (Component 2)
• select a British History option for Component 1 or 2
• select a non-British History option for Component 1 or 2

Additionally, A-level students must submit an independently researched Historical investigation of roughly 3500 words that meets the following requirements:
• the proposed topic is set in the context of approximately 100 years
• there is no overlap with the content of the options studied for the examined components
• all three components together cover a chronological range of at least 200 years.

AQA A-level popularity in 2017
According to Ofqual., total entry for A-level History across all boards in 2017 was 45,700.
In 2017, AQA were the largest examination board for A-level History with to roughly 47% of market share

1 http://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/history/specifications/AQA-7041-7042-SP-2015.PDF
A-level breadth study (Component 1) topic popularity in 2017
Students choose one of the below topics. The most popular A-level topics have been emboldened and italicised:

- **1A** The Age of the Crusades, c1071 – 1204
- **1B** Spain in the Age of Discovery, 1469-1598
- **1C** The Tudors: England, 1485-1603
- **1D** Stuart Britain and the Crisis of Monarchy, 1603-1702
- **1E** Russia in the Age of Absolutism and Enlightenment, 1682-1796
- **1F** Industrialisation and the people, Britain, c1783-1885
- **1G** Challenge and Transformation: Britain, c1851-1964
- **1H** Tsarist and Communist Russia, 1855–1964
- **1J** The British Empire, c1857–1967
- **1K** The making of a Superpower: USA, 1865–1975
- **1L** The quest for political stability: Germany, 1871–1991.

A-level depth study (Component 2) topic popularity in 2017
Students choose one of the below topics. The most popular A-level topics have been emboldened and italicised:

- **2A** Royal Authority and the Angevin Kings, 1154–1216
- **2B** The Wars of the Roses, 1450–1499
- **2C** The Reformation in Europe, c1500–1564
- **2D** Religious conflict and the Church in England, c1529–c1570
- **2E** The English Revolution, 1625–1660
- **2F** The Sun King: Louis XIV, France and Europe, 1643–1715
- **2G** The Birth of the USA, 1760–1801
- **2H** France in Revolution, 1774–1815
- **2J** America: A Nation Divided, c1845–1877
- **2K** International Relations and Global Conflict, c1890–1941
- **2L** Italy and Fascism, c1900–1945
- **2M** Wars and Welfare: Britain in Transition, 1906–1957
- **2N** Revolution and dictatorship: Russia, 1917–1953
- **2O** Democracy and Nazism: Germany, 1918–1945
- **2P** The Transformation of China, 1936–1997
- **2Q** The American Dream: reality and illusion, 1945–1980
- **2R** The Cold War, c1945–1991
- **2S** The Making of Modern Britain, 1951–2007

The five most popular A-level topic combinations were as follows (in descending order):

- ‘**1C** The Tudors: England, 1485-1603’ with ‘Revolution and dictatorship: Russia, 1917–1953’
- ‘**1H** Tsarist and Communist Russia, 1855–1964’ with ‘The English Revolution, 1625–1660’

Note: any British option may be combined with any non-British option, other than the following:

- ‘**1C** The Tudors: England, 1485-1603’ may not be combined with ‘**2C** The Reformation in Europe, c1500-1564’
• ‘1D Stuart Britain and the Crisis of Monarchy, 1603-1702’ may not be combined with The Sun King: Louis XIV, France and Europe, 1643-1715’.

AQA AS-level popularity in 2017
Total entry for AS History across all examination boards in 2017 was roughly 22,750. In 2017, AQA were the largest examination board for AS-level History with 53% of the market. The trend in topic choices for AS level were broadly similar to the trends seen above for A-level

Current status of AS level
Total entry for AS History for all examination boards has fallen significantly in recent years. In 2016 Ofqual reported² there were 55,650 entries for AS History. In 2017, total entries for A-level entries fell to 22,750.

This is representative of a more general trend across all subjects where AS is becoming less and less popular, though the trend is more severe in History. For example, overall entries for all AS subjects fell by 42% from 1,143,950 in 2016 to 660,200 in 2017.

Assessment objectives (AOs)
AOs determine the skills that are assessed in the exams. They are set by Ofqual and are the same across all GCSE History specifications and all exam boards. Ofqual also determine the proportion of marks that should be assigned to assessing each AO.

AS/ A-level AOs
The assessment objectives and weighting for AS and A-level History are as follows:

• AO1: 50% weighting at AS, 60% at A-level
Demonstrate, organise and communicate knowledge and understanding to analyse and evaluate the key features related to the periods studied, making substantiated judgements and exploring concepts, as relevant, of cause, consequence, change, continuity, similarity, difference and significance

• AO2: 25% weighting at AS, 20% at A-level
Analyse and evaluate appropriate source material, primary and/or contemporary to the period, within its historical context

• AO3: 25% weighting at AS, 20% at A-level
Analyse and evaluate, in relation to the historical context, different ways in which aspects of the past have been interpreted

Our A-level assessments address the above AOs and weightings as follows. Examples of the questions asked in the exams are included below. Further examples of question papers can be found here: (http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/history/as-and-a-level/history-7041-7042/assessment-resources )

A-level examination questions
Component 1 Question 1: compulsory interpretations question

The following example of an interpretation question is from ‘1C The Tudors: England, 1485-1603’ specimen paper. The question entails evaluation of three extracts. One extract has been included here for the purpose of exemplification

**Extract C**

Whilst Henry VII used every means at his disposal to reduce the pretensions of mighty subjects, he also did his utmost to build up his own power. The restoration of royal finances was a key element in this. The King recognised that the secret of recovering royal authority lay in making himself richer than his subjects. This was one reason why, unlike Edward IV, he retained possession of the Crown lands. But there was another reason. Land was the basis of local power. By keeping royal estates in hand and administering them through his own household servants, Henry maintained a direct royal presence throughout his kingdom.

Henry VII was not as ruthless, consistent or as continuously successful as this brief account implies. He faced major rebellions, especially in 1497, and was never entirely secure on the throne. His preferred approach to the control of the provinces by divide and rule created crises and tensions in some parts of the kingdom and stored up trouble for his successor in others. But by ceaseless vigilance and unrelenting pressure on all his subjects, great and small, Henry made himself respected, feared and obeyed.

Adapted from A J Pollard, The Wars of the Roses, 2001

Using your understanding of the historical context, assess how convincing the arguments in these three extracts are in relation to the threats to Henry VII’s position in the years 1485 to 1509.

[30 marks]
Component 2 Question 1: compulsory sources question
The following example of a source question is from '2S The Making of Modern Britain, 1951–2007’ specimen paper. The question entails evaluation of three sources. One source has been included here for the purpose of exemplification:

Source C
From a transcript from a meeting of the Foreign Affairs Committee in June 2003 where the Chairman questioned Alastair Campbell (Downing Street’s Director of Communications) about the government’s evidence in favour of an invasion of Iraq.

Mr Campbell: I work in a pretty exposed position. I work for a Prime Minister who is answerable to Parliament. The media can bandy all sorts of allegations about me, but the one thing you cannot do, if you are an elected politician is lie to the House of Commons. Now, the allegation that has been made by the BBC’s defence correspondent, is that the Prime Minister did exactly that, he put to the country and to Parliament a false basis for putting at risk the lives of British servicemen. That is an accusation against the Prime Minister, against the Foreign Secretary, against the Cabinet, against the Intelligence agencies, against me and against the people who work with me. Now that is why I take it so seriously, not because of me because, as I say, I am absolutely used to being described in all sorts of ways by journalists who, frankly, I would match a politician’s integrity against theirs any day of the week. I simply say in relation to the BBC story: it is a lie.

With reference to these sources and your understanding of the historical context, assess the value of these three sources to an historian studying Britain’s invasion of Iraq in 2003. [30 marks]

Essay questions
The following examples of breadth essay question are taken from 1D Stuart Britain and the Crisis of Monarchy, 1603-1702 specimen paper.

Section B
Answer two questions.

To what extent were disputes over religion, in the years 1603 to 1625, due to James I? [25 marks]

‘Short-term success but long-term failure.’
Assess the validity of this view of Charles II’s relations with Parliament, in the years 1660 to 1685. [25 marks]

To what extent did the power of monarchy change in the years 1688 to 1702? [25 marks]
GCSE DfE requirements
The DfE GCSE history subject content stipulated that GCSE specifications must require:

- The study of history drawn from three eras:
  - Medieval (500-1500),
  - Early Modern (1450-1750)
  - Modern (1700-present day)

- The study of history on three time scales:
  - short (depth study)
  - medium (period study)
  - long (thematic study)

- The study of history on three geographical contexts:
  - a locality (the historic environment)
  - British (this must form a minimum of 40% of the assessed content)
  - European and / or wider world settings

AQA GCSE History (8145)
In order to meet these requirements, our GCSE specification requires all students to study:

- one period study
- one thematic study
- one wider world depth study
- one British depth study including the historic environment.

There are no prohibited combinations.

Component 1 section A: Period studies
Students choose one period study topic from four. The topic that is expected to be most popular has been emboldened and italicised:

- 1A/A America 1840-1895: Expansion and consolidation
- 1A/B Germany 1890-1945: Democracy and dictatorship
- 1A/C Russia 1894-1945: Tsardom and communism
- 1A/D America 1920-73: Opportunity and inequality

Component 1 section B: Wider world depth studies
Students choose one wider world depth study topic from five. The topic that is expected to be most popular has been emboldened and italicised:

- 1B/A Conflict and tension: The First World War, 1894-1918
- 1B/B Conflict and tension: the inter-war years, 1918-1939
- 1B/C Conflict and tension between East and West, 1945-1972
- 1B/D Conflict and tension in Asia, 1950-1975
- 1B/E Conflict and tension in the Gulf and Afghanistan, 1990-2009

Component 2 section A: Thematic Studies
Students choose one thematic study topic from three. The topic that is expected to be most popular has been emboldened and italicised:

- 2A/A Britain: Health and the people: c1000 to the present day
- 2A/B Britain: Power and the people: c1170 to the present day
- 2A/C Britain: Migration, empires and the people: c790 to the present day

3 http://filestore.aqa.org.uk/resources/history/specifications/AQA-8145-SP-2016.PDF
Component 2 – section B
British Depth Studies including the historic environment

Students choose one British depth study topic from four. The topic that is expected to be most popular has been emboldened and italicised:

- **2B/A** Norman England, c1066-c1100
- **2B/B** Medieval England: the reign of Edward I, 1272-1307
- **2B/C Elizabethan England, c1568-1603**
- **2B/D** Restoration England, 1660-1685

The historic environment to be studied each year changes depending on the topic being studied. The sites for 2018-2020 are as follows:

- **For students taking exams in 2018:**
  - Durham Cathedral (Norman England, c1066 - c1100)
  - Stokesay Castle (Medieval England, the reign of Edward I, 1272–1307)
  - Hardwick Hall (Elizabethan England, c1568–1603)

- **For students taking exams in 2019:**
  - Pevensey Castle (Norman England, c1066 - c1100)
  - Caernarfon Castle (Medieval England, the reign of Edward I, 1272–1307)
  - The Globe Theatre (Elizabethan England, c1568–1603)

- **For students taking exams in 2020:**
  - The Battle of Hastings, October 1066 (Norman England, c1066 - c1100)
  - The Battle of Stirling Bridge, September 1297 (Medieval England, the reign of Edward I, 1272–1307)
  - The defeat of the Spanish Armada in the English Channel, July/August 1588 (Elizabethan England, c1568–1603)
  - The Dutch raid on the Medway, June 1667 (Restoration England, 1660–1685).

**GCSE AOs:** The assessment objectives and weighting for GCSE History are as follows:

- **AO1:** 35% weighting
  Demonstrate knowledge and understanding of the key features and characteristics of the period studied

- **AO2:** 35% weighting
  Explain and analyse historical events and periods studied using second-order historical concepts

- **AO3:** 15% weighting
  Analyse, evaluate and use sources (contemporary to the period) to make substantiated judgements, in the context of historical events studied

- **AO4:** 15% weighting
  Analyse, evaluate and make substantiated judgements about interpretations (including how and why interpretations may differ) in the context of historical events studied.

Examples of thematic GCSE questions are included below. Further examples of question papers can be found here [here](http://www.aqa.org.uk/subjects/history/gcse/history-8145/assessment-resources) :
Source A for use in answering question 01 on page 3.

Source A. A poster printed by suffragettes in 1912. The poster was produced by a group of artists founded in 1909 with the aim of encouraging artists to promote the women's movement and particularly votes for women by means of images.

Answer questions 01, 02, 03 and 04

01 Study Source A.

How useful is Source A to a historian studying votes for women?

Explain your answer using Source A and your contextual knowledge.

[8 marks]

02 Explain the significance of the trial and execution of Charles I for royal authority.

[8 marks]

03 Compare the campaigns for workers' rights in the 19th century with protests for the rights of ethnic minorities in the 20th century.

In what ways were they similar?

Explain your answer with reference to both periods.

[8 marks]

04 Has war and violence been the main way in which royal authority and governments have been challenged?

Explain your answer with reference to war and violence and other ways.

Use examples from your study of Power and the People;

[16 marks]

[SPaG: 4 marks]