



HISTORY

Has there ever been a more pertinent and relevant time to study History? History trains the mind through the rational enquiry into the human past. It helps us understand those forces and influences that shape the way we think, act and organise ourselves as people and societies. History seeks to shed light on how wars and revolutions have shaped our lives, how accidents have led to discoveries, and also equips students to understand what causes governments and dynasties to rise and fall. Fundamentally, it tells us how we have come to be, and helps us to make a little more sense of the world we inhabit *today*.

The course

We use the OCR exam board, and have chosen topics which continue to resonate with current British and world affairs. In short; the curriculum puts students front and centre in a position to be able to discuss what they may see on the news.

Year 12

In Year 12 we study Britain 1930-1997. This includes an in-depth study of the controversial decisions and achievements of Winston Churchill, as well as the complexities surrounding his legacy. This involves an investigation into the pacifist views of the public after 1918 and the British appeasement of Hitler in the face of aggression from Imperial Japan and Fascist Italy as well as the global scale of six years of war, from Bexleyheath to Bordeaux, to Burma. We then consider the global fallout after 1945, having examined the diplomatic relations of De Gaulle, to Stalin to Roosevelt.

We visit the Churchill War Rooms in central London to help bring this topic to life, and the lessons involve investigating sets of original archive documentation. The domestic and foreign policies of Churchill's successors until 1997 are analysed using more traditional essays, with references to Tony Blair, girl power and Brit Pop. Students will be able to explain the formation of the NHS, understand the progressivism of Harold Wilson's social policies, can debate why Thatcher really resigned from office, as well as the controversy of Britain's Empire. More

recent conflicts, like the Gulf War and Bosnian war, are also covered. Thus whilst being named 'Britain', this unit really is global.

Year 12 students also study the French Revolution and Napoleon 1774-1815 topic. As Eric Hobsbawm says, the French Revolution was 'a phenomenon as awful and irreversible as the first nuclear explosion, and all history has been permanently reversed by it'. Students who enjoy becoming experts in the detail of a complicated and ever-changing historiographical narrative will be in their element here, and we immerse students into the historic environment of both France in Revolution and France under Nazi occupation with a field trip to Paris.

Year 13

In Year 13 students are constantly required to make their own judgments from the evidence available; the coursework unit is a 4,000 word essay and provides a real insight into the demands of History at university because students choose their own essay title with guidance on research, formatting and how to structure and argument. It is possible to choose an essay question that is from their Year 12 topics, but many choose to pursue a personal passion; from the media's role in US failings in Vietnam, to the success of the Arab Spring, to attitudes towards women and crime in the East End in the nineteenth century. They also analyse how much change or continuity occurred in Russia between 1855 and 1964 in how its' rulers governed, suppressed opposition and influenced the lives of their people. Russia is a truly fascinating country, and the unit covers empire and expansion, the Cold War, the Revolution and the Second World War; hence again this equips young people with the knowledge to more contextually consider events in Europe.

What is so good about History at Colfe's?

Sixth form historians are supported by teachers who quite simply love their subject. The department is led by an examiner, battlefields guide and former OCR consultant, and each teacher has their specialism and passion. The department is committed to telling stories of the past beyond the curriculum too; from an Indian Muslim field agent operating for the SOE in

1944, to John Blanke, the African musician of the Tudor court. Our office is frequented by eager young historians passionate about query and debate, and as well as the excellent school library, we also have our own stock of books to lend out.

The department has an excellent top record of securing excellent results, and have a track record of producing outstanding results, with 88% of students securing A*-B this year, with our highest ever results at 88% A*-A. Our popularity has seen the intake grow from 12 students in 2019 in Year 13 to 22 pupils in 2023.

History A-level and beyond

Many of our students go on to study History as a single or combined degree at university. However, even if you do not wish to pursue the subject at degree level, universities and employers value History A-level because it reflects your training in rational thinking and spoken and written argument; it fits with Law, Politics, Liberal Arts and International Relations to name but a few options. Employers also recognise the sense of perspective and the critical dispositions nurtured by a historical education as well as the ability to manage and assess. We have a regular pool of Oxbridge candidates, with success in 2022 and 2021 and support pupils with their preparation for the Oxford HAT test, as well as overseas applications.