

**“I WOULD LIKE SUPPORT FROM SCHOOL
WHEN IT COMES TO DOING EXTRA TO GET
INTO ONE OF THE TOP UNIVERSITIES” HOW
DO HIGH ACHIEVING STUDENTS RESPOND TO
UNIVERSITY PREPARATION**

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**A RESEARCH & DEVELOPMENT PROJECT
SUBMITTED FOR THE
MSc LEARNING & TEACHING 2015**

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“I would like support from school when it comes to doing extra to get into one of the top universities.”

How do high-achieving History students respond to University Preparation Classes?

Abstract

High-attaining students from non-selective state schools still apply to Oxford or Cambridge University in fewer numbers than their independent or grammar school peers. Comprehensive schools have been tasked with doing more to encourage and support students to make applications, but with very little guidance on what form this support should take. To explore this issue, this project focuses specifically on History. An analysis of the characteristics that elite universities expect of their History applicants makes it clear that teaching to meet the requirements of A-level History alone would fall short of developing these traits. This project proposes a solution: extra-curricular University Preparation Classes for high-attaining History students.

Adopting a qualitative approach to action research, I captured both student and teacher voice through questionnaires at key points of the programme, together with a teacher journal, student work and group interviews. The classes were found to have a positive impact on the development of the characteristics of high performance in History, as well as affecting the rationale of students' university intentions. This paper ends by calling for greater collaboration between teachers and for universities' Widening Participation programmes to focus further on subject teachers' capacity to implement change in schools as a means to address the applications gap.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Post-war Britain has witnessed dramatic growth in higher education (HE) participation (Browne Report, 2010; Tight, 2012). In 2014, 18-year-olds in England were more likely to apply to HE than in any previous year (UCAS, 2014). However, there remain certain groups who are under-represented despite this overall rising trend and principal amongst them are those from lower socio-economic backgrounds (Croll & Attwood, 2013; Forsyth & Furlong, 2000; Harris, 2010; Tight, 2012). In addition, those students from poorer backgrounds who do progress to HE, ‘disproportionately ... enter less prestigious institutions’ (Bekhradnia, 2003: 13).

Once the school factor is considered, there is much literature to demonstrate the gap in entrance to the most prestigious universities (particularly Oxbridge) between non-selective school students and their independent and selective school peers (Ball et al., 2002; BBC, 2013a, 2013b; BIS, 2009; Boliver, 2013; Mangan et al., 2010; Ofsted, 2013a; Sutton Trust, 2011). As it appears that the admissions process at Oxbridge may actually positively favour state school students (Zimdars et al., 2009), it seems that the relative absence of these students is largely explained by the fact that they do not apply to the most prestigious Higher Education Institutions (HEIs) in the first place (Macaro & Wingate, 2004; Sutton Trust, 2004; Boliver, 2013). The finger has been pointed at comprehensive state schools for this ‘applications gap’, arguing that more needs to be done by such schools to

raise the aspirations of their students to apply to the most prestigious universities (DCSF, 2008; Ofsted, 2013a, 2015; Sutton Trust, 2011).

Pressure on schools to do more in this regard is increasing, with government reporting of destinations data, comparing Oxbridge and Russell Group universities with all HEIs (DfE, 2014a) and the suggestion that prestigious university admissions can be seen as a measure of school effectiveness of their provision for the most able (Ofsted, 2013a). Nonetheless, as Donnelly has noted, despite recommendations being issued to schools, they ‘do not go into any great detail about how this might be put into practice’ (2014a: 2). It is left to the individual schools themselves to determine and experiment with methods for raising aspirations and redressing the applications gap.

This project is borne out of previous research conducted at my school (School X) into factors affecting high-attaining¹ Year 12 and 13 students’ university application choice (Watkins, 2014). One student’s questionnaire response sits at the heart of this current enquiry:

I would like support from school when it comes to doing extra to get into one of the top universities.²

This project seeks to explore – and propose some answers to the questions of – what form ‘support from school’ should take, what ‘top universities’ want from applicants and what ‘doing extra’ should involve. I define the universities of Oxford and Cambridge as “elite” and as the “most prestigious” for the ‘unique position’ that they hold amongst other HEIs in the UK (Donnelly, 2014b: 57).

¹ High attainment was defined based on a mean GCSE score of at least an ‘A’

² This response is taken from data collected for my Part 2 research (Watkins, 2014)

1.2 Rationale and Research Questions

School X is a comprehensive, co-educational 11-18 academy in South West England, judged as a ‘good’ school by Ofsted (2012a). It has both a below-average percentage of disadvantaged students (determined by eligibility for free school meals) and of those with special educational needs, or who speak English as an additional language. In the sixth-form, the school has a below-average intake of high-attaining³ students (Ofsted, 2012b, 2013b, 2014). Despite this, School X has an impressive application rate to Russell Group universities, whilst being below average in its application rate to Oxbridge when compared with other non-selective state schools (Watkins, 2014).

I hold a position of responsibility at School X for leading the provision for more able students. In 2013, I extended our ‘gifted and talented’ register to include students in the sixth-form and, thus, the issue of supporting HEI choices became increasingly important to me.

As a History teacher regularly teaching five A-level groups, I have written many university references and have often been asked by students for informal advice about their UCAS personal statements. Both my reference-writing and my advice – which might deem me either gatekeeper or facilitator to HEI participation (Oliver & Kettley, 2010) – have been very much informed by my own assumptions and university experience. In light of my previous research at School X (Watkins,

³ Based upon average GCSE score of A-A*

2014), I wondered what better support for students applying to study History at a prestigious university might look like.

However, I have been struck both by the absence of empirical literature addressing this issue and also by the difficulty that I faced, without established links and networks, in finding out about the support in place at other schools. It seems likely that this is largely due to the competition between schools to secure Oxbridge offers for their students. Such competition may thwart collaborative working between teachers – a practice which has been proven to have positive effects on teacher efficacy (Burn et al., 2010; Cordingley et al., 2005). Thus, a further rationale for this project is to explore and develop potential avenues for collaboration and to make more publically known how high-achieving History students can be best supported in their applications to the most prestigious universities.

An exploration of the literature is guided by the following questions:

1. What are the characteristics of high performance in History?
2. What particular characteristics do elite universities expect from History applicants?
3. How well does A-level History prepare students for these expectations?
4. What is known about effective provision beyond the curriculum for applicants to elite universities?

2. Literature Review

2.1 What are the characteristics of high performance in History?

As A-levels provide the main access to HE entry in the UK, it seems useful to begin by examining high performance in History through the highest A-level grade description provided by Ofqual (Table 2.1).

Table 2.1. A/B boundary performance descriptions (Ofqual, 2011: 11-12)	
A01 - Learners characteristically: a) recall, select and deploy accurate, relevant and precise historical knowledge appropriately; b) show understanding through analysis and explanation and reach substantiated and mostly sustained judgements about key concepts; c) show understanding through analysis and explanation and reach substantiated and mostly sustained judgements about the relationships between key features/characteristics of the historical period; d) communicate accurately, clearly and fluently, using appropriate language and structure, using spelling, punctuation and grammar generally with a high degree of accuracy.	A02 - Learners characteristically: a) analyse and evaluate source material in its historical context with insight and discrimination; b) use the sources appropriately to substantiate arguments; c) analyse and evaluate how, in relation to the historical context, aspects of the past have been interpreted and represented in different ways.

To summarise, History A-level rewards, and thus recognises as high performance in History:

- depth of historical knowledge;
- sound historical understanding;
- lucid communication;
- the ability to formulate substantiated arguments; and
- thorough analysis of both evidence and interpretations of the past.

There are many similarities to be drawn with the GCSE 'A' grade description (Appendix A), although perhaps we can also recognise additional value at GCSE placed upon:

- the use of historical terminology; and
- independent thinking.

However, this summarised list of characteristics of high performance based upon grade descriptors may not be high enough when one considers that in 2014 25.3% of History A-level entrants attained an A or an A*, and that this is the lowest percentage since the introduction of the A* in 2010⁴ (Stubbs, 2014).

The figure originally presented here cannot be made freely available via ORA because of copyright. The figure was sourced at Fordham, M. (2013) O brave new world, without those levels in't: where now for Key Stage 3 assessments in history? ***The Historical Association Curriculum Supplement***, (September), 16-23

Strange as it may seem, looking back to Key Stage 3 (KS3) can help to illuminate our understanding of high performance in History at Key Stage 5. The National Curriculum attainment target (NCAT) may have disappeared (DfE, 2013), but the level descriptor for 'Exceptional Performance' (the highest level a student could achieve) goes further than Ofqual (2011, 2012) in detailing high performance (see Table 2.2). As Fordham has argued: 'I think few would challenge this as a

⁴ The highest A-A* percentage was 27.7% in 2010 (Stubbs, 2014).

reasonably strong description of what a pupil who is ‘good at history’ might look like’ (Fordham, 2013: 17).

Again, depth of historical knowledge is valued, as is the ability to explain historical concepts, the critical analysis of both evidence and interpretations and so too, as at GCSE, the use of historical vocabulary and independent conclusions. An interesting addition is that students are not only describing and explaining with accuracy, but also producing ‘precise and coherent narratives’. However, unlike the Ofqual grade descriptions, there is an explicit emphasis upon a *breadth* of historical knowledge (‘a wide frame of historical reference’), comparing ‘events and developments that took place in different countries and in different periods’. Indeed, the final of the four revised aims of the 2014 KS3 National Curriculum (DfE, 2013) is a focus on gaining ‘historical perspective’. Byrom has argued that ‘historical perspective’ is the goal of progression in history, with an emphasis on breadth of historical understanding developed through ‘continuous reinforcement, of seeing earlier learning in the light of new learning, of regularly challenging tidy narratives that seemed secure with new insights that may complicate but thereby enrich’ (Byrom, 2013: 9). Therefore, to our summarised list, we can add:

- the ability to make links between events across the breadth of both time and space.

Yet all the aforementioned assessment criteria fall short of a complete list of characteristics of high performance in History, particularly when this is compared to research conducted by the National Academy for Gifted and Talented Youth (NAGTY) (Chapman, 2006). (The NAGTY characteristics are cited in full in Appendix B.) Phillips has usefully grouped these into domains of ‘Philosophical

Awareness and Understanding'; 'Academic Resilience'; 'Joined-up historical thinking'; 'Advanced communication skills' and 'Advanced historical thinking' (Phillips, 2008: 182-4).

Like the NCAT, NAGTY identified the ability to make links between wide-ranging areas of subject knowledge, though to this is added the critical analysis and formulation of historical generalisations and periodisations. Together, this may be better referred to as 'joined-up historical thinking' (Phillips, 2008: 182). Again, being able to grapple with historical concepts, produce arguments in lucid writing, and using historical terminology are all present, which may be termed both 'advanced historical thinking' and 'advanced communication skills' (Phillips, 2008: 183-4). So too did NAGTY value the use of evidence and evaluation of interpretations, perhaps moving further than the NCAT with the inclusion of an 'understanding of presentism' (Chapman, 2006: 3). Indeed, there does seem a much greater emphasis on the awareness of history as a discipline or, as Phillips describes it, 'philosophical awareness and understanding' (Phillips, 2008: 182). Yet, notably absent elsewhere, the NAGTY group also places an emphasis on enjoyment of the study of the past and of the challenges it poses, as well as the ability to ask historical questions and engage in enquiry, which Phillips collectively categorises as 'academic resilience' (Phillips, 2008: 182). In addition, the skill of active reading is cited.

Therefore, by synthesising both accredited assessment criteria and the NAGTY research, I propose six common characteristics of high performance in History:

1. depth of historical knowledge and sound historical understanding;

2. lucid written communication (including the use of historical terminology and the ability to formulate substantiated arguments);
3. thorough analysis and critical reading of both evidence and interpretations of the past;
4. an enjoyment of, and engagement in, historical enquiry and independent thinking;
5. the ability to make links between events across the breadth of both time and space; and
6. a philosophical awareness of the discipline of History.

A further review of literature exploring these characteristics is presented below.

1. Depth of historical knowledge and sound historical understanding

Consensus runs throughout the examination criteria, as well as the NCAT and the NAGTY criteria on the importance of expansive historical knowledge as a characteristic of high performance in History. Indeed, within the context of Curriculum 2014 and its greater emphasis on the importance of historical knowledge (DfE, 2013), the profile of historical knowledge appears to be increasing. For example, Fordham (2013) has advocated the value of incorporating factual testing of substantive knowledge into a KS3 assessment framework. But how can historical knowledge be defined, and how is it linked to historical understanding?

Although caution must be taken not to get drawn into what Counsell rightly calls the ‘distracting dichotomy’ of the knowledge/skills debate (2000: 54), there is an

important distinction to be drawn, as Rogers (1987) does, between ‘know-that’ and ‘know-how’ – between substantive knowledge and the second-order concepts that give shape to the discipline of History. Since the latter also serve to define what counts as historical knowledge, neither make sense or can be regarded as genuine knowledge without the other (Rogers, 1987). Some history educators have developed Rogers’ (1987) two-way distinction between ‘know-that’ and ‘know-how’ by sub-dividing ‘know-how’ into two strands. For example, Vansledright (2011) proposes a ‘three-dimensional model’ of historical knowledge: first-order, or substantive, knowledge; the means to make sense of that knowledge (essentially second-order concepts such as causation and significance); and ‘the practices and strategies for getting there (the use of evidence)’ (Harris et. al, 2014: 24). Whether subscribing to either a two- or three-strand model, it is clear that historical knowledge and the understanding of key concepts and processes can only be achieved alongside one another. Hammond (2014) has demonstrated the importance of this relationship in the work of her Year 11 class, revealing the ways in which the construction of more complex and powerful historical analysis depends on the acquisition and deployment of substantive knowledge.

By means of a postscript, it must be recognised that most history educators now largely accept the contested nature of historical knowledge which cannot be reduced to a discrete list of facts (for example, Counsell, 2000; Wineburg, 2000; Lee et al., 2001; Harris & Burn, 2011 cf. Hirsch, 1987). This contrasts with the view often pronounced by the former Education Secretary on the need for ‘core knowledge’ and a single, defined version of the past (Gove, 2011) – even if his eventual statement of aims for the National Curriculum made reference to students’ ability ‘to discern how and why contrasting arguments and

interpretations of the past have been constructed’ (DfE, 2013: 1). Yet it is not only the discipline-specific literature within history education that would contest Gove’s position, but literature on student learning. Donovan and Bransford’s systematic survey of what is known about ‘*How Students Learn*’ is instructive here:

To develop competence in an area of inquiry, students must (a) have a deep foundation of factual knowledge, (b) understand facts and ideas in the context of a conceptual framework, and (c) organize knowledge in ways that facilitate retrieval and application (2005: 1).

An understanding of the processes of learning thus supports the conclusion that deep historical knowledge cannot be understood simply as knowledge of discrete substantive facts because, for true historical understanding, these cannot meaningfully be separated from an appreciation of the second-order concepts that underpin their selection and organisation.

2. Lucid written communication

In order to achieve highly in school History, strong skills of written communication are needed (Ofqual, 2011). Harris and Foreman-Peck have shown the impact that improved historical writing can have on examination results (2001) and Harris has strongly advocated the importance of essay writing: ‘[w]ithout presenting an opinion and supporting it with substantiated argument, our subject scarcely exists’ (2001: 13). Laffin (2012) has argued that sixth-formers can improve their writing through more extensive reading of historians’ work, encouraging students to explicitly engage with historians’ written craft. So too does Ward connect advanced writing skills with wider reading: ‘even our very brightest post-16 students need to be encouraged both to engage with the historiography surrounding their course and to learn to write with the ‘awareness of style’ needed for the very highest marks’

(2006: 9). Harris (2001) also connected good writing with good reading. However, just as it is difficult to separate historical knowledge and understanding, Harris argues that in order for sixth-formers to write effectively at the highest levels, they must first be able to ‘think historically’ (2001: 14). Again, the characteristics of high performance are interconnected.

3. Thorough analysis and critical reading of both evidence and interpretations of the past

High performance in History is frequently associated with the ability to read evidence closely and to analyse it critically so that well-reasoned inferences can be drawn out and substantiated (Chapman, 2006; Fordham, 2013; Ofqual, 2011, 2012). Particularly for sixth-formers, high attainment is associated with the need to explore more extended source material than A-Level courses require (Hibbert, 2002). Indeed, when Pickles called for examination boards to focus more on historical reasoning in the assessment of students’ use of evidence, it was on the basis that ‘historical knowledge is constructed from evidence’ (2011: 52), which illustrates the importance of this skill. For the NAGTY group, who listed one of the characteristics of the able historian as ‘the ability to read historical materials actively and critically’ (Chapman, 2006: 3), advanced reading not only involves the ability to deal with contemporary evidence but also to engage with historiography and interpretations. However, Ward has lamented the common scenario at A-level of students’ reluctance to read anything other than the textbook when, ‘[f]or the most able, they [textbooks] are not fit for purpose’ (Ward, 2006: 9). Certainly, textbooks endorsed by exam boards may encourage learning to be limited to the

confines of the specification, rather than wider reading of the historical topic in question.

The need for able sixth-form students to read widely is not a new concept (Pam, 1984) and, as already noted, has been readily linked to improved historical writing (Harris, 2001; Laffin, 2012; Ward, 2006), as well as to improved disciplinary understanding (Harris, 2001). Indeed, for Howells, ‘pupils who read well gain deeper historical perspectives, understand the historian’s craft and write more effectively. In other words, confident readers are confident historians’ (2011: 4).

With regards to interpretation, a wealth of literature attests to its importance in the study of History (Cassedy et al., 2011; Levstik & Barton, 2008). Studies, such as Foster (2011) and Howells (2001), have demonstrated the value of building historiographical debate into enquiries for KS3 students. Once we acknowledge the relationship between historical interpretation and the discipline of history (Chapman, 2009), then the importance of confidence in handling interpretations as a characteristic of the able student becomes more acute. As part of their ‘Reading Like a Historian’ project, Reisman and Wineburg proposed a four-tier developmental model. Students reaching the highest level will ‘demonstrate an awareness of their own subjectivity as historical actors and as readers of historical documents’ (2012: 175). For Lee and Shemilt (2004), the very purpose of interpretation is to build historical consciousness. The most advanced level of their six-level progression model strongly associates the understanding of historical accounts with understanding of the nature of History and the ‘criteria of the discipline’ (Lee & Shemilt, 2004: 30). Thus, the ability to analyse and critically read historical accounts is seen as central to the development of historical thinking, or historical consciousness.

4. An enjoyment of, and engagement in, historical enquiry and independent thinking

Harris and Haydn (2006) have shown that pupils largely enjoy History, particularly the varied pedagogy often employed by their teachers. One teacher study (Julie's Story) shows that when students enjoy the study of the past, they are more likely to access the curriculum at the right level of challenge for them (Hart et al., 2004). Although the focus of these studies is not sixth-form History, Chapman and Facey point out that '[t]he importance of making historical learning active and engaging for pupils across the key stages is well understood' (2009: 89). However, on its own, enjoyment would not serve as a sufficient distinguishing feature of high achievement.

Instead, associated with enjoyment of historical enquiry, is the ability to engage with enquiry and to ask questions. Indeed, the retention of the non-examined Historical Enquiry in the reformed 2016 A-level (DfE, 2014b), despite the removal of coursework in other subjects, strongly signals that independent enquiry is widely accepted to be a valuable and necessary skill of the history student. For Burnham, the ability to ask questions is a step towards students becoming "real historians" (2007: 12). Bemoaning the difficulty that A-level students have in framing their coursework enquiry questions, Burnham (2007) has demonstrated the importance and value of starting in Year 7 to develop students' capacity to frame worthwhile historical questions for themselves. Conducting similar student-led KS3 enquiries, both Conway (2011) and Hammond (2011) reported improved learning for their students. For Conway, 'the more empowered the students are; the more they learn' (2011: 56).

As well as student-led enquiry, literature points to pedagogy that both encourages and limits independent thinking. One method shown to be effective for developing student questioning is the use of visual sources. Whereas Phillips (2001) proposed this through the introduction of ‘Initial Stimulus Material’, Card (2012) showed how the use of pictures improved pupil talk. If pupil talk reaches the level of what Mercer (1995: 104) deemed ‘exploratory talk’ (when students challenge each other’s ideas), it follows that students will be creating knowledge that can be associated with independent thinking. In contrast, Evans and Pate (2007) have demonstrated the reductionist nature of scaffolding, such as the PEE model for paragraph writing, and how such an approach can thwart independent thinking.

Collectively, the literature demonstrates how choices of both curriculum and pedagogy can impact on students’ ability to enjoy and to engage in historical enquiry and independent thinking.

5. The ability to make links between events across the breadth of both time and space

The ability to make links between events across the breadth of both time and space can firmly be placed within the discourse of narrative frameworks that has received growing attention within the literature (Lee, 1991; Shemilt, 2000, 2009; Foster et al., 2008; Howson, 2007; Instone, 2013; Harris et al., 2014; cf. Barton, 2009). For Shemilt, a ‘necessary condition’ of ‘more sophisticated’ historical consciousness, is a solid grasp of the ‘big picture’ of history (2009: 194). He has argued that ‘unless and until people are able to locate present knowledge, questions, and concerns within narrative frameworks that link past with past and past with present in ways

that are valid and meaningful, coherent, and flexible, the uses that are made of history will range from the impoverished to the pernicious' (Shemilt, 2000: 99).

However, the history education community continues to debate how the teaching of frameworks may be implemented in classrooms. For Lee and Howson, the teaching of any framework cannot be separated from 'a context of disciplinary understanding' (2009: 244). Shemilt proposes four over-arching frameworks that extend across the study of human history, all of which would constantly be developed and reinforced: 'Modes of Production; Political and Social Organisation; Growth and Movement of Peoples; Culture and Praxis' (Shemilt, 2009: 161). Shemilt argues that through studying frameworks such as these, students will develop both their historical consciousness and also their ability to construct generalisations (Shemilt, 2009). However, a study by Instone (2013) with high-attaining boys at an independent school led her to conclude that teaching the 'big picture' of History may not, in fact, lead to improved historical consciousness.

Therefore, although the ability to make links between events across both breadth and space can be identified as a characteristic of high achievement in History (Chapman, 2006), the means to achieve this through the teaching of frameworks is still a topic of debate both in terms of method and efficacy.

6. A philosophical awareness of the discipline of History

This final criterion, a philosophical awareness of the discipline of History, is a characteristic which is arguably linked to high achievement in all of the preceding five traits. Indeed, an understanding of the discipline of History features at the top

of some progression models in terms of interpretations (Lee & Shemilt, 2004; Reisman & Wineburg, 2012) and of narrative frameworks (Shemilt, 2000). There is indeed much in the literature to suggest that engaging with the nature of History is a useful avenue to explore (Chapman, 2009), with the NAGTY group in favour of ‘a disciplinary approach to history’ for high-attaining students (Chapman, 2006: 3). This has been an approach adopted by Bain (2000) with much success. He has demonstrated that such a ‘cognitive approach toward learning history’ (Bain, 2000: 332) has led to more advanced historical understanding in his students. This characteristic, which is arguably central to all of the traits listed above, means that to be most successful at History, a student must become more like an historian.

2.2 What particular characteristics do elite universities expect from History applicants?

In the absence of empirical literature specifically addressing this issue, I draw mainly upon ‘grey literature’ in order to answer this question. However, the characteristics that Booth and Hyland (2000) identify as high performance in history at university level provide a useful starting point. Indeed their criteria are largely in line with the six characteristics set out above, with the addition of ‘the ability to work with others[,] the ability to manage one’s own learning within and beyond academic studies [and] the ability to use knowledge and skills in a socially responsible and constructive manner’ (Booth and Hyland, 2000: 7-8).

This relative alignment over the characteristics of high performance at both school and university level does, in itself, suggest that these are characteristics valued by elite universities. One study on admissions to the University of Oxford, using data from 2002, is perhaps more instructive due to its focus. It found that ‘participation in the “beaux arts” does not affect success at interview, but wide reading and wide cultural knowledge does’ (Zimdars et al., 2009: 658). Accordingly, it may be inferred that, within History, applicants are expected to read beyond their A-level course and to have wider historical understanding.

In the absence of further academic literature for elucidation, I turn to materials created by elite universities themselves. Of course, one of the required characteristics at both Oxford and Cambridge universities is excellent academic attainment, not limited to History, but across their studies. The standard History offer⁵ at Oxford is AAA (University of Oxford, 2014) and A*AA at Cambridge (University of Cambridge, 2015a). The University of Cambridge does not provide information on particular qualities desired from History applicants, but cites three characteristics that are expected from all applicants: 1. ‘ability and potential’, 2. ‘motivation and suitability for the chosen course’ and 3. ‘commitment and self-discipline’ (University of Cambridge, 2014a: 12). They associate the first characteristic with independent thinking and an ability to ‘show intellectual flexibility’ in exploring issues that they have not encountered before (*ibid.*: 12). More subject-specific guidance is published by the University of Oxford that informs prospective History students that ‘tutors are not so much interested in the level of your knowledge as in your ability to think historically’ (2014). Although the university does not elaborate with a definition of what ‘think[ing] historically’

⁵ In relation to students from England and Wales, or others sitting A-levels.

means, it does appear fair to conclude that independent thinking in History is valued by both universities.

Further clarification on the type of independent thinking in History required by elite universities can be found in the Marking Scheme for the History Aptitude Test (HAT). History applicants to the University of Oxford are required to sit the HAT, which comprises four questions. The first question is an extract from an historian, which requires students to show understanding of a certain aspect of the text in a single sentence. The criteria assessed in this question are:

- careful and critical reading;
- precision in the handling of concepts; and
- precision, clarity and facility of writing (University of Oxford, 2013: 1).

The second question focuses on the same extract and asks students to analyse the argument presented in a slightly longer response and, in addition to the criteria listed above, the ability to take an ‘analytical approach’ is also assessed (*ibid.*: 2). The third question asks students to write an essay in relation to a general theme raised by the extract. Additional criteria assessed in this question are:

- coherence of argument;
- selection of relevant evidence; and
- originality and historical imagination (*ibid.*: 3).

The final question concerns a second extract, a primary source, and asks students to suggest what can be learned about its historical context. This question draws on the aforementioned criteria. For the third question, examiners are advised that ‘[i]t may be helpful to have in mind typical degree class boundaries in assessing this exercise’ to categorise the answer into one of three bands (*ibid.*: 3). This may suggest that elite universities are seeking the same characteristics in their applicants as they would expect from their undergraduates.

By comparing criteria named by elite universities with the characteristics of high performance at school-level History explored above, much commonality can be found. Wide reading is valued (Zimdars et al., 2009), as is independent thinking (University of Cambridge, 2014a; University of Oxford, 2014). These traits can be associated, respectively, with the third and fourth characteristic of high performance. The criteria in the HAT Marking Scheme (University of Oxford, 2013) share many of the six characteristics of high performance in History found in the literature above (see Table 2.4). The fifth and sixth characteristic ('the ability to make links between events across the breadth of both time and space' and 'a philosophical awareness of the discipline of History') have not been included in Table 2.3, although arguably could be aligned with 'originality and historical imagination' (*ibid.*: 3). Nonetheless, 'originality and historical imagination' does seem to suggest something new, extending beyond the fourth characteristic of 'an enjoyment of and engagement in historical enquiry and independent thinking'. 'Originality and historical imagination' hints at a kind of *confidence* that builds on simply 'a willingness to take risks' acknowledged by the NAGTY group (Chapman, 2006: 3).

The figure originally presented here cannot be made freely available via ORA because of copyright. The figure was sourced at Chapman, A. (2006) ***Supporting High Achievement in History: Conclusions of the NAGTY History Think Tank 28/29 November 2005***. [Online] NAGTY.

Consequently, it seems possible to conclude that elite universities expect History applicants to display many of the qualities that were detailed above as six characteristics of high performance in History, but possibly with more emphasis on originality than was acknowledged at school level.

2.3 How well does A-level History prepare students for these expectations?

Concern has long been expressed that school leavers armed with an A-level in History are insufficiently prepared for university study and struggle with the transition to degree-level History (Booth, 1997; Pam, 1984). However, it could be assumed that the rise in History A-level examination results in the last twenty years (Stubbs, 2014) is linked to rising standards, which should lead to students being better prepared for History in higher education than their predecessors. Indeed, particularly since Curriculum 2000, a wealth of literature has been published showcasing excellent A-level practice within the History classroom to develop both students' reading and writing (R. Harris & Foreman-Peck, 2001; R. Harris, 2001; Howells, 2011; Laffin, 2012; Ward, 2006) and their use of interpretations (Chapman, 2009, 2011). Gone are the days, it seems, when Crinnion described sixth-form History 'classroom practice...[as] remain[ing] didactic' (1987: 157). Despite this, whilst these case studies attest that pedagogy has certainly developed at A-level, studies into university History continue to assert that A-level History still does not serve as an adequate preparation for undergraduate study (Booth, 2001, 2005; Hibbert, 2002, 2006).

What follows in this section is an exploration of the extent to which each of the characteristics – identified as common to both high performance in school History and featuring among the expectations of elite universities – are actually promoted by A-level History.

Independent thinking and originality

It is widely lamented that independent thinking is not adequately developed by A-level History. Independent thinking is not only expected by elite universities (University of Cambridge, 2014a; University of Oxford, 2014), but also accepted as an essential skill for History students in order to be successful at any undergraduate History course (Booth, 1993, 1997, 2001). Research into the transition from A-level to degree-level in English Literature has found a need for A-level English to demand more autonomous thinking to better prepare students for English at university (Ballinger, 2003; Smith, 2005). In History, Booth reports that most university tutors ‘concur that students are too often passive learners: docile and accepting in class, frightened of thinking independently, narrow in interest and unadventurous’ (1997: 207). Hibbert’s (2006) longitudinal study of the transition from A-level to university History questioned students and their teachers at both school and university. She found that, typically, students reported feeling unprepared for the independent nature of university History and their tutors wished that they ‘arrive[d] with more questioning minds’ to avoid time spent on training them to think more independently (Hibbert, 2006: 199). One undergraduate student from UCL has argued that to ensure better preparation for university, the ‘real intellectual breadth, inherent creativity and the excitement and uncertainty’ of History should be taught from A-level (Benjamin, 2005).

Instead, students have often been cited as describing A-level History as a process of “spoonfeeding” (Booth, 2003). Hibbert found that many of the students she questioned referred to this “spoonfeeding” or “forcefeeding” ... to describe the way they had been taught at A level, in contrast to the independence they were expected to develop at university’ (2006: 204). An undergraduate from Roehampton University criticised the suitability of A-level as preparation for university, describing it as ‘students [being] spoon-fed the information they require; they need only revise the information and learn exam techniques’ (Alkis, 2005). A study by Clark similarly found that Oxford undergraduates’ school experience was marked ‘by the syllabus [being] covered only superficially and at break-neck pace’ (2008: 106).

Indeed, pitted against an expectation from elite History applicants to display independent, creative thinking – otherwise conceived as ‘intellectual flexibility’ (University of Cambridge, 2014a: 12) or ‘originality and historical imagination’ (University of Oxford, 2013: 3) – is a pervasive examination culture in the A-level classroom. Hibbert (2002) has bemoaned the sad case that students were too often taught to be able to answer exam questions rather than nurtured to become historians. In a later study, Hibbert (2006) described an exam culture where teachers taught “to the test” and were reticent to explore anything not on the exam specification. Fortunately, a positive exception to this was the personal study element of A-level where independent thinking did take place (Hibbert, 2006). Even so, it was found that university tutors ‘did not discern better research skills among those students who had done a personal study’ (Hibbert, 2006: 199).

Referencing Hibbert, it has been claimed: ‘We need to accept that teachers and students are on a grade hunt’ (Lavender, 2009: 4). With entrance requirements for

students being driven upwards and an increased emphasis being placed upon examination results as a measure of performance of teachers, especially with the advent of performance-related pay, it seems the ‘grade hunt’ may be even more prominent now than it was in 2009. Such a focus on examination results has led to concern that demands on teachers to support students in attaining the highest results, coupled with the time pressure in which to deliver the curriculum, ‘can get in the way of the understandings and habits of mind that we should be seeking to encourage at advanced level’ (Chapman & Hibbert, 2009: 121). Thus, A-level History continues to fall short of nurturing the level of independent thinking required for all undergraduate History courses, let alone the level expected from applicants to elite universities.

Lucid written communication

The literature presents a mixed view on the level of preparation that A-level provides for university-level written work. Whereas many students report difficulties in adjusting to university-level essay writing (Hibbert, 2006), university tutors’ assessment of student essays is more mixed (Booth, 1997; Hibbert, 2006). Hibbert (2006) found that while most students found the more formative purpose of essay writing at university completely unfamiliar, some students also struggled to depart from a rigid and prescribed essay structure employed at A-level. She also discovered that some university tutors could detect their students’ reliance on reductive A-level essay frameworks and noted that these made ‘it sometimes difficult for students to move on at university’ (Hibbert, 2002: 42). In addition, some university tutors have been found to protest about the

quality of written communication with which students arrive, reporting grammatical, spelling and syntactic inadequacies (Booth, 1997; Hibbert, 2006). The level of language required at university has also been found to be a concern of first-year undergraduates themselves (Leese, 2010).

Collectively, this research raises concerns that A-level is not adequately preparing students for the ‘precision, clarity and facility of writing’ (University of Oxford, 2013: 1) and the ‘coherence of argument’ (University of Oxford, 2013: 3) demanded by the HAT test, which serves as gatekeeper for university applicants to the University of Oxford. This is perhaps even more concerning when it has been claimed that the aptitude tests for Oxford and Cambridge contain ‘over-complicated language [that] can favour middle class applicants’ (Pallis, 2007: 18).

Critical reading

There are two main criticisms of A-level as preparation for the critical reading needed at university: that students do not read (Hibbert, 2002, 2006; Ward, 2006), and that they do not know how to do so (Booth, 1997; Hibbert, 2006). The first criticism leads to students being shocked by the volume required by university study, a scenario that has been documented within the context of English Literature by both Ballinger (2003) and Smith (2005). Hibbert (2006) found the single ‘biggest difference between university and A-level history, according to all the students interviewed, was the use of libraries and books, especially the level of, and access to, resources.’ (2006: 221). Beyond the adjustment to this difference, one undergraduate’s story explains the shortcomings of her A-level experience:

I was positively disadvantaged in some respects; for example, I barely knew what a journal was and I had never used a footnote before (Benjamin, 2005).

This links to the second criticism of students not possessing the skill of critical reading. Students have demonstrated a lack of awareness of the different types of texts that exist (Hibbert, 2006) and a misunderstanding of the purpose of reading. Booth (1997) has revealed how students, upon beginning a History degree, believe that the purpose of reading is to find facts, rather than engage with the argument or interpretation being presented. This is worrying considering that Reisman and Wineburg's research would regard such a straightforward reading of a document to 'be accepted as truth or disregarded' as a low-level skill, in contrast to the higher-level 'disciplinary thinking' (2012: 175). The literature therefore suggests that A-level History is failing to prepare students for the critical reading expected of applicants to elite universities.

Depth and breadth of historical knowledge

The literature presents university students' grounding in historical knowledge either as mixed or as narrow. As Hibbert (2006) points out, in History 'there is no accepted essential body of knowledge and some institutions do not even require A-level history as a basic entry qualification' (2006: 45). This leads to variation in the level of students' preparation for university courses. Others have bemoaned the absence of world history in A-level courses (Chapman & Facey, 2004; Collins, 2011), suggesting that students are unable to develop a breadth of historical knowledge.

Of particular concern is Hibbert's finding that students lacked 'a detailed chronology and basic framework of knowledge when they arrived at university' (2006: 241). Whilst Booth's research shows students emphasise the importance of

knowledge at A-level, he demonstrates how students conceive this as a ‘reliance on recall’ (2000: 39), as opposed to historical understanding. If A-level is failing to equip students with both a breadth and depth of historical knowledge required for university study, then it seems likely that it will also fail to prepare students to meet the expectations of elite universities in this regard. This is because although the University of Oxford claims that ‘tutors are not so much interested in the level of your knowledge as in your ability to think historically’ (University of Oxford, 2014), it is inconceivable that students could meet the requirement in the HAT to show ‘precision in the handling of concepts’ (University of Oxford, 2013: 1) without a sound grasp of historical knowledge precisely because of its symbiotic relationship with understanding (Donavan and Bransford, 2005).

A philosophical awareness of the discipline of history

A number of studies point to the poverty of A-level courses at developing a philosophical awareness of the discipline of History. In Tyerman’s article on the History tutorial experience at Oxford, he explains the epistemological chasm between school and university:

The first things all History undergraduates have to be weaned off are the certainties derived from confidently prescriptive A-Level courses (2008: 93).

Indeed, Newton and Newton (1998), Booth (2003) and Nye et al. (2011) all found in their studies that A-level students believe that History is about the search for truth. Hibbert (2006) paints a slightly more favourable view, stating that there were some exceptions to such a position, although, of the students who had a more developed understanding of the discipline of History, these were often those who

had undergone preparation for Oxbridge interviews. Such preparation inevitably took place beyond the confines of A-level study and so does not allay the concerns raised by Booth (2003).

2.4 What is known about effective provision beyond the curriculum for applicants to elite universities?

In the introduction to the Gifted and Talented edition of *Teaching History*, Deborah Eyre pointed out that, in order to meet the needs of the most able historians, ‘core classroom provision should be supplemented by access to enhanced opportunities offered both within and beyond the school’ (Eyre, 2006: 7). However, there is a notable absence of empirical research that specifically explores what form support for students in History beyond the curriculum may take in order to help prepare them for applications to the most prestigious universities. There is even a lack of grey literature offering resources or case studies of specific History provision. The exception to this is the excellent collection of free resources recently published following an event run by the Historical Association (HA): ‘Doing History at the UK’s top Universities’ (McConnell, 2014). From discussions with fellow teachers on the course, it was clear that many schools run subject-specific Oxbridge preparation programmes, including those for History applicants, but it is difficult to discern what these History programmes comprise.

Oxbridge preparation literature offers a wealth of generic advice for students and schools, including the need to read widely and show ‘academic interest beyond the school syllabus’ (Pallis, 2007: 27). Care, of course, must be taken when considering

the validity of such literature (Parks, 2004). This being said, it seems true that ‘a lack of focused preparation harms many promising applicants.’ (Pallis, 2007: 15). The University of Cambridge makes clear that *subject-specific* preparation beyond the curriculum is needed:

...applicants should show enthusiasm for their chosen course, and the desire and potential to go beyond what is required in their studies. This could be demonstrated, for example, by the exploration of their subject beyond the school curriculum and by wider reading (their ‘super-curricular’ activities) (University of Cambridge, 2014a: 12).

Nonetheless, there is an absence of literature elaborating what ‘exploration of their subject beyond the school curriculum’ should look like.

Teacher and school habitus

The role of school and teacher habitus (Bourdieu & Passeron, 1990) appears frequently in HE participation literature and can provide some elucidation of the form that generic extra-curricular provision may take. A study by Donnelly (2014b) looked at three state schools in South Wales and found that Oxbridge preparation included UCAS support from pastoral leaders and meetings with members of the senior leadership team. Pugsley (2004: 43) conducted a study into ten different schools, also in South Wales, and found that the ‘better’ schools were able to ‘prepare their pupils more fully to enable them to engage with the university application process.’ Such preparation included staff using their own ‘social capital’ and ‘personal contacts at Oxbridge’ to support students in their Oxbridge applications (Pugsley, 2004: 47).

Case studies in private schools have found the preparation to have been better organised (Dunne et al., 2013) and to have begun earlier (Roker, 1993) than state

schools. The extra-curricular offering at private schools is also commonly presented as more extensive (Herrmann, 2011), and this can help students in their university preparation as the ‘regular school competitions’ offer ‘prizes [that] can add distinctions to a pupil’s record’ (Pallis, 2007: 27). Dunne et al. (2013) offer an explanation for the more developed Oxbridge provision at private schools: the increased importance of elite university admissions at these schools because they serve as an advertisement for the school.

Research conducted by Oliver and Kettley (2010) at six state schools confirmed the powerful role that teachers could play as either gatekeeper or facilitator to elite university participation. Describing the Oxbridge provision in place at a competitive boys grammar school, they state: ‘[i]ndividual students who achieved more than six A-stars at GCSE were sent congratulatory letters, inviting them to consider applying to Oxbridge’ (Oliver & Kettley, 2010: 741). Having been ‘invited’ to apply, an information evening on applying to Oxbridge was held for students and parents as well as an Oxbridge mentor appointed (Oliver & Kettley, 2010). The ‘effectiveness’ of such provision may be questioned by a study by Byrom et al. (2007) that focuses on pupil voice, with a student recounting the negative impact of being excluded from Oxbridge provision, despite ultimately attaining the entry requirements. Therefore, provision that offers support both with applications and also with extra-curricular clubs is presented as effective, but careful consideration is needed as to how that extra-curricular provision is offered to students.

Outreach programmes

Both Oxford and Cambridge Universities dedicate substantial resources to outreach programmes: the University of Cambridge alone dedicated over £5.5 million to access and outreach in 2015-16 (University of Cambridge, 2014b). Importantly, there seems to be an increasing move towards outreach work focusing on subject-specific programmes. For example, since 2010, the University of Oxford has run the UNIQ summer school programme, which involves students applying to a specific subject-based course, which, in History, is either ‘Gender and Identity’ or ‘Race and Protest’ (University of Oxford, 2015). In 2013, the University of Cambridge launched ‘HE plus’, a pilot scheme that aims to support able students in making elite university applications through developing their academic skills (University of Cambridge, 2015b). Part of the scheme ‘offer[s] students the opportunity to attend super-curricular subject sessions, designed to encourage and challenge participating students to develop key subject skills’ (*ibid.*). The University of Cambridge also offers subject masterclasses (University of Cambridge, 2012). Their justification is: ‘[m]any students have had little exposure to ideas beyond their A level syllabus’ (*ibid.*: 4). If this is the case, it seems to call for subject-specific extra-curricular provision to take place in schools. However, none of the outreach courses explain what they entail, so it is difficult for schools to replicate such provision.

A notable exception are the excellent online resources that supplement the courses provided for students by the Villiers Park Educational Trust (2015). Hibbert (2006) commends the Villiers Park Educational Trust (together with the Sutton Trust) for their courses that extend students beyond the History A-level curriculum, but notes that access to both programmes is limited. However, ten free

activities are available online (Villiers Park Educational Trust, 2015), widening access for sixth-formers. These activities (found in Appendix C) largely focus around the sixth characteristic of exceptional performance in History – a philosophical awareness of the discipline of History – and potentially provide one model of provision for elite university History applicants beyond the curriculum.

History-specific provision

There are some case studies that include forms of subject-specific extra-curricular provision in History for high-attaining students. Supporting reading beyond the curriculum is one method cited. Whereas Laffin established an online History book club for her sixth-formers (Laffin, 2012), Lavender suggests that subscription to JSTOR may be worthwhile, although she does point out that it is ‘prohibitively expensive for most schools’ (Lavender, 2009: 5). Technology, too, has been presented as effective extended provision. Chapman (2009) designed a virtual learning environment (VLE) task that allowed high-attaining students in different schools to engage with interpretations and discuss them both with each other, and with university academics. Developing links with university tutors is not a unique suggestion, with Harris also suggesting more generally that:

the most effective method of raising aspirations and encouraging pupils to consider highly selective HE is a long-term partnership between a school or college and a selective university, working on its own behalf or, preferably, on behalf of a set of similar universities (2010: 77).

A further suggestion proposed by McConnell (2014) is ‘to provide some kind of forum for historical debate ... A historical society where students are introduced to historical ideas is critical.’ He stresses the importance of giving students extra-

curricular provision that focuses on discussion of historical issues beyond their A-level course (McConnell, 2014).

History-specific preparation for Oxbridge applicants was witnessed by Hibbert (2006: 186), describing how all elite applicants ‘got more help than others, usually being given mock interviews, either by the department or the school and being given particular help in focussing their personal statements appropriately’. Similar to Pugsley’s (2004) findings, a number of the History teachers in Hibbert’s (2006) study also used their own contacts with Oxbridge colleges to support students, including organising lectures in school given by dons. Hibbert (2006) cites essay competitions run by both Oxford and Cambridge colleges, ‘specialist sixth form magazines, and day schools run by organisations’, although she notes that ‘access for individual students depends very much on the interest of individual schools and teachers’ (2006: 68).

Subject-specific extra-curricular provision, then, appears to be increasing in quantity at a greater pace than accessibility to knowledge of what this may entail. Suggestions that can be found in the literature include: individualised support, a History Society, wider reading, or use of technology to link with academics.

2.5 Summary and research questions

There is considerable consensus in the literature between the characteristics of high performance in school History and the characteristics sought by elite universities from History applicants. However, the literature raises concerns about

whether A-level adequately develops these characteristics. There is evidence of programmes that aim to bridge this gap (University of Cambridge, 2012, 2015; University of Oxford, 2015; Villiers Park Educational Trust, 2015). Despite such programmes and despite the evidence that many schools do offer extra-curricular History provision for their potential elite university applicants, few details are provided in the published literature about the History provision that schools could offer students, and I could find no empirical research evaluating the effectiveness of such programmes.

As a result, I created my own extra-curricular programme, in the form of a series of University Preparation Classes (UPCs). In light of my reading, the programme was designed both to address some of the weaknesses of A-level as a preparation for application to elite universities and also to foster the characteristics of high performance that had been identified as desirable. My research took the form of an investigation into students' experiences of those University Preparation Classes, guided by three research questions (RQ):

- RQ1. What were students' views on History before the University Preparation Classes?
- RQ2. How do students respond to the University Preparation Classes?
- RQ3. What do both student and teacher voice suggest about how the University Preparation classes might be improved?

3. Methodology

3.1 Objective

I carried out action research in order to explore the three research questions. A qualitative approach was chosen both due to the sampling constraints of the research focus (addressed below), but also for the richness of data that can be attained.

3.2 The nature of action research

Action research originates from the work of Kurt Lewin (Adelman, 1993) and the teacher-research model can be traced to Lawrence Stenhouse (Kelly, 1985). Stenhouse argued that ‘refinement of professional skill is generally achieved by the gradual elimination of failings through the systematic study of one’s own teaching’ (1975: 39). Cohen and Manion’s definition of action research is pertinent: ‘a small-scale intervention in the functioning of the real world and a close examination of the effects of such an intervention’ (1994: 86). My study was ‘small-scale’ (c. 10 students) and in response to a ‘real world’ problem: that my high-attaining students were not applying to elite universities. I wondered how I could better support them to do so.

A further distinctive feature of action research is that research and action take place at the same time, see Figure 3.1 (Edwards & Talbot, 1997). Action research models are most often conceived as ongoing spirals, or a number of cycles, rather than as a single study (Elliott, 1991; Cohen et al., 2007; Thomas, 2013). My research can be best described as undergoing two full cycles – a pilot and a subsequent study – with further future cycles planned beyond the confines of this project.

The figure originally presented here cannot be made freely available via ORA because of copyright. The figure was sourced at Edwards, A. & Talbot, R. (1997) ***The hard pressed researcher: a research handbook for the caring professions***, 2nd ed. London: Longman

Action research is often collaborative (Cohen et al., 2007). My model for collaboration may deem my research ‘practical action research’, as I have worked with ‘outside facilitators’ at each stage of the research process, who have taken a ‘process consultancy role’ to strengthen my self-reflection (Carr and Kemmis, 1995: 203).

At the planning stage of my second cycle, having attended the HA’s ‘Doing History at the UK’s top Universities’ event, I consulted closely with a teacher at an independent school who offers extended History provision for their Oxbridge applicants. She kindly shared her own resources and we discussed the aims for such a programme and how students can be best supported. I am hugely indebted

to her for the ideas and activities that she provided. This helped me to formulate my strategy for a History preparation programme for elite universities. I also worked with an English teacher (Teacher Y) at School X (himself an Oxford alum) who has previously supported students with English Oxbridge applications. The success of his work is suggested by the fact that in the last three years, of School X's Oxbridge applicants, at least one has applied to read English in each year (Watkins, 2014). Together, we were able to articulate the particular needs of potential Oxbridge applicants from School X. He encouraged me to include essay-writing and oral-presentation in any provision I offered, as methods for students to consolidate their new learning.

During the action and monitoring phase, I collaborated with my own department, principally using my colleagues as a 'sounding board' for my concerns or ideas. For instance, I worked with colleagues to help resource some of the UPCs and showed them some material before delivery to gain their advice. In the second cycle, I also invited a trainee teacher to the UPCs and we discussed together students' written work and the best feedback to provide.

One aim of this study was to develop avenues for collaboration between history educators and to make possible methods for supporting applicants to elite universities more publically known, thus the dissemination of my findings for critical discussion was important. I have shared my findings within my department, across the wider staff body at a twilight training session and across the schools in our Teaching Alliance at a History Teach Meet. It is my intention to share my findings with other History educators by publishing them in the professional journal, *Teaching History*. Beyond History, I have shared my research

in a workshop with trainees at an initial teacher training provider and have also begun the process of sharing my findings with elite university staff.

3.2 Pilot – the initial cycle

Hitchcock and Hughes (1995: 41) have advocated the use of a pilot study as one method to ‘uncover some of the problems in advance of the research proper’. I envisaged the pilot as a method to improve validity so that I could ‘uncover...problems’ that I could not foresee before the research began. I viewed the pilot study as the initial action research cycle that was not the precursor to the ‘research proper’ but rather the beginning of a spiral process.

The pilot intervention was a series of three taught UPCs that ran for eight weeks in a seminar-style format. It included one session using the Villiers Park Educational Trust’s resources on ‘What is History’ (2015), and others which I designed myself (see Appendix D for the outline programme). Emerging from discussion with Teacher Y, I asked students to write two essays from a choice of titles, framed around university essay competitions: one on the nature of History and the second on a period of History that they had not previously studied. Data collection measures employed were: a baseline questionnaire (Appendix E), student work (Appendix F demonstrates a selection) and a group interview for evaluating the intervention.

In comparison to the main cycle of research, the pilot was smaller in scale (restricted to Year 12 participation) and in timescale (it ran for eight fortnightly, as opposed to 21 weekly, sessions). Considering Byrom et al.’s (2007) study on the

negative impact that targeted participation could have, I chose to invite all History students to the UPCs, regardless of their prior attainment. What Belson (1986) described as ‘volunteer bias’ in relation to the problem of non-response in surveys (in Cohen et al., 2007) can be usefully applied here. This is because the impact of voluntary participation had a noticeable impact on the sample, given the nature of the intervention as an extra-curricular club. Eight students came to the initial meeting; six students took part in the baseline questionnaire; four students completed the written work; and two students attended the group interview. Although triangulation can mitigate some issues of validity, the reducing sample size raises some concerns.

That being said, the baseline questionnaire and student work did still provide some initial findings about students’ views of History and their response to the UPCs. In the questionnaire, all students regarded the value of knowledge of the past as restricted to understanding the present and learning from it in the future. All students also cited ‘interest’ as the main reason why they enjoyed History. Their perceived difficulties of the subject revolved around retention and recall: ‘learning all the key facts and knowledge needed’ was a typical comment. By the end of the pilot UPCs, students displayed considerable development in their philosophical awareness of history; their wider reading was also evidenced by explicit engagement with historiographical debate in three of the four essays.

Analysis of interview data proved informative when reflecting on how to modify the UPCs’ programme for the next cycle of research. The students certainly seemed to feel that the UPCs served a worthwhile purpose. One student said it was great to have ‘more support’ and the other felt that it served as a ‘first indication of what university would be like’, which convinced him that he did want to study History

at university. Another aspect of the programme that they praised was the focus given by the essay competitions, as it was ‘good to have an end goal’. They also suggested ways to improve the programme: starting earlier (before mock examinations) and dedicating time for students to present their individual research so that they could learn from each other, and also improve their speaking skills.

By reflecting on the pilot intervention, I refined the UPCs’ programme for the second cycle of research. I retained the ‘What is History’ activity due to considerable student progress in philosophical awareness of history. As a result of suggestions made in the group interview, I continued to design written work around essay competitions; introduced student presentations as a pedagogical tool; and began the UPCs earlier in the school year.

Reflections on both the collection and analysis of the pilot data caused some important refinements to my final methodology. Firstly, the questionnaire required modification. The framing of the questions in the baseline questionnaire (Appendix E) was not clear enough: students’ responses frequently conflated questions 2, 3 and 4 on the purpose of a History degree. A single question here would suffice. Instead, drawing upon further review of the literature, which emphasised the importance of independent thinking (Booth, 1993, 1997, 2001) and the skills of reading (Hibbert, 2006) in the transition to university, I felt questions addressing these issues would be worthwhile additions.

Secondly, it was confirmed that group interviewing was suited to the research aim. The limitations of group interviews include that they may allow certain participants to either dominate or evade questioning and can tend towards “group think”, discouraging individuals who hold a different view from speaking out’

(Cohen et al., 2007: 373). In spite of this, I felt that this interview method allowed for discussion to flow freely and, as Cohen et al. (2007) noted, it is likely to be less intimidating for young people. However, my decision to record the pilot data through a written, shorthand summary of responses may have resulted in an unwitting bias, prompting me to record only those responses that I judged to be useful or that fitted my preconceptions. Therefore, I aimed to reduce bias in the next cycle of research by audio recording and subsequently transcribing interviews.

Thirdly, I realised that, due to the extra-curricular nature of the intervention and the accordingly high drop-out rate witnessed during the pilot, to maximise validity, the range of data needed to be extended both temporally and methodologically. Temporally, in addition to the baseline questionnaire, I introduced a written questionnaire at both the mid- and end-point of research. Methodologically, I felt that the data focused too exclusively on pupil voice and that it would be richer if teacher voice was audible too. Accordingly, I kept a research diary to record my own thoughts throughout the intervention and I also designed a questionnaire for the staff with whom I collaborated.

3.3 Research design

The intervention

The programme I designed for the UPCs was a product of my own reflection on the literature and also collaboration with other teachers, as described above. Teacher Y's advocacy of oral presentation was supported by findings from the student

interview and thus I incorporated this into the second cycle of UPCs. The resultant scheme of work can be found in Appendix G. I linked each session either to high performance characteristics identified by NAGTY (Chapman, 2006) or HAT skills and concepts (University of Oxford, 2013).

Following the pedagogical model established in the pilot, the UPCs were delivered in seminars. This aimed to simulate the university experience and to build students' confidence about discussing their learning in this format. Indeed, although Booth stressed the importance of 'seminar debate and discussion' to university History (1997: 208), both Booth (1997) and Hibbert (2006) found this to be a core skill for which undergraduates were underprepared.

Monitoring of my intervention during the second cycle resulted in some changes to the original scheme of work (see Appendix H). I reflected that some discussions would benefit from an additional session and so I removed other elements to accommodate this (together with the unforeseen loss of one week due to mock examinations taking place).

Participants

A 'purposive sample' (Thomas 2013: 137) was employed, in the understanding that I sought not to 'represent the wider population' (Cohen et al., 2007: 113) but produce theories based only on a representation of the sample itself. To widen the scope from the pilot, both Year 12 and 13 History students were invited to the club. Given the nature of the UPCs, it was envisaged that there would be an uptake of approximately ten students. Eventually, eleven students attended at least one session, with the average attendance across the programme being five. Thus the

‘sampling frame’ (Cohen et al., 2013:151) was established as flexible, due to the voluntary nature of the extra-curricular UPCs.

Data collection

Building upon reflections from the pilot cycle, a multi-method approach was taken. I selected questionnaires for their ability to ‘gather data at a particular point in time with the intention of describing the nature of existing conditions’ (Cohen et al., 2013: 256). The questionnaires at the beginning and end of the programme focused on students’ views of History and posed the same questions to allow for comparison of final responses with a baseline (see Appendix I). They were distributed on paper. Open questions were used to elicit a range of responses, taking an inductive approach to analysis. I also decided to assess students’ historical understanding and the extent to which they possessed a narrative framework by asking students the question that Lee and Howson (2009) asked in the Usable Historical Pasts project: ‘What is the story of British history over the last 2000 years?’ (Howson, 2007: 41). This was distributed together with the written questionnaires. Staff questionnaires were distributed to teachers who attended the student presentations at the end of the project (Appendix I). The mid-project survey was conducted online for ease of analysis using Google Drive. It was more structured than the other questionnaires, answering a mixture of open and closed questions, including dichotomous and multiple-choice questions (see Appendix J).

More effective questionnaire distribution could have produced more data. The initial audit of students’ knowledge of British history was completed within the

UPCs and so ten responses were produced. However, due to the time constraints of the school lunch-break (30 minutes), students were given the baseline questionnaires to complete at home; only eight were returned. The online mid-project questionnaire also produced eight responses. However, evaluation questionnaires were only completed by three students, so caution must be taken in placing undue weight upon these. Of the four members of staff who attended the student presentations, three returned questionnaires.

The pilot had confirmed the suitability of group interviewing but, in contrast to the unstructured inductive methodology employed in the pilot, I chose to take a combination deductive/inductive approach, using a mixture of structured (see Appendix K) and semi-structured questioning. This allowed for more free-flowing dialogue, since highly-structured questions could prevent students feeling at ease. A semi-structured approach therefore sought to mitigate the ‘experiential and biographical baggage’ (Cohen et al., 2007: 150) that I brought as the students’ teacher. Reflecting on the pilot cycle, I audio-recorded this interview. Although the number of students who took part in this interview (five) was greater than for both the pilot interview and the evaluation questionnaire, it must be noted that the opinions expressed by students may not be representative of the whole sample. Particularly, there may be a positive bias expressed in this data as these were the students who had chosen to continue to attend the UPCs until the end of the 21-week programme.

Additional data sources were artefactual. Copies of student work were collected and I kept a teacher journal. In this, I recorded a register of student attendance and my thoughts and reflections after each session. Thus it was ‘event-contingent’ (Thomas, 2013: 200).

Data analysis

I adopted a constant comparative method (Thomas, 2013) to analyse the data collected. I transcribed the interviews (see Appendix L). I also decided to transcribe the written questionnaires for ease of handling and also to minimise bias from my ability to recognise individual handwriting. Both the questionnaire responses and the interview were coded (see Appendix M for an example). I took a mixed deductive/inductive approach to coding, with some codes born out of the literature review (e.g. ‘independent thinking’) but others ascribed as a result of the data collected (e.g. ‘agency’). The data was then categorised in relation to these codes in order to create a narrative. Of course, the limitations of coding are accepted, including the fact that the original meaning might be lost as a result of textual ambiguities and of my own preconceptions (Cohen et al., 2007). However, I took a systematic approach to comparing and reviewing my data and codes which, together with transparency about the process, it was hoped, would help strengthen the validity of the findings. In addition, I used online word frequency counting and word cloud tools to highlight any potential missed themes.

3.4 Validity

It is recognised that absolute validity is not possible and instead ‘we strive to minimize invalidity and maximize validity’ (*ibid.*: 133). Since this was a qualitative research study, internal validity was my main concern. Cohen et al. (2007: 135) describe this as meaning ‘[t]he findings must describe accurately the phenomena being researched’. A possible and valuable way to address this could have been

respondent validation. However, given the time that data analysis took, I dismissed this on grounds of both practicality (the participants had already left school so contacting them would have been difficult) and also of likelihood that participants' thinking would have shifted since the collection of data given their subsequent experiences (external examinations, university open days and school-based HEI events). Instead, I sought internal validity through systematic coding procedures, described above, and through triangulation of data. More specifically, triangulation 'between methods' (*ibid.*: 143) was deployed in an attempt to 'minimize invalidity'.

3.5 Ethics

Much of the work undertaken as part of this action research was part of my normal practice as a teaching professional. However, additional ethical considerations were taken into account. I complied with the guidelines set out by the British Educational Research Association (BERA, 2011) and the Central University Research Ethics Committee (CUREC). Consent was gained from my Headteacher who upheld CUREC's view that parental permission was not necessary, based on the age and perceived ability of participants 'to understand or agree voluntarily to undertake their role' (BERA 2011: 6), as the research was to be conducted with sixth-formers. The nature of the research was explained to all participants, both students and staff, and they were given the opportunity to ask questions. Voluntary informed consent was obtained from all participants and they were informed of their right to withdraw at any time. Since the UPCs were voluntary, and in response

to student interests, the risks involved were assessed to be minimal. However, due to a focus on elite universities, it was felt that some students may feel under pressure to do well, to apply to a prestigious university or to develop anxiety over whether they would be successful in an application. I discussed this with the Headteacher and I monitored this closely, although eventually this risk did not manifest itself.

The anonymity of all participants has been protected; pseudonyms have been assigned and applied throughout the project. All data collected was stored securely and confidentially, and destroyed at the end of the research period.

4. Findings and analysis

4.1. What were students' views on History before the University Preparation Classes?

4.1.a How did students conceive the study of History before the classes?

Perhaps unsurprisingly, considering that students voluntarily attended the classes, the students were unanimous in viewing the study of History as valuable to society. Universally, they justified the value that they attributed to history on the grounds that society can learn from the lessons of the past. A typical response claimed that the past 'allows us to learn from mistakes so we don't make the same mistakes in the future'. To support their position, two students cited Santayana's famous dictum: "Those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it". One student felt that knowledge of the past can allow us to 'predict [the future] – which is invaluable for preventing disasters'. This Santayanan explanation of the value of studying History has been found to be a common finding in studies of pupil perspectives in both the UK (Haydn & Harris, 2010) and the USA (Vansledright, 1997), although in both cases, unlike my sample, it was not the most frequently cited reason.

The notion that lessons from the past can even be applied to an isomorphic present or future may indicate that my students possessed a simplified understanding of the nature of History. Consistent with Vansledright's (1997) findings, my respondents did not evaluate 'the power of "learning the mistakes of the past"

[which] suggests that they may be convinced of the inevitable and successful forward development of history’ (Vansledright, 1997: 536). Students’ historical understanding at the baseline may therefore be assessed as unsophisticated, given that Whig interpretations of History have now widely been discredited, as has the idea ‘that history can instruct the present, and teach us clearly “useful” lessons’ (Howson, 2007: 42). However, it is important to note that this conclusion about students’ rather simplistic understanding is not based on a rejection of the notion of learning from the past *ipso facto*, as clearly there are strong arguments to support the idea that understanding past trajectories that have led us to the present does offer a powerful means of orientation in time, allowing better prediction of future possibilities (Rogers, 1987; History & Policy, 2015). Instead, this conclusion is based on the *kinds* of lessons from the past that the students assumed could be drawn: uncritical or deterministic.

Two students justified their enjoyment of the subject based on constructing written History, but in very different ways. One student took a utilitarian standpoint: valuing History’s transferable ‘writing and analytical skills’. Contrastingly, another student described essays as ‘fun’, perhaps conceiving the process of writing History as more of an intellectual game. However, these views were not evident amongst the rest of the sample.

The breadth of History was a more common theme, and this was cited both negatively and positively. One student thought that ‘the huge amount of possibilities of information to learn and analyse [was] the most difficult thing about studying History’. More typical was the belief that ‘memorising facts and dates’ was the most difficult aspect of studying History – a view that was also revealed in the pilot cycle. A theme therefore emerged that students placed

importance upon the ability to recall facts in the study of History. Some students, however, viewed the breadth of History as a strength of the subject; one student ‘enjoy[s] the fact that there is so much relevant and intriguing information’. Another agreed, but with an egocentric caveat; he was more interested in ‘other cultures that share similarities to us. For example I’d be more interested in the Roman Empire than ancient African tribes.’

Similarly divisive were both the variety of interpretations of the past and the requirement for independent thought in History. The demand for independent thought was conceived as both a difficulty (‘What I find most difficult about History is working out what my opinion is’) and a cause of enjoyment. One student felt it was not easy ‘to see the past as those present would have seen it, rather than with modern attitudes or with the benefit of hindsight’, whereas another student enjoyed being presented with ‘contrasting viewpoints’. Here, students clearly demonstrated a better understanding of the nature of History.

4.1.b What were students’ university intentions before the classes?

All students expressed an intention to apply to university and, as expected considering the nature of the classes, they all displayed an interest in reading History. Four explanations emerged for their desire to study History at university. Firstly, employability was cited by nearly all students. This position can be summarised by one student who believed History ‘leads to a lot of different, well-respected careers’. Second, and linked to employability by many students, were the skills that a History degree cultivates. Although skills were offered as a popular justification, only one student explained these attributes: ‘[t]hese include

analytical skills, the ability to evaluate sources and appreciate different viewpoints on issues but also compare and contrast and make a judgement'. Third, and equal in mention to skills, was an enjoyment of the subject. Finally, one student referred to his ability – he was 'good at it'.

These findings contradict both Booth's (1997) and Hibbert's (2006) research. Both those studies found that the majority of students named enjoyment as the main reason for studying History. Hibbert found only 'a few cases [where] students said that they believed history to be highly regarded by employers' (2006: 188). Caution must be heeded in drawing conclusions, as their sample was much larger than my own. It can be said, nonetheless, that before the UPCs, my sample perceived employability as the most important reason for wanting to study History at university.

4.1.c How can students' historical knowledge and understanding be described before the classes?

One source of data that could be used here is student attainment. Due to the fact that the sample was drawn from both Year 12 and 13, the only comparable external examination data would be GCSE grades; however these do not account for subsequent progress. Instead, report data (acknowledging these are predicted, rather than actual, grades) is cited in Table 4.1. This provides some indication of how proficient students were at applying historical knowledge and understanding to A-level examination courses. However, I felt that such attainment measures are a limited data source for this project seeing as the UPCs were purposely designed

to extend beyond A-level. Moreover, any correlation drawn between attainment and the intervention could wrongly be attributed to the impact of the UPCs.

Table 4.1. Student AS/A-level attainment before and after the intervention			
	Name	Report Grade before the UPCs	Report Grade after the UPCs
Year 13	John	A	A
	Emily	A	B
	Natasha	A	A
	Michael	A	A
	Ian	A*	A*
	Freddie	A	A
Year 12	Nathan	A	A
	Edward	B	A
	Ben	B	A
	George	B	B
	Louise ⁶	B	B

There are two further data sources that are informative in assessing students' historical knowledge and understanding: responses to the baseline questionnaire and to the task designed for the Usable Historical Pasts project: 'What is the story of British history over the last 2000 years?' (Howson, 2007). I have used the four level descriptors used by Foster et al. (2008) for their project to categorise my responses to this task. These are:

1. **'unsubstantial'**
2. **'topics'** – '...random topic lists or partial or truncated narratives.'
3. **'and then'** – '...narrative which typically began with the Battle of Hastings and continued to advance by attaching a detailed range of events thereafter.'
4. **'explanatory'** – '...responses in which students offered either an explanatory or thematic account of British history' (Foster et al., 2008: 6).

For a significant number of students, their historical knowledge and understanding was blighted by an absence of a clear historical framework. Half of the participants produced responses to the written task that could be accurately described as topic-

⁶ It should be noted that Louise joined the classes after baseline data was collected.

based (see Table 4.2). Typical of this category is the following extract (Appendix N lists further examples of each category):

- The Romans held control over Britain until their Empire fell in 300-500 AD?
- The Anglo-Saxons took over at some point
- 1066: The Battle of Hastings
- Eventually heading into the Medieval and Middle Ages

Four students were able to produce a narrative response that can be described as ‘and then’. However, inaccuracies were present in many examples of both ‘topics’ and ‘and then’; for example, ‘Henry VIII had eight wives’ and that the ‘Romans left Britain in 40AD’. Noticeable too were gaps in their knowledge, which mainly fell between the Romans and 1066; then between 1066 and the Tudors.

Table 4.2. What is the story of British history over the last 2000 years? Initial Responses

Name	Level	Category
John	2	Topics
Emily	2	Topics
Natasha	2	Topics
George	2	Topics
Freddie	2	Topics
Nathan	3	And then
Edward	3	And then
Ben	3	And then
Michael	3	And then
Ian	4	Explanatory

This is perhaps unsurprising given students’ own admissions in their questionnaires that remembering facts was difficult (cited most frequently as the most difficult aspect of History). One student referred to their lack of ‘a general timeline ... of History’; another expressed frustration that ‘I can remember the majority of key facts, but in some cases there might be huge blocks of history that I know, followed by blank spaces’. Another student felt that the most enjoyable part

of History ‘is looking at how there are patterns and trends across time’ – although this is something that most of the sample were unable to do, at least in the ‘2000 years of British history’ task.

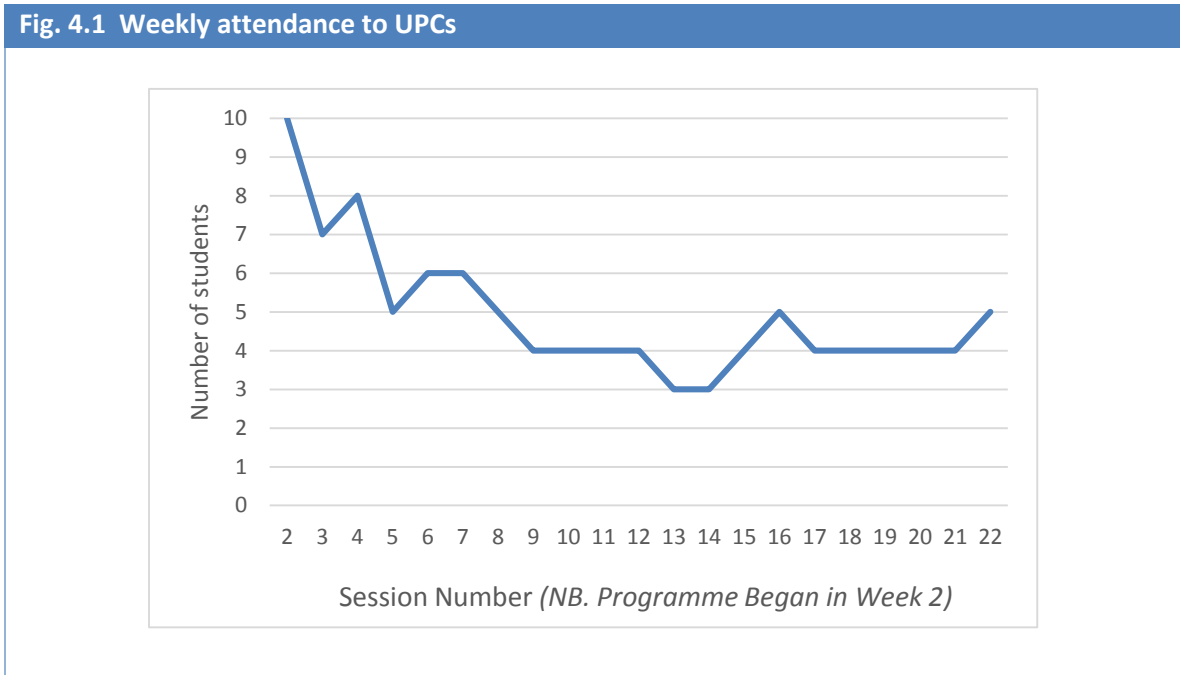
The picture that emerged was not completely bleak in terms of students’ historical knowledge and understanding. One student’s response met the description of ‘explanatory’. Interestingly, this is the only student in the sample targeted an A* (although this grade is only available in Year 13). This respondent organised a clear narrative into themes of empire, democracy and economics, deploying relevant details to support his points. Moreover, only one student restricted their response to content covered either by their GCSE or A-level course; the others were able to display factual knowledge beyond what they had studied for external examinations. Nonetheless, the sample was overwhelmingly unable to demonstrate a sound understanding of the ‘big picture’ of history, which Shemilt argued is integral to developed historical consciousness (2009: 194).

4.2. How do students respond to the University Preparation Classes?

4.2.a How popular were the classes?

Student attendance data provides some indication of popularity. As Figure 4.1 details, the number of students attending the weekly UPCs declined over the 21 weeks for which it ran. The mean attendance at a session was 5 students. Looking at attendance by individual student (see Figure 4.2) across the programme, it is

clear that Year 12 attended far more than Year 13 did. The overall mean attendance was 45%; for Year 12 alone it was 79% and for Year 13 just 16%. Whilst this may highlight that Year 12 found the classes more enjoyable, useful or better pitched to their level, it may not be coincidental that Year 13 attendance declined once the first UCAS deadline had passed. If true, this could suggest students are utilitarian in their attendance of the classes, in relation to their UCAS application.



Student voice provides some illumination as to why attendance declined over the programme. Figure 4.3 shows that time pressure was by far the biggest reason claimed for non-attendance: citing other commitments, being too busy or that they simply forgot. This data suggests that their absence was not due to lack of interest or enjoyment of the classes. However, it must be noted that although responses were completely anonymous to this questionnaire (being completed online), the students may have been reluctant to admit that they did not enjoy the classes due to their relationship with me as their teacher.

Fig. 4.2. Percentage of UPCs attended, by individual student

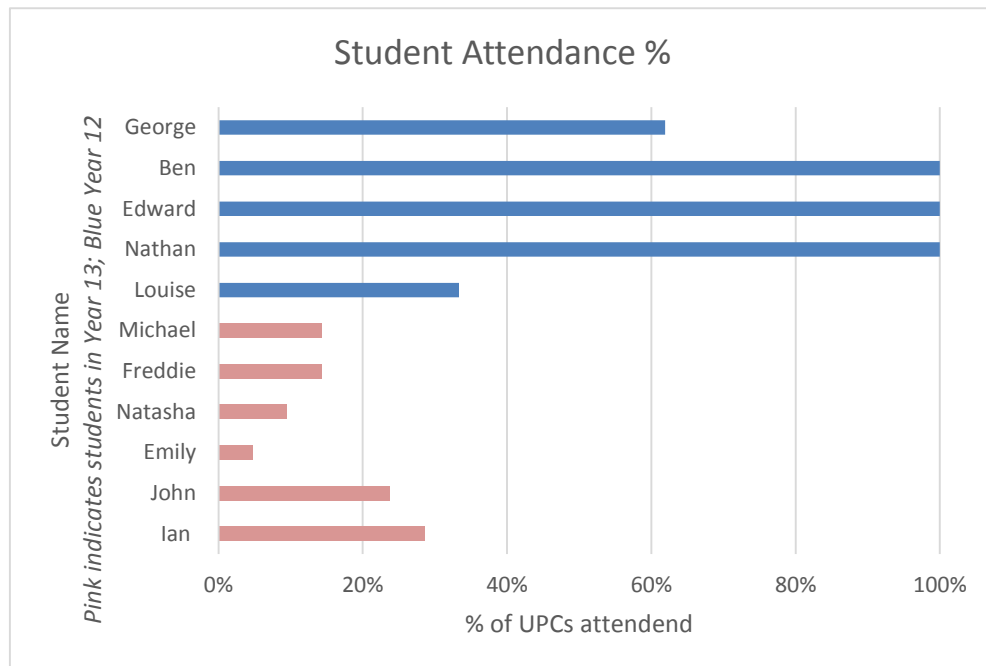
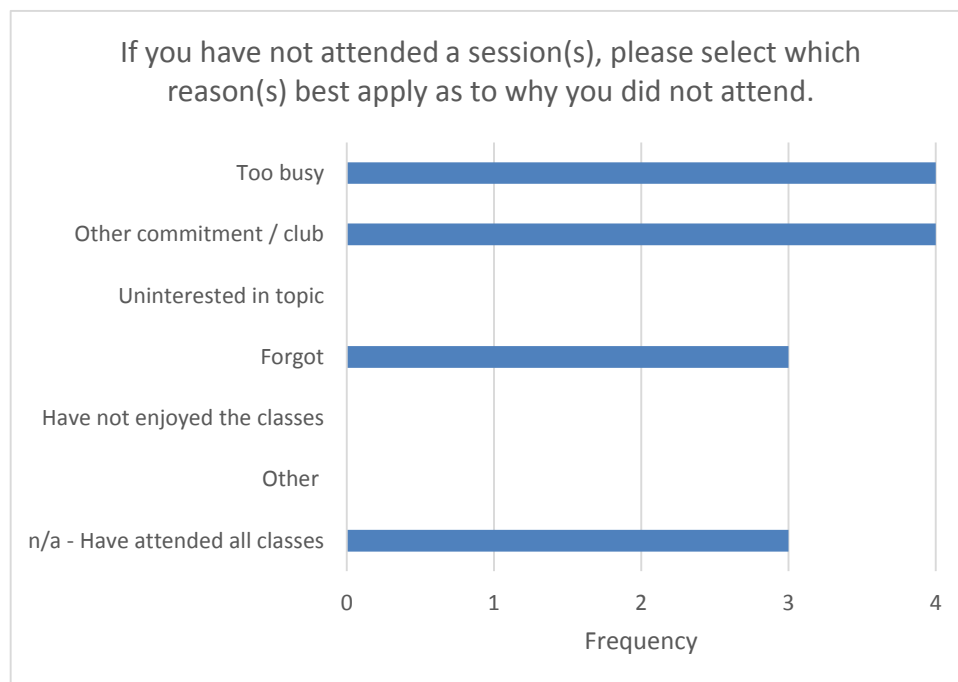
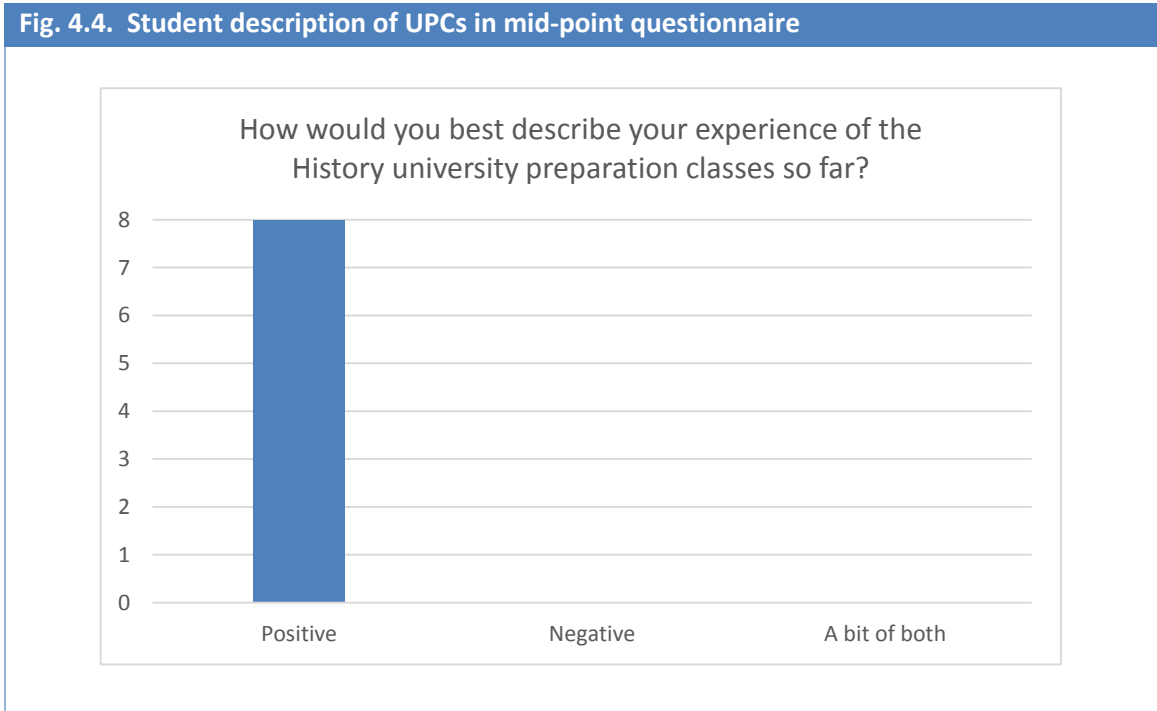


Fig. 4.3. Reasons given by students for non-attendance in mid-point questionnaire



Participation is just one measure of popularity; interview and questionnaire data overwhelmingly suggest that the UPCs were indeed popular with students. All respondents to the mid-point questionnaire described their experience as ‘positive’ (see Figure 4.4), as did students interviewed at the end of the programme. Explaining this position, students often cited enjoyment. One student said they ‘would do 2 sessions per week if they were available!’ Other than enjoyment, utilitarianism did emerge in student responses in relation to meeting university expectations (‘if I’m called to interview for any Unis, I believe I’ll be able to more firmly argue my points’) and to realising whether History was the right subject to apply for, as – in line with the findings of the pilot – another student felt the classes provided them ‘with a clearer, more accurate understanding of what history at university may be like’. The other common explanations for the popularity of the classes were firstly that it ‘enhanced and enriched [their] historical knowledge’ ‘beyond the school curriculum’ and, secondly, the pedagogy employed (discussion).



Overall, it can be concluded that the UPCs were more popular with Year 12 than Year 13 students. Attendance was disappointing; it could only be maintained at approximately half the original intake of students. Despite this, student voice makes clear that the classes were regarded positively, even if that perception did not always translate into participation.

4.2.b How have students' views of History been affected by the classes?

There was little difference in substance, but subtle shifts in sophistication, between responses at the beginning and the end of the programme on how students justified the study of History. Unsurprisingly, given their involvement in the UPCs, students remained unanimous in believing History was valuable. Again, all students explained its value in terms of the ability to learn from the past. Typical was the response that 'it helps us to understand the present and can help us to avoid the mistakes of the past'. Slightly more nuanced, critical responses emerged on possible kinds of learning from the past: one student qualified that 'we can learn from the past...if we understand it'. The limited number of evaluation questionnaire responses (three) should be noted here. However, there was much to suggest that students did develop a higher-level, disciplinary understanding of History in the other data collected, as discussed below.

4.2.c What was the impact of the classes on students' historical knowledge and understanding?

Students demonstrated signs of an increased philosophical awareness of the discipline of History by the end of the UPCs. Firstly, unlike both pilot and baseline

data suggesting that recall of substantive knowledge was critical to History, students by the end of the programme placed an increased emphasis on interpretations. All respondents said that studying interpretations was the most difficult aspect of the subject because ‘there are so many conflicting views’. Secondly, the historical questions that students were most interested in asking noticeably changed from the beginning of the programme to the end: from the specific to the generic. Initially, many students wanted to know the answer to specific, content questions, such as ‘How did the First World War affect the countries involved after the war?’; or counterfactual, ‘what-if’ questions. The only respondent to ask a question showing disciplinary awareness in the baseline questionnaire (‘Is there such [a] thing as “truth” in History?’) was posed by a student who took part in the pilot programme, and so had explored these ideas already. By the end of the intervention, all students asked questions that could be classed as showing philosophical awareness of the nature of History, for example:

- What proof do we have that various historical events genuinely happened, and how reliable is that proof?
- How do social, economic and political factors interact? To what extent can they be separated? Which is the most important in driving change?

Students themselves also felt that they had developed disciplinary awareness as a result of the UPCs. Over half the responses to the mid-point questionnaire named this as the main aspect of their knowledge that had improved. A typical response was: ‘My knowledge of what history is and the debates surrounding it has been hugely expanded’. This area of development emerged also in the group interview. One student explained that they found most useful:

...ideas about History in general like, um, ‘What is History’ and all those books. And all those ideas about truth and change and individuals and all that stuff. I didn’t know much about that before.

Another thought that the study of the nature of History was ‘so important, but [they]’d never heard of it’.

By contrast, when considering students’ written responses to the story of British history over the last 2000 years, the impact of the UPCs on students’ historical knowledge ranges from negligible to negative. As Table 4.3 shows, of the three students who completed the task at both the beginning and the end of the programme, their responses showed no improvement on the scale established for the Usable Historical Pasts project (Foster et al., 2008). One student – Edward – even went down a level. Considering these findings, it is perhaps not surprising that one student felt that I should ‘spend a bit longer on the British history over the last 2000 years’.

Table 4.3. What is the story of British history over the last 2000 years? Comparison of Initial and End Responses

Name	Initial Level	Initial Category	End Level	End Category
John	2	Topics		
Emily	2	Topics		
Natasha	2	Topics		
George	2	Topics		
Freddie	2	Topics		
Nathan	3	And then	3	And then
Edward	3	And then	2	Topics
Ben	3	And then		
Michael	3	And then		
Ian	4	Explanatory	4	Explanatory

My teacher journal corroborates the limited impact that the UPCs had on students’ historical knowledge. I noted that: ‘Mostly they don’t have the knowledge to challenge these views yet’. Importantly, this reflection was recorded only a third of

the way through the programme and so cannot represent an evaluation of the whole programme, however it does suggest that students' historical knowledge, at least at this particular point of the programme, had not greatly developed.

Conversely, other data sources suggest that the UPCs did in fact help to develop students' historical knowledge. Firstly, a common theme identified by the students themselves in both the interview and the mid-point questionnaire was that they had a 'better understanding of the general cycle of history - what happened in what order', particularly in relation to British history. Students also felt that they had developed their ability to analyse historical change so that they could propose theories on '*how* things change and whether it's, you know, individuals, or something more than that, economics, or whatever'. Secondly, staff evaluation of student presentations suggested all students displayed 'wider knowledge' in their responses to questions, even if the level of 'breadth and depth' was 'mixed' within the group. One History colleague felt all students demonstrated historical knowledge beyond the A-level curriculum both through 'content covered' and 'conceptual understanding of significance' – using terms that resonate with Rogers' (1987) model of 'know-that' and 'know-how'. Finally, student essays demonstrate development of historical knowledge. Their progress is particularly visible for the significance task, for which students selected an unfamiliar topic of History and deployed newly-acquired knowledge, the depth of which was indicative of A-level standard, despite no formal teaching on the topic (see Appendix O).

Triangulation of the data therefore suggests that students' historical knowledge and understanding had developed by the end of the UPCs. This was particularly true of their understanding of the nature of History. However, despite students' belief that their historical knowledge of a framework of British history had

improved, the three respondents showed no improvement in this written task, judged in relation to the criteria set out by Foster et al. (2008). This raises questions of ‘big picture’ frameworks: about their nature, their implementation in the curriculum and their assessment. Students may not have developed a more usable framework of 2000 years of British history by the end of the programme, but they may have developed other kinds of frameworks, smaller in scale. Indeed, both staff and student questionnaires indicate the range of their historical knowledge had expanded and the essays produced by students provide convincing data of their grasp of entirely new topics. A methodological limitation here was that I did not specifically measure whether students were able to locate specific topics within any other type of framework than one based on 2000 years of British history. Such an approach may have produced richer data from which to draw stronger conclusions. Moreover, it should perhaps be acknowledged that my assessment of their framework knowledge was unfair, or inappropriate. On reflection, it struck me that my methodology was perhaps stuck within the Black Box (Black & Wiliam, 2010), as I did not make clear to students the success criteria by which their work would be evaluated. Yet my findings regarding the difficulties of developing sixth-form students’ understanding of a ‘big picture’ framework resonate with Instone’s (2013) study. It seems that the nature of a 2000-year framework can be challenging to grasp, given the current curriculum structures in school. To be achieved successfully, as others have argued, such frameworks probably need to be taught and reinforced as part of the school curriculum, (Nuttall, 2013; Lee and Howson, 2009; Shemilt, 2000, 2009), rather than being bolted on in discrete extra-curricular sessions.

4.2.d What impact do University Preparation Classes have on students' university intentions?

All students at the mid- and end-point of the intervention remained unanimous in their intention to go to university. Whilst all students still expressed some interest in applying to study History, other subjects or joint-honours were also now considered by six participants. Whilst this may suggest that students were less inclined to apply to a single-honours History course having taken part in the UPCs, the data collected is not sufficient to support this inference, not least because of limitations in the baseline questionnaire. Unfortunately its wording was more closed – ‘Why are you considering studying it at university?’ – and, on reflection, can be seen as a rather presumptive, even leading, question, with which respondents would have had to actively disagree.

The data collected from the mid-point questionnaire and group interview were richest, as they asked most specifically about university applications. Both data sources provided information on where Year 12 students wished to apply and on where Year 13 had applied. All students in the sample had either applied, or expressed an intention to apply, to a Russell Group university. Two Year 13 students who took part in the pilot programme had since applied (unsuccessfully) to study History at Oxford; three Year 12 students expressed an interest in applying to study History at Oxford or Cambridge in the mid-point questionnaire and, by the end of the programme, a fourth student also indicated this intention. As only one student from School X had applied to study History at Oxbridge in the preceding three years, it can be tentatively suggested that participation in the UPCs at School X may lead to an increased likelihood to apply to an elite university to study History. However, it is too early to be certain of this deduction; further

research would need to monitor this trend over subsequent years to reach more confident conclusions.

The explanations offered for planning to study History at university were in line with the same four categories evident in the students' rationales before the classes: employability, skills, enjoyment and ability. However, the order of importance was completely different. Before the intervention, only half cited enjoyment as the reason for wanting to study History; by the mid-point questionnaire, all eight students named this as a factor. Employability, followed by skills, was most frequently cited in the baseline data; career motivations were now named just twice, skills only once and perceived ability now featured in two responses. This new pattern, with enjoyment now featuring so prominently is interesting as it conforms much more closely with the findings from the studies by Booth (1997) and Hibbert (2006). My speculation is that this change in attitude may be the result of experiencing more independent study, wider exploration of open questions and an increased sense of agency (discussed below).

Some students did point out that the UPCs had had an impact on their university intentions. One student said that, together with wider reading, 'attending ... classes ... has consolidated my decision [to apply to study History]'. Similarly, another – Edward – felt that: 'I think I definitely want to study History now, hopefully at a Russell Group university'. Rather than confirming her pre-existing university intentions, Louise said that the classes had 'changed her mind' from applying for a single honours languages degree:

'Cos I do really enjoy History, so I'm leaning more towards History with French now.

However, it would be incorrect to say that the classes allowed all Year 12 participants to have more clarity about their university intentions: by the end of the programme, Ben felt that he was ‘still torn between History and Law’.

Whilst many students claimed that the UPCs had influenced their university intentions, it is difficult to conclude with confidence that there was a causal connection between the two. In terms of elite university applications, some encouraging findings emerged. While the precise impact of the main study as opposed to the pilot phase cannot be discerned, it is nonetheless significant that the introduction of the UPCs was followed by two students submitting Oxford applications. Of those students who only took part in the main intervention, only Ben considered an elite university at the end of the programme when he had not done so before, and so little change in destination intentions was discernible. It is especially difficult to make broad conclusions when the reduced attendance, and therefore reduced data-set, may be an indication of students no longer wishing to study History at university. This being said, both student voice on intention to apply and actual applications to elite universities suggest that the UPCs did have a positive impact on student intentions.

4.2.e How far do the classes adequately prepare students for the expectations of elite universities?

The expectations of elite universities detected in the literature were found to be broadly in line with the six characteristics of high performance in History. In addition to historical knowledge and understanding (addressed above), particular emphasis was placed upon independent thinking (University of Cambridge, 2014a;

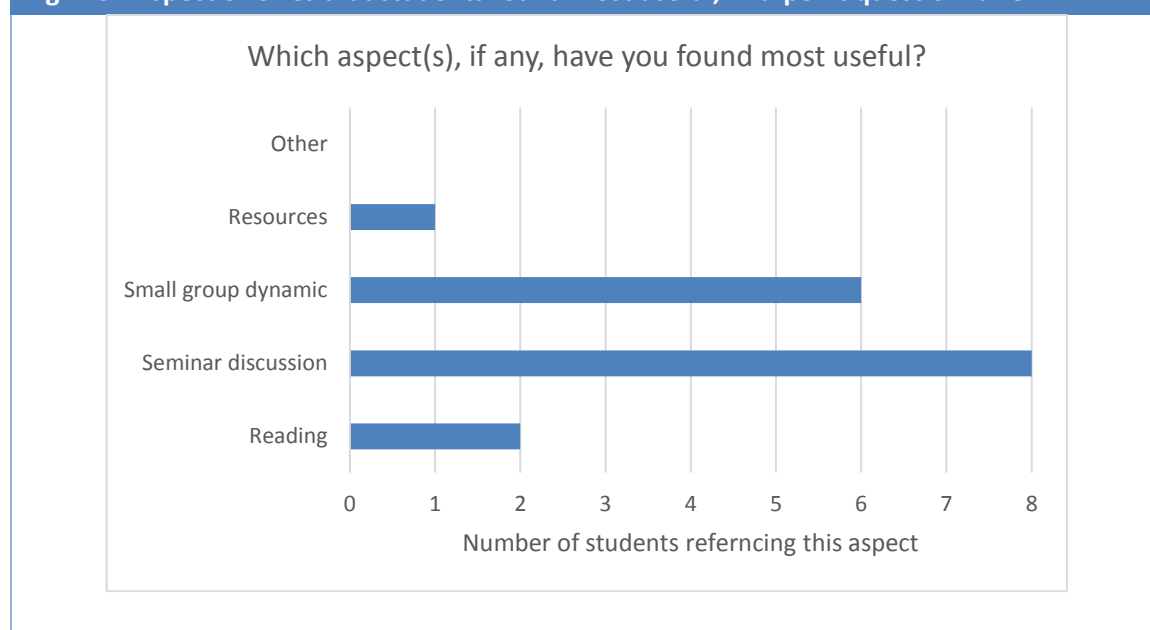
University of Oxford, 2013, 2014); wider reading (Zimdars et al., 2009); careful analysis of extended sources and competent, clear writing (University of Oxford, 2013).

A common theme that emerged was students' belief that the classes had helped them to think more independently. Whilst one student before the programme felt that the most difficult aspect of History was 'working out what my opinion is', by the mid-point questionnaire a reasonably typical response was that the UPCs have 'allowed me to think in more depth and critically'. One student went so far as to say that they 'have begun to question aspects of history, and life in general, that I didn't before'. The independent thought required in the UPCs was often articulated in opposition to A-level study, where 'the kind of perceptions you end up with' are 'quite narrow'. In the group interview one student explained the difference between the UPCs and the curriculum:

We seemed to ask more questions. I suppose in our lessons we are told – like – um, not what to think but we are sort of like told for the exam. But we just think more independently.

Arguably linked to independent thought (and its development) is discussion and this was an aspect of the UPCs that students regularly commended (see Figure 4.5). Typical was this comment that '[t]he discussions are the most useful aspect because they allow you to hear a range of opinions'. Moreover, the quality of discussion was the feature of the classes that I most frequently referenced in my teacher journal, reflecting an importance which I placed upon discussion.

Fig. 4.5. Aspect of UPCs that students found most useful, mid-point questionnaire



Teacher voice likewise suggested that students developed their ability to think independently. My journal indicated that some students were better at this than others, for example, I praised John and Nathan for ‘beginning to challenge views’. Staff questionnaires also suggested that students displayed independent thinking. One colleague noted how ‘[s]tudents had clearly taken control of their research’; another described how they ‘all had a clearly-framed thesis’.

Collectively, these findings suggest that students definitely deployed independent thinking during the UPCs, even if any improvement in the *quality* of independent thinking cannot be attributed with certainty.

Students who completed the programme all demonstrated wider reading, with the majority increasing both the quality and quantity of their reading material from the start of the course. At both the beginning and the end of the UPCs, students were asked what books related to history they had recently read. Of the eight initial respondents, four categories emerged. Three students named books written by historians; two students cited historical fiction or popular History books; two

students had not read anything at all; and one student could be classed as a utilitarian reader – he had only read extracts of chapters for his Extended Project Qualification.

By the end of the project, all of the three respondents had read books by historians. Ian named one historian at the start, and another at the end of the intervention. Nathan and Edward demonstrated greater development in this regard: before the UPCs, they had read three and two popular History books, respectively, but no books by academic historians. At the end of the UPCs, both boys had read two different books by historians, as well as additional popular History titles. Moreover, all participants in the group interview said that they had made use of the wider reading materials that I placed on the school's VLE. However, this could be an example of 'group think' (Cohen et al., 2007: 373) as my teacher journal suggested in two sessions that no students had completed the set reading. Indeed, of Mercer's three categories of talk, the group interview clearly corresponds with '[c]umulative talk, in which speakers build positively but uncritically on what the other has said' (Mercer, 1995: 104). Excluding common words, the third most frequent word used in the group interview after 'think' and 'history' was 'yeah', which suggests the extent of affirmative discourse deployed. Therefore, considering the potential subjectivity of the interview and the reduced data-set for the evaluation questionnaire, further corroboration of students' levels of reading is needed. An analysis of student essays, however, shows full referencing, proving that students were completing some wider reading beyond their A-level courses, at least to meet the requirements of the UPCs written tasks.

In regards to 'faculty of writing' (University of Oxford, 2013: 2), the impact of the UPCs was shown mostly in essay structure and student perception of the purpose

of writing. Students felt they had improved their 'writing style in essays'. One student stated that they had 'become better at forming a balanced opinion into an argument' and another expressed this as now understanding 'how to argue my point across firmly'. Others enjoyed the freedom of not having a specific structure for their written work. All the students in the group interview contrasted this to essay writing at A-level. Characteristic of their responses was this comment:

...in A-level History, it's all just: this is the structure, follow it and you'll get full marks. It was nice in certain ways to write freely to some extent.

Some change in the purpose of written work was also demonstrated in the essay feedback session of the UPCs. My teacher journal described this session where students gave each other feedback on their essays as 'useful'. On reflection, my comment that 'we all gave productive feedback' emphasises that students were embracing the formative, rather than summative, approach to written work as well as a collaborative approach to the construction of knowledge.

It seems, therefore, that the students who took part in the UPCs had begun both to adjust to the formative purpose of university essays and also to move away from a strict A-level writing structure that Hibbert (2002, 2006) had found could hinder transition to university study.

4.3. What do both student and teacher voice suggest about how University Preparation classes might be improved?

4.3.a. Practicalities

Timing was a feature that emerged repeatedly on how to improve the UPCs. This was interesting in light of the fact that I had already revised the timing in view of the pilot findings and had started the UPCs five months earlier in the school year. One student still felt that it could be started earlier and suggested introducing the classes to Year 11 as well. However, timing issues were most frequently based on the variety of pressures on students. Typical of this category was this response to the question ‘What do you think would improve these classes?’: ‘[i]f I had more time/less commitments to fully enjoy them’. Whilst I could not have reduced students’ other commitments, one solution may have been to publicise the UPCs to parents so that they were able to support and prioritise their children’s commitments. Additionally, the suggestion that UPCs could be expanded to younger students is certainly one that I would like to explore.

Other temporal concerns focused upon the length of sessions being too short. One student suggested running the sessions after school so we could have longer than the 30-minute lunch-break. I also reflected in my journal that we needed more time for particular sessions, consequently modifying the planned programme to allow some sessions to run to a second week. Time was similarly a concern for one student who felt unable to consolidate his ideas fully:

...some of [the sessions] you think ... you can go away and watch or read something, but if you’re not discussing it again – or if you’ve read it before

but haven't actually been talking about it before, you might not understand it so much.

On reflection, to allow for greater consolidation, it may be preferable to extend the programme across two years, with each topic set across two weeks: the first for introduction and exposition; the second for discussion based on further reading.

There were some additional improvements suggested by both students and staff that can be categorised as 'practical'. At the mid-point questionnaire, one student asked if they could have a "log book" so [they] could have a record of every session and take notes if required, coming back to it to review what [they] covered and to do extra reading when [they] get spare time.' Consequently, I provided students with exercise books in which to record notes. Another suggestion, made by a member of staff, was to change the venue for the student presentations from my classroom to a meeting room, where students could use the 'plasma screen to give it some gravitas'. This certainly might have an impact on the perceived value of the UPCs by the school and, in line with this, I have reflected that I could have also invited parents and governors to the student presentations to help give recognition to their work.

4.3.b Agency

One unexpected theme that arose from an analysis of voice - both student and my own - was that of agency. Students pointed to an improved sense of agency in the UPCs in comparison to normal A-level lessons. One student stated that 'it was nice to get some opinions on what *we* think about History [original emphasis]'. Another student emphasised this when discussing the written task, her discourse littered with personal pronouns:

And you had – it was your own choice. You could choose anything you wanted to do. So that was good as well.

Seeing as students valued this sense of agency, upon reflection, the UPCs could have enhanced this further, possibly through more independent choice of topics for the sessions, rather than them all being chosen by myself.

Analysis of my teacher journal reveals, at times, that I had a limited view of my own agency in regards to both my subject knowledge and pedagogy. A significant proportion of my journal records my negative feelings on what did not go as well as I had hoped. For the session on the British Empire, I felt that ‘I had not prepared for this session as well. Not my subject specialism. Wasn’t able to probe as well as I’d like’. Other entries noted that ‘[m]y questioning could have been better to draw out points’ or pondered whether it was ‘[t]oo led? By me?’ One way of addressing this would be to develop my subject knowledge on the topics I felt less confident about; a more effective way might be to combine this with my reflections on student agency and run the UPCs in a format that places more onus on the students to lead sessions.

4.3.c Historical knowledge

Triangulation of the data suggests that a further area that could improve the UPCs was the development of students’ historical knowledge. Both my journal and the staff questionnaire, as well as attesting to improvements in historical knowledge, simultaneously suggested that this could have been developed further. One member of staff pointed out that students’ presentations should ‘[u]se other arguments, either from historical schools of thought or recognised sources’. I had also felt that students’ limited grasp of historical knowledge prevented them from

being able to support their ideas during the discussions on the nature of History. Moreover, as already discussed, their written accounts of the last 2000 years of British history showed no improvement. A number of students expressed that they wanted to spend more time developing a framework of British history. However, as argued above, this lack of a 'big picture' of History (Shemilt, 2009) may be better addressed by change *within* the curriculum, rather than beyond the classroom so that 'historical consciousness' does not become the privilege of the few, rather than the right of all students of History.

5. Conclusion and implications

5.1 Conclusion

Increasing pressure on non-selective schools to raise students' aspirations to apply to the most prestigious universities to address the applications gap (DCSF, 2008; DfE, 2014a; Ofsted, 2013a, 2015; Sutton Trust, 2011) has not been accompanied by guidance on how schools can best achieve this (Donnelly, 2014a). My previous research (Watkins, 2014) found that School X's applications to elite universities were below average and that students wanted to be provided with additional support. This project sought to investigate the form that 'support from school' should take within a History context. Using action research, I have explored one method that could be used to support elite university History applicants in the form of UPCs and have evaluated the impact of this intervention.

A review of the literature enabled me to compile a list of six key characteristics of high performance in History. This list was broadly in line with the criteria which elite universities seek in applicants (University of Cambridge, 2014a; University of Oxford, 2013, 2014; Zimdars et al., 2009). The UPCs had at least some impact on the development of each of the six characteristics. The first – the depth of historical knowledge and sound historical understanding – and fifth characteristic – the ability to make links between events across the breadth of both time and space – can be linked, and results in this area were somewhat mixed. Written work aimed to assess students' grasp of a historical 'big picture' – as a measure of their historical consciousness (Shemilt, 2009) – but found no improvement in their

narratives, with one student regressing down the levels set out by Foster et al. (2008). This suggests that, according to Shemilt's (2009: 194) criteria, my sample of students do not meet the 'necessary condition' of 'more sophisticated' historical consciousness. However, both student and teacher voice, together with written work, suggested that the UPCs had resulted in improved historical knowledge. Students also felt that they were more able to link events across time, particularly in regards to historical change. This raises important questions on the nature of overarching frameworks, their implementation in the curriculum, and their assessment. Indeed, these findings may be placed alongside those of Instone (2013) to question whether a 'big picture' framework is needed in order to display historical understanding.

The UPCs were found to have a positive impact on both the second and third characteristics: lucid written communication, thorough analysis and critical reading of both evidence and interpretations of the past. Students moved away from the rigid essay structures of A-level that Hibbert describes (2002, 2006) – and enjoyed doing so. They also developed their wider reading in both quality and quantity. In addition, students at the end of the UPCs were more likely to see interpretations as more complex, believing them to be the most difficult aspect of History.

The UPCs were found to have more impact than A-level on nurturing the fourth characteristic of high performance – an enjoyment of and engagement in historical enquiry and independent thinking. Data collected in my study confirms earlier work by Booth (2001, 2005) and Hibbert (2002, 2006) that students feel A-level History does not cultivate independent thinking: A-level was too dominated by the

needs of the exam. Students testified to the positive impact that the UPCs had had on their ability to think independently.

Finally, student data suggested that the sixth characteristic – a philosophical awareness of the discipline of History – was one of the principal areas on which the UPCs had had an impact. Students felt that this concept was completely foreign to them before the classes. By the end of the UPCs, students were more likely to ask questions about the nature of History, demonstrating disciplinary understanding.

In relation to my objective to provide support for university applications, slightly more impact was witnessed in regards to university intentions than university destinations. Whereas all students expressed an interest in applying to study History both before and after the UPCs, the data collected at the end only represented half the original sample. A surprising finding was that while most students at the beginning of the UPCs felt the main reason for applying to study History was associated with employability, after having taken part in the UPCs, students were most likely to cite enjoyment. As well as this change confirming earlier research by Booth (1997) and Hibbert (2006), it also implies that students enjoyed the different type of learning that the UPCs offered and that this contributed to more students making HE decisions based on their love of the subject rather than their career prospects.

A weakness of my methodology was that I did not assess university destination intentions at the start of the intervention; data was only collected at the mid- and end-point. Even though all participants in the study either had applied, or expressed intention to apply to a Russell Group university by the mid-point of the

programme, it is not known whether this represents decisions made prior to the UPCs, or as a result of having attended the classes. Some change was detected; having completed the UPCs, one additional student wished to apply to Oxbridge and two participants in the pilot cycle did make Oxford applications. Nonetheless, any claims about association between UPCs and propensity to apply Oxbridge can only be tentative.

5.2 Limitations

The benefit of qualitative research is that it enables detailed understanding of the specific sample's view on the UPCs, but caution must be exercised in generalising these findings beyond this sample to provision for History students more widely. It may be that the largely positive findings would only be found in the specific context of School X or even within this specific sample. Furthermore, even within the sample, my conclusions must only be tentative due to the dropout rate and the consequently reduced data-set. Conclusions about students' historical frameworks and university intentions were particularly restricted by a small return at the end of the programme and this is an area that would benefit from further research to support my findings. Due to the nature of the classes and the below-average attainment profile of sixth-form students at School X, I could not reasonably expect to draw a wider sample per year than I gathered for this study. However, a study of the UPCs either implemented over three years at School X, or over one year in more schools, would address the stability of my findings. A study over three years would also allow for full analysis of UCAS data, as I was unable to analyse the impact of

the UPCs on eventual university destinations due to the time restrictions upon my research, which did not correspond with a complete UCAS application cycle.

5.3 Implications

The findings of my research have implications for teaching and learning in History. Firstly, as students enjoyed the level of independent study of the UPCs and found this to contrast with their experience of A-level (confirming findings from the literature of the inadequacies of A-level to prepare students for the independent thinking of university (Booth, 2005; Hibbert, 2006)), there seems to be a need to explore ways of enhancing student agency in the teaching of A-level. I wonder whether student-led enquiry, along the lines proposed by Burnham (2007), Conway (2011) and Hammond (2011), could be integrated into sixth-form teaching, beyond the realm of the personal study.

Secondly, as a result of my findings that even students taking part in the UPCs (who were all high-attaining sixth-formers) did not have a ‘big picture’ of British history, more research is called for in order to understand how usable historical frameworks can be implemented into the school curriculum. At School X, using a resource that I made for the UPCs to teach 2000 years of British history, informed by the literature (Howson, 2007; Shemilt, 2000, 2009) (see Appendix P), a colleague and I have designed our own framework to build into our teaching of GCSE Crime and Punishment. More practical studies of teaching historical frameworks may increase the likelihood of students developing a historical ‘big picture’.

Thirdly, the extent of consensus in the literature between the characteristics of high performance in History at both school- and university-level merits acknowledgement in school History departments. On a personal level, I have particularly questioned how many opportunities I provide in my lessons to develop these six characteristics of high performance. I wonder whether these criteria may be useful for other teachers, especially since the advent of 'life after levels' with the abolition of the NCAT. As a department, we intend to consider these characteristics as the highest level of our progression model for Key Stages 3 and 4.

Additionally, my research findings have implications for future UPCs. I will continue to run the classes and to simultaneously conduct action research to monitor their impact. I strongly support Eyre's (2006) view that there should be additional History-specific extended provision available for students across key stages, and the UPCs could meet this need. However, I do still feel that the UPCs are best positioned as sixth-form provision, but I would like to involve younger years by inviting them to the student presentations, or by inviting them to special sessions to be run by sixth-formers – in a bid to further develop participants' agency as well.

On a wider level, there are a number of implications arising from my research in regards to collaboration. In the first instance, these are based on collaboration with colleagues within School X. The intervention itself was highly influenced by collaboration with Teacher Y. However, having completed my research, I feel further collaboration with colleagues at School X would be beneficial. I shared my findings in a twilight training session that I held for colleagues across School X and invited discussion on what additional support might look like in their respective subjects. Answers have not yet been produced, but a dialogue has begun. This is

one way of addressing Hibbert's (2006) findings that History provision beyond the curriculum was not effective when it relied only on the motivation of single teachers. Indeed, my project will be shared with the Senior Leadership Team and, given the evidence from this research that students value this form of support, together with the fact that destinations data is now being used as a measure of school effectiveness (DfE, 2014a; Ofsted, 2013a), it is suggested that school policy should place value upon staff participation in extra-curricular provision, such as the UPCs.

There are also wider implications for collaboration between schools and elite universities. Hibbert (2006) and Pugsley (2007) both described how teachers who attended Oxbridge themselves were able to use their own networks and contacts at elite universities to deliver support for students. Further research measuring the impact that networks such as these have on admissions would be informative. As someone without such networks, I certainly feel that it is more difficult to arrange lectures with dons – a practice described by Hibbert (2006) – as I would have to contact the outreach department rather than, potentially, being able to contact academics directly. My research therefore implies that university outreach policy would benefit by exploring further ways of helping teachers to collaborate with elite universities. Indeed, elite universities should consider devoting more of their Widening Participation budget, which has been boosted by increased student tuition fees, to subject teachers' professional learning on how they can best prepare students for applications to their institutions. This may call for more support for teachers in the development of their subject knowledge in order that they can best deliver support for their students.

Finally, there are broader implications of this research for collaboration between schools themselves. Although Burn et al. (2010) and Cordingley et al. (2005) have shown that teacher collaboration positively impacts on teacher effectiveness, it seems that, given the absence of literature and resources, competition between schools over elite university admissions may have so far harmed the ability of teachers to share with other schools the extended provision that they provide for Oxbridge applicants. This being said, events such as the HA's 'Doing History at competitive universities' has opened some doors to collaboration, allowing teachers to network and to work together in this pursuit. To further this dialogue between teachers, I plan to share my findings in the professional journal, *Teaching History*. However, my research implies that more can still be done in this regard and, rather than this falling on individuals and organisations such as the HA, it would be useful if government policy were supported by suggestions on implementing the support that is expected of schools in order to raise application aspirations.

By means of a final thought, Allouch and Buisson-Fenet's argument on the most effective methods of positive action in addressing the participation gap is worthy of citation:

... in order to overcome individuals' tendency not to put themselves forward for consideration, the answer is to prepare candidates rather than change the test, to support applicants rather than reform the admissions procedure (2009: 239).

University Preparation Classes can tentatively be concluded to be one effective method to 'prepare candidates' and to 'support applicants'. These claims call for further collaborative professional learning in order to strengthen these conclusions.

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Appendix A: GCSE Grade A Description

Candidates recall, select, organise and deploy detailed historical knowledge effectively and with consistency. They show thorough understanding of the historical periods, themes and topics studied. They communicate their ideas using historical terms accurately and appropriately. They demonstrate their understanding of the past through developed, reasoned and well-substantiated explanations. They make perceptive analyses of the key concepts, features and characteristics of the periods studied, and the interrelationships between them. They evaluate and use critically a wide range of sources of information in an historical context to investigate historical questions, problems or issues independently, and to reach reasoned and substantiated conclusions. They recognise and provide reasoned comments on how and why events, people and issues have been interpreted and represented in different ways, and provide a well-developed consideration of their value in relation to their historical context. (Ofqual, 2012: 7-8)

Appendix B: NAGTY Characteristics of High Achievement in History (Chapman, 2006: 2-3)

The figure originally presented here cannot be made freely available via ORA because of copyright. The figure was sourced at Chapman, A. (2006) ***Supporting High Achievement in History : Conclusions of the NAGTY History Think Tank 28/29 November 2005***. [Online] NAGTY.

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Appendix C: List of the History Extension Activities provided by Villiers Park Educational Trust (2015)

- Why History Matters: An Introduction
- Time and Counterfactual History
- Ideas of History: from the Ancients to the Christians
- Ideas of History: The Middle Ages
- The Enlightenment and its Legacy
- Postmodernism and History
- Public History
- Feminism and Gender in History
- History and Anthropology
- Developmental Models of History: Marxism

Appendix D: Pilot Programme Resources

History Extension Programme – 16+

	Key question	Task set
1	What are your thoughts on History? Why do you want to study it?	Write a written response to the reading material.
2	What is History? Issues in historical thought	Write a written response about a chosen historical period
3	Why was your person/event significant? What have you learned?	Evaluate what learned and feelings on History.

a) Choose ONE of these topics to write at least a 2 page response (max 2,000 words)

Key reading

- Munshaw's review of Carr's *What is History?*
<http://www.history.ac.uk/ihr/Focus/Whatishistory/carr1.html>

Suggested reading

- Extract from Tosh, J. (2008) *Why History Matters*, Palgrave Macmillan: Basingstoke.
 - Extract from Evans, R. J. (1997) *In Defence of History*, Granta: London.
1. Can historians really be objective?
 2. 'All history is contemporary history' (Benedetto Croce). Discuss.
 3. Do you think that the word 'truth' has outlived its usefulness in History?

Vellacott History Prize, Cambridge University (essay 2,000-4,000 words; deadline 21st March)

4. 'Men make their own history, but they do not make it just as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given, and transmitted from the past' (Karl Marx). Discuss.

University of Sheffield essay competition, max 1,500 words – deadline 31 March

5. Can TV history replace the history book? Discuss with reference to one particular TV history series or programme.

St Hilda's College Oxford essay competition, max 2,500 words - Friday 11 April 2014

6. What can buildings tell historians about past societies?
7. Can verse ever be useful to historians as a source of evidence?
8. Has gender or social class been more important in shaping women's lives in history?
9. Is it true that class conflict has been the engine of history?
10. Does religion usually hinder social change?

St Hugh's College, University of Oxford Julia Wood Prize 2014 by Friday 11th July 2014 (choice of essay optional, 2,000-4,000 words)

b) Choose ONE of these topics to write at least a 2 page response (max 2,000 words)

EITHER

1. Who benefited from the Black Death?
2. 'Henry VIII was a psychopath' (Kevin Dutton). Discuss.
3. Was there an 'English Revolution' in the seventeenth century?
4. Why were people in the twentieth-century convinced by 'scientific racism'?
5. Was the 'Blitz Spirit' a myth?
6. What is African history?
7. Discuss the issues at stake in a debate about the German past and its representation in Germany.
8. What's the difference between women's history and gender history?

University of Sheffield essay competition, max 1,500 words – deadline 31 March

9. Did the barbarian invasions cause the end of the western Roman empire?
10. Does King Richard III deserve to be rehabilitated?
11. What was the effect of First World War on the Irish Home Rule movement?

OR

- a) Evaluate the significance of an event in a period of your choosing.
- b) Evaluate the significance of a person in a period of your choosing.

Appendix E: Example of Pilot Programme Questionnaire

History beyond A-Level

1. How valuable do you think knowledge of the past is to society?

Very - shapes how you behave today.

2. How valuable do you think a History degree is?

Highly valuable - good platform for variety of next steps / career paths.

3. What do you think History equips a graduate with?

Balancing an argument
Taking in variety of arguments

Analyzing sources

4. What value do you think a History degree might have for you personally?

Enjoyable
Academic basis.

5. What do you find most difficult about the study of History?

Consolidating all the info.
Not contradicting arguments.

6. What do you most enjoy about the study of History?

Interesting
Essay based - good at writing.

Appendix F: Examples of Pilot Programme Student work

Can historians really be objective?

At first thought it may seem axiomatic that historians are unable to be truly objective with any report, source or evidence to which they acclaim. This is due to the constant margin for interpretation or subjectivity that no matter how small or large, will always remain. This means that despite whatever the evidence may be, there is always room for a tiny slant or spin on 'factual' information that is given to us. However with deeper thinking it is possible to understand that—maybe in some forms, evidence is completely unbiased, especially in scientific fields. Carr's 'What is History?' of 1961 can be placed directly under the spotlight in order to help us answer this question.

Argument clearly set out

What does objective mean? Good to define terms

Of course, it can be argued that the professionalism of a modern historian has surely evolved into one where subjectivity has been removed, and that surely the most experienced of historians and fact-finders are knowledgeable enough to be able to produce evidence without the risk of applying any personal slant on information. Carr has influenced many historians in his writing when he argued that history could be entirely objective. Carr wrote that if historians can 'do it properly' and 'don't choose to lie about the evidence', then they can 'probably get the story straight'. This perhaps implies that those historians who are able to complete the analysis correctly and simply maintain correctness throughout, are able to produce objective forms of evidence. Not only here would it seem as though Carr was arguing that objectivity in history is possible, it would also seem as if there is an implication that is a lot more achievable than perhaps many believe.

Despite Carr's connection to postmodernism (Munslow = wrong)

good to cite historians from past re from empiricism + positivism since Herodotus (widely considered for history)

Many historians in the past also argue in favour of the truthfulness of historical content, and furthermore appear to argue that an objective source is realistic. From Munslow's review of Carr's 'What is History?', we can learn that commonly known historians such as Arthur Marwick believed and argued that despite our interpretations of current events, historical events that are set in stone and are unchangeable still remain to influence our perception, perhaps meaning that these hard and brutal facts are one common source of objective information. Munslow's review of Carr's book also includes the information that differing ideological pairs such as Marxists and Liberals are able to 'agree on the facts', despite their individual differences. Munslow also goes on to state that 'we cannot destroy the knowability of past reality even as we re-emphasise it'. What we can infer from this is that as humans we are capable of being aware and knowledgeable of this 'past reality' and able to understand it, therefore implying that surely as a result of this we are capable of being objective. This continues Carr's previous view that historians are able to 'get it right', especially when it comes to the 'past reality' that Munslow talks about in his review.

well supported + argues point

The repeated use of the word 'fact' throughout Munslow's piece would also imply a good claim to the possibility of objectivity in historical research. The argument that some figures, where they be instances of quantitative or qualitative data, are hardboiled truth, they are 'facts'. It may be argued that not every number or sentence we are fed is the truth, but surely it can be strongly argued that some instances of data are axiomatic in their truthfulness and validity. For example when a historian writes that the Great Fire of London occurred in 1666, or that approximately 6 million Jews died in as a result of Hitler's radical dictatorship, can these numbers be considered objective? It can be argued that the answer to this question can be considered a yes because surely, if these figures and dates are accepted by all, this means they are true, and therefore unaffected by any means of personal opinion or subjectivity. Therefore specific types of data that are so well-known and so vastly

itself as axiomatic that subject is good to evaluate + explore this from a relativist stance

accepted by large numbers of people, surely argue as an objective source if there is no disagreement or spectrum of opinion about these occurrences.

The basic theory of interpretation is one that disputes the argument that historians can be objective in any way. Munslow mentions that "the facts of history never come to us pure, but are always refracted through the mind of the historian". In explaining this it can be stated that in simple terms, any piece of information that is written by any historian will include a personal slant or opinion, ultimately making any source of any kind subjective. What Munslow tries to describe is that no matter how hard a historian is to try, it is impossible for him/her to leave a totally balanced and objective viewpoint around their document. Munslow mentions in his review that this logic may perhaps lead to something called 'total scepticism', whereby this logic is invalid as it appears to suggest that no source can ever be true. Despite this counterargument, this widely accepted theory of interpretation would suggest that no source throughout the world can be deemed utterly truthful and all information has element of personal subjectivity. Consequently it can be strongly argued here that historians cannot be objective at all. *danger?*

The naturally occurring individual differences from person to person is also a considerably large factor in this debate. Whether the person reporting the information is a historian or not, based on this idea not one individual judgement can be made on what is right and what is wrong. Witnesses of an event may report their experience to a historian, who will then publish it, at the same time as another witness informing another historian of their 'side of the story'. So in the field of events, perhaps every witness sees something slightly different to another, meaning in essence there is no proper 'truth' of a situation that has been affected. Even if a historian was to witness an event first hand, and try their best to remove any personality or sentiment from their perception of that event, their perspective would only be true to them and therefore surely that information is deemed subjective. It can be argued here that overall no two people will have an identical viewpoint of an event, and therefore no pure agreements can be made, meaning that no information is in fact objective. *nice point*

Prior experience and knowledge to an event or instance also ties in with a view that individual differences prevents a source from being entirely objective. Munslow writes in his book review that historical meaning is influenced 'by her knowledge of the context', and this is arguably true for any source from any person. This creates the idea that our subjectivity comes almost unconsciously from our past experience. For instance, a soldier that fights in the Second World War may have a less radical view of the war if they have had prior experience of conflict from the First World War. However, young, in fact, underage soldiers will have described their experiences in WW2 as the most tremendously horrific experience of their lifetime, simply because they have had nothing else of the same scale to compare it to. This again links back to the original idea of personal subjectivity that disputes Carr's idea of a possibly objective historian.

Language Therefore it can be concluded that the objectivity of historians is achievable, but only on a very small, in fact, tiny scale. This is due to the idea that some, globally accepted facts must be true because of the lack of dispute on the, for example, dates, places and events are considered indisputable on the majority. However, in almost any other scenario it is proposed by Munslow and theories of others that sources of information can not in any way originate from an entirely, balanced and unaffected point, that is of course a human origin. *need to support this*

'Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given, and transmitted from the past' (Karl Marx) Discuss.

Karl Marx was co-author of the 'Communist Manifesto' and is a renowned figure in the development of Communist ideology. His view that men 'make their own history', 'but under circumstances... transmitted from the past' places a balance between individualism or freedom of choice and the constraints of society; many of which are directly passed down from the events of history. *Good you set out your views here?*

Most significantly, the past does dictate the stance and position we happen to take on a variety of issues - and thus the history we make - to a fair extent. The life of Marx himself, and the development of the Communist Manifesto, was influenced by the past. He thought up and developed Communism after seeing the wealth of his middle class family; with a belief that he was living off the labour of others in a system of capitalism which was rooted in the past and had developed over time - basing these ideas of the philosophy of Hegel. Marx felt a certain discomfort in the fact that 'it is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but... their social existence determines their consciousness.' Men are born in to a social class and structured social environment which has been developed over time, with that environment - 'transmitted from the past' - going on to shape their life. This can resonate in the modern day, with the dominance in UK politics of Etonians and other public school figures: Blair, Cameron, Osborne, Johnson. These are primary examples of figures for whom the past that they had no part in shaping has meant they have a greater chance of success in life. The widespread public dislike of the Communist movement, which Marx played a key role in shaping, is seemingly not because of the theory itself but because of historical examples of it being implemented by brutal dictators such as Stalin.

Furthermore, we are constrained by the past, and therefore do not make our history as we please, to a greater extent. Our actions are limited by what others, long dead, chose to do. Would our lives today be different had the Normans lost at the Battle of Hastings in 1066? If Franz Ferdinand was never killed in 1914? If Hitler was never born? These are unanswerable questions, but they show that the lives of each person today were inevitably influenced and are still restricted - to what extent we do not know - by the actions taken by generations long since gone. Likewise, the values of society more generally and the culture of each nation; including the general perception of what is right or wrong - was developed long ago. For instance, the Second Amendment of the US constitution, setting out the right to bear arms, was entrenched in 1791; a different time when the militia were effectively made up of the people of the USA and no real police force or military was in place. Nonetheless, the constitution is still interpreted in this way and has a significant influence on the gun rights debate in the modern day - even after the Sandy Hook Elementary shooting the people of the US defend their right to bear weapons, with this happening under circumstances without doubt dictated by the past.

On top of this, the circumstances in which we live are transmitted from the past; with this archaic culture even physically reflected through buildings and architecture. For example, the unelected House of Lords has seen its chamber in place since the 1706 Treaty of Union and 1707 Acts of Union - with a mouse infestation corroborating its age. Despite this, the entire UK government is based on this system which also includes the House of Commons, established 300 years ago. It could be said that many of the various criticisms of UK politics essentially arise from the outdated nature of the system. By using a system established in the past, whilst we admittedly retain tradition and a link with that past, issues are bound to appear. It is often said the Houses of Parliament are alienating to women, with women making up just 23% of the House of Commons, and this comes down to the dominance of men, as is also the case in business and religion - with a consistent refusal to give women a greater role in Christianity and Islam. It has been said the constructs of power determine events; with a resulting male skew on public life - and this likely originates from Roman male supremacy, with British institutions struggling to adapt in the modern day as the makeup of these institutions is so largely influenced by 'circumstances directly encountered, given... from the past.'

The buildings themselves influence person or constructs of power may embody?

However, it could be argued that we are not in fact governed by the past, but can learn from the past to change in the future - 'those who cannot remember the past are condemned to repeat it' (Santayana.) For instance, the ease by which Hitler was able to escalate his operations can be put down to failures by Britain and other countries; failures which have been prevented in the modern day by new safeguards put in place by the UN, NATO and other bodies; much like what also happened after Stalinism was ended in Russia. Admittedly, however, by learning from the past and ensuring we do not repeat the past we can be said to be governed by that past to an extent. Stalinism was played upon greatly by the Americans hoping to create a 'red scare' during the Vietnam War, as in the Cambodian Civil War, with the idea of a domino theory and communists everywhere: even Kennedy was accused of being a Communist at one point. For this period the US was controlled by the past due to the immense fear of repeating it - much of that fear created by the US government itself - meaning it could be said the circumstances 'transmitted from the past' had a significant impact on the actions the US and other countries took; and the lives their people lived. Even events as recent as the Arab Spring were seemingly new and unpredictable, but were rooted fundamentally in the past. *how? further clarification would be good here.*

More recently, the past has had a far less significant impact on the lives we live. It has been said that much of the general population suffer from 'Historical Attention Span Deficit Disorder,' thanks to the rare references to the past from the media and the general decline in historical knowledge amongst the majority of people. In our detached, liberal, modern society some argue we feel we are separate from the past and therefore know less about it, meaning the influence it has on our lives is minimal. Our circumstances are dictated by the past less and less - so much of present day life is composed here and now: from modern art, to the increase of globalisation, to the growth of multiple new technologies. This is the case so much so, Fukuyama argued we may have in fact reached 'the end of history,' a time of peace where reference to the past is tangential. This contrasts with the 'red scare' in the USA; a time when people needed an understanding, albeit based upon a subjective account, of the past to invoke fears of returning to that past and away from our present. Carr argued that we are in 'an unending dialogue between past and present'; we are in the middle of time, and one day we will be history, so the influence of the past is notable but not exclusive. Tosh backed this, adding that we should situate 'the present in the processes which link it with the past and the future.' In an increasingly detached society, he believes, it should not only be the past that informs the present: but what we think and hope the future may hold.

Burke → tradition = Relationship / partnership between those who are living, those who have died, and those yet to be born.

It will undoubtedly be said that we position ourselves against the past; comparing our present day society to that of the past in order to pick out variation of culture and narratives of change in the modern day. Constantly comparing the modern day and the past principally means we are living our lives in circumstances defined by that past. For instance, British people tend to refer to national history, with chauvinism in the British Empire among some as they look back to the past to remember it; with this past empire arguably influencing the role of the UK on the world stage today. Moreover, identity history can be found among certain groups like women and the Black community, with a sense of nostalgia created as people have pride in individual stories and link themselves to the past: with their sense of identity in the modern day set out by events which occurred historically. However, the past is also often used to set apart the changes which have been made, for better or worse - like the decline of the British empire or increasing equality. It could be said there have been certain changes in society but, all in all, the past has developed a set of 'norms' and convention upon which we base our lives today. The tradition of Parliament, for example, provides historical grounding for our system of government: but it has been said the system should be changed and 'modernised' to suit the present day. It is questionable whether change is always a force for good, or whether a link to the past should always be retained. Many have claimed we are living within the 'norms' of an old generation and culture - such as on the issue of gay marriage which, until recently, was still outlawed in the UK - and the only way to remove the chains of the past is through reform of the UK's legal and parliamentary system, and thus of society more generally.

about the Amendment 1885 → gross indecency vs sodomy

As an alternative to living on the basis of history, we should look to the future. When the state pension was established, for example, it was based on the fact that in 1909 just 5% of the

* Chesterton - 'A democracy of the dead'

population were over 70 years old (the age required to get a state pension) and thus it was affordable for the government. By basing this on the past, however, it has been argued an unsustainable system was created: in 1909 just 1 out of every 200 people would live to the age of 100, yet 100 years later 1 in 4 people live to this age. By basing the pensions system on history, instead of looking to the future, the system is now more and more unaffordable for the taxpayer → *eg?* and significant reforms are needed. On the same note, some have said Clement Attlee failed to look forward when he set up the NHS in 1948 - with healthcare funding now at £108.9 billion compared to the £437 million when it was set up - which would equate to just £9 billion today. These are just two examples of what some say is 'an obsession with history,' with decisions moulded too much by the past rather than looking to the future. Schorske believed thinking with history and contextualising ourselves allows us to 'orient ourselves in the living present' - a belief that we are not restricted by the past but that history is merely 'an arena for contemplation' (Jordanova) that we should consider alongside possible alternatives for the future. *ref.*

On top of this, Marx is wrong to a fair extent, because the world is ever changing, moulding organically and the 'belief in history's capacity to understand the present and enlarge its sense of possibilities has never been weaker.' People no longer wish to root themselves in the past, in times gone by, but want to look to the future in a more forward thinking and liberal society - a society with constantly changing circumstances and changing social values; a society where the BBC believe there now to be not three social classes, as Marx had claimed, but seven. This new society, that thinks purely of the present and the future, is evident in modern day politics: the 'modern' Conservative party have rejuvenated their image in order to brush off Thatcherism and the 'toxic Tory' brand, instead favouring 'caring Conservatism' in a new liberal world. In the same way, the Labour party in many ways don't want the electorate to look before 2010 at 'New Labour,' or even further back to the factionalised party of the 1980's; but to look forward to 'One Nation Labour' under Miliband. Politicians distancing themselves from the past is not limited to party politics, either. Codebreaker Alan Turing was issued a pardon for his convictions for homosexuality by the coalition government and Tony Blair expressed 'deep sorrow' for the slave trade, stopping short of a full apology. This raised the question of whether these things come down to us, the present generation, in the modern day. Is it not our duty to take responsibility for the wrongdoings of previous generations if we wish to take credit for their successes? *it'sel a Conserv narrow back Disraeli*

However, Marx is right to a larger extent - the past is relevant in the modern day in a variety of areas. The post 9/11 fear, for instance, was shaped on the past: the declaration of war in Iraq took place in a 'post 9/11 world,' a world of increased fear with people willing to give up more and more of their privacy and rights based on the alarm invoked by the past. The weak take-up by the UK press and public, of the revelations by Edward Snowden about the invasion of privacy by GCHQ and the NSA goes to show that, even in an increasingly liberal society, people are willing to sacrifice rights for security; influenced by terrorist events years ago. Likewise, the lack of international action in Ukraine is, some argue, taking place in the shadow of the Cold War - with international leaders reluctant to start something bigger by getting involved at this stage; all of this is based on what history has shown. Nonetheless, there is scepticism about the practical benefits of history: Blair contradicted Marx's statement upon the invasion of Iraq in 2003, saying 'there has never been a time... when... a study of history provides so little instruction for our present day.' - *Washu right*

In conclusion, overall it could be said 'Men make their own history, but they do not make it as they please; they do not make it under circumstances chosen by themselves, but under circumstances directly encountered, given, and transmitted from the past' to a large extent. Our society and the environment in which we live has been passed down and adapted over endless previous generations, with the past inevitably going to shape our views and reactions to the world we live in; and thus the decisions we make. Man does have an element of control over his own life - with self awareness and the ability to shape the future based not on what has happened before but how he would like the world to be - however in reality his control will never be entire, as it is almost impossible to break away from the past when that past has such an influence on the world in which we live. Marx himself even questioned the forces of history, arguing 'History does nothing; it does not possess immense riches, it does not fight battles. It is men, real, living, who do all this.'

+ ultimately - 1 2546 words

concur
ending more definit

Appendix G: Original UPCs Scheme of Work

Session	Objective / Key question / Activities	High performance Characteristics (NAGTY/HAT)	Historical concept (s)	Resources	Follow-up action
1	Year 13 only - HAT discussion / summer reading and British history over last 2000 years				
2	Introduction to classes - what will we do (focus on open discussion)? Collect baseline data & get to know students: Why do you want to study History? What is the story of British history over the last 2000 years? (Howson, 2007)	* An appreciation of the intrinsic value of historical learning and an enjoyment of the process * The ability to structure and to develop extended historical narrative and analysis and the ability to construct, sustain and weave together chains of reasoning, analysis, description and explanation	Continuity & change		Prep reading: Munslow review of Carr and Swain's article. Further reading by Evans on Frog
3	What is History? Discussion of reading; issues of truth / History as art or science?	* <u>the adoption of an analytical approach</u> * A developed awareness of the complexity of the past and of the process of seeking to understand it * A developed awareness of the nature of historical argument and of the ways in which historical claims are put together and justified	Truth	PPT - What is History	Prep reading: article on Citizenship / Tosh extract

4	What is the purpose of History? Discussion of reading; citizenship / identity.	* the adoption of an analytical approach * A developed awareness of the complexity of the past and of the process of seeking to understand it * A developed awareness of the nature of historical argument and of the ways in which historical claims are put together and justified	Identity		Set mini-essay (1000 word limit) on nature of history for after half term . Task: think back over what learned throughout school, can you produce a better answer to the story of Britain in the last 2000 years?
5	What is the story of British history over the last 2000 years? Developing a framework / 'big history'. What are the problems / challenges with such a framework? Is a framework desirable? Why might 'big histories' lost favour in the 1990s (Corfield's argument)?	* the adoption of an analytical approach * The ability to structure and to develop extended historical narrative and analysis * A hunger for knowledge of the past and the ability to acquire and understand large quantities of knowledge about the past *The ability to develop and internalise an 'archive' of historical knowledge and concepts and the ability to use this to frame and develop questions * The ability to make and to break historical generalisations – to see their value and also their limits	Continuity & change	Group card sort of events - sort chronologically and then into Shemilt (2009)'s 4 way framework	Watch the World History for Us All 7 minute video (youtube). Further viewing: David Christian TED talk lecture

6	What causes historical change? Introduction to interpretations of change (Whig, Marxist etc.)	<u>* the adoption of an analytical approach*</u> <u>precision, in the handling of concepts and in the selection of evidence presented to support points*</u> The ability to critically deploy historical evidence to sustain, test and develop historical arguments and to think critically about the ways in which others have done this* A willingness to construct historical hypotheses, to test and develop historical theories and descriptions and a willingness to take risks when doing so	Cause & consequence Continuity & change Interpretations	HA Why have things happened in History worksheet	Reading - Swain (ed) How do civilisations develop?
7	Is there anything which was not caused by economics (HA, 2014)? What was Marx's view of historical change? Lecture followed by discussion.	<u>* the adoption of an analytical approach</u> <u>* precision, in the handling of concepts and in the selection of evidence presented to support points</u> * The ability to critically deploy historical evidence to sustain, test and develop historical arguments and to think critically about the ways in which others have done this * A willingness to construct historical hypotheses, to test and develop historical theories and descriptions and a willingness to take risks when doing so	Cause & consequence Continuity & change Interpretations	PPT - Marx & History	Give Marx optional reading. Swain (ed) How does personality affect politics?

8	How far do individuals drive historical change? Discussion on 'great men'. Are other factors more important?	* the adoption of an analytical approach * <u>precision, in the handling of concepts and in the selection of evidence presented to support points</u> * The ability to critically deploy historical evidence to sustain, test and develop historical arguments and to think critically about the ways in which others have done this * A willingness to construct historical hypotheses, to test and develop historical theories and descriptions and a willingness to take risks when doing so	Cause & consequence Continuity & change Interpretations	Worksheet on individuals	Swain (ed.) Why do wars begin?
9	What makes an event or person historically significant? Set up significance projects to research: Choose any period of History that you do not study within the curriculum and write a written response. 'What was the historical significance of X?'	* The ability to engage in open-ended historical research and enquiry and to enjoy the process * The ability to grasp and understand historical concepts, to develop them rigorously and to apply them in a nuanced way when constructing historical analyses, arguments and explanations	Significance	Give a research proposal template for students to complete	Research topics and proposal due 2 weeks before holidays and essays due after holidays

10	Why do wars start? Ask students to come up with as many generic causes that they can. How many conflicts can they name? Look deeper at Wars of the Roses, WW1 and WW2. Compare to their studies on the Cold War.	<u>* the adoption of an analytical approach*</u> <u>precision, in the handling of concepts and</u> <u>in the selection of evidence presented to</u> <u>support points*</u> The ability to critically deploy historical evidence to sustain, test and develop historical arguments and to think critically about the ways in which others have done this* A willingness to construct historical hypotheses, to test and develop historical theories and descriptions and a willingness to take risks when doing so	Cause & consequence Interpretations War		Margaret Macmillan extract on nationalism
11	What causes nationalism? What is nationalism / a nation. When did nations emerge? How has History been used by nationalists? Discussion of Serbian case (Macmillan)	<u>* the adoption of an analytical approach</u> <u>* precision, in the handling of concepts and</u> <u>in the selection of evidence presented to</u> <u>support points</u> * The ability to critically deploy historical evidence to sustain, test and develop historical arguments and to think critically about the ways in which others have done this * A willingness to construct historical hypotheses, to test and develop historical theories and descriptions and a willingness to take risks when doing so	Cause & consequence Continuity & change Interpretations Nation	PPT	Watch John Green Youtube - Was the Renaissance a thing?

12	How do intellectual movements begin? What is an 'intellectual movement'? Lecture on scientific revolution, enlightenment & renaissance. Do conversations have an end point / are they discrete?	* <u>the adoption of an analytical approach</u> * <u>precision, in the handling of concepts and in the selection of evidence presented to support points</u> * The ability to critically deploy historical evidence to sustain, test and develop historical arguments and to think critically about the ways in which others have done this * A willingness to construct historical hypotheses, to test and develop historical theories and descriptions and a willingness to take risks when doing so	Cause & consequence Continuity & change Interpretations Ideas	PPT	Great Cat Massacre extract
13	What does this extract tell us about society and culture in 18th century France? (The Great Cat Massacre) Discussion - class, cultural traditions, anthropological approach to History	* <u>the ability to read carefully and critically</u> * <u>historical imagination</u> * <u>the adoption of an analytical approach</u> * The ability to cope with the unfamiliar (contexts, periods, cultures) and the ability to use historical imagination to engage with and attempt to understand it * The ability to read historical materials actively and critically – to read documents and accounts for purpose and to consider the aims of authors and documents	Similarity & difference Power Ideas	Essays due. Robert Darnton article from History Today	Optional - give Darnton full reference Cromwell extracts for next session

14	What is the argument of each extract? Which of these interpretations of Cromwell is best? (TH114) What has affected their interpretations?	<u>* the ability to read carefully and critically*</u> <u>the adoption of an analytical approach*</u> The ability to cope with the unfamiliar (contexts, periods, cultures) and the ability to use historical imagination to engage with and attempt to understand it* The ability to appreciate and to deal with logical complexity in historical writing and documentary materials and to consider and to evaluate conflicting and contradictory evidence and arguments* A secure grasp of the nature of historical interpretation and the ability to historicize representations and constructions of the past, in the light of a range of considerations (such as their purpose, the questions being asked and answered, provenance, audience, context)	Interpretations	Differing extracts to discuss - Marxist, Victorian, Contemporary, Revisionist (root in Chapman's 2009 on interpretations). Use SHP Scarborough (2005) activity at the back of book	Extract from Judd / James / Ferguson
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15	Was the British Empire all bad? Interpretations of empire (Judd vs James)	* <u>the ability to read carefully and critically</u> * <u>the adoption of an analytical approach</u> * The ability to cope with the unfamiliar (contexts, periods, cultures) and the ability to use historical imagination to engage with and attempt to understand it * The ability to appreciate and to deal with logical complexity in historical writing and documentary materials and to consider and to evaluate conflicting and contradictory evidence and arguments * A secure grasp of the nature of historical interpretation and the ability to historicize representations and constructions of the past, in the light of a range of considerations (such as their purpose, the questions being asked and answered, provenance, audience, context)	Interpretations	Judd / James / Ferguson extracts	Web links on public / private sphere
16	Feedback on essays. Students peer read and offer their feedback too	* <u>the adoption of an analytical approach</u> * <u>the ability to answer a question relevantly</u> * <u>the ability to offer a coherent argument</u> * <u>precision, clarity and facility of writing</u> * The ability to grasp and understand historical concepts, to develop them rigorously and to apply them in a nuanced way when constructing historical analyses, arguments and explanations * The ability to grasp, to develop and to	Significance	Student essays	Redrafting and final essay due after half term when they will present to group

		experiment with analytical historical vocabularies and to enjoy communicating historical ideas and theories			
17	What is the relationship between the public and private spheres? Definition. Is 'the personal...political'? Which sphere makes for better history?	* <u>the adoption of an analytical approach</u> * A developed awareness of the complexity of the past and of the process of seeking to understand it* A developed awareness of the nature of historical argument and of the ways in which historical claims are put together and justified* An understanding of presentism – of the inevitable human tendency to see the past in terms of the present - and of the problems and opportunities that it presents	Similarity & difference Power Ideas Gender Family	PPT	Extract from David Christian's big History (p. 472-5) on the Rapa Nui people (as referenced in Corfield's 2009 article)
18	What can we learn from the history of nature? The importance of environment, Britain's "island story".	* <u>the adoption of an analytical approach</u> * <u>precision, in the handling of concepts and in the selection of evidence presented to support points</u> * A willingness to construct historical hypotheses, to test and develop historical theories and descriptions and a willingness to take risks when doing so * The ability to cope with the unfamiliar (contexts, periods, cultures) and the ability to use historical imagination to engage with and attempt to understand it	Continuity & change Cause & consequence Nature		Extract from Kennedy The Rise & Fall of the Great Powers & BBC History article by Ferguson on 'The War of the World'

19	Can historians predict the future (HA, 2014)? Can we learn from History? Is there any value in counter-factual History?	* <u>the adoption of an analytical approach</u> * <u>precision, in the handling of concepts and in the selection of evidence presented to support points</u> * The ability to critically deploy historical evidence to sustain, test and develop historical arguments and to think critically about the ways in which others have done this * A willingness to construct historical hypotheses, to test and develop historical theories and descriptions and a willingness to take risks when doing so	Continuity & change Cause & consequence Interpretations		Further reading - Fukuyama The end of History & various counter history articles based on students own interests
20	Essays due & students present argument	* <u>the adoption of an analytical approach</u> * <u>the ability to answer a question relevantly</u> * <u>the ability to offer a coherent argument</u> * <u>precision, clarity and facility of writing</u> * The ability to grasp and understand historical concepts, to develop them rigorously and to apply them in a nuanced way when constructing historical analyses, arguments and explanations * The ability to grasp, to develop and to experiment with analytical historical vocabularies and to enjoy communicating historical ideas and theories	Significance	Student essays	Prepare presentation for staff after school last week of term

21	What can you learn from this extract? Old Bailey Proceedings. Is there such a thing as unwitting evidence?	* the ability to read carefully and critically* <u>historical imagination</u> * <u>the adoption of an analytical approach</u> * The ability to cope with the unfamiliar (contexts, periods, cultures) and the ability to use historical imagination to engage with and attempt to understand it* The ability to read historical materials actively and critically – to read documents and accounts for purpose and to consider the aims of authors and documents	PowerGenderEconomics	Extract from the old bailey proceedings	Give students the website to explore for themselves
22	What can you learn from this extract? Something abstract using numbers, possibly probate records? And / or a photograph collection - maybe Holocaust related	* the ability to read carefully and critically* <u>historical imagination</u> * <u>the adoption of an analytical approach</u> * The ability to cope with the unfamiliar (contexts, periods, cultures) and the ability to use historical imagination to engage with and attempt to understand it* The ability to read historical materials actively and critically – to read documents and accounts for purpose and to consider the aims of authors and documents		Sources	
23	What are labels for? (HA, 2014) What are the uses and abuses of periodisation? Does the 'twentieth century' exist?	* <u>the adoption of an analytical approach</u> * <u>precision, in the handling of concepts and in the selection of evidence presented to support points</u> * An informed awareness of the importance of historical context, the desire	Change & continuity Interpretations		

		and ability to contextualise elements of the past and the ability to develop a sense of period and to suggest, question and critically evaluate periodisations			
24	Student evaluation of programme. Student interviews & feedback on programme			Evaluation questionnaire	

Appendix H: Revised UPCs Scheme of Work

Modifications to the original programme have been highlighted in yellow.

Session	Objective / Key question / Activities	High performance Characteristics (NAGTY/ <u>HAT</u>)	Historical concept (s)	Resources	Follow-up action
1	Year 13 only - HAT discussion / summer reading and British history over last 2000 years				
2	Introduction to classes - what will we do (focus on open discussion)? Collect baseline data & get to know students: Why do you want to study History? What is the story of British history over the last 2000 years? (Howson, 2007)	* An appreciation of the intrinsic value of historical learning and an enjoyment of the process * The ability to structure and to develop extended historical narrative and analysis and the ability to construct, sustain and weave together chains of reasoning, analysis, description and explanation	Continuity & change		Prep reading: Munslow review of Carr and Swain's article. Further reading by Evans on Frog
3	What is History? Discussion of reading; issues of truth / History as art or science?	* <u>the adoption of an analytical approach</u> * A developed awareness of the complexity of the past and of the process of seeking to understand it * A developed awareness of the nature of historical argument and of the ways in which historical claims are put together and justified	Truth	PPT - What is History	Prep reading: article on Citizenship / Tosh extract

4	What is the purpose of History? Discussion of reading; citizenship / identity.	* the adoption of an analytical approach * A developed awareness of the complexity of the past and of the process of seeking to understand it * A developed awareness of the nature of historical argument and of the ways in which historical claims are put together and justified	Identity		Set mini-essay (1000 word limit) on nature of history for after half term . Task: think back over what learned throughout school, can you produce a better answer to the story of Britain in the last 2000 years?
5	What is the story of British history over the last 2000 years? Developing a framework / 'big history'. What are the problems / challenges with such a framework? Is a framework desirable? Why might 'big histories' lost favour in the 1990s (Corfield's argument)?	* the adoption of an analytical approach * The ability to structure and to develop extended historical narrative and analysis * A hunger for knowledge of the past and the ability to acquire and understand large quantities of knowledge about the past *The ability to develop and internalise an 'archive' of historical knowledge and concepts and the ability to use this to frame and develop questions * The ability to make and to break historical generalisations – to see their value and also their limits	Continuity & change	Group card sort of events - sort chronologically and then into Shemilt (2009)'s 4 way framework	Watch the World History for Us All 7 minute video (youtube). Further viewing: David Christian TED talk lecture

6	What causes historical change? Introduction to interpretations of change (Whig, Marxist etc.)	* <u>the adoption of an analytical approach</u> * <u>precision, in the handling of concepts and in the selection of evidence presented to support points</u> * The ability to critically deploy historical evidence to sustain, test and develop historical arguments and to think critically about the ways in which others have done this * A willingness to construct historical hypotheses, to test and develop historical theories and descriptions and a willingness to take risks when doing so	Cause & consequence Continuity & change Interpretations	HA Why have things happened in History worksheet	Reading - Swain (ed) How do civilisations develop?
7	Is there anything which was not caused by economics (HA, 2014)? What was Marx's view of historical change? Lecture followed by discussion.	* <u>the adoption of an analytical approach</u> * <u>precision, in the handling of concepts and in the selection of evidence presented to support points</u> * The ability to critically deploy historical evidence to sustain, test and develop historical arguments and to think critically about the ways in which others have done this * A willingness to construct historical hypotheses, to test and develop historical theories and descriptions and a willingness to take risks when doing so	Cause & consequence Continuity & change Interpretations	PPT - Marx & History	Give Marx optional reading. Swain (ed) How does personality affect politics?

8	How far do individuals drive historical change? Discussion on 'great men'. Are other factors more important?	* the adoption of an analytical approach * <u>precision, in the handling of concepts and in the selection of evidence presented to support points</u> * The ability to critically deploy historical evidence to sustain, test and develop historical arguments and to think critically about the ways in which others have done this * A willingness to construct historical hypotheses, to test and develop historical theories and descriptions and a willingness to take risks when doing so	Cause & consequence Continuity & change Interpretations	Worksheet on individuals	Swain (ed.) Why do wars begin?
9	What makes an event or person historically significant? Set up significance projects to research: Choose any period of History that you do not study within the curriculum and write a written response. 'What was the historical significance of X?'	* The ability to engage in open-ended historical research and enquiry and to enjoy the process * The ability to grasp and understand historical concepts, to develop them rigorously and to apply them in a nuanced way when constructing historical analyses, arguments and explanations	Significance	Give a research proposal template for students to complete	Research topics and proposal due 2nd December and essays due after Christmas

10	Why do wars start? Ask students to come up with as many generic causes that they can. How many conflicts can they name? Look deeper at Wars of the Roses, WW1 and WW2. Compare to their studies on the Cold War.	* <u>the adoption of an analytical approach</u> * <u>precision, in the handling of concepts and in the selection of evidence presented to support points</u> * The ability to critically deploy historical evidence to sustain, test and develop historical arguments and to think critically about the ways in which others have done this * A willingness to construct historical hypotheses, to test and develop historical theories and descriptions and a willingness to take risks when doing so	Cause & consequence Interpretations War		Margaret Macmillan extract on nationalism
11	What causes nationalism? What is nationalism / a nation. When did nations emerge? How has History been used by nationalists? Discussion of Serbian case (Macmillan)	* <u>the adoption of an analytical approach</u> * <u>precision, in the handling of concepts and in the selection of evidence presented to support points</u> * The ability to critically deploy historical evidence to sustain, test and develop historical arguments and to think critically about the ways in which others have done this * A willingness to construct historical hypotheses, to test and develop historical theories and descriptions and a willingness to take risks when doing so	Cause & consequence Continuity & change Interpretations Nation	PPT	Watch John Green Youtube - Was the Renaissance a thing?

12	How do intellectual movements begin? What is an 'intellectual movement'? Lecture on scientific revolution, enlightenment & renaissance. Do conversations have an end point / are they discrete?	* <u>the adoption of an analytical approach</u> * <u>precision, in the handling of concepts and in the selection of evidence presented to support points</u> * The ability to critically deploy historical evidence to sustain, test and develop historical arguments and to think critically about the ways in which others have done this * A willingness to construct historical hypotheses, to test and develop historical theories and descriptions and a willingness to take risks when doing so	Cause & consequence Continuity & change Interpretations Ideas	PPT	Great Cat Massacre extract
13	What does this extract tell us about society and culture in 18th century France? (The Great Cat Massacre) Discussion - class, cultural traditions, anthropological approach to History	* <u>the ability to read carefully and critically</u> * <u>historical imagination</u> * <u>the adoption of an analytical approach</u> * The ability to cope with the unfamiliar (contexts, periods, cultures) and the ability to use historical imagination to engage with and attempt to understand it * The ability to read historical materials actively and critically – to read documents and accounts for purpose and to consider the aims of authors and documents	Similarity & difference Power Ideas	Essays due. Robert Darnton article from History Today	Optional - give Darnton full reference Cromwell extracts for next session

14	Feedback on essays. Students peer read and offer their feedback too	* <u>the adoption of an analytical approach</u> * <u>the ability to answer a question relevantly</u> * <u>the ability to offer a coherent argument</u> * <u>precision, clarity and facility of writing</u> * The ability to grasp and understand historical concepts, to develop them rigorously and to apply them in a nuanced way when constructing historical analyses, arguments and explanations * The ability to grasp, to develop and to experiment with analytical historical vocabularies and to enjoy communicating historical ideas and theories	Significance	Student essays	Redrafting and final essay due after half term when they will present to group
15	Was the British Empire all bad? Interpretations of empire (Judd vs James)	* <u>the ability to read carefully and critically</u> * <u>the adoption of an analytical approach</u> * The ability to cope with the unfamiliar (contexts, periods, cultures) and the ability to use historical imagination to engage with and attempt to understand it * The ability to appreciate and to deal with logical complexity in historical writing and documentary materials and to consider and to evaluate conflicting and contradictory evidence and arguments * A secure grasp of the nature of historical interpretation and the ability to historicize representations and constructions of the past, in the light of a range of	Interpretations	Judd / James / Ferguson extracts	Suggested further reading of James

		considerations (such as their purpose, the questions being asked and answered, provenance, audience, context)			
16	What is the argument of each extract? Which of these interpretations of Cromwell is best? (TH114) What has affected their interpretations?	* <u>the ability to read carefully and critically</u> * <u>the adoption of an analytical approach</u> * The ability to cope with the unfamiliar (contexts, periods, cultures) and the ability to use historical imagination to engage with and attempt to understand it * The ability to appreciate and to deal with logical complexity in historical writing and documentary materials and to consider and to evaluate conflicting and contradictory evidence and arguments * A secure grasp of the nature of historical interpretation and the ability to historicize representations and constructions of the past, in the light of a range of considerations (such as their purpose, the	Interpretations	Differing extracts to discuss - Marxist, Victorian, Contemporary, Revisionist (root in Chapman's 2009 on interpretations)	Complete reading of the sources and match together with the date of the interpretation

		questions being asked and answered, provenance, audience, context)			
17	Completed Cromwell activity and discussion				Suggested further reading of Cromwell article
	Y12 MOCK WEEK - SESSION CANCELLED				
18	Essays due & students present argument	* <u>the adoption of an analytical approach</u> * <u>the ability to answer a question relevantly</u> * <u>the ability to offer a coherent argument</u> * <u>precision, clarity and facility of writing</u> * The ability to grasp and understand historical concepts, to develop them rigorously and to apply them in a nuanced way when constructing historical analyses, arguments and explanations * The ability to grasp, to develop and to experiment with analytical historical	Significance	Student essays	Prepare presentation for staff after school last week of term

		vocabularies and to enjoy communicating historical ideas and theories			
19	What can you learn from this extract? Old Bailey Proceedings. Is there such a thing as unwitting evidence?	* <u>the ability to read carefully and critically</u> * <u>historical imagination</u> * <u>the adoption of an analytical approach</u> * The ability to cope with the unfamiliar (contexts, periods, cultures) and the ability to use historical imagination to engage with and attempt to understand it * The ability to read historical materials actively and critically – to read documents and accounts for purpose and to consider the aims of authors and documents	Power Gender Economics	Extract from the old bailey proceedings	Continue to read the source and see what else can pick out from it
20	Old Bailey - complete discussion	* <u>the ability to read carefully and critically</u> * <u>historical imagination</u> * <u>the adoption of an analytical approach</u> * The ability to cope with the unfamiliar (contexts, periods, cultures) and the ability to use historical imagination to engage with and attempt to understand it * The ability to read historical materials	Power Gender Economics	Extract from the old bailey proceedings	Give students the website to explore for themselves

		actively and critically – to read documents and accounts for purpose and to consider the aims of authors and documents			
21	What are labels for? (HA, 2014) What are the uses and abuses of periodisation? Does the 'twentieth century' exist?	* <u>the adoption of an analytical approach</u> * <u>precision, in the handling of concepts and in the selection of evidence presented to support points</u> * An informed awareness of the importance of historical context, the desire and ability to contextualise elements of the past and the ability to develop a sense of period and to suggest, question and critically evaluate periodisations	Change & continuity Interpretations		
22	Student evaluation of programme. Student interviews & feedback on programme			Baseline questionnaire	

Sessions not covered from original programme

	What is the relationship between the public and private spheres? Definition. Is 'the personal...political'? Which sphere makes for better history?	* <u>the adoption of an analytical approach</u> * A developed awareness of the complexity of the past and of the process of seeking to understand it * A developed awareness of the nature of historical argument and of the ways in which historical claims are put together and justified * An understanding of presentism – of the inevitable human tendency to see the past in terms of the present - and of the problems and opportunities that it presents	Similarity & difference Power Ideas Gender Family	PPT	Extract from David Christian's big History (p. 472-5) on the Rapa Nui people (as referenced in Corfield's 2009 article)
	What can we learn from the history of nature? The importance of environment, Britain's "island story".	* <u>the adoption of an analytical approach</u> * <u>precision, in the handling of concepts and in the selection of evidence presented to support points</u> * A willingness to construct historical hypotheses, to test and develop historical theories and descriptions and a willingness to take risks when doing so * The ability to cope with the unfamiliar (contexts, periods, cultures) and the ability to use historical imagination to engage with and attempt to understand it	Continuity & change Cause & consequence Nature		Extract from Kennedy The Rise & Fall of the Great Powers & BBC History article by Ferguson on 'The War of the World'

	Can historians predict the future (HA, 2014)? Can we learn from History? Is there any value in counter-factual History?	* <u>the adoption of an analytical approach</u> * <u>precision, in the handling of concepts and in the selection of evidence presented to support points</u> * The ability to critically deploy historical evidence to sustain, test and develop historical arguments and to think critically about the ways in which others have done this * A willingness to construct historical hypotheses, to test and develop historical theories and descriptions and a willingness to take risks when doing so	Continuity & change Cause & consequence Interpretations		Further reading - Fukuyama The end of History & various counter history articles based on students own interests
	What can you learn from this extract? Something abstract using numbers, possibly probate records? And / or a photograph collection - maybe Holocaust related	* <u>the ability to read carefully and critically</u> * <u>historical imagination</u> * <u>the adoption of an analytical approach</u> * The ability to cope with the unfamiliar (contexts, periods, cultures) and the ability to use historical imagination to engage with and attempt to understand it * The ability to read historical materials actively and critically – to read documents and accounts for purpose and to consider the aims of authors and documents		Sources	

Appendix I: Initial & Evaluation Questionnaires

History University Preparatory Classes – Initial Questionnaire

These questions are not meant to catch you out – there is no ‘right’ answer. I simply want to get to know more about you and your understanding of History.

1. How valuable do you think knowledge of the past is to society? *Please explain your answer.*
2. How valuable do you think a History degree is for an individual? Why are you considering studying it at university?
3. What do you find most difficult about the study of History?
4. What do you enjoy most about the study of History?
5. What questions in History interest you? *These may be questions that puzzle you about a topic you are currently studying, or have studied, or these may be questions more generally about the past.*
6. What, if anything, have you read recently to do with History, beyond what has been studied in class?

History University Preparatory Classes – Initial Historical Knowledge

What is the story of British history over the last 2000 years?

Answer this question as fully as you can within the half hour time limit, aiming for at least a paragraph. Do not worry if you are unsure about any historical facts. I simply want to know more about what you know about British history at this stage.

History University Preparatory Classes – Evaluation Questionnaire

1. How valuable do you think knowledge of the past is to society? *Please explain your answer.*
2. How valuable do you think a History degree is for an individual? Why are you considering studying it at university?
3. What do you find most difficult about the study of History?
4. What do you enjoy most about the study of History?
5. What questions in History interest you? *These may be questions that puzzle you about a topic you are currently studying, or have studied, or these may be questions more generally about the past.*
6. What, if anything, have you read recently to do with History, beyond what has been studied in class?
7. What is the story of British history over the last 2000 years? *(Answer below, aiming for at least a paragraph)*

History @ University Preparation Classes – Staff Feedback

I would appreciate any of your feedback / thoughts / comments on the programme so I can evaluate it for next year. Please be aware I will use your comments anonymously as part of my MLT research.

1. What did you think of the quality of historical knowledge demonstrated by the students in their presentation?
2. What did you think of the quality of historical thinking demonstrated by the students in their presentation?
3. Did you think the students displayed historical knowledge & understanding beyond what is expected in their A-level course? Please explain your answer.
4. Do you have any suggestions / thoughts or feedback on how these sessions could be improved for next year?

Thank you!

Appendix J: Mid-Project Online Questionnaire

History University Preparation - October Evaluation

* Required

How would you best describe your experience of the History university preparation classes so far?*

- ☒ Positive
- ☒ Negative
- ☒ A bit of both

Please explain your answer. *

If you have not attended a session(s), please select which reason(s) best apply as to why you did not attend. *

- ☒ Other commitment / club
- ☒ Too busy
- ☒ Uninterested in topic
- ☒ Forgot
- ☒ Have not enjoyed the club
- ☒ Other: ☒

Which aspect(s), if any, have you found most useful? *

Tick as many as apply

- ☒ Reading
- ☒ Seminar discussion
- ☒ Small group dynamic
- ☒ Resources
- ☒ Other: ☒

Is there a topic, or type of session, that you have found particularly useful that you would like to do more of?



What, if anything, have you found NOT useful?

- ☐ Reading
- ☐ Seminar discussion
- ☐ Small group dynamic
- ☐ Resources
- ☐ Other: ☐

What do you think would improve these classes?

Is there anything in particular that you would like to cover in the classes?

In what ways, if any, do you think your historical knowledge has improved since attending the classes?

This may be historical facts or understanding of a particular period

In what ways, if any, do you think your skills as a historian have improved?

Are you planning on going to university? *

- ☐ Yes
- ☐ No
- ☐ Unsure

If so, which universities are you considering? *

If you are planning on going to university, which subject(s) are you considering applying to study?

Why are you considering this subject choice?

Appendix K: Interview Questions

Group Interview – Evaluation Questions

Distribute the seminar titles as an aide memoire for students

1. What did you think of the History University Classes?
2. Which aspects of the programme did you find most useful?
3. What, if anything, did you not enjoy, or find not useful?
4. What do you think would improve these classes?
5. In what ways, if any, do you think your historical knowledge has improved?
6. In what ways, if any, do you think your skills as an historian have improved?
7. Are you planning on applying to a university? If so, which ones?
8. What subject are you considering applying to study? Why?

Did you use the resources and reading made available on Frog?

Appendix L: Transcript of Interview

Key

I Interviewer

L Louise

Ia Ian

N Nathan

E Edward

B Ben

* Pseudonyms have been applied to this transcript.

I: What did you think about the classes and the things done at lunchtime?

L: I've only been coming for a bit, but I did really enjoy, like, looking at other things that we wouldn't look at in History and looking at History in a different way. We seemed to ask more questions. I suppose in our lessons we are told – like – um, not what to think but we are sort of like told for the exam. But we just think more independently, I thought.

I: Any other thoughts? Generally on the classes?

Ia: Just quite a good range of stuff that I wouldn't think to consider normally. And like, but without, being too – you know – you have to learn these key facts and memorise them – it was sort of like seeing what your opinion on something. I think there was a YouTube video, I can't remember what it was called?

I: Oh, the Big History clip?

Ia: Yeah, I thought that kind of thing was interesting. Because I have individual events that I have learnt but it was sort of piecing it together in one course of History.

N: Yeah, I think it was really useful to, kind of, widen our ideas because it's quite – or what there is time for – in lessons, is quite narrow, the kind of perceptions you end up with. So it's good to, kind of, question those.

E: The History of Everything – as everyone has already said.

B: Yeah, it was nice to get some opinions on what *we* think about History, because you don't really get a chance to do that in the curriculum.

I: Are there any particular areas that you found most useful? I mean, looking back at what we've covered [referring to the copies of the programme outline the students had been given], maybe a topic, or a format of particular session?

Ia: The stuff on historical change and on Marx 'cos that links in with Year 13 Politics obviously [a reference to me as Ia's Politics teacher] but that's – like the historical change more generally seemed quite useful 'cos that can sort of link into any topic

you're studying: *how* things change and whether it's, you know, individuals, or something more than that, economics, or whatever. So that was good.

N: I thought this first stuff was really useful, like, um, introducing us to 'What is History' 'cos that's so important, but I'd never heard of it – I don't know if anyone else had – so that... it was really useful to look at the, kind of, philosophy of History as a whole to start off with before looking at, um, individual parts of History.

L: I agree with N on that. You know we did periodization and that like that last week? It's just something you'd never think of – and why it's like that. It's really interesting.

E: I thought looking at when we were doing Cromwell and trying to piece together what all the different sources were, that was quite nice. It almost made me think about what different sources were, and where that would come into the whole timeline. [Reference to the Cromwell interpretations activity]

B: I thought historical significance was good because then we could actually focus on, like, the impact and influence which events and people actually have on History – which I hadn't had the chance to do yet. [Reference to the written task on historical significance]

I: So, do you think, on reflection, that doing the written work and the reading beyond the classes were the most useful part? Or do you think the discussion in the classes were the most useful?

L: I think definitely it was useful doing like a project, or something like that. 'Cos even though it's, like, extra-curricular, it is good to build up to something. And you had – it was your own choice. You could choose anything you wanted to do. So that was good as well.

E: It was nice to do it without, like, a structure as well }

L: Yeah }

E: because in, well, yeah, in A-level History, it's all just: this is the structure, follow it and you'll get full marks. It was nice in certain ways to write freely to some extent.

Ia: Yeah, I liked the essay because it just meant I could research it and then plan it out and then just write it. There wasn't so much worrying about having to say certain things that would get marks. Because otherwise – you can talk about something, but I think it sticks in your mind a little more if you've researched it and you've done all that yourself.

N: It worked really well having the essays as open-ended as they were, with such a wide scope of what you could do it on.

I: What, if anything, did you not enjoy, or find not useful? And please speak frankly, because I'm not offended! Is there anything that you thought, yeah that was less

useful – or maybe, I would have like to have looked at this more, or that didn't work so much for me?

L: I think it's just opinion of what you enjoy studying. You're never going to all agree on what you enjoy. Yeah.

Ia: I'd say it would have been good if it had started a bit earlier, maybe. Like, earlier on – 'cos obviously I've had so much other stuff on. But I think after – I don't know – I suppose it would be the year before to get earlier years involved. That would have been quite helpful to have a longer range thing.

I: Around GCSE age group?

Ia: Yeah, if you can do that.

N: It might have been – Maybe, spend a bit longer on the British history over the last 2000 years [Audible noises of agreement] – 'cos that's kind of a key thing to understand.

I: Do you mean the content? Would you like me to tell you more 'stuff' on this topic, rather than discuss the ideas?

N: No, I just meant that particular topic – just, maybe, spend a bit longer on it. Because, I think the ideas and the discussion was the most useful part – but I think that particular topic would be good to develop it further.

I: Is there anything else? [Pause] I mean those are things that you found less useful – is there anything that you think might improve the classes?

Ia: Just starting earlier. If I'd started earlier, I could have done extra reading maybe. Even if it's just before the summer holidays – because I know I did something, if you remember [a reference to the pilot study]. Like, you could say read this over the summer of Year 12 and then come back and you could, I don't know, do a project as it were. Because I – I think reading is a good thing – maybe, if you want to have that range, that's a good time to start.

I: Did any of you use the reading material I put on Frog?

E: I did.

N: Yes, as much as possible. And they *were* really useful. It was especially useful to read it and then discuss it afterwards.

I: Do you think your knowledge of History has improved? Do you think you know more about History?

E: Yep!

I: Can you give me the ways? Or particular examples?

N: Particularly about ideas about History in general like, um, 'What is History' and all those books. And all those ideas about truth and change and individuals and all that stuff. I didn't know much about that before.

Ia: All the stuff about what drives change – like I said before. So when I came to study Marx, I already had the idea of the dialectic and Hegel and all of that kind of thing. So, even though – I think we probably came at it a different sort of angle – rather than what he wanted, we came at it at how he thought things would change. That sort of helped with background knowledge for both Politics and History.

I: In what ways, if any, do you think your skills as an historian have improved? Maybe the ways you write, or discuss, or something else?

L: I think I question things more. Like, I don't just accept it. So, you read something and I think – well, what else could it be?

E: Yeah, and what other people might think about it, particularly in terms of historical thought. And in terms of essays. Like, the 'What is History' essay that we had to look at different opinions.

N: Yeah, I think it certainly did with writing the essays and that kind of thing. I think there's kind of less space for that in the curriculum.

I: One thing I'm thinking about doing next year is asking people to spend longer on each topic – possibly by reducing the stuff to give more time for discussion. Do you think that might be a good idea?

L: Yeah.

Ia: Yeah. Especially on the historical change and what is history. I think some of the later sessions you might be able to get done in one session. But, yeah, some of them you think – 'cos you can go away and watch or read something, but if you're not discussing it again – or if you've read it before but haven't actually been talking it before, you might not understand it so much.

I: I would like to know if you are planning on applying to university – and obviously, Ia, I know you have done so already. But I wanted to know if you are thinking of applying and, if so, which ones, and to do what subject?

L: For me, I want to do French, but with something else. So I'm thinking either French and Russian, or French and History. At the moment, I like Bath, or, um Bristol. I've only been coming here [the classes] for the last few weeks and since then, I've sort of changed my mind. 'Cos I do really enjoy History, so I'm leaning more towards History with French now.

N: Yeah, it's very, very likely to be something involving History and probably just History. As for where, I'm still not sure, that's tricky. I know we've talked about the

Oxbridge and stuff and that's maybe something. But I'm not sure. I couldn't say I'm definitely going to do that, but it's definitely a possibility.

E: I think I definitely want to study History now, hopefully at a Russell Group university.

B: I'm still torn between History and Law now, but definitely at a Russell Group, hopefully.

I: Ia, I know you've applied for History and Politics. Have you made a decision yet?

Ia: I've just got to decide Warwick or Exeter, and I don't know which.

Appendix M: An extract from the coded interview

I've only been coming for a bit, but I did really enjoy, like, looking at other things that we wouldn't look at in History and looking at History in a different way. We seemed to ask more questions. I suppose in our lessons we are told – like – um, not what to think but we are sort of like told for the exam. But we just think more independently, I thought.	enjoy different independent independent, different independent
Just quite a good range of stuff that I wouldn't think to consider normally. And like, but without, being too – you know – you have to learn these key facts and memorise them – it was sort of like seeing what your opinion on something. I think there was a YouTube video, I can't remember what it was called?	breadth different agency content
Yeah, I thought that kind of thing was interesting. Because I have individual events that I have learnt but it was sort of piecing it together in one course of History.	interesting framework
Yeah, I think it was really useful to, kind of, widen our ideas because it's quite – or what there is time for – in lessons, is quite narrow, the kind of perceptions you end up with. So it's good to, kind of, question those.	breadth different independent
The History of Everything – as everyone has already said.	framework
Yeah, it was nice to get some opinions on what we think about History, because you don't really get a chance to do that in the curriculum.	agency different
The stuff on historical change and on Marx 'cos that links in with Year 13 Politics obviously but that's – like the historical change more generally seemed quite useful 'cos that can sort of link into any topic you're studying: <i>how</i> things change and whether it's, you know, individuals, or something more than that, economics, or whatever. So that was good.	change change breadth change change

Appendix N: What is the story of British history over the last 2000 years? A range of extracts

Example of a 'Topics' response

History University Preparatory Classes – Historical Knowledge

What is the story of British history over the last 2000 years?

Answer this question as fully as you can, aiming for at least a paragraph. Do not worry if you are unsure about any historical facts. I simply want to know more about what you know about British history at this stage.

- The Romans held control over Britain until their empire fell in 300 - 500 AD? (The East empire went on to become the Ottoman empire)
- The Anglo-Saxons took over at some point
- 1066: The Battle of Hastings
- Eventually headed into the Medieval and Middle Ages
 - ↳ trial by combat, etc. all used
- Witchcraft used to be a crime that you'd be hanged for following trial by cold water
- 1415(?) Henry V leads a battle in France
- Richard II was usurped by Henry IV
- Henry VIII had 8 wives
 - ↳ Oliver Cromwell was his advisor?
- ~~1537-40~~ 1537-40: Dissolution of the monasteries
- Edward VI ruled for 6 years. Bloody
 - ↳ taken over by Lady Jane Grey, Mary, and then by Elizabeth I
- 1829: Robert Peel establishes the Met. Police
- late 1500 - early 1600s: Shakespeare's works are first performed
- 1901: Queen Victoria dies
- 1800(?): Industrial Revolution
- 1914-1918: WWI
- 1939-1945: WWII
- Post-WWII ~~1945~~ - 1990: Cold War
- 1675ish: Pilgrims leave for the Americas
- 1945 - 2014: everything covered in Mass Media course
- 1950s(?): Malaysia crisis
- 1969: Capital punishment abolished
- 1965: Race Relations Act

Example of an 'And then' response

History University Preparatory Classes – Historical Knowledge

What is the story of British history over the last 2000 years?

Answer this question as fully as you can, aiming for at least a paragraph. Do not worry if you are unsure about any historical facts. I simply want to know more about what you know about British history at this stage.

2000 years ago, Britain was under Roman rule, in a society with structure and order. Following the collapse of the Roman Empire, the dark ages began. During this period there was little need for books and academia and so the historical sources from this era are mainly limited to books from churches. At the turn of the millennium the Saxons were overturned by William the Conqueror at the Battle of Hastings (1066). From the 11th century to the 16th century Britain was Medieval, with very little health care or technology, culminating in the 1348 black plague. The British Empire expanded under the rule of the Tudors with ~~as~~ approximately a third of the globe under its rule at its peak. Following the Tudors, and all the religious strife that came with them, were the Georgians (?) who oversaw increasing rural development. The country developed exponentially in the 18th and 19th centuries with the Agricultural and Industrial revolution which saw cities, and the population grow. The end of the 19th century and the 20th century saw a great emphasis on health, with Public Health Acts and the founding of the NHS.

... .. Didn't get round to the 

Example of an 'Explanatory' response

History University Preparatory Classes – Historical Knowledge

What is the story of British history over the last 2000 years?

Answer this question as fully as you can, aiming for at least a paragraph. Do not worry if you are unsure about any historical facts. I simply want to know more about what you know about British history at this stage.

The history of Britain ~~has changed~~ over the last 2000 years is notable, as it has seen considerable changes in Britain. From Roman rule, to the Old World Britain's position within it, to the changing position of the monarchy. The British empire, too, is key. Many say the days of British rule and the Empire came to an end when Hong Kong was handed to China in 1997, with a few overseas territories remaining – but this built up and was lost over many years from India and Australia (prosperous nations) and lost prosperous nations in Africa.

On a domestic basis, the UK now has democratic parliamentary rule with an elected Head of State who holds very little power in reality. This also has built up over many years, with the Civil War and increasing power of parliament, to universal suffrage in 1928. Prior to this, the medieval times and middle ages saw the royal family change multiple times. Some events like the Battle of Hastings in 1066 and the rest of the 15th – the widely known Henry VIII's 6 wives, the reign of William (Duke of Normandy), and the beginning and end of colonial transportation to Australia are perhaps more widely known than Britain's changing global role and the political history of the nation: the Tories (later Conservatives), foundation of the Labour Party in the early 1900s as well as the SDP and their later merging with the Liberal Party to form the Liberal Democrats.

The state of Britain is ever changing – the Industrial Revolution saw great changes in the nation's people held, many of which changed yet again with the change of industry in favour of offshoring and the increase of the British factor in the late 20th and 21st century. In the present day we are left with a nation which is a key player globally – in the G7, UN, EU and more – which has its legacy in the foundation of parliamentary democracy, fights against the slavery it was once involved in and more: with the UK possibly soon breaking up, yet another change of federal power after 6 many 20th century social changes.

Appendix O: Student work on significance

Could you use a more quote to start with?

** How would you define historical significance? Do you agree with Counsell?*

may not be a clear answer

Useful context.

Good to define significance criteria.

good to set parameters

A clear analytical focus. V. well supported

Good integration of differing views

What was the historical significance of the Boston Tea Party?

whose history?

The Boston Tea Party is one of history's best remembered events, arguably the most famous tax protest in history.¹ To this day it continues to make its presence felt, with the current Tea Party political movement claiming origins in the event.² It was a protest against unfair taxation based on a principle that stretched far back into British history and had become part of the British constitution. The principle at stake was that the colonies should not be taxed without being represented. In practice, this meant that they wanted representation in the British parliament, something which had previously been dismissed on the grounds that it was impractical.³ The taxes were clearly unconstitutional; the principle of no taxation without representation had been established by the Magna Carta of 1215,⁴ which stated that "no scutage or aid is to be imposed in our kingdom except by the common counsel of our kingdom". Although this came with certain limitations and did not appear in subsequent reissues of the charter,⁵ the principle had been established and it was later reaffirmed by the 1689 Bill of Rights.⁶ The protest was specifically against the Tea Act, which had reinforced taxation in the colonies (although it did actually reduce the amount of tax that they had to pay). As a response, on the 16th December 1773, Bostonians boarded three merchant ships and threw their cargoes of tea into Boston harbour.⁷ This would prove a hugely significant event in history. Christine Counsell has argued that the historical significance of an event can be judged by the following criteria: the change which resulted from it, what it reveals about history, how remarkable it was, how it has been remembered, and its resonance. Here, we will focus on the change resulting from the Tea Party, its remarkable aspects, and what it reveals about America and its place in the British Empire at the time.

The significance of the Boston Tea Party lies mainly in the key role it played in igniting the American War of Independence. There were two strands to this. Firstly, the Tea Party inspired rebellion in the other colonies. Within days, tea ships had been forced away from Philadelphia and New York and tea consignees in the latter had resigned. The second strand was the Coercive Acts (known in the colonies as the Intolerable Acts). In direct response to the Tea Party, the British government closed Boston harbour until the tea had been paid for, suspended the Massachusetts government and transferred various powers from the people to the governor, who was now to be Thomas Gage, the commander of British forces in North America. The boundaries of Quebec were also extended, and Catholics in Canada were given freedom to practise their religion. It was these acts, rather than the Tea Act, which were declared unconstitutional by a Continental Congress of every colony except Georgia in September 1774. By this point, the people of Massachusetts recognised not the official government but the town governments which they had begun to elect, and Gage was relying for control on military power alone.⁸ There were clashes between government and militia from February 1775 onwards. Although the colonies and Britain would not be at war until nearly two years after the Tea Party,⁹ America had effectively been lost.

The longer term causes were also important, but the Tea Party was the key event, without which the course of history could have been very different. To some at the time, this was already clear. John Adams declared it to be "so bold, so daring, so firm, intrepid and inflexible, and it must have so important consequences, that I cant (sic) but consider it an Epocha in History."¹⁰ There could have been various long term solutions to the problem, had the Tea Party not happened. It has been argued that the problems could have been settled in the courts.¹¹ This would have been impossible once the Tea Party had happened and conflict between Britain and the colonies had begun; Boston

had been since the Boston Massacre of 1770 a "cauldron of anti-British feeling".⁸⁸ It seems highly unlikely that the courts could have solved the problem after the Tea Party; by that point, the people of Massachusetts were refusing even to recognise the British government (as seen earlier). The other potential alternative was dominion status,⁸⁹ as later happened to Ireland, Australia, New Zealand, South Africa and Canada.⁹⁰ It would have allowed the colonists to form their own parliament,⁹¹ but would also have entailed them being subordinate to British foreign and defence policy,⁹² wherein lies the problem. This may have been plausible at an earlier stage, but it seems highly unlikely that it would have worked once the Tea Party had happened, when, as seen earlier, the British were relying for control on military power alone. It would have taken some fairly seismic changes for the colonists to go from fighting against to fighting for the British Empire. The Tea Party and the British response between them made America's position almost impossible to sustain.

The scale of participation in the Tea Party was remarkable. Thousands were present at the protest, although only around a hundred people took part in the actual destruction of the tea.⁹³ The scale of the destruction was also remarkable; at £9,659, the tea would be worth around \$1.7 million today.⁹⁴ However, the most remarkable aspect to the events surrounding the Tea Party was the British response. As seen earlier, it involved passing the punitive Coercive Acts. This is somewhat surprising and perhaps disproportionate when compared to other, earlier events in the colonies. The most remarkable contrast can be found in the *Gaspée* Affair of 1772. The *Gaspée* was a ship in the British fleet which patrolled for smugglers off the coast of Rhode Island. It stopped and searched every boat it could and re-provisioned itself by raiding local farms. Eventually, this became too much for the Rhode Islanders. When the *Gaspée* came too close to shore, they forced the sailors off and set the ship on fire. The British response was to attempt to have the colonists tried as pirates, by legal means.⁹⁵ Even when this failed due to Rhode Island chief justice Stephen Hopkins' refusal to allow the perpetrators to be arrested, the British government did not respond with new legislation. Instead, they sent a special commission to try to arrest the perpetrators.⁹⁶ This is in marked contrast to the British response to the Tea Party. The incident of the *Gaspée* seems at least as rebellious as the Tea Party, perhaps even more so, yet it did not provoke a substantial response. Had the British response been different, it could easily have led to conflict as significant as that which followed the Tea Party and, eventually, all-out war. It is also worth noting that the response was targeted solely at those who had committed the crime, not at the colonies in general, as the Coercive Acts were. This shows a very different approach to quelling dissent.

The events surrounding the Tea Party are revealing of changing priorities in the British Empire. The purpose of the Tea Act had nothing to do with the colonies in America. It had been passed in order to help the financially-struggling East India Company.⁹⁷ This was clearly essential as far as the British government was concerned; the Company had taken over the administration of India.⁹⁸ It ruled over 20 million people in Bengal alone, and also controlled the provinces of Bihar and Orissa.⁹⁹ This reveals that the British government was beginning to become more concerned with the Empire in India than in America. They had prioritised keeping afloat the East India Company over keeping peace in the colonies. They should have been able to anticipate the effects of the Tea Act; events in Boston had already forced them to remove a number of taxes, including the Stamp Act in 1766 and almost all of the Townshend taxes in 1770.¹⁰⁰ That the British government still passed the Tea Act in 1773 shows that their focus had already begun to swing eastwards towards India.

Further
analysis
+ well
supported
paragraph

The Tea Party also reveals that the protests had begun to stretch beyond taxation without representation. The Tea Act of 1773 had actually made tea cheaper; in fact, it would probably have undersold smuggled Dutch tea (although this was not definite).^{xxxv} It had reduced the taxation burden on the colonies by stopping the tea being taxed in England.^{xxxvi} The colonies did still have to pay tax on tea under the Townshend Act, but this had been in place since 1767.^{xxxvii} The immediate and violent reaction to the Tea Act, then, demonstrates that there were other forces driving the protestors' objections. The main reason for their anger at the Act was that it gave the East India Company a monopoly on imported tea.^{xxxviii} This would likely have led to Boston's profitable smuggling industry losing out due to the East India Company's (probable) undercutting of smuggled tea. However, it must be noted that the colonists also objected because The Tea Act further entrenched the problem of taxation without representation. They feared that they could lose the principle forever and become subjects, rather than partners, in Empire.^{xxxix} This remained the central problem, but the protestors were beginning to widen their objections. It seems that a more general dissatisfaction with British rule was starting to develop.

We can conclude about the Boston Tea Party and the events surrounding it three things. Firstly, it was a key event in the beginning of the American War of Independence. Without it, there would have been several ways in which the disputes between the colonies and British government could have been resolved. These would have been impossible once the Tea Party had happened; the only truly plausible course of history was a long and painful descent into war. Secondly, the Tea Party was remarkable, both for its scale and for the British response, which defied the precedent that had been set by previous action. Finally, the events surrounding the Tea Party reveal to us a number of important things about America and its position in the British Empire at the time. The protest had begun to stretch beyond taxation without representation and the British were already looking to the east rather than the west. However, this did not make revolution inevitable. As seen earlier, there were various plausible solutions to the protests. The Tea Party prevented all of them. It was this, above all, that made the Boston Tea Party a historically significant event.

A well-
argued +
substantial
conclusion

A highly analytical + very well-supported essay,
in a well-structured answer.

To go further, you need to consider your conceptual
analysis of historical ideas - can you link
points together? You dismiss longer term causes
in preference for the Tea Party - is this a pattern
you can see elsewhere? ~~Are~~ Are protests + action
more successful at implementing change than
diplomacy?

- ¹ Andrew Marr, *A History of the World* (Macmillan 2012), p346
- ² <http://www.teaparty.org/about-us/> Retrieved 14.1.15
- ³ Ian Mortimer, *Centuries of Change: Which Century Saw the Most Change and Why it Matters to Us* (The Bodley Head 2014) p216
- ⁴ Nicholas Vincent, *The Amazing Legacy of Magna Carta*, in BBC History Magazine (February 2015)
- ⁵ http://magnacarta.cmp.uea.ac.uk/read/magna_carta_1215/Clause_12 Retrieved 18.2.15
- ⁶ Ian Mortimer, *Centuries of Change: Which Century Saw the Most Change and Why it Matters to Us* (The Bodley Head 2014) p216
- ⁷ Robert J Parker, *The American Revolution: A Concise History* (Oxford University Press 2011) p17
- ⁸ *Ibid.*, pp17-19
- ⁹ Tristram Hunt, *Ten Cities That Made An Empire* (Allen Lane 2014) p62
- ¹⁰ Robert J Parker, *The American Revolution: A Concise History* (Oxford University Press 2011) p17
- ¹¹ Robert M Spector, *The American Revolution: Something Beyond the Causes* in *The Social Studies* (March 1971) pp99-105
- ¹² Andrew Marr, *A History of the World* (Macmillan 2012), p349
- ¹³ *Ibid.*, p350
- ¹⁴ David Reynolds, *The Long Shadow: The Great War and the Twentieth Century* (Simon and Schuster 2013) p31
- ¹⁵ Andrew Marr, *A History of the World* (Macmillan 2012), p350
- ¹⁶ David Reynolds, *The Long Shadow: The Great War and the Twentieth Century* (Simon and Schuster 2013) p31
- ¹⁷ Tristram Hunt, *Ten Cities That Made An Empire* (Allen Lane 2014) p19
- ¹⁸ Robert J Parker, *The American Revolution: A Concise History* (Oxford University Press 2011) p17
- ¹⁹ *Ibid.*, p15
- ²⁰ <http://www.ushistory.org/declaration/related/gaspee.htm> Retrieved 21.2.15
- ²¹ <http://www.bostonteapartyship.com/the-tea-act> Retrieved 15.1.15
- ²² Robert J Parker, *The American Revolution: A Concise History* (Oxford University Press 2011) p16
- ²³ Tristram Hunt, *Ten Cities That Made An Empire* (Allen Lane 2014) p193
- ²⁴ Robert J Parker, *The American Revolution: A Concise History* (Oxford University Press 2011) px
- ²⁵ Benjamin Woods Labaree, *The Boston Tea Party* (1964), quoted in Mark Peterson, *Review of Defence of the Patriots: The Boston Tea Party and the Making of America*
- ²⁶ Robert J Parker, *The American Revolution: A Concise History* (Oxford University Press 2011) p16
- ²⁷ *Ibid.*, px
- ²⁸ <http://www.bostonteapartyship.com/the-tea-act> Retrieved 15.1.15
- ²⁹ Tristram Hunt, *Ten Cities That Made An Empire* (Allen Lane 2014) pp59-60

What was the historical significance of the Battle of Shiloh in the American Civil War?

Good to
contemprorise

On April 6th 1862, almost a year into the conflicts of the American Civil War, 40,000 Confederate soldiers under the command of General Albert Sidney Johnson attacked a line of Union soldiers who were encamped near Pittsburg Landing on the Tennessee River. The surprise Confederate offensive drove the unprepared Union soldiers from their camps, threatening to overwhelm Major General Ulysses S. Grant's entire command. Fighting continued until after dark, and the following day, Grant's counteroffensive overpowered the weakened Confederate Forces and successfully prevented the loss of Union Ground that a Confederate victory would have ensured. Over this two-day period, the Battle of Shiloh produced more than 23,000 casualties, and was the bloodiest battle in American history at its time. Consequently, the Battle of Shiloh arguably changed the tactics used by both Union and Confederate forces in the American Civil War, and can therefore be described as historically significant. This essay will utilise Christine Counsell's description of historical significance through the '5Rs', which stand for Remarkable, Resulting in Change, Remembered, Resonant and Revealing in order to determine what the historical significance of the Battle of Shiloh was in the American Civil War.

arg ✓

This could
be grappled
with further
what do
you think
historical
significance
is?

To begin with, the Battle of Shiloh in 1862 was historically significant because it was remarkable. This is because, since its occurrence, the Battle of Shiloh has been considered an important and notable event, namely because of its high casualty count. For example, it is estimated that, during the course of the 4 year war, an estimated 620,000 soldiers were killed. However, in the Battle of Shiloh alone, an estimated 23,746¹ soldiers were killed. This means that, as a percentage of the estimated total deaths during the course of the Civil War, the Battle of Shiloh contributed to 3.83%. Furthermore, despite the fact that the Battle of Shiloh only lasted for a matter of hours, a huge amount of soldiers were still killed. There were so many bodies on the battlefield after the Battle of Shiloh that General Ulysses Grant wrote afterwards 'a man could walk across a huge cotton field merely by stepping on dead bodies, without his feet ever touching the ground'². This makes the Battle of Shiloh remarkable because, not only did a huge amount of soldiers die, but it can be considered as one of the first events of notable conflict in the American Civil War.

A focused
+ supported
arg.

Secondly, the Battle of Shiloh can be considered as historically significant because it resulted in change. This is because, before the Battle of Shiloh, General Ulysses Grant had been one to believe that the war would be short, with one great battle deciding the outcome. However, the Battle of Shiloh changed his mind on this opinion, with General Ulysses Grant concluding afterwards that the war would not be won until the entire South was 'subjugated'. Consequently, this change of opinion influenced the tactics that General Ulysses Grant used in later campaigns. For example, from May until June 1864, General

1: *

¹ "Civil War Casualties", Civil War Trust < <http://www.civilwar.org/education/civil-war-casualties.html> > accessed 20 February 2015

² "The Battle of Shiloh, 1862" EyeWitness to History, www.eyewitnesstohistory.com (2004), accessed 20 February 2015

Ulysses Grant launched an Overland Campaign. This campaign was a series of sustained offensives in which Grant aimed to completely 'subjugate' any Confederate Forces. This was seen in the Battle of the Wilderness³ from May 5th to May 7th 1864, in which Union Forces under General Grant's command attacked Confederate Forces in Virginia. This highlights how the Battle of Shiloh resulted in change and was therefore historically significant because it shows how the key tactics that were taught by the Battle of Shiloh helped to secure victories in later campaigns.

Furthermore, it can be argued that the Battle of Shiloh was historically significant because it is still remembered today. For example, there is a ten-acre cemetery dedicated to those soldiers that lost their lives in the Battle of Shiloh. This cemetery, known as the Shiloh National Cemetery⁴, is located in Shiloh, Tennessee and contains the remains of over 3,500 Union soldiers. To this day, almost 150 years since the National Cemetery was opened by the Federal Government, the Cemetery is still visited by many every year. This is mainly because of the huge amount of bloodshed experienced by soldiers at the time. This highlights the historical significance of the Battle of Shiloh because it indicates that the huge loss of life that occurred during the Battle of Shiloh is still respected by American citizens and tourists today.

Is it
remembered
outside
of USA?
Evidence?
2.4

Moreover, the Battle of Shiloh can also be argued to be historically significant because it is resonant. Resonance is often considered to mean having an effect on future generations. It can be strongly argued that the Battle of Shiloh did have a lasting effect on future generations because it proved many points to the North and South alike. Consequently, the Battle of Shiloh's shocking death toll proved to the leaders of both the Union and Confederate Forces that different strategies would be needed in order to be successful. As a result of this, the Union adopted new strategies in order to 'subjugate' the South as a political entity. This meant that, ultimately, Union Forces were able to win the American Civil War, and the Union victory evidently had a lasting effect on the United States of America because it led to the construction of the United States of America as it is today. Therefore, it can be argued that the Battle of Shiloh was historically significant because it was resonant, as it had a large impact on future generations. Resonance can also be determined by the comparisons associated with a certain event. It can therefore be argued that the Battle of Shiloh is resonant as a result of its name. This is because, in biblical terms, 'Shiloh was one of the earliest and most sacred of Hebrew sanctuaries'⁵. This suggests that the Battle of Shiloh is resonant because it contrasts with the violent battleground that was Shiloh in 1862. The Shiloh National Cemetery that now sits on the site of the Battle of Shiloh

What is
this lasting
effect? #3

³ "The Wilderness", Civil War Trust <<http://www.civilwar.org/battlefields/the-wilderness.html>> accessed 20 February 2015

⁴ "Shiloh National Cemetery", National Park Service <http://www.nps.gov/nr/travel/national_cemeteries/tennessee/shiloh_national_cemetery.html> accessed 20 February 2015

⁵ Dr William Smith, "Entry for 'Shiloh'", Smith's Bible Dictionary, 1901.

could also be compared with this biblical city, as the Cemetery is now peacefully home to the soldiers who lost their lives in the Battle.

Finally, the Battle of Shiloh was historically significant because it was revealing. For example, the Battle of Shiloh was said to have set the stage for things to come. This suggests that the Battle of Shiloh highlighted discoveries that were very important to the success of later battles in the Civil War. For instance, before the Battle of Shiloh, General Ulysses S. Grant believed that the American Civil War would be short and that one single battle would determine the victory. However, the Battle of Shiloh revealed to the General that the war would not be short. In fact, the Battle of Shiloh highlighted to him that the war could only be won when the entire South was crushed. As previously mentioned, this informed the later strategies used by General Grant, whereby the aim was to initiate attacks which took control of the South. This was particularly seen in the Battle of the Wilderness in 1864, where Union forces initiated powerful attacks with the aim of 'crushing' the South. This shows how the Battle of Shiloh was historically significant because, ultimately, without the information that the Battle of Shiloh revealed, it can be argued that the American Civil War may not have been won by Union forces because the later tactics used by General Grant put a strain on Confederate Forces, which eventually led to the surrender of Robert E. Lee in 1865.

To conclude, it can be strongly argued that the Battle of Shiloh was significant in the American Civil War because it revealed important information to Union and Confederate leaders about the Civil War as a whole, and the strategies that they were using. This was significant because it allowed the leaders to change their strategies to suit a long war which would only be won if the entire South was 'crushed'. Therefore, it can be argued that the Battle of Shiloh was ultimately responsible for the Union victory in the Civil War, because, without the Battle of Shiloh, the tactics used by the Union Forces may not have been changed, and therefore the United States of America as it is known today may never have existed. However, it could also be argued that these changes in strategy would have eventually occurred from other conflicts, and that therefore the Battle of Shiloh was not historically significant.

A worrying post-script
consider your argument.
Should figure more prominently in judgment essay

- * 1. What do you think is the role that individuals play in shaping the course / outcome of battles / war / history
- * 2. Is the myth of Shiloh more significant than the battle itself?
- * 3. Do you envisage lasting effect in political, social or geographical terms? What about cultural too - slavery?

A very well-researched essay that is well-supported + focuses well on significance. Consider the Qs above to move your writing forward in terms of analysis.

Appendix P: Resource used for building a framework of 2000 Years of History⁷

	Romans (43-410)	'Dark Ages' (410-1066)	Middle Ages (1066-1485)	Early Modern (1485-1750)	Industrial (1750-1900)	Modern (1900-Today)
How have we organised ourselves?	The Romans organised us into Roman Britain. This included England and Wales, but the Romans never conquered Scotland or Ireland. Roman society was hierarchical (based on citizenship and wealth) and slaves were at the bottom.	We organised ourselves into lots of little kingdoms. When the Vikings arrive, they settle in the Northeast. The authority of the king grows. By the 10 th century, England has developed into a single kingdom (Aethelstan is the first king of England).	England and Wales were united by William the Conqueror. Scotland remained a separate country. William establishes the feudal system.	The feudal system breaks down, but society is still hierarchical. In 1603, Scotland shared a monarch with the rest of Britain. From 1649-1660 Britain had no king. In 1707, Great Britain was formed.	In 1801, Ireland joined Great Britain to make the United Kingdom. As capitalism develops (with factories replacing smaller cottage industries), so does a class system (working, middle and upper) and class identity.	In 1922, the Republic of Ireland left the UK. In 1945, the UK joined the United Nations. In 1973, the UK joined the European Economic Community. In 1999, devolved parliaments took control in Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland. A rigid class structure begins to disappear.
How have we survived?	Most people farm and eat the food they grow. A few people earn money and buy food.	Most people farm and eat the food they grow. A few people earn money and buy food.	Most people farm and eat the food they grow. A few people earn money and buy food.	Most people farm and eat the food they grow. A few people sell their produce. A few earn wages.	Farmers sell the food they grow and use the money to buy food. The majority of people work in manufacturing and earn wages. They buy the things they need.	Most people work for a living. Increasingly they work in service industries. They earn wages and there is a growth of disposable income. Far fewer people are involved in manufacturing or food production.
What did the British people think?	We believed in multiple gods. We embraced civilisation and comfort that the Romans brought. Patriarchy.	Not many people travelled. After the arrival of St Augustine in 597, Christianity spreads.	People believed that God controlled the world. The sacraments shaped people's lives.	The Reformation begins: an argument over which Church was right: Catholic or Protestant? By the 1640s, the argument became about the power of kings.	More people learned to read and think widely. There is a scientific revolution and rational, rather than religious, explanations are offered. People thought about democracy. The Chartist movement is an example of this.	We think it right to be tolerant and believe in gender, racial and religious equality. Rapid expansion in new media allows people to communicate more widely.
Who came and went?	The Roman army in 43 AD. Afterwards, a trickle of Romans came.	The Saxons from Germany and the Vikings from Scandinavia. Britons (Celts) pushed to Wales, Cornwall or to Europe.	The Normans in 1066. We went to Palestine (Crusades) and tried to dominate France.	We started to explore the New World. From the 1600s, Britain started to colonise. First Ireland, then the New World. Some religious refugees came to Britain.	Britons colonised the Empire. At its height, the British Empire ruled a 1/4 of the world's population. The Irish came to work after the potato famine in the 1840s.	People came here from former colonies. After WWII, all 800 million subjects of the British Empire were allowed to come to Britain without a visa. Increasingly, government controls were placed on immigration. Some Britons left to find new opportunities abroad.

⁷ Inspired by resources shared by Rick Rogers at conference for the Association for Historical Dialogue and Research, accessed on http://www.ahdr.info/ckfinder/userfiles/files/Rick_Rogers_October_workshop_template.pdf