



# Edexcel A-Level History

## Democracies in Change: Britain and the USA in the 20<sup>th</sup> Century



# Year 11 History Bridge to A-Level

At Kimberley College we will study Edexcel History – Route H – at A-Level History. In Year 12 we will cover two units: Unit 1 Britain Transformed 1918-1997 and Unit 2 The USA 1920-1955 Boom, Bust and Recovery. These activities are designed to give you some background knowledge ready for the History A Level.

## Course Details

In the twentieth century, democracies came under increasing challenge and faced internal and external threats. By studying Britain and the United States, you can develop an understanding of those challenges as well as identifying the similarities and differences in how these two nations responded.

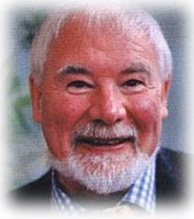
**Unit 1: Britain Transformed 1918-97:** This comprises a study in breadth, in which students will learn about the extent to which Britain was transformed politically, socially, economically, and culturally in the years 1918–79. This incorporates responses to the challenges of war, fluctuations in the economy, technological advances, and the desire for greater social equality. The unit also contains a depth study of historical interpretations which focuses on the impact of Margaret Thatcher’s governments on Britain between 1979 and 1997.

**Unit 2: The USA c.1920-55 - Boom, Bust and Recovery:** This unit focuses on the economic and social change in the USA; from the post-war boom of the 1920s, through depression, recovery and war, to the transformation of many aspects of US society in the years immediately after 1945. Students will gain an in-depth understanding of economic change and its long-term effects, the growing demands by black Americans for social equality, and the cultural changes driven by individuals and by technology.

## Activities

### **1. Timelines**

- a) Create a timeline for Britain between 1918-1997 – what do you think were the most important events and why?
- b) Create a second timeline for America between 1920-55 – again what do you think were the most important events and why?
- c) Are there any areas of comparison between the countries and time periods? How would you categorise these similarities (e.g. social, economic)?



## 2. What was the impact of WWI on Britain?

Read the chapter from Arthur Marwick and make notes/mindmap of the reading, focusing on the political, economic and social impact of war. **Aim to record the views of three historians, other than Marwick.**

## 3. Research: Britain's Prime Ministers 1918-1997

Create a timeline of British Prime Ministers from David Lloyd George to John Major. For each individual consider these questions:

- Which party did they lead?
- What significant events happened during their Premiership?
- What significant policies did they introduce?
- Why did they leave office?



## 4. What is your opinion on Margaret Thatcher?

Watch the documentary (Margaret Thatcher <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=P2oVbwT9E64>) and in paragraphs, answer the question: ***Is it justified to say that Thatcher is the greatest British Prime Minister?***

- 🚫 Include specific evidence to support your judgement.

## 5. Research: US Presidents 1920-1955

Create a timeline of American Presidents from Woodrow Wilson to Dwight Eisenhower. For each individual consider these questions:

- Which party did they lead?
- What significant events happened during their Premiership?
- What significant policies did they introduce?
- Why did they leave office?





## 6. How did the United States change during the 20th century?

Read the extract from *USA: History in Brief* and complete a short timeline (no more than one side of A3) of US History from 1900-1955. This will help build in context of America before the First World War.

## 7. What events epitomise British and American history in the 20th century?

After researching Britain and America in the 20<sup>th</sup> century, find a song or two photos that represent an event in either nation's history. This event should fall within the time periods of each unit but more importantly, be one that you believe to be important and significant for how the country developed.

It might be good to explain why you have chosen the songs/photos and why the event is noteworthy. You can choose more than one event – this will be a great discussion to have in September.

## 8. Presentation

Please create a presentation – it can take the form of a PowerPoint, essay or video to answer the following question: **Which country went through the most significant change and why?**

You will need to put together an argument to decide whether Britain between 1918-1997 or America between 1920-1955 went through the most significant change/s. You will need to support your argument with Historical evidence and find 3 historians who you can quote to support your argument. Please also consider if the change/s were short or long term and whether this adds or detracts from your argument. Any comparisons you can make between the countries will strengthen your argument.

## 9. Media Festival

Please read, watch and listen to as many of the different books, films and podcasts as you can to help expand your background knowledge.

### ***For more information...***

You can use the link below to the Edexcel website to find more information about the course:

<https://qualifications.pearson.com/en/qualifications/edexcel-a-levels/history-2015.coursematerials.html#filterQuery=category:Pearson-UK:Category%2FSpecification-and-sample-assessments>

If you have any questions please email Mrs Griffin [egriffin@wootton.beds.sch.uk](mailto:egriffin@wootton.beds.sch.uk).