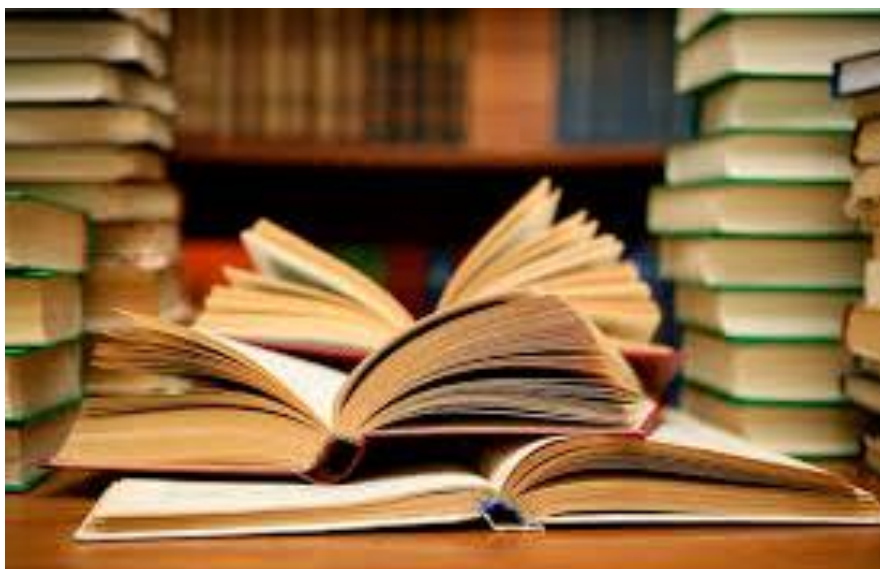


# History A-Level: Coursework 9HI0/04 [20%] Non-Examined Assessment



## Teaching Staff:

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## Suggested workbook →

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Edexcel-level-History-Coursework-Workbook/dp/1510423532>

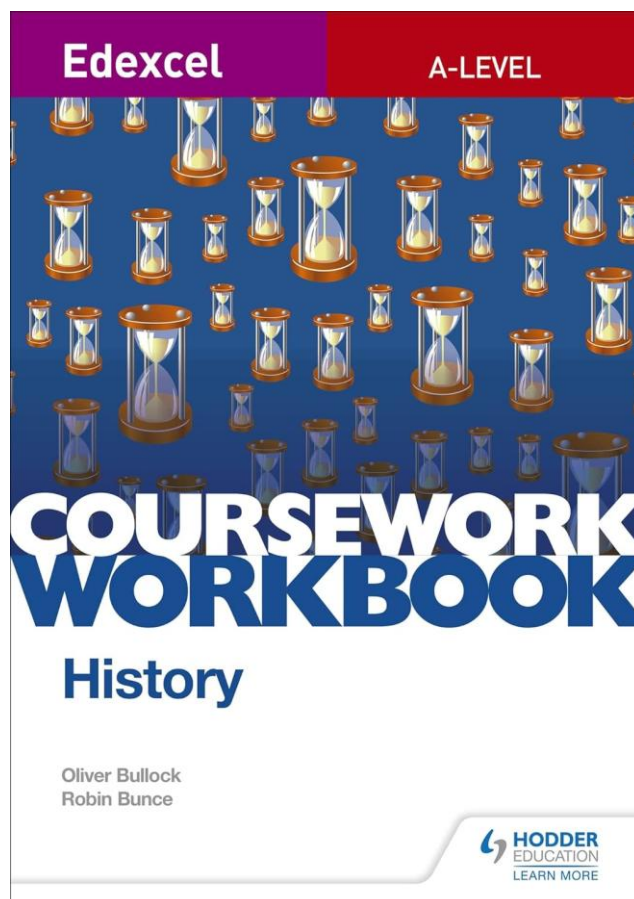
## Resources and materials:

- Pearson Edexcel Website
- Teams [& SharePoint]

## Final physical submission deadline:

Friday 13<sup>th</sup> February 2026, 3pm

*In line with JCQ rules, the centre cannot accept coursework submitted after this date and time. The centre cannot accept electronic submission.*



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## Physical and Electronic Folder Check Log

Date of check	Checklist	Suggested improvements
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li><input type="checkbox"/> This course guide, including specification</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Edexcel coursework questions booklet</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Lesson notes and associated handouts are organised, lesson-by-lesson <i>together</i>. Notes and handouts should never be separated.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Class notes are up to date</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Homework is up to date and filed alongside the lesson/topic</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> All work contains titles and dates</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> A clear section for assessment and feedback, e.g. coursework exemplars. All teacher feedback sheets [yellow] are included.</li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Evidence of a minimum of 2 hours of independent study per week. <i>This could be recorded in your resource record.</i></li> <li><input type="checkbox"/> Other:</li> </ul> <p><i>A reminder that all of the above apply to electronic folders. You will still need a physical folder for handouts, course guides and feedback. This is KLSix policy.</i></p>	
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## Course overview [from the Specification]

### Overview:

Your coursework is worth 20% of your A Level History grade. It is internally marked by two members of staff, then externally moderated by Edexcel.

The purpose of this coursework is to enable students to develop skills in the analysis and evaluation of interpretations of history in a chosen question, problem or issue as part of an independently researched assignment.

The focus is on understanding the nature and purpose of the work of the historian. Students will be required to form a critical view based on relevant reading on the question, problem or issue.

The final assignment should analyse, explain and evaluate the interpretations in the three chosen works and reach an overall judgement on the view, making use of supplementary reading.

This means you are required to **investigate a historical problem, question or issue** to form a critical view based on relevant reading on the topic. As part of your research, you are specifically required to analyse, explain and evaluate the interpretations of **three historians** on the topic.

In the process of producing the coursework, you will:

- recognise that the interpretations are representations and constructions of the past.
- recognise how the interpretations relate to the question that you seek to answer.
- analyse and comprehend the defining elements of particular interpretations.
- explain why historians arrive at their interpretations.
- be able to evaluate differing interpretations against appropriate and relevant criteria.
- understand that differences in interpretation can be legitimate.

As a result of the research, students must produce a **written assignment**, with a recommended word count of between 3,000 and 4,000 words. The assignment should include a bibliography as well as any references for quotations and citations.

The coursework is assessed using a centre-set assignment. Assignments must meet the requirements detailed below. An assignment framework is provided to support the development of individual assignments.

## **Content:**

Learning objectives - Students will:

- recognise that interpretations are representations and constructions of the past.
- recognise the relationships between interpretations and the questions that they seek to ask and answer.
- comprehend and analyse the defining elements of particular interpretations.
- explain why historians arrive at the interpretations they do and understand that differences in interpretation can be legitimate.
- be able to evaluate differing interpretations against appropriate and relevant criteria.
- organise and communicate their findings.

Your teacher will provide information that covers the work of historians in creating interpretations and approaches to the analysis and evaluation of historical interpretations, for example to develop understanding of:

- the range of methods used by historians in their work.
- the diverse range of focuses and purposes that historians have.
- the different perspectives of historians.

The course should also help you to develop enquiry skills, for example:

- effective record keeping and referencing.
- planning skills
- effective use of a library and the internet.

## **Assignment topic and question**

Your coursework question is not specified by Pearson Edexcel, but it should be “sufficiently complex and interesting enough to have generated disagreement between historians”.

The coursework may cover a new topic area question, problem or issue, dependent on your interests and provided there is a range of suitable interpretations available. Any historical period of study can be appropriate, providing that the question “meets the requirements of being sufficiently complex and interesting enough to have generated disagreement between historians”, and that there are “sufficient published resources available for students to exercise individual judgement”.

The question, problem or issue could concern any of the following perspectives: aesthetic, cultural, economic, ethnic, political, religious, scientific, social or technological, and could include debates on change, continuity, causation, consequence, similarity, difference, significance or the key features of societies and periods. The problems or issues debated by historians are varied and this will be reflected in the question formulation. Some examples are given below. Historians have disagreed about:

- The consequences of ...
- The nature of...
- The extent of change in ...

- to which ... improved ...
- How far ... succeeded
- How far ... was responsible for ...
- Whether ... can be seen as a turning point in ...

Common / well-resourced questions include, 'Historians have disagreed about:

- The extent of change brought about by Norman conquest
- The impact of the Black Death on society in England
- The nature of the witch craze
- The character of the English Reformation
- How far Oliver Cromwell was responsible for the failings of the Protectorate
- How far Catherine the Great can be seen as an Enlightened Despot
- Whether the 1832 Parliamentary Reform Act is aptly termed 'Great'
- The defeat of the South in the American Civil War
- The impact of suffragette militancy on the cause of women's suffrage
- The causes of the First World War
- The causes of the Russian Revolution[s] [February or October]
- The extent to which Stalin destroyed Lenin's legacy
- The causes of Hitler's rise to power
- The nature of Hitler's dictatorship
- The consequences of Neville Chamberlain's policy of appeasement
- The origins of the Cold War
- The reasons for the ending of the Cold War

**Unfortunately, many 'popular history' topics such as 'who was Jack the Ripper?' or 'who shot JFK' do not have the necessary range of different interpretations by academic historians to meet the requirements of the coursework, nor do they lend themselves to answers where the student can produce a critical judgement of the topic.**

Coursework *can* cover interpretations of a question, problem or issue related to content covered in Paper 1, 2 or 3 [e.g. a question on the Cold War would be allowed even though there is some cross-over with Paper 1]. ***However, the coursework task must not duplicate coverage of the historical interpretations section studied for Paper 1 [Paper 1 Unit 5 Reagan].*** Your teacher and Edexcel moderators will check this.

**You should therefore select a topic from the Edexcel coursework questions booklet.** These are well-known historical debates that will allow you to meet the assessment criteria because there are a suitable range of interpretations available. You must select your topic and resources [including three chosen works] from the booklet independently, and these will be checked by the teacher [and Edexcel coursework advisory service]. Students can choose the same topics/questions, but **the research and written essay must be your own work** [AI and plagiarism checks are conducted both internally and by Edexcel]. Some schools choose a single topic and question for all of their students in advance; at KLS, we allow you to select from pre-approved topics to ensure success, whilst giving you choice and therefore ownership of your coursework topic.

**You can of course deviate from the exact question title given in the booklet, and we would encourage you to do so.** You could change the factor in the question, for example.

**We would advise against choosing your own topic** [outside of the booklet] unless you are able to fully justify this in your coursework proposal form [and the Edexcel advisory service approves]. It might be that you have had a long term interest in a particular topic and you would need to prove that you have sufficient knowledge of the historical debate in order for this to be approved. However, it is important that you are aware that choosing a less well-known debate often means that there are fewer resources and interpretations available to you, and they are harder to access [readily / for free]. It can also make it harder for you to access the higher marks in the mark scheme. **In the past, students who have chosen more obscure individual topics have done less well than those who selected their topic from the Edexcel coursework questions booklet.**

There is no minimum or maximum length of time-period for the coursework. The appropriate length will depend on the topic chosen, which could be a single key event or a period of decades or longer. It should have sufficient scope to allow you to engage with the chosen topic, whilst overly long time periods can make it harder for you to focus on the topic.

## Assignment question

**Your assignment question MUST follow the template below** (replace the words in the square brackets with the chosen question, problem or issue). When you submit your final coursework, this wording must be displayed on the front page.

---

Historians have disagreed about [the chosen question, problem or issue].

What is your view about [the chosen question, problem or issue]?

With reference to three chosen works:

- analyse the ways in which interpretations of the question, problem or issue differ
- explain the differences you have identified
- evaluate the arguments, indicating which you found most persuasive and explaining your judgements.

Students may choose to divide their assignment into sections or complete it as a continuous essay, and should make use of supplementary reading as appropriate.

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## Assignment taking: research

Choosing your 'three chosen works'

Students must refer, in their assignment, to **three works [a chapter, book or article written by an historian]** relevant to the chosen question, problem or issue.

- These works should be **substantial** enough to support the assignment, and it is recommended that they are of article or chapter length.
- The works can be in hard copy, electronic or audio-visual format, but must be **created by historians** (each work must be by a different historian).
- The works may be from different time periods or may be contemporary to each other.
- The works should contain interpretations that together contain a range of views or emphases. These may differ in focus, methodology and/or perspective, but must be sufficiently different for the student to be able to make valid comparisons and judgements.

Your teacher will check that the works you have chosen will provide sufficient evidence for you to write a response to the question, before you begin the writing phase. **This is the purpose of the coursework proposal form, which is sent to the Edexcel advisory service.**

You cannot use any work that has been used by your teacher in the skills-based section of the course. This is because you are required to exercise individual judgement over the choice of works.

There is more information below about how you can check whether or not your 'chosen' or 'supplementary' work is written by a historian. It is really important that all references are credible works; wikipedia

### **Supplementary reading**

Students must undertake supplementary reading (**at least two further works; we would recommend more though**) to help you form a view about the interpretation under discussion. This will also help you choose which works to focus on for detailed analysis and evaluation.

### **Collaboration**

Students must undertake their research independently. This also includes support from AI. There is a declaration form [**'Coursework authentication sheet'**] to complete where you must confirm that AI has not been used in the research and writing of your coursework. If the Edexcel moderator believes there has been collaboration between students, plagiarism or AI, the candidate's coursework will be ungraded and it is likely that this will delay the marking of the entire cohort's coursework; in other words, your use of AI or someone else's work will negatively impact and delay everyone else's final results in the Summer of 2026.

### **Feedback and the role of the teacher during the research stage**

Your teacher will:

- Check the works selected to ensure that they will enable you to complete the assignment

- Exercise sufficient supervision to be satisfied that the research is being undertaken independently and that students remain focused on the assignment.

Teachers can:

- help students to understand rubrics and assessment criteria.

## The Resource Record

While carrying out your research, **you must complete a Resource Record** [in this course guide and here

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/A%20Level/History/2015/forms-and-administration/Coursework-resource-record-November-2020.docx>

This must list all the resources used. It is checked regularly by the teacher, in order to validate the research process and verify the independence of the research undertaken.

It will provide evidence to support the markers' judgements about the quality of the work and provide evidence for moderators that students have exercised choice of which resources to use.

In the 'comments' column of the resource record, you should provide evidence of why you have selected your three chosen works, including a short summary of the main differences between them.

**It is *really* important that the Resource Record is completed throughout, and not rushed at the end or submitted in a different format. You must use the Edexcel proforma above.**

This is so that your final coursework submission shows the process of your research over time. Without this, the Edexcel moderator cannot award you 'resources' marks and there is no evidence of independent research, which can result in 0 marks being awarded.

Please remember that your teacher is subject to the same JCQ rules as you - if you do not submit the Resource Record with your final coursework essay, we cannot ask you to re-submit it and this is how it is sent to the exam board.

The Resource Record can be completed by hand or electronically. Please remember that the final record must be printed.

## Assignment writing and final submission

Students must produce a **written assignment**, with a recommended word count of between 3,000 and 4,000 words. The assignment should include a bibliography as well as any references for quotations and citations.

**Please note what your teacher can and cannot do during the writing of your coursework:**

Teachers may:

- help students to understand rubrics, assessment criteria and controls.

Teachers must:

- review the student's first complete draft. The guidance may indicate to students if any element of the task requirements is absent or given insufficient attention. Guidance must remain 'general', which is defined as guidance that enables students to use their initiative in making amendments and improvements independently.

Teachers must not:

- give detailed feedback to individual students about how to improve work to meet the assessment criteria. The guidance provided prior to final submission should only enable students to take the initiative in making amendments, rather than detailing what amendments should be made. This means that teachers cannot provide templates and model answers.
- mark work provisionally with a view to sharing that mark with students so that they may then improve it.
- return work to students to make changes after it has been marked.

**What needs to be submitted by the student:**

1. The assignment, which must include a bibliography listing the resources used, and distinguishing clearly between the main three works that are referred to and any supplementary reading. They must ensure that all quotations and citations are referenced using an established referencing system, such as Harvard.
2. The Coursework authentication sheet. This verifies the work as the student's own, lists the examined options taken and provides an accurate word count. The Pearson template must be used.
3. The Resource Record

**Presentation of work**

Students must present their work for the **assignment on paper**. Student work must be identifiable by student name and assignment. The work should be double-spaced to allow for marking comments. Page numbers are also helpful.

**Word count**

It is recommended that students write between 3,000 and 4,000 words for their assignment.

Footnotes may be used. These are not included in the word count but they must not be used to develop the student's line of argument.

Appendices may be included, containing material to which the student has made reference in their assignment, for example extended quotations or extracts. These are not included in the word count.

Students should be advised that if they exceed the word count, it is less likely that they will be able to satisfy the requirement of production of a concise response.

### **Candidate malpractice**

Please remember that your teachers are submit to the same rules as you, and must report malpractice to the exam board. This includes the use of AI.

“Candidate malpractice refers to any act by a candidate that compromises or seeks to compromise the process of assessment, or which undermines the integrity of the qualifications or the validity of results/certificates.

Candidate malpractice found in controlled assessments after the declaration of authenticity has been signed, and in examinations must be reported to Pearson.

Failure to report candidate malpractice constitutes staff or centre malpractice”.

## How does the coursework fit into my A Level?

The coursework is worth 20% of your A Level History grade:

A level: Paper 1, Paper 2, Paper 3, Coursework			
AS: Paper 1 and Paper 2			
Paper 1	Paper 2	Paper 3	Coursework
30% A level 60% AS	20% A level 40% AS	30% A level	20% A level
External examination	External examination	External examination	Internal assessment
Breadth study with interpretations	Depth study	Themes in breadth with aspects in depth	Independently researched enquiry
Assessment Objectives 1 and 3	Assessment Objectives 1 and 2	Assessment Objectives 1 and 2	Assessment Objectives 1 and 3

Your coursework assesses AO1 [5%] and AO3 [15%]:

### Assessment Objectives and weightings

Students must:		% in GCE
<b>AO1</b>	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	<b>55</b>
<b>AO2</b>	Analyse and evaluate appropriate source material, primary and/or contemporary to the period, within its historical context	<b>20</b>
<b>AO3</b>	Analyse and evaluate, in relation to the historical context, different ways in which aspects of the past have been interpreted	<b>25</b>
<b>Total</b>		<b>100%</b>

### Breakdown of Assessment Objectives

Paper/component	Assessment Objectives			Total for all Assessment Objectives
	AO1	AO2	AO3	
Paper 1: Breadth study with interpretations	20%	–	10%	<b>30%</b>
Paper 2: Depth study	10%	10%	–	<b>20%</b>
Paper 3: Themes in breadth with aspects in depth	20%	10%	–	<b>30%</b>
Coursework	5%	–	15%	<b>20%</b>
<b>Total for this qualification</b>	<b>55%</b>	<b>20%</b>	<b>25%</b>	<b>100%</b>

## What is expected of me?

### 1. An organised folder with clearly marked sections.

Your folder will be routinely checked using the checklist at the front of this course guide.

### 2. Be fully prepared for and actively participate in lessons

- **Preparation** - If you are asked to prepare a task for a lesson you must complete it and arrive at the lesson with your completed work. You must always arrive at your lesson with your folder, reading record or any other preparation work you have asked to bring. It is not acceptable to arrive at a history lesson without the work you have prepared in advance. If you arrive without the prepared work you will not be able to participate in the lesson and will therefore be asked to leave the lesson to complete the preparatory work.
- **100% attendance.** If there is a valid reason why you cannot attend (e.g. a pre-booked medical appointment or a sports fixture) it is your responsibility to inform your teacher. They will then expect you to complete the work missed in school time on one of your free periods. It is not acceptable to book driving lessons or tests in lesson time.
- **Active involvement in lessons** - You must play an active and focused role in all lessons. The more you engage in discussion and activities, the more you will get out of the lesson.

### 3. Independent research and choosing of interpretations

Students are expected to carry out research and reading about their coursework topic. Beyond the initial lessons covering the skills needed to carry out effective research and analysis of historical interpretations, students must work independently. As per the specification, you are “required to exercise individual judgement over the choice of works which they will use to address the coursework topic”. This means that although we can provide a collection of works from which you can choose [i.e. the booklet], you are individually responsible for selecting and analysing the selected three.

### 4. Doing further supplementary reading

As well as selecting three main works which will be analysed in the process of writing the coursework, students must also undertake supplementary reading. This is necessary to assist in your evaluation of the main works and in forming of a view about the interpretation under discussion and their choosing of works to focus on for detailed analysis and evaluation.

### 5. Keeping a resource record

While carrying out your research, students must complete a Resource Record [see above and the proforma in this course guide]. This can be found in Appendix 5 of the Specification and on the Edexcel website [and on Teams].

This must list all the resources used and be checked regularly by the teacher. This will allow the teacher to validate the research process and verify the independence of the research undertaken.

The Resource record will also provide evidence to support marker judgements about the quality of the work and provide evidence for moderators that students have exercised choice of which resources to use.

In the 'comments' column of the resource record, students should provide evidence of why they have selected their three chosen works, including a short summary of the main differences between them.

### **6. Structuring the response**

Students are required to present their own view and to analyse and evaluate three main relevant works. Whilst there is no required structure for the assignment, your teacher will give you structure guidance. You may find it helpful to complete the assignment in two sections, devoting the first part to the essay to their view and the second part to the analysis, explanation and evaluation of the differing interpretations in their three chosen works. Alternatively, students may prefer to divide the essay into four sections, with one for the presentation of their view and the following three sections for each of the three bullet points in the question.

In reaching a judgement on the view, students must refer to their three chosen works and should make use of supplementary reading. Their own judgement should essentially be a consideration of which of the views they find most convincing and why. If the assignment is divided into sections, it would seem appropriate for approximately one-third of the words used be devoted to the first section on the presentation of their view. The exemplar answers below include examples of how assignments have been structured.

### **7. The first draft and final submission**

Students submit a first complete draft to the teacher. This is reviewed by the teacher. General guidance may be given to the student to indicate if any element of the task requirements (i.e. to analyse, explain and evaluate the interpretations in the three chosen works and to reach an overall judgement on the view, making use of supplementary reading) is absent or given insufficient attention. The guidance cannot give detailed individual feedback, nor can it detail what amendments should be made, rather it will be sufficient to enable students to take the initiative in making amendments. The feedback cannot give a provisional mark. Once the work is submitted on the final deadline date, it cannot be returned to students for further amendments.

### **8. Submitting the final assignment**

The final submission should include the following:

- **The assignment**, which must include a bibliography listing the resources used. The bibliography should distinguish clearly between the main three works that are referred to and any supplementary reading. All quotations and citations in the assignment must be referenced using an established referencing system, such as Harvard; the student should use their chosen referencing system consistently.
- **The Coursework authentication sheet**. This verifies the work as the student's own, lists the examined options taken and provides an accurate word count. The Pearson template must be used (see Appendix 4 of the Specification, the Edexcel website, below and on Teams).

- **The Resource Record** (see Appendix 5 of the Specification, the Edexcel website, below and on Teams). The Resource record sheet must be submitted in addition to a bibliography because it is important in validating that students have carried out an enquiry process and will demonstrate that they have read widely and selected works independently. Students should also indicate their three selected works with an asterisk.

## 9. Meet deadlines

You **must** meet every deadline set by your teacher. With coursework, if you do not meet a deadline, this means you will not get feedback. Your teacher will always ensure you have sufficient time to complete work set. If you are struggling to meet a deadline it is important that you speak to your teacher in advance and work out a solution to help you complete the work.

**Please remember that the final submission deadline for coursework is absolute.** In line with exam board rules, the exam centre [KLS] cannot accept late submissions [even if you are ill] and must write to the exam board if coursework is not submitted on this date. Just like in exams, if you are absent, we will ask for medical evidence to give to the exam board for them to consider.

You may wish to use the table below to record your deadlines:

Deadlines	Due date	Method of submission
Coursework proposal form		
Resource record		
First draft		
Second draft		
Final submission [including Resource Record and Candidate Authentication Sheet]		<b>This must be submitted on paper</b> to ensure authenticity in line with exam board rules.

# How is coursework assessed?

Coursework	*Paper code: 9HI0/04
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>First moderation: May/June 2017.</li> <li>Students carry out an independently-researched enquiry requiring them to analyse and evaluate historical interpretations and to organise and communicate the findings (AO3, AO1)</li> <li>The assignment is set by the centre on a question, problem or issue that has generated disagreement among historians.</li> <li>The assignment is marked out of 40.</li> </ul>	20% of the total qualification

The mark scheme [below] assesses AO1 and AO3. There are 5 bullet points within each of the 5 levels, assessing:

1. Identification of, selection from, and **deployment of material** relevant to an aspect of historical debate [AO3] – *i.e. Choosing and using information to evaluate the debate.*
2. Ability to reach and sustain an **overall judgement** about a matter of historical debate in its **historical context** [AO3] – *i.e. Comparing how and explaining why historians' views can be different.*
3. Analysis and explanation of **differences in historians' views** [AO3] – *i.e. Evaluating and judging historians' arguments*
4. **Evaluation** of, and **judgement** on, historians' arguments [AO3] – *i.e. Reaching a judgement on a historical debate. This should be driven by your chosen works.*
5. Demonstration of understanding of **relevant concepts** and organisation and **communication** of a concisely-formulated argument [AO1] – *i.e. Understanding of a debate and writing an argument about it (concise means in the word limit).*

The mark scheme is broken into 5 levels, like below. Although we can confirm your centre-assessed mark [in May, subject to exam board moderation afterwards], we cannot confirm your grade because these are decided by the exam board in August. You should be aiming for high marks:

Mark	Level	Key characteristic	Mark Band
38	5	Sustained analysis, explanation and evaluation of arguments	High level 5: 38–40 marks Secure Level 5 in many/all areas.
35	5		Mid-level 5: 35–37 marks Some areas of Level 5 but not across all aspects OR is not concise
31	4	Analyses, explains and evaluates interpretations	High level 4: 30–32 marks Secure Level 4 in many/all areas.
27	4		Mid-level 4: 27–29 marks Some areas of Level 4 but not across all aspects OR is not concise
23	3	Explains analysis and attempts evaluation	High level 3: 22–24 marks Secure Level 3 in many/all areas
19	3		Mid-level 3: 19–21 marks Some areas of Level 3 but not across all aspects OR is not concise

Level	Mark	Descriptor
	0	No rewardable material.
<b>Level 1</b>	1–8	<p><b>Selects material</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A limited range of material has been identified for use in the enquiry and appropriately cited. Information taken from reading is mainly used illustratively and understanding of the issue in question is limited.</li> <li>Judgement on the question is assertive, with little or no supporting evidence, and contextual knowledge is not linked to it.</li> <li>Demonstrates only limited comprehension and analysis of the views in the three chosen works, selecting some material relevant to the question. Surface differences are noted as matters of information.</li> <li>Evaluation of the chosen works relates to their information rather than their argument, or is based on questionable assumptions.</li> <li>Some accurate and relevant knowledge is included but it lacks range and depth and does not directly address the enquiry. There are only limited attempts to structure the answer, and the answer overall lacks coherence and precision, but the work is concise.</li> </ul> <p><b>Low level 1: 1–2 marks</b> The qualities of Level 1 are displayed, but material is less convincing in some aspects <b>and</b> it is not concise.</p> <p><b>Mid level 1: 3–5 marks</b> The qualities of Level 1 are displayed, but material is less convincing in some aspects <b>or</b> it is not concise.</p> <p><b>High level 1: 6–8 marks</b> The qualities of Level 1 are securely displayed.</p>
<b>Level 2</b>	9–16	<p><b>Attempts analysis and explanation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A range of material relevant to the enquiry has been identified and appropriately cited. Information taken from reading shows limited attempts at selection and is used mainly illustratively, but shows some understanding of the overall issue in question.</li> <li>A judgement on the question is given but with limited support and is related to information, rather than specific issues of interpretation. Contextual knowledge is used only to expand on matters of detail in a work or to note some aspects that are not included.</li> <li>Attempts analysis of views in three chosen works by comparison and description of some points within them that are relevant to the debate, but limited understanding of the reasons for differences is shown.</li> <li>The evaluation recognises an element of argument in the chosen works but the criteria for judgement are routine or left implicit and substantiation is limited.</li> <li>Mostly accurate and relevant knowledge is included, but lacks range or depth and has only implicit links to the conceptual focus of the enquiry. The answer is concise and shows some attempts at organisation, but most of the answer is lacking in coherence, clarity and precision.</li> </ul> <p><b>Low level 2: 9–10 marks</b> The qualities of Level 2 are displayed, but material is less convincing in some aspects <b>and</b> it is not concise.</p> <p><b>Mid level 2: 11–13 marks</b> The qualities of Level 2 are displayed, but material is less convincing in some aspects <b>or</b> it is not concise.</p> <p><b>High level 2: 14–16 marks</b> The qualities of Level 2 are securely displayed.</p>

Level	Mark	Descriptor
<b>Level 3</b>	17–24	<p><b>Explains analysis and attempts evaluation</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A range of material relevant to the enquiry has been identified from reading and appropriately cited. Information has been appropriately selected and deployed to show understanding of the overall issue in question.</li> <li>A judgement on the question is related to some key points of view encountered in reading and discussion is attempted, albeit with limited substantiation. Contextual knowledge of some issues related to the debate is shown and linked to some of the points discussed.</li> <li>Analyses some of the views in three chosen works by selecting and explaining some key points and indicating differences. Explanation demonstrates some understanding of the reasons for differences.</li> <li>Attempts are made to establish valid criteria for evaluation of some arguments in the chosen works and to relate the overall judgement to them, although with weak substantiation.</li> <li>Mostly accurate and relevant knowledge is included to demonstrate some understanding of the conceptual focus of the enquiry, but material lacks range or depth. The answer is concise and shows some organisation. The general trend of the argument is clear, but parts of it lack logic, coherence and precision.</li> </ul>
		<p><b>Low level 3: 17–18 marks</b> The qualities of Level 3 are displayed, but material is less convincing in some aspects <b>and</b> it is not concise.</p> <p><b>Mid level 3: 19–21 marks</b> The qualities of Level 3 are displayed, but material is less convincing in some aspects <b>or</b> it is not concise.</p> <p><b>High level 3: 22–24 marks</b> The qualities of Level 3 are securely displayed.</p>
<b>Level 4</b>	25–32	<p><b>Analyses, explains and evaluates interpretations</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A range of material relevant to the enquiry has been identified from reading, appropriately cited and selected and deployed with precision to demonstrate understanding of the issues under debate. Most of the relevant aspects of the debate will be discussed, although treatment of some aspects may lack depth.</li> <li>Evidence from reading is used with discrimination to sustain a judgment on the question although selection may lack balance in places. Contextual knowledge of some of the issues is integrated in the discussion of aspects of the debate.</li> <li>Analyses the views in the chosen works and the differences between them, explaining the issues of interpretation raised. Explanation of points of view in three chosen works demonstrates some understanding of the basis of the arguments of the authors.</li> <li>Valid criteria are established by which the arguments in the three chosen works can be judged and they are applied in the process of making judgements, although some of the evaluations may be only partly substantiated.</li> <li>Knowledge is deployed to demonstrate understanding of the conceptual focus of the enquiry and to meet most of its demands. The answer is concise and generally well organised. The argument is logical and is communicated with clarity, although in a few places it may lack coherence and precision.</li> </ul>
		<p><b>Low level 4: 25–26 marks</b> The qualities of Level 4 are displayed, but material is less convincing in some aspects <b>and</b> it is not concise.</p> <p><b>Mid level 4: 27–29 marks</b> The qualities of Level 4 are displayed, but material is less convincing in some aspects <b>or</b> it is not concise.</p> <p><b>High level 4: 30–32 marks</b> The qualities of Level 4 are securely displayed.</p>

Level	Mark	Descriptor
<b>Level 5</b>	33–40	<p><b>Sustained analysis, explanation and evaluation of arguments</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A range of material relevant to the enquiry has been identified from reading, appropriately cited and selected and deployed with precision to demonstrate understanding of the issues under debate. Most of the relevant aspects of the debate will be discussed in a sustained evaluative argument.</li> <li>Material from reading is used with discrimination to sustain a considered overall judgement on the question. Contextual knowledge of the issues is fully integrated into the discussion of the debate.</li> <li>Analyses the views in the chosen works and the differences between them, explaining the issues of interpretation raised. Explanation of points of view and differences between them demonstrates understanding of the basis of the arguments of the authors and the nature of historical debate.</li> <li>Valid criteria are established by which the arguments in the three chosen works can be judged and they are applied and fully justified in the process of making judgements.</li> <li>Knowledge is deployed to demonstrate understanding of the conceptual focus of the enquiry, and to respond fully to its demands. The answer is concise and well organised. The argument is logical and coherent throughout and is communicated with clarity and precision.</li> </ul>
		<p><b>Low level 5: 33–34 marks</b> The qualities of Level 5 are displayed, but material is less convincing in some aspects <b>and</b> it is not concise.</p> <p><b>Mid level 5: 35–37 marks</b> The qualities of Level 5 are displayed, but material is less convincing in some aspects <b>or</b> it is not concise.</p> <p><b>High level 5: 38–40 marks</b> The qualities of Level 5 are securely displayed.</p>

**Edexcel GCE History (9HI0) Unit 4: Coursework – Student Friendly Mark Scheme**

Level	Mark Band Key characteristic	Mark within level <i>(Concise means in the word limit)</i>	Choosing and using information to evaluate the debate	Reaching a judgement on a historical debate	Comparing how and explaining why historians' views can be different	Evaluating and judging historians' arguments	Understanding of a debate and writing an argument about it <i>(Concise means in the word limit)</i>
1	1–8 <b>Selects material</b>	<b>Low level 1: 1–2 marks</b> Some areas of Level 1 but not across all aspects AND is not concise	A <u>limited range</u> of material has been used and referenced	Judgement is <u>assertive</u> , with <u>little or no supporting evidence</u>	Shows <u>some understanding</u> of the views in the three sources by <u>selecting some material which relates to the question</u>	<u>Evaluates</u> what information is included in the three sources <u>rather than their argument</u>	<u>Some accurate/relevant knowledge</u> is used but it lacks range and depth and <u>does not directly relate to the debate</u>
		<b>Mid-level 1: 3–5 marks</b> Some areas of Level 1 but not across all aspects OR is not concise	Information from the sources are used to <u>describe views but not to answer the issues in the question</u>	Contextual/own knowledge is <u>not linked</u> to discussion	<u>Simple, surface differences in the information</u> in the sources are stated	<u>Evaluation are generic and/or based on assumptions</u>	The answer has <u>limited structure</u> , so it isn't clear or <u>precise</u> but it is concise (in the word limit)
		<b>High level 1: 6–8 marks</b> Secure Level 1 in many/all areas					
2	9–16 <b>Attempts analysis and explanation</b>	<b>Low level 2: 9–10 marks</b> Some areas of Level 2 but not across all aspects AND is not concise	A <u>range relevant material</u> has been used and referenced	A <u>judgement is made</u> but with <u>limited supporting evidence</u> and is <u>made about the topic</u> (not on issues of interpretation)	<u>Attempts to analyse the views</u> in three sources by <u>describing and comparing the points</u> they make which are relevant to the debate	<u>Evaluation of the overall arguments</u> in the three sources	<u>Mostly accurate/relevant knowledge</u> is used but it lacks range and depth and <u>has implied/not clear links to the ideas in the debate</u>
		<b>Mid-level 2: 11–13 marks</b> Some areas of Level 2 but not across all aspects OR is not concise	Information from the sources is <u>not well selected</u> and is mostly used to describe views but <u>shows an overall understanding of the issues in the question</u>	Contextual/own knowledge is <u>used to expand on the sources or to note content which they don't include</u>	Shows <u>limited understanding of the reasons why there are differences</u> in their views	<u>Judgement on the sources is made</u> but may be <u>basic, implied/not clear or not well supported or explained</u>	The answer is <u>concise</u> and shows <u>some attempts at a clear structure</u> , but it <u>mostly isn't clear, precise or make sense as a whole</u>
		<b>High level 2: 14–16 marks</b> Secure Level 2 in many/all areas					
3	17–24 <b>Explains analysis and attempts evaluation</b>	<b>Low level 3: 17–18 marks</b> Some areas of Level 3 but not across all aspects AND is not concise	A range relevant material has been used and referenced	A <u>judgement is made on the question</u> and relates to the <u>points of view in the sources</u> but with <u>limited supporting evidence</u>	<u>Analyses some of the views</u> in the three sources by <u>selecting and explaining some of their key points and comparing their differences</u>	<u>Attempts are made to establish a criteria</u> for evaluation of the arguments in the three sources	<u>Mostly accurate/relevant knowledge</u> is used but it lacks range and depth and <u>has clear links to the ideas in the debate</u>
		<b>Mid-level 3: 19–21 marks</b> Some areas of Level 3 but	Information has been <u>well selected</u> and <u>used to</u>				The <u>answer is concise</u> and shows <u>some structure</u> so

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		not across all aspects OR is not concise	<u>show understanding</u> of the overall issues in question	Contextual/own knowledge of issues <u>relevant</u> to the debate are <u>used</u> and <u>linked to some points</u> discussed	<u>Explanation</u> of some of the reasons <u>why</u> <u>there are</u> <u>differences</u> in their views	<u>Overall judgement is made and based on some criteria</u> although <u>not fully supported or explained</u>	the <u>general argument</u> is <u>clear</u> , but <u>in places it is unclear, not precise or doesn't make sense</u>
		<b>High level 3: 22–24 marks</b> Secure Level 3 in many/all areas					
4	<b>Analyses, explains and evaluates interpretations</b>	<b>Low level 4: 25–26 marks</b> Some areas of Level 4 but not across all aspects AND is not concise	A range relevant material has been used and referenced	Evidence is <u>well selected and used to sustain judgment</u> on the question although may <u>lack balance</u>	<u>Analyses the views</u> in the three sources and <u>explains the differences between their interpretations</u> on the debate	<u>Valid criteria</u> are set out <u>to judge to the arguments</u> in the three sources but may <u>not be used throughout</u>	<u>Well-chosen knowledge is used to show understanding of the ideas in the debate</u> and to <u>meet most of the demands of the question</u>
		<b>Mid-level 4: 27–29 marks</b> Some areas of Level 4 but not across all aspects OR is not concise	Information has been <u>precisely selected</u> and used to show understanding of the issues debated in the question	Contextual/own knowledge of some of the issues is <u>woven into discussion</u> of aspects of the debate	<u>Explains the reasons why they have different points of view</u> showing some <u>understanding of arguments of the authors</u>	<u>Final judgements use the criteria</u> but some evaluation is <u>only partly supported or explained</u>	The answer is <u>concise and well-structured so it is logical and clear</u> , although in a few places it may not be precise or make sense
		<b>High level 4: 30–32 marks</b> Secure Level 4 in many/all areas.	<u>Many areas of the debate are discussed</u> although some not in depth				
5	<b>Sustained analysis, explanation and evaluation of arguments</b>	<b>Low level 5: 33–34 marks</b> Some areas of Level 5 but not across all aspects AND is not concise	A range of relevant material has been used and referenced	Evidence is well selected and used to <u>sustain a well-considered judgment</u> on the question	<u>Analyses the views</u> in the three sources and the differences between their interpretations on the debate	<u>Valid criteria are set out and used to judge the arguments</u> in the three sources	<u>Well-chosen knowledge is used to show understanding of the ideas in the debate to fully meet the demands of the question</u>
		<b>Mid-level 5: 35–37 marks</b> Some areas of Level 5 but not across all aspects OR is not concise	Information has been precisely selected and used to show understanding of the issues debated in the question	Contextual/own knowledge of the issues is <u>fully woven into</u> discussion of the debate	<u>Explains the reasons why they have different points of view</u> showing <u>clear understanding of arguments of the authors</u> the and <u>the changing nature of historical debate</u>	<u>Criteria are applied throughout and used to fully justify the final judgement of the sources</u>	The answer is concise and well-structured to <u>communicate a clear, precise and logical argument throughout</u>
		<b>High level 5: 38–40 marks</b> Secure Level 5 in many/all areas.	Most areas of the debate are discussed through a <u>sustained evaluative argument</u>				

# What does coursework look like?

Below is an exemplar responses from Edexcel. It was awarded 40/40.

While all three historians agree that the final collapse of the Constitutional Monarchy on the 10<sup>th</sup> August 1792 resulted from more immediate factors, such as the rise of extremist factions, they disagree when on which factor made those successive medium-term events inevitable. For example, on the rise of extremist factions, Cobban advances the idea that the shock dismantlement of the ancien régime gave way to groups seeking to fill the power vacuum: 'in a state in which the old authorities had collapsed and the new ones had hardly begun to function it was inevitable that such revolutionary groups should become the real centres of power.' (Cobban, 1963, p. 177) These groups disputed amongst each other until the radicals emerged victorious and began to pursue their agenda, which eventually culminated in the downfall of the monarchy. Cobban particularly emphasises the role of the Jacobins, with the idea that they 'gradually came to usurp the powers of local government' (Cobban, 1963, p. 178), and through methods such as 'the exploitation of popular discontent and the stirring up of mob passions, whether against aristocrats or priests, or simply political opponents' (Cobban, 1963, p. 178) the 'more advanced revolutionaries were gradually able to impose their rule on France.' (Cobban, 1963, p. 178) It is important to note that Cobban puts emphasis on the idea that the rise of extremism came as a result of the lack of political experience of the deputies – 'What its members lacked was what in the nature of things they could not have acquired – political experience' (Cobban, 1963, p. 180) which caused much of the discontent that led to the rise of the Jacobins, and the sections of society that backed them: 'the Constituent Assembly was unable to control the rising tide of anarchy.' (Cobban, 1963, p. 180) The most prominent example of failure as a result of political inexperience is with the acceptance of Robespierre's self-denying ordinance by the moderates in September 1791, which empowered the radicals by phasing out the moderates, and such doomed the monarchy by allowing the radicals to thereafter freely pursue their agenda: 'but he could not have secured its acceptance without the support of the right, whose hatred for the constitutionalists led them to deal this last blow to their enemies even if it was to prove fatal to themselves and to the king.' (Cobban, 1963, p. 184) Cobban therefore argues that this pre-existing factor of inexperience, that came from the shock transition from the ancien régime, made the downfall of the Constitutional Monarchy inevitable in the way that it significantly contributed to the deputies' mistakes that allowed the radicals to become powerful and the moderates to be phased out.

While agreeing with Cobban's argument that the rise of extremism was a primary factor in the downfall of the Constitutional Monarchy, Furet's argument differs in the way in which he

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Historians have disagreed about why the 1789-92 French Constitutional Monarchy was likely to fail from the outset.

What is your view on why the Constitutional Monarchy was likely to fail from the outset?

With reference to three chosen works:

- Analyse the ways in which interpretations of the question, problem or issue differ
- Explain the differences you have identified
- Evaluate the arguments, indicating which you found most persuasive and explaining your judgements.

When the Constitutional Monarchy collapsed on the 10<sup>th</sup> of August 1792, it incidentally also marked the end of the 400-year-old ancien régime by suspending the final obstacle to its complete destruction. Despite beliefs that it had been toppled three years earlier in 1789, throughout the years of the attempted Constitutional Monarchy, the people never got rid of the feeling that the ancien régime still resided within the continued rulership of Louis XVI. This in essence was as a result of the contradiction within the revolution, a theory predominantly proposed by François Furet, which I will argue ultimately made the downfall of the Constitutional Monarchy inevitable. Alfred Cobban is also part of the group of historians that argue that the Constitutional Monarchy was doomed to fail from the start, but rather for problems incurred as a result of the rapid collapse of the ancien régime. Barry Shapiro similarly believes that the Constitutional Monarchy was doomed from the start, but puts particular emphasis on the infliction of trauma by Louis XVI on the deputies from the events of summer 1789 (i.e. the outset) that ultimately made inevitable the breakdown in the paternal relationship (between Louis XVI and his subjects) and consequently the downfall of the monarchy. In this essay, I aim to explore these nuances, compare them, and explain them, such that I will be able to make my own informed judgement on why the Constitutional Monarchy was likely to fail from the outset. In order to answer this question, it should be noted that I have interpreted the beginning of the Constitutional Monarchy to be the storming of the Bastille in July 1789 as opposed to the de jure creation of the limited monarchy through the Constitution of 1791. This is because the storming of the Bastille marked the point at which the King lost his monopoly on violence, and thereby his symbolic, near-absolute, though evidently not guaranteed, control on the nation.

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proposes the Jacobins gained power. While Cobban acknowledges that the Jacobins exploited 'political discontent' (Cobban, 1963, p. 178), Furet expands on this by explaining their rise through his theory of a contradiction within the revolution. He does this by expanding on one of the most prominent examples of the contradiction, being the limitation of the franchise as a result of the distinction between active and non-active citizens that reminded many of the unfair and unequal nature of the ancien régime they had just revolted against: 'nonetheless, it rested on a distinction between civil rights, which were universal, and political rights, which were not: to that democratic man who was the central representation of the Revolution it added a contradictory element, at this sensitive spot.' (Furet, 1995, p. 99) In this way, Furet blames the rise of extremism on the contradiction of the compromise that was the Constitutional Monarchy, which was in turn easily capitalized on by the radical groups – 'It was not by chance that Robespierre built his reputation as defender of the people on criticism of the *censitaire* electoral system.' (Furet, 1995, p. 99) Furet therefore proposes the Constitutional Monarchy was doomed from the outset as a result of its flawed systematic nature, of retaining a 'king in a republican constitution' (Furet, 1995, p. 99) to which he would never belong and would be inevitably ousted (as a symbol of the ancien régime). He highlights that the continuation of ancien régime practices in the distinction between active and passive citizens only strengthened this feeling amongst the people.

Shapiro takes quite a different approach to this; while he still argues that the rise of extremist groups set up the conditions to which the Constitutional Monarchy fell, he explains their rise through his theory of traumatic politics. Rather than blaming the inexperience of the deputies, or the contradiction between revolutionary ideals and what actually materialised, he blames the actions of the crown in the 18<sup>th</sup> century in the way in which it has managed to set the conditions to which the people and the monarch seemed to have a paternal relationship. This explains the phenomenon whereby many of the moderate deputies, in denial over Louis XVI making mistakes, forced themselves to divert blame for every wrongdoing by Louis XVI: 'For the traumatized deputies of 1789, depending upon whether denial or repetition was ascendant, Louis was either a saintly good father deceived by his evil advisers or a traitorous enemy who ... they believed was willing to have them killed to protect his own interests.' (Shapiro, 2015, p. 116) He argues that this paternal-traumatic relationship, combined with Louis XVI's mistakes such as his supposed 'public declaration of political war against the revolutionaries' (Shapiro, 2015, p. 115) when he utilized physical force on 20 June 1789, produced a traumatic

response from the deputies which essentially radicalized many of the moderates beyond the extent to which they could 'convince themselves that their emotional connection to the king which his evil advisers had put at risk had now been restored.' (Shapiro, 2015, p. 114) Thus, Shapiro argues that 'the traumatization of summer 1789 ultimately severely undermined and perhaps largely foreclosed the possibility of establishing a constitutional monarchy in which the representatives and the monarch could have worked out ways of relating to each other as opponents rather than enemies.' (Shapiro, 2015, p. 117) In contrast to the other two historians, Shapiro therefore argues that it was not pre-existing systematic or logistical issues that doomed the Constitutional Monarchy from the outset, rather a combination of Louis XVI's actions and the existing paternal traumatic relationship that made it such that radicalism emerged from a sense of 'betrayal' amongst the deputies following the events of summer 1789.

Shapiro makes an notable point when discussing the 'desacralization' argument made by many historians; while not refuting the existence of 'desacralization' over the 18<sup>th</sup> century, he refutes its impact upon the viability of the Constitutional Monarchy by arguing against historians such as Merrick, Van Kley and especially Chartier and his 'affective rupture' theory by instead supporting 'Tackett's assertion' (Shapiro, 2015, p. 107) that countered the notion of a 'prerevolutionary dethronement' (Shapiro, 2009, p. 3) of the king by conversely stating that 'during the early days of the Estates-General, the vast majority of Third Estate representatives were firmly convinced that Louis XVI was "on their side" and that "all reforms must be accomplished under the close auspices of the monarchy"' (Shapiro, 2015, p. 107). Interestingly, at this point of the argument Shapiro directly addresses Furet's argument that 'a viable constitutional monarchy "could never have been implemented"' (Shapiro, 2015, p. 109) and instead proposes the idea that, in response to 'desacralization', the royal propagandists had only promoted 'strong ties with a more down-to-earth and "democratic" monarch' (Shapiro, 2015, p. 107) which set the conditions to which 'the emotional and ideological foundations for a workable constitutional monarchy can be said to have been present' (Shapiro, 2015, p. 107). In this way, the historians thereby also disagree upon when exactly it was doomed to fail – Furet and Cobban propose that it was always doomed to fail due to the inherent issues with the concept of a Constitutional Monarchy and the repercussions of a shock transition between government forms, while Shapiro argues that the downfall only became inevitable during summer 1789 as a result of Louis XVI's trauma inducing actions, the effect of which was made worse by the existing paternal relationship.

The reason why these historians have reached different conclusions can be attributed to their own approach to the French Revolution, and the nature of their own political views and interests. One aspect of similarity in this regard is with Cobban and Furet, who both agree that the Constitutional Monarchy was doomed from the outset due to systemic and logistical issues within the revolution and have deduced this argument within books that examine the French Revolution on a long term and wide scale. Furet's 'Revolutionary France, 1770-1880' and Cobban's 'A History of Modern France, Volume One' each respectively look at a hundred years of the French Revolutionary period, and Cobban over his three volumes, 250 years. The significance of this is that it may impact their judgements over the interpretation of what exactly caused the downfall of the Constitutional Monarchy, as they may be trying to work it into a longer-term framework of interpretation. For example, Furet's recognition of a contradiction within the revolution on which he bases his argument is examined with the hindsight of the later victories of the republicans over the monarchists in the 1870s in achieving a lasting settlement that Furet proposes reconciled the apparent issue of past contradictions: 'only the victory of republicans over monarchists in 1876-7 provided modern France with a regime that established in lasting form the full range of the principles of 1789 ensuring not only civic equality but also political liberty.' (Furet, 1995, p. ix) Perhaps the fact that there was no further revolution following the settlement of the 1870s guided Furet's approach to the 1789-92 Constitutional Monarchy in which he details the problems of that revolution to be what was reconciled in the 1870s. Another problem this entails is that these historians, focussing on such wide periods, may gloss over detail in order to produce a theory on the interconnectedness of events throughout the 200 years of French Revolutionary study. The method Furet used to derive his theory of a contradiction within the revolution comes to mind most when thinking about this, as pointed out by many when assessing his work: 'his conceptual approach to history, in which he preferred to overlook minute detail in favor of political and philosophical analysis.' (Riding, 1997) Similarly, Cobban's need to summarise vast swathes of history means that he is inevitably 'led to postulate hypotheses which he has not the space to defend in detail, and to advance interpretations which all would not accept.' (Hampson, 1963) On the other hand, Shapiro's article in McPhee covers only 1789-93 and similarly his other published work such as *Traumatic Politics* or *Revolutionary Justice in Paris* only deals with the King during the period of constitutional monarchy or the period 1789-90, and so it can be said that he looks at history on much more of a limited scale. His lack of interest therefore to come up with an overarching argument to do with French democracy on a 100-to-200-year scale inevitably means that his conclusions will be more as a result of detailed events rather than wide

movements and trends. This is important when considering the debate over what made the downfall of the Constitutional Monarchy inevitable, as Furet has identified a contradiction in the revolution within the examined hindsight of what exactly happened after, as compared to Shapiro who only covers the 'Early French Revolution' and thus does not need to create an overall 'theme' to explain why the next revolution happened and later failed in France in 1830, in the same way Cobban and Furet need to.

On the topic of a framework that historians may apply, it is also important to consider the fact that both Cobban and Furet had similar political beliefs, and therefore interpreted the Revolution in a classical liberal fashion. It also should be noted that Furet was once part of the 'Annales school', which was a group of historians that predominantly focused on social and economic history as opposed to political history. Furet grew to reject this proposal, and notably rejected his own Marxist views and instead grew to advocate the classical liberal view that Cobban had championed. He came to emulate Cobban's focus on political history as opposed to social and economic history, which came from Cobban's own belief that passing judgement on economic history is flawed because 'the results of research in this field are still hardly adequate even for a broad picture.' (Cobban, 1963, p. 1) This impacts their judgements because they therefore solely focus on political history, in the form of their direct focus on the Constituent and Legislative assemblies. They will therefore not have the same perspective on the significance of the crowd as would economic historians since they did not consider them when thinking about the reasons for the downfall of the Constitutional Monarchy. For example, the conclusions cited above on what exactly motivated the nation to turn to radicalism is impacted by such negation; others such as the Marxist historian George Rudé would cite poor economic conditions that precipitated the growth of the sans-culottes as a political force and thus was the reason for the driving of 'the Revolution leftwards along courses neither intended nor desired by the men of 1789.' (Rudé, 1989, p. 73) Cobban and Furet only superficially cover this in their works, focussing much more on the political nature of the dynamic between the assemblies and the monarchy, and such may skew their own conclusions when deciding why the Constitutional Monarchy was likely to fail from the outset. Furet also specifically formed his arguments with the aim to contradict Marxist interpretations, by showing how important political history was compared to social history: 'Furet refuted Marxist theory and resurrected the idea that the French Revolution might have been driven by political aims as much as by social conditions or class dissatisfaction.' (Llewellyn & Thompson, 2012)

see 13 basis @ 25

act of 'betrayal' that Shapiro proposes doomed the revolution from summer 1789 onwards (namely the use of troops on the 20<sup>th</sup> June 1789) would have occurred anyway with Louis' rejection of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. The document was significant in driving the large divide between the people and the monarchy, marking a point at which both parties realised they could never harmoniously co-operate, and caused the Flight to Varennes, the point of no return. As Aston, a respected historian focussing on Louis XVI's role in bringing the downfall of the monarchy, recognises in his work, 'McManners argued that "If there was a point at which the Revolution "went wrong", it was with the imposition of the oath"' (Aston, 2004, p. 26). In Doyle's earlier article attacking the desacralization argument, similarly refuted by Shapiro, he argues that the Civil Constitution of the Clergy rather than desacralization caused the downfall of the regime. He argued that Louis XVI went along with the transfer of power until the Civil Constitution of the Clergy was proposed, which was perceived by Louis to be the Revolution's 'attack on religion which led to the flight to Varennes – and that in turn which triggered a logic which brought war and the downfall of a monarch seen to be on league with the enemy.' (Doyle, 2000, p. 24) In consideration of these alternative views, I would therefore argue that it was inevitable that Louis XVI would reject the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, due to factors and conditions that were formed before the summer of 1789 such as the deeply religious and divine characteristic of the monarchy that Louis XVI could have never parted with. Similarly, the National Assembly would have inevitably passed this law as it stood in the way of completing the destruction of the ancien régime – as Lewis puts it, a historian who rejected both revisionist and Marxist interpretations of the Revolution, the Church was 'deemed to be yet another bastion of aristocratic privilege' (Lewis, 1999, p. 30). Thus, in the assembly's apparent crusade to overturn all elements of feudalism, they had inadvertently revealed that the King was the last barrier to its complete destruction. In this way, the effect and existence of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy supports Cobban and Furet's argument of pre-existing problems in the revolution making downfall inevitable. This is because it is an example of the disruption that would inevitably occur in the compromising system of constitutional monarchy, with an Assembly desperate to dismantle the ancien régime to justify the revolution, and the incompatible force Louis XVI acted in the pursuit of that goal.

*1 + well-supported evaluation  
linked knowledge + supplementary sources*

However, I agree with Shapiro's arguments against Furet in one area: refuting the idea of a 'prerevolutionary dethronement' (Shapiro, 2009, p. 3) of the king – which is essentially part of the desacralization argument that Shapiro associates with historians such as Furet and Halévi

Shapiro similarly focuses on political history, though this is as a result of his own goal of tying the disciplines of psychology and history together rather than a lack of interest on the economic and social history: 'In proposing to view the Constituent Assembly's decision making through a lens fashioned by psychological theory and clinical practice, this study aims to provide a new perspective on a classical problem in French revolutionary historiography' (Shapiro, 2009, p. 1). This is therefore indicative of the possibility that Shapiro may have attempted to apply a specific lens when analysing the outcomes of the period such to fit his psychoanalytical framework about trauma. It should also be noted that, though Shapiro himself lacked a clear historical movement or school to latch his work onto, he viewed his work to be a response to the revisionist view on the Revolution: 'my book is primarily positioned in opposition to the so-called "revisionist" historians (e.g., Francois Furet and Keith Baker) who emphasize the extent to which the radicalism and violence of the later stages of the Revolution were already present in embryonic form at the beginning and that efforts to establish Constitutional Monarchy had therefore little or no chance of succeeding.' (Shapiro, 2018) Considering the fact that Shapiro thus went into his work with the intention of analysing different evidence such to gain a different outlook on the actions of the deputies from 1789-93, his conclusions are impacted by the evidence he selects – perhaps the fact that Shapiro predominantly relied upon the letters of deputies to their constituents to build his theory of trauma means that he gained a much more narrow view on why the Constitutional Monarchy was likely to fail from the outset as compared to Cobban and Furet.

*74 marks / 50-70*

In consideration of all the arguments, I side with Cobban and Furet's, that the Constitutional Monarchy was likely to fail from the outset because of pre-existing systemic issues; that it was always doomed to fail, against Shapiro's theory of trauma causing the inevitable failure of the revolution only following Louis XVI's rash actions during the outset of the Constitutional Monarchy in summer 1789. To therefore support Cobban and Furet's argument against Shapiro's, that Louis XVI's actions were inevitable and such the Constitutional Monarchy was always likely to fail from the outset, one specific event comes to mind that had significant ramifications on the continued existence of the Constitutional Monarchy: the rejection of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy in 1790. Even if Louis XVI had not acted brashly during the summer of 1789, the ramifications of this event demonstrates how the Constitutional Monarchy was always inevitably doomed as a result of the necessity of the revolution to remove all aspects of the ancien régime – to which Louis would have inevitably resisted. Furthermore, a similar

in reference to their book, *Monarchie républicaine*. This is because, as Shapiro and Doyle argue against other historians such as Van Kley and Robert Chartier, that desacralization is simply not enough to explain the reason behind the inevitability of the Constitutional Monarchy's collapse. Doyle himself counters the desacralization argument by noting that there was not much sacralization in the first place – 'how "sacralized" had the monarchy ever been in the minds of ordinary French people?' (Doyle, 2000, p. 25), going on to also state that there had even been 'grumbings' about royal extravagance, warmongering, and religious persecution at arguably the height of absolute monarchy and 'sacralization' under Louis XIV (The 'sun' king) that historians such as Van Kley would argue would have been indicative towards a collapse of royal authority. Shapiro himself argues that even if desacralization did occur, it was countered by royal propaganda, thereby setting up the preconditions to which the paternal relationship existed between the king and his subjects, to which the ideological foundations for the monarchy would have thus been there. In this way, while agreeing with most of Furet's argument about structural reasons causing the inevitability of the downfall of the Constitutional Monarchy, I disagree with the notion of 'desacralization' affecting the downfall of the monarchy, and such conclude that the notion of a contradiction within the revolution can exist independently of 'desacralization' – that the Constitutional Monarchy was doomed before it started for inherent systemic issues rather than long-term 'desacralization'.

In conclusion, it has become clear that the Constitutional Monarchy was likely to fail from the outset as a result of pre-existing structural and logistical reasons; due to Furet's proposal of a contradiction within the revolution in combination with Cobban's argument about the repercussions from the shock collapse of the ancien régime, rather than for any other reason such as Louis XVI's mistakes in summer 1789 (which Shapiro argues was made worse by the present paternal relationship) or a "prerevolutionary" dethronement of the king' (Shapiro, 2009, p. 3). This is because the form of government that was constitutional monarchy would have never been able to suit revolutionary France's need at the time; it was ineffectual at a time when the nation needed to be divisive to solve the political issues of the day - as Cobban notes Dumont's view about the state of the Constitution, it "'was a veritable monster: there was too much republic for a monarchy, and too much monarchy for a republic.'" (Cobban, 1963, p. 185) In this way, the Constitutional Monarchy was likely to fail from the outset due to the inevitable frustration that would come about upon the realisation by the increasingly sovereign people of France that Louis XVI stood in the way of the complete destruction of the ancien

régime – that the Constitutional Monarchy, in its existence, compromising nature and co-operation with the king, harboured and maintained the 'contradiction within the revolution'.

Word Count: 3968 = *correct*

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### Coursework resource record

Pearson Edexcel Level 3 Advanced GCE in History				
Centre name: [REDACTED]				
Candidate name: [REDACTED]				
Resources used. The three works chosen for the assignment must be asterisked.	Page/web reference	Student comments	Student date(s) when accessed	Teacher initials and date resource record checked
*Cobban, A., <i>A History of Modern France, Volume One</i> (Penguin, 1963)	pp. 162-200	Argues that the shock dismantlement of the ancien regime leads to many problems, such as the rise of extremist factions to fill in the power vacuum, who would eventually undo the system through their gradual phasing out of the moderates, such as with the later self-denying ordinance. Also argues that one factor for the fall of the constitutional monarchy that began before it even started, was the lack of experience of the deputies which caused a multitude of problems, such as the political friction between the parties they were not used to dealing with. Also argues that the war was not just as a result of factional struggles, but of a need to rectify a previous half century of humiliating defeats.  I will use this work as a core work, as it presents the lack of experience argument for the downfall of the constitutional monarchy.	16/09/2021	28/09/2021 TCHN

Doyle, W., <i>The Execution of Louis XVI and the End of the French Monarchy, History Review</i> (March 2000)	pp. 21-24	Doyle presents several arguments for the reasons behind Louis XVI's execution. He focuses on one in particular, the long-term desecralisation of the monarchy that by the time of the revolution the image of the monarchy was in such a state to be challenged. However, he goes on to argue that this alone is not adequate enough to explain Louis XVI's death, instead that the reasons for the downfall of Constitutional Monarchy was the Flight to Varennes, which was in turn caused by the rejection of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy. Thus argues that Constitutional Monarchy was not doomed from the outset.  I will use this work as a supplementary work, as it does not explore Doyle's argument in the relatively short number of pages such that I would be comfortable of it using it as a core work, but it is useful nonetheless because of his presentation of the desecralisation argument, even if he does disagree.	22/08/2021	28/09/2021 TCHN
Aston, N., <i>The French Revolution 1789-1804: Authority, Liberty, and the Search for Stability</i> (Palgrave Macmillan, 2004)	pp. 9-30	Argues that the French Revolution was as a result of medium-term issues, such as the political problems and financial problems, and more so the 'destabilising efforts made to resolve them.' Does recognise the fact that the stress points in the French polity pre-dated the start of Louis XVI's reign in 1774. Even more so, he strongly argues the idea that it was a lack of initiative by both Louis XVI and his ministers that created the conditions for constitutional monarchy, and its eventual failure. Argues that the final blow was dealt with the imposition of the Civil Constitution of the Clergy, which forced Louis XVI and much of the nobility to consider emigrating, or fleeing.	25/08/2021	28/09/2021 TCHN

		I will use this work as a supplementary work rather than a main work as it argues too much in favour of Louis XVI being the downfall of the nation.		
Rudé, G., <i>The French Revolution</i> (Weidenfeld and Nicholson, 1989)	pp. 71-79	Argues that a multitude of factors caused the downfall of constitutional monarchy, but the flight to Varennes was the most significant of all by indirectly contributing to the war that ultimately dealt the final blow.  I will not use this work.	28/08/2021	28/09/2021 TCHN
Lewis, G., <i>The French Revolution: Rethinking the Debate</i> (Routledge, 1999)	pp. 24-41	Argues that France was too divided in its beliefs to permit a non-violent transfer of power, or even a compromise in the form of constitutional monarchy. The contradiction of the revolution prevented many from forming groups that could be dealt with through compromises, and thus none could be made. Essentially implies the fact that the King was the last bastion of ancien regime feudalism, and thus with the modernisation of the country it was essential to remove him also. Thus, argues that Constitutional Monarchy was doomed from the outset.  I will use this work as a supplementary work as it is especially useful when arguing the inherent contradiction of the revolution.	27/08/2021	28/09/2021 TCHN
*Shapiro, B., <i>The Case Against the King</i> , in McPhee, P (ed.), <i>A Companion to the French Revolution</i> (Blackwells, 2015)	pp. 107-120	Initially refutes the idea that the reason for the Constitutional Monarchy being doomed from the outset was from the people; the deputies initially were on Louis XVI's side, and the royal propagandists had laid the ground for a democratic monarchy in the preceding decades. Rather he argues, through Shapiro's theory about traumatic politics, Constitutional Monarchy fell because of the paternal relationship dynamic between Louis XVI and the deputies, which ultimately left Louis with much responsibility when it came to his actions. This relationship only intensified the	23/08/2021	28/09/2021 TCHN

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		divide between Louis XVI and the people when Louis XVI let them down further. Also argues that it had the effect of ousting the moderate propensities of the deputies. I will use this work as a core work as it provides another lens to why the Constitutional Monarchy was doomed from the outset.		
Shapiro, B., <i>Traumatic Politics: The Deputies and the King in the Early French Revolution</i> (The Pennsylvania State University Press, 2009)	pp. 162-184	Shapiro continues his argument about 'traumatic politics', while also refuting other arguments, such as the "desacralisation" argument through looking at events such as the suspensive veto granted to the King by the deputies. I will use this work as a supplementary work, as it only continues the ideas of the previous Shapiro work, while focussing too much on what happens after the imposition of constitutional monarchy that does not benefit me much more than Shapiro's first work about Traumatic Politics.	23/09/2021	28/09/2021 TCHN
Tackett, T., <i>When the King Took Flight</i> (Harvard University Press, 2003)	pp. 219-223	Argues that the Flight to Varennes was the turning point in the survival of the Constitutional Monarchy, and that it was not doomed from the outset. Argues that it would have worked if Louis XVI had given his full support, all pretences of which were abandoned on the night he fled. Argues that the deputies had managed to work out a situation in which social and political unrest was reduced, and that all was needed was the King's support, but his choice to flee the country ruined it all. I will use this work as a supplementary work, as it is a useful example of a direct contradiction to the idea that Constitutional Monarchy was doomed from the outset.	12/08/2021	28/09/2021 TCHN
Hardman, J., Louis XVI and the French Revolution, <i>History Review</i> (September 1996)	pp. 37-42	Argues that previous kings such as Louis XIV and Louis XV set in stone the prerequisites for a disloyal nobility, and Louis XVI only sparked it. This in turn set of the chain of events, and eventual loss of control of the revolution from	25/08/2021	28/09/2021 TCHN
		the first estate to the third. Argues that Louis XVI on the whole is not as incompetent and indecisive as many believe him to be, but still argues that he should not be made out 'to be a saint'. Also argues that the lack of trust following the decades of perceived royal despotism and failure on Louis XVI's part to show leadership on the matter of the Estates-General voting agreement produced 'a sense of betrayal and (after Louis brought up troops, though their orders were strictly defensive) fear and a thirst for vengeance.' Since Louis XVI was given a tough situation from the start in which he had no part in the Constitution, 'save for a choice of acceptance or rejection, which would lead to his abdication and possibly death', Hardman argues that this situation forced the subsequent events such as the October Days and Flight to Varennes to occur. Also argues that governance under the Constitution was made to be too gridlocked, and therefore caused Constitutional Monarchy to fail. Finally argues that Constitutional Monarchy would not have failed in the case that Louis XVI's cousin took the throne, as many of the issues with the Constitutional Monarchy such as legitimacy and popularity would have been solved, though counters that with the idea that Louis XVI would have never allowed that to happen. I will not use this work – while it does have the same worth as many of my full works, it argues the Louis XVI point of view of doomed from the outset, which I am not focusing on.		
*Furet, F., <i>Revolutionary France, 1770-1880</i> (Wiley, 1995)	pp. 95-116	Argues along the lines of a contradiction placed within the revolution, of the fact that there was essentially a republican constitution while maintaining a King. Important to note that he makes the important distinction between the civil revolution and the political revolution, as he makes	25/09/2021	28/09/2021 TCHN
		the case that the civil revolution was widely backed by all (1789) while the topics on for debate in the political revolution starkly divided the country to the extent that the compromise of constitutional monarchy would eventually be undermined. Implied through his argument that war was inevitable, as the gridlock conflict resulting from the constitution created a situation in which both sides (the Monarchists and Republicans) wanted war in order to oust the other. I will use this work as a core work as it presents an important argument for a contradiction within the revolution as a reason for the failure of the constitutional Monarchy.		
Rudé, G., <i>The Crowd in the French Revolution</i> (Oxford University Press, 1959)	pp. 61-112	Rudé argues that the crowd as a political force directly causes the downfall of the constitutional monarchy, as a result of a combination of economic and political factors that led to popular discontent with the state of the Constitutional Monarchy and the development of the crowd as a political force. I will use this as a supplementary work as it is a useful alternative argument that proposes that economic failures caused discontent, which I will use to contrast against the solely political arguments of my core works.	16/02/2022	13/03/2022 TCHN

## What are interpretations?

### What is an interpretation?

**Interpretations are the works of historians who have produced academic works that are relevant to the topic.**

Students must use interpretations in their coursework. These should be substantial works where a distinct scholarly interpretation is presented. Generally speaking, these works will use evidence and the work of other historians in advancing arguments and reaching conclusions about the topic.

Students must refer, in their assignment, to **three main works** relevant to the chosen question, problem or issue. The three works should meet the following criteria:

- They should be substantial enough to support the assignment, and it is recommended that they are of article or chapter length. A work may include more than one chapter from a historian's book if appropriate. There is no maximum length, though choosing very long academic works can make it much more challenging for students to get to grips with the historians' arguments.
- They can be in hard copy, electronic or audio-visual format, but must be created by historians (each work must be by a different historian).
- The works may be from different time periods or may be contemporary to each other.
- The works should contain interpretations that together contain a range of views or emphases. These may differ in focus, methodology and/or perspective, but must be sufficiently different for the student to be able to make valid comparisons and judgements. Additionally, it is not permitted for any of the three works to be passages used by the teacher in the skills-based course of study.

Once your proposal is submitted, your teacher will check that your chosen works meet the requirements and provide sufficient evidence for you to make a satisfactory response to the question. Please keep in mind that, although teachers are responsible for ensuring that the choice of works is appropriate for the coursework, students are required to exercise individual judgement over the choice of works.

### Who counts as a historian?

Students' chosen works must be substantial enough to support the assignment, and **it is recommended that they are of article or chapter length**. They may be in hard copy, electronic or audio-visual format but the specification indicates that they **must be created by historians**.

For example, an interpretation created for television by a historian recognised in the relevant field and with the historian given in the writing credits may be used. An article by

an historian for an A Level publication may be used, as well as one published in a scholarly journal, but a school textbook, distilling the views of historians, may not.

**Popular historians such as Andrew Marr** *may* be suitable if they present a distinct scholarly interpretation – as additional works rather than one of the three main works – but if you are unsure, it is best to check with the the advisory service.

One test is whether the work is appropriately referenced and draws on the work of other historians in advancing arguments and reaching conclusions rather than being a personal account. If the chapter of a book is jointly written and both the authors are recognised historians, then this would count as a single ‘work’ for coursework purposes.

If students wish to use multiple works by the same author for their coursework this would not count as more than one ‘work’. Edexcel does advise that students use three **different** historians for their main three works. Strictly, the coursework requires a ‘work’ to be the view contained in a single published piece, rather than the historian’s view overall, so we’d advise just using whichever of the publications is most contrastive with the other two main works.

It would still be possible to refer to their other publications as **supplementary reading** if they offer additional significant comment. Students could use a book review as an interpretation, provided that it is written by an historian, and it contains an argument that can clearly be attributed to the review author. However, it’s probably better to use as a supplementary work, as the author’s own argument is unlikely to be dominant within the work. Journalists, policy experts, military experts etc are more likely to be sources of evidence than interpretations of history.

**If you are writing about a political historical debate, it is important that you check that your chosen work is not written by a political scientist, politician or journalist. An easy way to check this is to look up their degree – if they have a History degree, then they are an historian.** If they have a degree in Politics/International Relations/Political Science, it is likely that the advisory service will not approve the chosen work because they are not an historian.

The chosen works must enable students to explore the views of historians. It’s not an exercise in exploring the views of figures who lived through, and have their opinions on or were themselves involved and influential in, the event being investigated. The key thing to consider is what opportunity the work provides to explore the views of historians. For example, if they evaluate a work by calling into question its findings and arguments, when the work itself was a personal view, or was never an appropriate scholarly work, then that undermines the purpose of the coursework and their opportunities to get to grips with the basis of differing views amongst historians.

We would advise against using historians who are writing in a foreign language. It’s difficult for the teacher and the moderator to get a sense of the debate otherwise. Any citations from the works should be translated and students should be reminded of their responsibility to represent the views contained within them accurately. Teachers should only permit the

use of foreign-language works if they are confident that it will not disadvantage the student, since teachers may not be able to discern any misconceptions in any preliminary discussion of the suitability of the chosen works to present different views.

**Historians writing during the same time period as your chosen topic/question would not count as an interpretations.** Historians writing around the time would normally be used as *sources* contemporary to the period, rather than as the work of a historian. However, a nineteenth-century historian reflecting on the medieval period would of course be appropriate; they do not have to be twentieth- or twenty-first-century writers.

The key is whether the work is appropriately referenced and draws on the work of other historians in advancing arguments and reaching conclusions, rather than being a personal account. In the case of more modern topics, from the late twentieth century, for example, the historian should be writing sufficiently long afterwards to be sure the work is primarily the product of historical research rather than of personal experience. As a rule of thumb, at least a decade might be thought appropriate for some hindsight to be applied.

## Can we all choose the same three works?

It is not allowed [by Edexcel] for all students in the same cohort to use the same three works. It may be that individual students within a cohort end up choosing the same three works; however, Edexcel would expect to see evidence in the student's resource record sheet that a range of resources has been consulted and that the students have independently selected the historians' works.

Students should be selecting their work on an individual basis and the purpose of the example question booklet is only to provide students with a range of works from which to choose, not to direct them to categories or groups of resources. **Any works used as examples by your teacher cannot be used** as one of the three works or the required supplementary reading.

## What are 'supplementary works'?

Although the three interpretations form the basis of the coursework, students must undertake **supplementary reading of at least two further works**. This is to assist in their evaluation of the main works and in forming their own view about the interpretation under discussion. Supplementary reading will also help with choosing the three works to focus on for detailed analysis and evaluation. **In practice, it is a good idea to look at the work of five to six authors before narrowing down the choice to the three which will form the focus of the coursework.** The supplementary reading, along with the three interpretations, should be logged in the coursework documentation, i.e. The Resource Record.

## What are 'schools of history'/'schools of thought'?

Historiography is the **study of how history has been written**—the methods, approaches, and perspectives historians use to interpret the past. Because historians often disagree with each other, over time, schools of thought/history have emerged, where historians group

themselves by principle. For example, ‘intentionalist’ historians argue that Hitler had a long term plan for the Holocaust, whereas ‘functionalists’ argue that the Holocaust was not planned from the beginning and instead emerged gradually as a consequence of Nazi bureaucracy and wartime conditions; a ‘synthesist’ or ‘moderate’ would blend the two. Common ‘schools of history’ also include ‘orthodox’, ‘revisionism’ and ‘post-modernism’, but it will depend on the debate.

Whilst awareness of these debates are helpful in contextualising your chosen works, Edexcel have confirmed that “is not necessary for students to name or understand schools of history as part of their analysis and evaluation of the interpretations”. When writing your response, you should focus your analysis of the views in the chosen works and the differences between them, rather than in trying to link them to a particular school. **A common mistake is that students sometimes link historians’ works to a school of history, for example in identifying that a historian has a revisionist perspective, but without explaining why this affects the validity of their interpretation.** Whilst a considered evaluation of the significance of the historiographical perspective of a work to the argument being made could be valid to the enquiry, and therefore could be awarded marks within the mark scheme, focusing on the views within the works and the differences between them is generally a better approach for most students.

Similarly, it is not necessary for students to discuss a historian’s **methodology** as part of the evaluation of interpretations. The coursework question asks students to analyse the ways interpretations differ, to explain these differences and evaluate the arguments as well as presenting their own view. Methodology may be a useful criterion by which to judge the interpretations, but this will depend on the works chosen and it is not a requirement.

## How do I analyse and evaluate historical interpretations?

The following is an abridged guide from Edexcel about interpretations at A Level:

[https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/A%20Level/History/2015/teaching-and-learning-materials/A\\_level\\_History\\_interpretations\\_guidance\\_abridged.pdf](https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/A%20Level/History/2015/teaching-and-learning-materials/A_level_History_interpretations_guidance_abridged.pdf)

## What are historical interpretations?

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A key point to note about historical ‘interpretations’ is that they are plural. To understand historical interpretations, it is necessary to understand something about the nature and development of the discipline of history.

Although histories have been written for millennia, the academic discipline of history is generally understood to be a nineteenth century creation (Beiser, 2011; Berger, Feldner and Passmore, 2003; Novick, 1988). Despite the expectation, shared by leading nineteenth century practitioners of the discipline such as Lord Acton, that the professionalisation of history would lead to the creation of ‘ultimate’ history providing a singular and definitive account of the past (Carr, 1961, p.1; Megill, 2007, pp.162-164), the growth of academic history in the twentieth century led to the proliferation of histories rather than to their consolidation (Ankersmit, 1994).

## The illusion of ultimate history

Like everything and everyone else, the discipline of history and the historians who practice it exist in time. History asks and aims to answer questions about the past, however, neither history nor the past are static. The topics, issues and themes that we think merit attention, the questions that we consider worth asking, the methods of research and analysis that we use to answer these questions and the sources that we have available to us all change with time. Our understandings of time itself and of change over time are emphatically impacted, for example, by changing research technologies and methods.<sup>1</sup>

Furthermore, historians are a very diverse group and they are all located in social, cultural, political, economic, geographic and ideological spaces, as well as in time (Appleby, Hunt and Jacob, 1995; Novick, 1988). Histories are decisively shaped by the identities of the people who write them (Schama, 1991). Histories are always narratives, to one degree or another, and writing a story involves a series of identifications and decisions, all of which are shaped by the assumptions and identities of the story's narrator.

'Ultimate' history seemed possible in the late nineteenth century partly because it could safely be assumed that professional academic history was 'his-story' (rather than 'her-story' or 'their-stories') and because it could safely be assumed that high – rather than gender, or labour, or racial, or cultural – politics was the 'fit and proper' subject of this story.

## History is a collective practice

'Ultimate' history, then, was an illusion.<sup>2</sup> This does not mean, however, that the discipline of history is an illusion. Despite their differences, historians have a great deal in common and share a common professional identity as historians, despite variations in approach, in interpretive framework, in topic, in method, and so on (Megill, 2007). Now, as in the late nineteenth century, history is an interpersonal and collective practice, and gains much of the objectivity that it can claim from this

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<sup>1</sup> It was possible to think of Stonehenge as a stand-alone monument, for example, until the development of aerial photography during the First World War made it clear that it was one of a number of elements of a much larger scale ritual landscape. It was possible, in the 1950s, to construct interpretations of Stonehenge that linked its builders to Mycenae and Greek antiquity but it was no longer possible to do so once the development of radio carbon dating made it clear that the chronology of Stonehenge predated Mycenae (Chapman, 2007; Chippendale, 2001).

<sup>2</sup> It is worth noting that this was well-understood very rapidly, as Mandell Creighton's 'Introductory Note' to the 1902 *The Cambridge Modern History* shows (Ward, Prothero and Leathes (eds.), 1902, Volume 1, pp.1-6). Lord Acton himself, notoriously, did not manage to write very much history, ultimate or otherwise.

fact (Evans, 1997; Megill, 2007; Rüsen, 2005; Seixas, 1993). History is the work of many hands – of archivists, historians, curators, and so on (Samuel, 1994) – and not driven simply by individual subjectivity and whim. Historians both depend upon each other's work and depend on each other for the recognition and validation of their own work. The disciplinary community of historians acts as the arbiter of what counts as historical work and history is made through public and open debate within this community. Histories always involve stories, to one degree or another, but there is much more to history writing than story-telling: the *form* of historical writing, characterised by close attribution of sources and an infrastructure of argumentation and justification (Grafton, 2003; Megill, 2007), embodies a commitment to debate and critical evaluation.

Learning about historical interpretations involves coming to understand why it is that history is inherently plural and changing, rather than singular and 'ultimate'. Learning about historical interpretations also involves coming to understand the ways in which interpretations are constrained by disciplinary practices. The rigour of historical practices is not measured by the permanence or the 'ultimate' nature of the histories that they produce. Rigour consists, rather, in the qualities of research and argument that historical works display and in the processes of debate and argument through which historical claims to knowledge are advanced, tested and, perhaps, sustained and developed.

Historical interpretations, then, are representations and constructions of the past, created in particular moments of time, by particular authors who have particular agendas and who aim, through the interrogation of the records of the past, to make sense of time and change (Rüsen, 2005). In so far as they are historical (rather than simply about the past), historical interpretations are arguments and, as such, are amenable to rational scrutiny and debate. Historians cannot, as it were, 'make it up' or 'say what they like'.<sup>3</sup> The processes of historical debate aim to ensure that the representations of the past constructed in historical narratives are subject to rational evaluation and these processes differentiate histories from the past-referencing practices of collective memory, party history, national myth, and so on (Lowenthal, 1985 and 1998; Megill, 2007; Wertsch, 2002; Wineburg, 2001 and 2007).

### Summary

Students should understand:

- that histories are representations and constructions of the past
- that histories are inherently plural and variable
- that histories exist in time and change with time
- that histories are authored and shaped by the subjectivities of their authors
- that histories are typically narratives grounded in evidence and argument
- that history is a discipline and an interpersonal practice.

## Research on 16-19 year-old students' thinking about interpretation

The table below shows a range of ways 16-19 year-old history students tend to explain variations in historical interpretations.

**Table 2: Types of Explanation for Variation in Interpretation<sup>5</sup>**

Explanatory Type	Definition
1. Authorial explanation	Variations in interpretation are explained in terms of authors' backgrounds or background beliefs
2. Archival explanation	Variations in interpretation are explained in terms of the variable or limited nature of the archive available to historians.
3. Impositionist explanation	Variations in interpretation are explained in terms of variations in how historians imposed their preconceptions on the record of the past through their interpretations
4. Hermeneutic explanation	Variations in interpretation are explained in terms of variations in how historians construed or constructed the meaning of the record of past.
5. Inquisitorial explanation	Variations in interpretation are explained in terms of variations in the questions that historians asked about the past.

### **Common misconceptions**

#### **The past is fixed**

Many students talk about history in a way that assumes that the past has a single and fixed meaning, and these students talk about historical interpretation as if it should also be singular and fixed (accounts should agree in mirroring a 'fixed' past). This is a misconception. What we can say about the past relates to the topics and issues that we focus on and the questions that we ask and to a range of other variables, including, for example, the methods that we use to answer our questions. As Lee and Shemilt argue, histories are more like theories, developed to solve problems and to answer questions, than they are like pictures, developed to mirror 'what happened' (Lee and Shemilt, 2004).

#### **Historians are searching for the 'truth'**

Many students assume that historical sources should be thought of as witness statements reporting 'what happened' and that the historian's job is to find reliable reports and to piece them together, in the manner in which one might reassemble a jigsaw or a broken mosaic, to create a true 'picture' of the past. This is a misconception and one that fails to appreciate the importance of questions. If accounts are answers to questions then it follows that there can be as many different and legitimate accounts as there can be different questions about the past. Questions also determine the conclusions that can be drawn from sources. Any source, 'reliable' or otherwise in testimonial terms, must be interrogated and reliability is relative to the question that is asked.

In short, you should know :

- that historical interpretations are constructions – things that historians actively make rather than simply find
- that histories are more like theories – developed in answer to questions or in response to problems – than they are like pictures
- that although histories involve representation (description, explanation, and so on), they are not simply re-presentations of a fixed past.

Useful questions to consider:

- Are the historians asking the same questions or are they in fact answering different questions about the past? (It is possible to set out with different aims – to set out to describe something in the past, to explain it, to evaluate it and so on.)
- Do the historians examine the same source materials as they pursue their questions about the past?
- Do the historians ask the same questions of their source materials?
- Where different conclusions are drawn from similar facts or sources, it may be because the historians disagree about what these things *mean*. There are many reasons why they might. Consider these possibilities (and others that you can think of!):
  - Do they have differing understandings of the *context* (the period, the background situation and so on)?
  - Are they defining *concepts* in different ways (if we disagree about whether a 'revolution' has occurred, for example, it may be because we are using different criteria to define the concept 'revolution')?<sup>6</sup>

## Comprehending and analysing interpretations

Understanding particular historical interpretations necessarily involves comprehension – understanding what histories say, in a literal sense. Developing your understanding of historical interpretations, therefore, entails developing your ability to read and to understand what they read. Understanding historical interpretations also involves understanding of what they are and what they are trying to do. History – literally and etymologically – is a process of enquiry about the past. Histories, as has been noted above, are answers to questions and attempts to solve problems more than they are simply pictures of the past. You need to be sensitive to the different aims that historians have in their writing and the enquiries and questions to which their histories respond.

## What historians are saying and analysing historical texts

You need to understand what particular historical works are saying and doing before you can think critically about them.

- Actively read articles.
- Recognise arguments
- Understand how historians state their case and how they use argument and citation to make their case.
- Apply understanding
- Citations - spend time exploring footnotes and how they work to support what historians say.
- What historians are doing - an interpretation can be understood as attempting to provide an answer to a question that its author has posed, tacitly or explicitly. An interpretation can also be understood as aiming to perform one of a number of generic 'tasks of historical writing' (Megill).

In a paper first published in 1989, Allan Megill identified 'four tasks' that all historical writing must engage in, to one degree or another and these 'tasks' are outlined and summarised in Table 3 below (Megill, 2007, pp.63-77).

**Table 3: The Four Tasks of Historical Writing<sup>8</sup>**

Task	Explanation
1. Description	Describing an aspect of historical reality – telling what was the case
2. Explanation	Explaining why a past event or phenomenon came to be
3. Evaluation	Attributing meaning, value and / or significance to aspects of the past
4. Justification	Justifying descriptive, explanatory or evaluative claims by supplying arguments to support them

Understanding the tasks that an historian has set themselves helps if we want to *understand why historical works differ*, since they may be attempting to do different things. Understanding what an historian is trying to do is also essential if we are to *evaluate* the extent to which they have been successful: we need to know what an historian is trying to do before we can ask the questions 'How have they gone about doing it?' and 'How well have they done it?'.

## Explaining why historians arrive at differing interpretations

Differences in purposes include:

- kinds of historical **focus** (social history, economic history, and so on)
- **scale** of focus (studies of individuals, villages, empires, and so on)

- differences in what histories are **seeking to do** in the broader context of the evolution of historiography (challenging or defending a consensus, applying a new approach to familiar content, and so on)

### **Evaluating interpretations against appropriate and relevant criteria**

Evaluating historical interpretations can be challenging. Avoid the following:

- ‘fence-sitting’, when students systematically avoid discriminating between accounts and insist on finding undifferentiated value in all the historical arguments that they are asked to consider
- simplistic evaluation, when students make superficial judgements based on naïve criteria (of the kind, for example, that say ‘X is best because it is published by Cambridge University Press’ or ‘Y is best because it was published most recently and new evidence may have come to light’)
- overstated judgements, when students dismiss or endorse arguments in an ‘all or nothing’ way, without nuance or a sense that arguments can have strengths of different kinds.

To overcome problems such as these, try to appreciate:

- that evaluation is relative, not absolute (it depends upon our purposes)
- that evaluation requires detailed engagement with historians’ arguments
- that evaluation is a matter of applying criteria – we cannot make a judgement without them – rather than simply ‘checking the facts’.
- that differences in interpretation can be legitimate; our default expectation should be for histories to differ – depending on their purposes, methods, context and so on. Legitimate differences in the calls that historians make can arise and these decisions can be compared and evaluated comparatively.

Evaluation dos:

- ✓ Identify the argument
- ✓ Identify the differences between works
- ✓ Apply own knowledge
- ✓ Apply criteria to evaluate
- ✓ Integrate supplementary works [i.e. add after evaluation of 1]

Do not:

- ✓ Stray from your question
- ✓ Give narrative that serves no evaluation purpose
- ✓ Focus on biographical detail

## Applying valid criteria

You have already learned about AO1 'valid criteria' when writing essays in Paper 1 and Paper 2 [e.g. short term, long term, underlying, trigger, root, exacerbated, heightened etc – remember Alphonse the camel]. You then learned about AO2 'valid criteria' in Paper 2, where you evaluated the utility of sources based on their accuracy, comprehensiveness/completeness and objectivity. However, AO3 valid criteria are different. **DO NOT apply AO2 valid criteria in your coursework**; the mark scheme is very different and you are not being assessed on the utility of sources or the provenance of the work.

### What criteria should I use for making a judgement about my three works?

The mark scheme uses the word 'criteria' in relation to strand 4 – Evaluation of, and judgement on, historians' arguments. Criteria are standards by which something may be judged or decided. They are not the factors being used or the issues being discussed in the question, but the basis on which the you will reach your judgement.

The relevant criteria for judging the three works in the coursework will depend on the specific works chosen. The analysis of the works should focus on the arguments being presented by the authors. When assessing the arguments used by historians in relation to specific issues, you should use the same approach as they would to the evaluation of your own arguments.

Additionally, you might give other reasons for judgement that relate to more general criteria related to the nature of historical writing – **for example a historian's perspective, focus, purpose, methodology or choice of evidence** etc., but whether these are relevant will depend on the issue investigated and the nature of the chosen works.

You should avoid:

- attempts to examine the extracts in a manner more suited to AO2, for example by making assertions about reliability or purpose
- just selecting quotations, paraphrasing or describing, without proper reasoning
- relying on the works as if they were simply sources of information, rather than analysing the arguments being presented in them
- making assertions of the inferiority of one extract on the basis that it offers less factual evidence than another, without genuinely analysing the arguments offered
- drifting away from the specific demands of the question to the wider topic
- expecting the works to be polar opposites, instead of recognising that there may be degrees of difference or even common ground.

Key advice from Edexcel:

- Analysis and evaluation of differing views involves an understanding of the criteria historians employ for their own judgements
- Generic criteria, for example related to methodology, purpose, schools of thought, may assist in the process of analysis and evaluation, but are not a requirement and must be applied to the substantive issue before they enhance the standard of work
- High level work will make clear the criteria for judgement when coming to an overall conclusion.

The following is an abridged guide from Edexcel about applying criteria at A Level:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/A%20Level/History/2015/teaching-and-learning-materials/GCE-History-guidance-to-application-of-valid-criteria.pdf>

## GCE History: the application of valid criteria



# AO3: Making judgements and applying criteria in coursework

Students' experience of writing their own essays and the advice given above regarding the use of criteria for judgement should inform their reading for coursework. They should be alive to the basis of historians' argument in the works they read, the criteria historians themselves use for making judgements and the relationship of these to any differences they encounter in their chosen works. This point is exemplified in guidance material written by Dr Arthur Chapman. 'Are they [historians] defining concepts in different ways (if we disagree about whether a 'revolution' has occurred, for example, it may be because we are using different criteria to define the concept 'revolution')?'<sup>1</sup>

## Analysing and evaluating the criteria used by historians

The skills and understandings required for AO3 in the new Paper 4 have been present in different assessment approaches in previous specifications. In the extract below, written under examination conditions for the legacy Unit 3, the student is considering the view that 'the New Deal delivered limited economic improvement'. The response is analysing the arguments used by historians in provided extracts<sup>2</sup>. It shows that their differing views are based on the use of different criteria and evaluates their use.

### Example 1

Whilst source 10 uses unemployment to impress the ND's inability to effect economic recovery 'as late as 1941, the unemployed numbered six million' source 12 counters this, instead citing that the ND essentially 'checked the downwards deflationary spiral 'through numerous public works expenditure'....

The sources furthermore comment on the invisible dividend of 'hope for ultimate orderly recovery' (12) that the ND through expanding the role of government was able to bring, which is difficult to quantify but vital to appreciate when considering the 'paralysing fear' the Depression had brought to the country whose economic confidence had been severely depleted. Hence perhaps it is somewhat reductive to solely consider unemployment figures ('numbered six million' 10) to appreciate the extent to which the ND, a fundamentally socio-economic and political programme brought about recovery, as the programme seemingly necessitates a more qualitative analysis...

Thus, whilst the ND due to the scale of the intractable Depression ... [was] unable to bring full economic recovery, one must consider [that] it crucially, 'having left many problems unsolved' (10) in terms of the main economy, mitigated the psychological Depression.

It is clear that in this example the student has proceeded on the basis of weighing up what counts as 'economic improvement' when a judgement is made about the recovery brought about by the New Deal – i.e. what criteria for judgement are to be used.

The use of criteria – ‘What counts?’ – can be seen to be at the heart of many well-known debates. For example:

- The early nineteenth standard of living: what criteria are being used to measure quality of life of the industrial workforce – for example, what weight should be given to higher income versus reductions in freedom of action
- The verdict on Haig’s conduct of the campaign on the Western Front: what criteria are being used to judge his leadership – for example how much weight should be given to the extent of casualties sustained during the process versus overall outcome of the campaign?
- The extent of popular support for / opposition to the Nazi regime: what measures are being used to gauge support? Is lack of overt opposition the same as consent?

In the extract below, Example 2, from a coursework essay on the extent to which Cromwell was responsible for a Tudor Revolution in Government, the student is analysing the criteria used by historians to consider what counts as a ‘revolution’ in government. The student is also analysing the basis of the historian’s arguments by considering the timeframe the historian has used.

### Example 2

One major change administered by Cromwell that led to a ‘revolution’ in Tudor government according to Geoffrey Elton is the creation of governmental ‘departments’. He claims that a bureaucratic system was set up in which ‘properly trained officials operated... within specialist departments’, this was an attempt by Cromwell to separate the work of the government from the monarch so that administration would ‘not depend on the vigour of the Crown’ thus allowing government to operate as a more efficient system as each bureaucrat would operate in their area of expertise only in order to ensure that the highest quality of work was consistently generated in each department. This view is challenged by John Guy who states that Wolsey held greater responsibility for the split in government and formation of departments for he ‘began to appoint specific councillors as deputies to perform the Council’s judicial function’. Although there was no formal split under Wolsey, Guy clarifies that the minister laid the grounds for an ‘essential distinction between executive work and justice’ and thus Cromwell’s responsibility for a ‘revolution’ in this aspect of government is limited as his actions were arguably only a continuation of the ingenious plans for administrative reform under Wolsey. Guy’s view can be supported by Wolsey’s creation of the Eltham Ordinance in 1526 which acted as a blueprint for the changes to government, this major act of administration detailed a reform of the royal household to ensure Wolsey’s political supremacy – thus this evidence is strengthened as Wolsey’s known desire for power would forge the assumption that the intended reforms were in no way minor and would introduce as much of a revolution as would be had under

Historian’s view of what constitutes revolution

The historian’s criterion

The historian’s criterion

Criterion for alternative view

Criterion for alternative view

the modernised system of government departments. This factual detail exposes the reformist mind-set of the former minister and highlights how in the context of Wolsey's time in power, the ideas proposed were far more revolutionary than under Cromwell thus reducing his responsibility for the revolution as his role was reduced through the knowledge that reorganisation of the household was a concept clearly detailed by Wolsey, not Cromwell. Additionally, Elton's view can be undermined through his approach to his investigation of Cromwell's work in Tudor government. A noticeably narrow time span is referenced by Elton to support his claims for Cromwell's creation of a 'revolution', making his actions seem far more reformist and omitting any major reference to Wolsey which would greatly reduce the significance of Cromwell's work.

Student's criterion for judgement

Second criterion for student's judgement

## The use of 'generic' criteria

The discussion above identifies the historians' use of substantive criteria for judgement – those that arise specifically from the discussion of the subject matter of the enquiry. Students also look to explain and evaluate differences between historians using generic criteria such as purpose, methodology, schools of thought, etc. While these clearly can have a key bearing on differences of view and nature of conclusions reached in some enquiries, it is not necessary to use them and students should not strain to do so where the subject matter or the content of the works they have chosen does not lend itself to such a discussion. It also follows that it is not necessary, when initially choosing an enquiry, to strive to find works where the methodology, purpose, or schools of thought have a bearing. At this level, students may not be able to engage with issues of methodology, for instance – unless these are readily apparent (for example, if students can engage with the differences of view emerging from in-depth local studies compared with national surveys). It is sufficient for students to be able to show (as the student exemplified above has) the basis for differences from the substance of the arguments – that difference can result from the criteria used to select evidence (e.g. timeframe) and to form judgements.

If generic criteria are used, they should be related specifically to the substantive discussion of the enquiry. In this extract below, generic comment is offered, but not applied to the discussion of differing views. It does not raise the attainment of the student and tends to detract from, and weaken, the quality of the response.

### Example 3

'Elton's view on the departments within the government would therefore be seen as convincing as no historian of those mentioned have strongly criticised his opinions to a full extent, suggesting his view may be correct and definite. Though some may argue Cromwell's influence may differ in weight for the responsibility of his role in transforming the departments within the Tudor government, they still ultimately agree with Elton in this instance. They may result in different views due to their process of history and the system they used in order to find out the information to answer their initial questions. The first step in the process of history is the enquiry this crucial step is the ultimate reason as to why historians differ in their views and why historians may have disagreed in their views on Cromwell's impact of the revolution of Tudor government. If historians have

Generic statement not shown to apply to this enquiry

conflicting enquires and are starting the process of methodology finding out about different areas and point of views of a particular topic, this will therefore result in their views clashing.'...

Generic statement not applied

The difference in the historians' views may be caused due to their methodology; a step in the process of history. The methodology is a crucial part contributing to the analysis historians make, it will influence their work on specialism, and the use of others work and sources. Some historians may draw economic studies, enquire with specific key individuals to discover a more personal viewpoint. Elton's viewpoint on Cromwell's change in the Privy Council may not be as strong as his opinion on the departments of the government, as this view faced more criticisms. Other historians see Cromwell's role in a more negative light, even to the extent he was not at all responsible for the changes made and should not receive the credit.

Generic statement, not shown to apply to the material in this enquiry

## The use of criteria in overall judgement

Students need to use their own criteria to come to an overall judgement. 'Evaluation requires detailed engagement with historians' arguments [and] evaluation is a matter of applying criteria – we cannot make a judgement without them – rather than simply 'checking the facts'.<sup>3</sup> In coming to an overall conclusion, students should take account of the differences of view they have encountered and make the grounds for (criteria for) their own judgement clear. The example below (the concluding paragraph to the work of the student in Example 2) shows criteria being employed for the student's own judgement.

### Example 4

Judgement

In conclusion, Elton's view that Thomas Cromwell held responsibility for a 'revolution' in Tudor government is **overall unconvincing**. He **appears to restrict the time periods** in which he investigates Cromwell's contribution to reform in order to make the minister's actions appear as significant and reformist as possible when in fact they **are merely a continuation of ideas implemented before the minister's time in power**, an example being Wolsey's plans for a reduced Council to carry out administration as highlighted by Guy as a primary aspect of his argument. Elton's failure to consider Cromwell's actions in the wider context of Tudor government reduces the credibility of his argument significantly and highlights the importance of the points raised by Starkey in regards to the existence of a small, select Council before Cromwell, showing it as a necessity triggered by Henry's careless reign rather than an ingenious attempt at revolutionising government under Cromwell. Additionally, Guy's claim takes a more open approach that explores the actions of Wolsey in beginning the departmentalisation of government, showing how Cromwell's actions were arguably a reflection of following the instructions of a 'blueprint' forged by Wolsey. Although credibility could be given to Elton's view in regards to the revolutionary change to the role of

Criterion

Criterion

Parliament, the fact that both Guy and Starkey offer this same interpretation shows no more reliability in Elton's work as the change to Parliament was indisputable. Overall, it is clear that the balanced interpretation of Guy – in particular – as well as the wider context approach of Starkey **undermine Elton's claim and show that Cromwell held very limited responsibility for a revolution in Tudor government.**

Overall judgement, based on clear criteria and consistent with the reasoning and argument that precedes it

# Structure

**There is no set structure for coursework, as this may depend on the nature of the debate in question.** The exemplar included in this booklet is a good indicator of how best to structure your work.

Edexcel state, “students are required to present their own view and to analyse three relevant works. The assignment may be divided into sections or be completed as a continuous essay. The use of subheadings is permitted. Students may find it helpful to complete the assignment in two sections (or indeed four), devoting the first part to the presentation of their view and the second part (or the following three parts relating to each of the bullet points) to the analysis, explanation and evaluation of the differing interpretations in their three chosen works. In reaching a judgement on the view, students must refer to their three chosen works and should make use of supplementary reading. If the assignment is divided into sections, it would seem appropriate for approximately one-third of the words used be devoted to the first section”.

A suggested structure, in line with the above and exemplar:

Section	Skills	Structure Breakdown
1	Introduction	Introduce the debate, outline the three interpretations and your line of argument [overall judgement on your chosen works]
2	Analyse the ways in which interpretations of the question, problem or issue differ.	Summary and evaluation of Interpretation 1
		Summary and evaluation of Interpretation 2
		Summary and evaluation of Interpretation 3
3	Explain the differences you have identified.	Evaluation of differences between interpretations, applying valid criteria, integrating contextual knowledge and supplementary works
4	Evaluate the arguments, indicating which you found most persuasive and explaining your judgement.	Conclusion

Evaluation dos:

- ✓ Identify the argument
- ✓ Identify the differences between works
- ✓ Apply own knowledge
- ✓ Apply criteria to evaluate
- ✓ Integrate supplementary works [i.e. add after evaluation of 1]

Do not:

- ✓ Stray from your question
- ✓ Give narrative that serves no evaluation purpose
- ✓ Focus on biographical detail

## Edexcel Word Count Guidance

It is recommended that students write between 3,000 and 4,000 words for their assignment.

- Footnotes may be used. These are not included in the word count but they must not be used to develop the student's line of argument.
- Appendices may be included, containing material to which the student has made reference in their assignment, for example extended quotations or extracts or data. These are not included in the word count.
- If students submit an assignment which is under the minimum word count of 3000 or over the maximum of 4000, then they may not be able to achieve full marks.
- Students should be advised that if they exceed the word count, it is less likely that they will be able to satisfy the requirement of production of a concise response.
- Assignments which are more than c.10% of the word count over the maximum of 4,000 words should be judged as not having met the requirement for concision that is contained in the level descriptors. This will prevent the award of the top mark band in a level even if the other qualities are displayed.

## Edexcel rules about the use of AI

All work submitted for qualification assessments must be the students' own. Students must be made aware that the use of AI tools in coursework could mean they are in breach of this requirement, as exemplified below:

### **Students should not be using AI tools to select relevant works.**

If a student uses an AI tool to select suitable works, then they will not be able to access relevant parts of the mark scheme that reward this skill. Students should be reminded that the selection of appropriate reading forms part of the first bullet point of the mark scheme at each level: 'A range of material relevant to the enquiry has been identified and appropriately cited....'

Additionally, the specification emphasises the student's independent role in researching and selecting appropriate works. 'Students must exercise their own judgement in selecting which resources to use and deciding how to use them. If teacher-review of student proposals indicates that the three works do not provide sufficient scope, it is up to the students to identify a collection which does. The precise works should not be selected by the teacher, although teachers may offer advice on relevant reading.' AI should not therefore be selecting works for students.

### **Students should not be using AI tools to plan their coursework assignment.**

If a student uses an AI tool to plan and structure their coursework assignment, this could be a breach of the requirement to ensure that the work submitted is their own. Students should be reminded that the organisation of the assignment forms part of the fifth bullet point at each level, ranging from 'some attempts to structure the answer' at level one to 'well organised' at level five. AI should not therefore be planning the assignment for students.

### **Students should not be using AI tools to help write their coursework assignment.**

If a section of work is reproduced directly from an AI generated response that section cannot contribute towards the final mark awarded.

**If students do use AI tools for coursework, then they must clearly reference this on their assignment and teachers must ensure this is taken into account when applying the mark scheme.**

**If a student uses AI tools in such a way that the work they submit is not their own, and fails to make reference to this on the work, then they will have committed malpractice.** Where teachers have doubts about the authenticity of the work they must investigate and report to Pearson.

#### **Resource record sheet**

Students are reminded about the importance of the resource record sheet for evidencing research and demonstrating they have carried out an enquiry in an appropriate manner. This sheet can be used, for example, to show evidence of wider reading and to support students' decisions about the selection of specific works.

#### **Coursework authentication sheet**

Students are also reminded that the coursework authentication sheet has now been updated [February 2024] to make clear reference to the use of AI tools. Students and teachers are required to sign this sheet to declare that the work submitted is their own.

JCQ guidance on use of AI in assessments For further guidance on the use of AI in coursework please see the JCQ's guidance on AI use in assessments: protecting the integrity of qualifications which can be found on their website: <https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/malpractice/artificial-intelligence/>

# Coursework Proposal Form

Please note that what you write here is submitted to Edexcel's Coursework Advisory Service. All titles, interpretation summaries, chosen and supplementary works are sent to Edexcel to approve before you begin your first draft.

Checklist	Yes	No
Approving an appropriate enquiry focus		
Have you chosen from [and/or adapted] the Edexcel questions booklet.		
Does your question follow the question framework in the specification? [including the three bullet points]		
Is there a suitable range of published/other resources for the topic?		
Have you identified <b>three</b> chosen works?		
Have you identified <b>three</b> supplementary works?		
Does the question require analysis and evaluation of an issue about which there are differences of interpretation? [i.e. are there clear differences in interpretation of this issue]		
Approving an appropriate proposal		
Have you listed three relevant published resources for detailed analysis?		
Are your three historians named?		
Have you checked that your three authors are historians, in line with Edexcel's guidance?		
Have you identified appropriate sections, chapters or articles?		
Have you read and summarised the appropriate sections, chapters or articles?		
Have you included your <b>Resource Record</b> with your proposal [ <i>this will not yet be finished, but should show your research and summaries so far</i> ].		
Have you identified differences of view?		
Does your summary suggest that your proposal is focused on issues which give sufficient scope for discussion of interpretations?		
Does your task appear manageable within 3,000–4,000 words?		
Is this proposal your own [remember that these proposals are put through an AI detector and are sent to the exam board]		

<p><b>Coursework title:</b>          Historians have disagreed about...</p> <p>What is your view about...</p> <p>With reference to three chosen works:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• analyse the ways in which interpretations of the question, problem or issue differ</li> <li>• explain the differences you have identified</li> <li>• evaluate the arguments, indicating which you found most persuasive and explaining your judgements.</li> </ul> <p>Summary of differences in interpretations / views on this question.  <i>Provide at least three points of view or differences of emphasis, claim or judgement in relation to this coursework title</i></p>	
View 1	
View 2	
View 3	
<p>Relevant publications: Your three <b>chosen</b> works  <i>Include the title, author, date of publication and page/chapter numbers. .</i></p>	
Chosen work 1	
Summary of interpretation i.e. main argument	
Context of writing/purpose/ background of historian	
Chosen work 2	
Summary of interpretation i.e. main argument	
Context of writing/purpose/ background of historian	

Chosen work 3	
Summary of interpretation i.e. main argument	
Context of writing/purpose/background of historian	
Relevant publications: Your three <b>supplementary</b> works <i>Include the title, author and date of publication.</i>	
Supplementary work 1	
Summary of interpretation i.e. main argument	
Context of writing/purpose/background of historian	
Supplementary work 2	
Summary of interpretation i.e. main argument	
Context of writing/purpose/background of historian	
Supplementary work 3	
Summary of interpretation i.e. main argument	
Context of writing/purpose/background of historian	

# Resource Record

You will be given a copy of Resource Record to complete. **You must use Edexcel's proforma; you cannot create your own.** This can be hand written or typed. When submitted, it must be handed in on paper, along with the final coursework piece.

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/A%20Level/History/2015/forms-and-administration/Coursework-resource-record-November-2020.docx>



## Coursework resource record

[illegible]

Please refer to the [new guidance on digital submission of coursework](#) from the summer 2021 series onwards.

# Coursework Authentication Sheet

You will be given a copy of the sheet below to complete when you submit your coursework:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/content/dam/pdf/A%20Level/History/2015/forms-and-administration/coursework-authentication-sheet-february-2024-updated.docx>



## Coursework authentication sheet

Pearson Edexcel Level 3 Advanced GCE in History	
<b>Assignment title:</b>	
Have you received advice on the title from the Assignment guidance service?	Y/N
Centre name:	Centre number:
Candidate name:	Candidate number:
State the examined options that are being taken:	
Paper 1:	
Paper 2:	
Paper 3:	
Mark awarded	Comments [Comment box expands as you start entering text]
Word count	

**Teacher declaration**

I declare that the work submitted for assessment has been carried out without assistance other than that which is acceptable according to the rules of the specification. I certify that to the best of my knowledge the evidence submitted for this assignment is the learner's own. The learner has clearly referenced any materials used in the work. To the best of my knowledge, if any artificial intelligence (AI) tools have been used in the work, the learner has clearly referenced these, and I have taken this into account in applying the mark scheme. I have not solely used AI to mark the learner's work. I understand that false declaration is a form of malpractice.

Assessor name			
Assessor signature		Date	

**Candidate declaration**

I certify that the work submitted for this assessment is my own. I have clearly referenced any materials used in the work. I understand that the use of artificial intelligence (AI) tools could mean that I am unable to access aspects of the mark scheme. I have clearly referenced any AI tools if used. I understand that false declaration is a form of malpractice.

Candidate signature		Date	
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**Additional Candidate declaration**

By signing this additional declaration, you agree to your work being used to support Professional Development, Online Support and Training of Centre-Assessors and Pearson Moderators.

Candidate signature		Date	
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Please refer to the [new guidance on digital submission of coursework](#) from the summer 2021 series onwards.

Please refer to the JCQ guidance on the use of artificial intelligence in coursework if required: <https://www.jcq.org.uk/exams-office/malpractice/artificial-intelligence/>

## Remaining FAQs

### Can I do the same question as someone else?

Yes, as long as you have a suitable range of works to enable you to produce an individual response. Edexcel state, “where all students are following the same topic area, they should not all be evaluating the same three chapters, articles, etc. Students must exercise their own judgement in selecting which resources to use and deciding how to use them”

“It is not acceptable for all students in the same cohort to use the same three works. It may be that individual students within a cohort end up choosing the same three works; however, we would expect to see evidence in the student's **resource record sheet** that a range of resources has been consulted and that the students have independently selected the historians' works”.

### Is there a set structure?

Edexcel state, “students are required to present their own view and to analyse three relevant works. The assignment may be divided into sections or be completed as a continuous essay. The use of subheadings is permitted. Students may find it helpful to complete the assignment in two sections (or indeed four), devoting the first part to the presentation of their view and the second part (or the following three parts relating to each of the bullet points) to the analysis, explanation and evaluation of the differing interpretations in their three chosen works. In reaching a judgement on the view, students must refer to their three chosen works and should make use of supplementary reading. If the assignment is divided into sections, it would seem appropriate for approximately one-third of the words used be devoted to the first section”.

### How much historical context do I need to include in my response?

Remember that coursework focuses on historical interpretations rather than content; the assessment objective weighting for coursework is split 5% AO1 and 15% AO3. Therefore, the focus is primarily on using contextual knowledge in the process of evaluating interpretations and forming judgements in response to the question, rather than in simply presenting extensive own knowledge on the topic. *Your coursework essay is not like a Paper 1 or 2 essay, where you are solely analysing historical events.*

Of course, you will need to *apply* your understanding and knowledge of the historical context to your evaluations of the historians' arguments. This should be integrated [woven] into your evaluation; avoid lengthy introductions/sections that focus on historical context.

At Level 5 it is noted in the mark scheme that ‘contextual knowledge of the issues is fully integrated into the discussion of the debate.’ Contextual knowledge will be a good measure for challenging or agreeing with interpretations and is therefore important to the overall discussion.

### Do I need to discuss historians' methodology in my essay?

Edexcel state, “it is not necessary for students to discuss a historian's methodology as part of the evaluation of interpretations. The coursework question asks students to analyse the ways interpretations differ, to explain these differences and evaluate the arguments as well as presenting their own view. Methodology may be a useful criterion by which to judge the interpretations, but this will depend on the works chosen and it is not a requirement. It may be useful to discuss

methodology and why accounts differ as part of the taught skills course in order to develop students' general understanding of historical interpretations.

### Do I need to include a word count?

Final submissions must include a word count. Footnotes are not included in the word count but they must not be used to develop the student's line of argument. The word count is from 3,000 to 4,000 words. If students exceed this guideline it is less likely that they will be able to satisfy the requirement of production of a concise response.

### How much feedback will I get?

Edexcel state, "teachers must check the works selected by students to ensure that they will enable the student to complete the assignment *and* exercise sufficient supervision to be satisfied that the research is being undertaken independently and that students remain focused on the assignment" [i.e. checking **resource records**, which should be continuously updated throughout coursework planning and writing].

"Teachers must review the student's first complete draft. The guidance may indicate to students if any element of the task requirements is absent or given insufficient attention. **Guidance must remain 'general'**, which is defined as guidance that enables students to use their initiative in making amendments and improvements independently".

"Teachers may help students to understand rubrics, assessment criteria and controls.

**"Teachers must not give detailed feedback to individual students about how to improve work to meet the assessment criteria.** The guidance provided prior to final submission should only enable students to take the initiative in making amendments, rather than detailing what amendments should be made.

"Teachers must not mark work provisionally with a view to sharing that mark with students so that they may then improve it, or return work to students to make changes after it has been marked".

### What happens if I am ill on the final submission date?

Unfortunately, just like with examinations, if you are absent on the submission date, you cannot hand it in at a later date. The centre [KLS] cannot accept late submissions, just like they would not be allowed to accept students sitting a GCSE or A Level exam on another day.

In the event of absence, the same process applies to coursework as with exams; we would write to the exam board to advise them of your absence, ideally including medical evidence from a doctor.

Similarly, the centre cannot accept electronic submissions on the final due date. Please remember that **coursework must be submitted on paper and cannot be submitted electronically.**