

History A Level at CNS

Studying History at CNS will be challenging, rewarding and engaging. The A Level course will help you to explain some of the most important events and changes that have taken place in the last 400 years. You will be asking questions about the nature of revolution; the extent to which the government can control society; and the development of modern politics and society. You will also be answering these questions!

Basic information:

Exam Board: AQA

Year 12:

Unit 1H (Russia) Part 1

Unit 2E (Civil War) Part 1

Year 13:

Unit 1H (Russia) Part 2

Unit 2E (Civil War) Part 2

(coursework: American Civil Rights)

1H Tsarist and Communist Russia, 1855-1964

- Trying to preserve autocracy, 1855-1894
- The collapse of autocracy, 1894-1917
- The emergence of Communist dictatorship, 1917-1941
- The Stalinist dictatorship and reaction, 1941-1964

2E The English Revolution, 1625-1660

- The emergence of conflict and the end of consensus, 1625-1629
- An experiment in Absolutism, 1629-1640
- The crisis of Parliament and the outbreak of the First Civil War, 1640-1642
- War and radicalism, 1642-1646
- The disintegration of the Political Nation, 1646-1649
- Experiments in Government and Society, 1648-1660

Breadth and overview:
Comparisons

Sources: Historical interpretation

Depth:
Detail detail detail!

Sources: Primary documents

Preparation research - Russia

Russia Unit:

1) Create a glossary for your folder. Start with the following key words. You will add to this as the year goes on.

Tsar and Tsarism	Aristocracy	Serfdom	Nobility	Reform
Repression	Preserve	Monarchy	Autocracy	Communism
Agriculture	Economy	Industry	Modernisation	Dictatorship

2) Create a factfile on Tsar Alexander II's Russia in the mid C19th. This should include the following information:

- Alexander's background, reputation and death
- Russia's involvement in the Crimean war
- Life for peasants
- Life for nobility
- The state of the economy



Preparation research - Civil War

Civil War Unit:

1) Create a glossary for your folder. Start with the following key words. You will add to this as the year goes on.

Monarchy	'Divine right'	Parliament	Absolutism	Civil war
Reformation	Protestant	Catholic	Royal court	Tyranny
Anglican	Puritan	Royalist	Ship money	Favouritism

2) Create a factfile on the problems facing King Charles I. This should include the following information:

- King Charles I and his wife Henrietta Maria
- King Charles' advisers: Lord Strafford (Thomas Wentworth), William Laud
- Problems with Parliament
- Relations with Scotland



Preparation reading - Russia

Russia 1855-1964: A synoptic overview

Flagship History

Task:

In A Level History you will often be asked to read a chapter or extract from one of our 'wider reading' books.

Please read this introductory chapter to help familiarise yourself with some of the key points of Russian history in the C19th and C20th. This chapter helps you to see the 'big picture' of this unit which is a 100 year breadth study (which tackles themes in a way a bit like your 'medicine through time' GCSE unit or equivalent).

Please answer the questions below to help you understand the main points of the chapter. Your answers will be discussed in your first History lesson so please bring them in September.

Questions

1. What event in the mid C19th was a national humiliation for Russia and what influence did this have on the new Tsar Alexander II?
2. Describe the position was Russia in in 1855? (think about geography, economy, government, population, society)
3. What significant change did Tsar Alexander bring about in 1861? What do you think the consequences of this might have been?
4. What economic transformations had Russia undergone in the 1890s and 1900s?
5. How had Stalin turned Russia into a world superpower by the 1950s?
6. How had opposition groups demonstrated their political opposition to the Tsarist regime?
7. How did the First World War act as a catalyst for the 1917 February Russian Revolution?
8. How did Lenin and Stalin intensify repression in Russia after the 1917 October Bolshevik (Communist) revolution?
9. Why does the chapter conclude by highlighting two key themes of Russian history: radical reform and political repression.
10. +1 How far do you think these themes apply to Putin's Russia today?



1 Russia 1855–1964: A synoptic overview

Key Issues

- How far did Russia's government change from 1855 to 1964?
- How did Russian society and the economy change in the period 1855 to 1964?
- How important were individual Russian rulers in bringing change to Russia from 1855 to 1964?

- 1.1 Russia in 1855
- 1.2 The reign of Alexander II, the Tsar Liberator, 1855–81
- 1.3 The coming of the communist state
- 1.4 Key themes in Russian history 1855–1964

1.1 Russia in 1855

In 1855 Russia faced national humiliation. It was in the middle of a war on its own soil against Britain, France, Piedmont-Sardinia and the Ottoman Empire. The Crimean War (1854–56) saw the forces of these four powers besiege the southern Russian naval base of Sebastopol, and by 1855 the Russian forces were on the brink of defeat. In 1855 Tsar Nicholas I died, to be replaced by Tsar Alexander II – who became known during his reign as the 'Tsar Liberator'. Alexander II was determined to modernise Russia to prevent such an event happening again. From 1855 until his death, at the hand of assassins in 1881, Alexander II brought about fundamental social and political reform to Russia.

Throughout its history, from 1855 to 1964, Russia saw periods of major social, political and economic change instituted from above. In the twentieth century, there were similar periods of fundamental change, brought about by the Soviet leaders Lenin and Stalin.

In 1855 Russia was one of Europe's five Great Powers. It stretched from Poland in the West to Alaska in North America. It covered approximately 20 per cent of the world's land surface. Although vast in size, it was the most politically and economically backward of Europe's major states. The ruler of the Russian Empire was the Tsar (Emperor) who had complete political power. There was no national parliament or any form of elective government. The Tsar chose the government and determined government policy. He was head of the armed forces and was regarded as the head of the main religion, the Russian Orthodox Church. The vast majority of the Russian population – 80 per cent – were serfs, the personal property of their owners. In 1855 Russia had more in common with medieval England than the rest of Europe.

Serf: A person who is the personal property of their owners.

Preparation reading - Civil War

Has history been hard on Charles I?

By Tim Harris

Task:

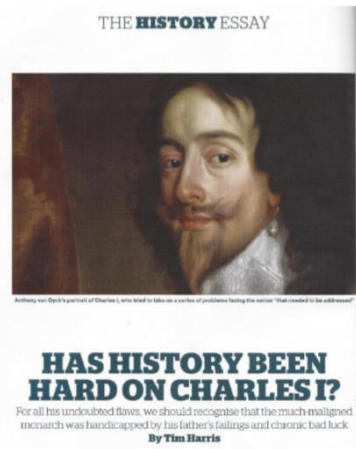
As part of studying A Level History you will be reading academic articles like this one.

Please read the article by Tom Harris and answer the questions to help you understand the key points of the article.

As a class we will be discussing the article and your answers to the questions so please bring this to your first History lesson.

Questions

1. What are the 2 conflicting interpretations of Charles' period of Personal Rule? (the 11 years that Charles ruled without a parliament)
2. Why was being king of England, Scotland and Ireland a difficult task in the C17th?
3. In what ways had King James (Charles' father) left his son and heir a difficult legacy? (think about religion and finance)
4. What was the main bone of contention between Charles and parliament when he came to the throne in 1625?
5. How did Charles try to bring stability to his kingdoms in the 1630s when he ruled without parliament?
6. What was controversial about Charles' policies during Personal Rule? (think in terms of religion, finance and legal system)
7. In what ways could Charles' policies be defended as 'logical'?
8. How did Charles' personality create problems with parliament?
9. What had Charles done to alienate and upset his Scottish and Irish kingdoms?
10. "Ironically the civil wars didn't erupt because Charles was no good at the politics of spin; they erupted because he was." What does the author of the article mean by this concluding sentence?



THE HISTORY ESSAY

In early October 1640 Charles I, based temporarily at York following defeat at the hands of the Scottish Covenanters, sat down to a game of chess with the Marquess of Winchester. As Charles pondered how to play his bishop, Winchester quipped: "See, Sir, how troublesome these Bishops are?" Charles said nothing, but "looked very grim".

Defeat in the second of the two Bishops' Wars – in which a power struggle over the future of the Scottish church led to violent clashes between the king's forces and his opponents in Scotland – was the beginning of the end for Charles I. Having fallen out with his parliaments in the late 1620s, he had embarked on a period of personal rule from 1629, and pursued an ambitious policy of reform in church and state in all three of his kingdoms: England, Scotland and Ireland.

The stalemate of the first Bishops' War finally led him to recall parliament in the spring of 1640, but he dissolved it after only three weeks rather than agree to its demands for reform. Defeat in the second Bishops' War forced Charles to call what became known as the Long Parliament and to negotiate with it.

In October 1641, as Charles worked towards a settlement with the Scots, the Catholics in Ireland decided to launch a rebellion of their own. Disagreement over who should control the army needed to put down the Irish rebellion led ultimately to both parliament and the king raising their own forces and going to war with each other in 1642. Defeat in the ensuing civil wars – there were two – resulted in Charles being tried and executed for treason (a crime that can only be committed *against* kings) in January 1649.

Why did things go so disastrously wrong for Charles? Few would now accept the older characterisation of him as a tyrant whose personal rule was a high road to civil war and revolution. Some even regard the personal rule as a period of constructive and welcome reform in England, arguing that his regime was toppled only as a result of the prior revolts in Scotland and Ireland.

Must revolutions have great, long-term causes? Was Charles's fall an inevitable consequence of his political inheritance? Or was it the result of bad luck, political miscalculation, even accident? Do we blame Charles or the situation in which he found himself?

Charles's father, James VI of Scotland, had united the crowns in 1603 when he succeeded Elizabeth to the thrones of England and Ireland as James I. England had its problems – a seriously under-financed crown and deep-seated religious tensions dividing various types of Protestants among themselves (Calvinists and anti-Calvinists, Puritans and anti-Puritans), James now also found himself ruled three

kingdoms with different religious complexions: Anglican England, Presbyterian Scotland and Catholic Ireland (albeit that the church establishment in Ireland was Protestant and the Catholic majority were divided ethnically between the native Gaelic and the Old English). Ireland posed further security problems as a Catholic island off the coast of Protestant England that had the tendency to rebel against English rule. During Tyrone's rebellion of the 1590s, which was only finally put down in 1603, the Gaels of Ulster had even offered the crown of Ireland to the king of Catholic Spain.

James VI and I is normally seen as a skilful politician who managed this problematic multiple-kingdom inheritance reasonably well. He calmed religious tensions in England, and under his rule Scotland and Ireland were quieter than they had been for a long time.

Yet James stored up a hornets' nest of problems for his son. He had enraged many Scots by reviving episcopacy (a hierarchical structure in which the chief authority over a local church is a bishop) north of the border. It was also James who had first moved to introduce a more Anglican style of worship into the Scottish Kirk, thereby upsetting the Presbyterians. It is true that he took care to work through the general assembly of the Kirk and the Scottish parliament. But he used a considerable amount of bullying and intimidation to force his reforms through and Scottish Presbyterians never accepted the assemblies that had backed James's initiatives as legitimate.

James's solution to the security problem in Ireland was to declare the land of six of the counties of Ulster forfeited to the crown and to plant the province with Protestants from England and Scotland.

Both the Scottish Covenanters of the late 1630s and the Irish rebels of 1641 traced the roots of their grievances back to his reign.

Nor did things always go smoothly for James in England. He had disagreements with his parliaments over revenue and foreign policy, and himself ruled without parliament from 1610 to 1621 – the assembly that met for nine weeks in 1614 was deemed not to have been a parliament because it enacted no legislation.

James never solved the problem of an under-financed crown. He encountered severe problems with the Puritans towards the start of his reign, and whatever peace he brought to the



King James VI and I, seen here in a c1619 portrait, left Charles "a hornets' nest of problems"

Optional wider reading/watching - Russia

(On your Marx) Get Set... For History A Level

Unit 1: Tsarist and Communist Russia, 1855-1964 (AQA 1H)

This course is all about the big changes in Russia over this 100 year period. In Year 12 you will be learning about the weakening position of the old Tsarist regime in Russia, under the leadership of Tsar Alexander II, Alexander III and Nicholas II. You will assess the different styles of their authority and their relative successes and failures, including politically, economically and for wider Russian society. Ultimately you will be tracing the drastic changes that Russia underwent in the C19th and analysing the reasons why Russia experienced a Communist Revolution in October 1917. In Year 13 you will be studying the ways in which Lenin and Stalin established a Communist state in Russia and the political and economic consequences of this. You will particularly focus on the brutality of Stalin's regime and the ways in which he imposed an authoritarian state on his people. Finally you will contrast Stalin's Communist rule to his successor, Khrushchev. Fundamentally, you will be drawing comparisons and making parallels between the Tsarist and Communist systems; assessing the extent to which the main institutions of power in Russia really changed.

Key themes/ideas:

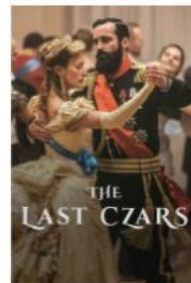
- Political power and authority
- Opposition to the regime
- Economic and social change



Get Set... Things To Watch

TV

- Netflix series—The last Tsars (warning! a bit raunchy at times!)
- BBC iplayer—Stacey Dooley investigates Russia's war on women
- BBC iplayer series—War and Peace
- BBC iplayer—Russia with Simon Reeve
- BBC iplayer—Putin: the new Tsar
- All4—Putin: A Russian spy story



Films

- Dr Zhivago
- Anna Karenina
- Stalingrad
- The death of Stalin (warning! Explicit language)



Documentaries

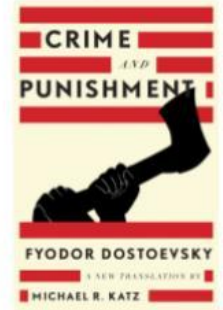
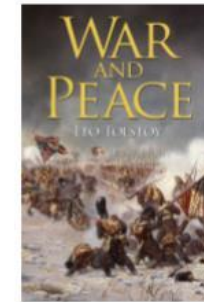
- Lucy Worsley—Empire of the Tsars (youtube)
- BBC Witness History—Soviet Russia
- Stalin, man of Steel (youtube)



Get Set... Things To Read

Russian Classics

- Tolstoy
- Chekov
- Dostoyevsky



Historical Fiction

- A gentleman in Moscow by Amor Towles
- The Russian concubine by Kate Furnival
- Stalin's ghost by Martin Cruz Smith
- Sashenka by Simon Sebag Montefiore
- One night in winter by Simon Sebag Montefiore
- The siege by Helen Dunmore

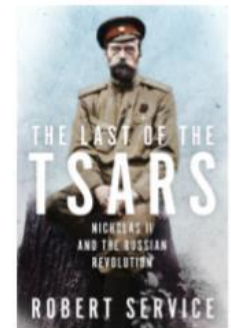


Academic

- BBC Historyextra online—The legacy of the Romanovs
- BBC Historyextra online—Russia's revolutions: how 1917 shaped a century
- Revolutionary Russia, 1891-1991 by Orlando Figes
- Russia: A 1000 year chronicle of the wild east by Martin Sixsmith
- The Romanovs by Simon Sebag Montefiore
- The Last of the Tsars by Robert Service
- A History of C20th Russia by Robert Service

Get Set... Things To Listen To

- BBC Sounds—Inside Putin's Russia
- BBC Sounds—Russia, the drive to Empire
- BBC Sounds—A to Tsar of Russia with Adrian Chiles
- BBC Sounds—It's just a joke, comrade: 100 years of Russian satire
- 'In our time' podcasts by Melvyn Bragg (Emancipation of the serfs, Assassination of Alex II)



For even more information please visit the CNS History Department website via the CNS cloud portal. And don't forget to follow us on twitter



Optional wider reading/watching - Civil War

Get Set... For History A Level

Unit 2: The English Revolution (AQA 2E)

This course is all about the clash between King Charles I and his parliament leading up to the English Civil war in 1642. In Year 12 you will study the relationship between King Charles and his parliament, with a major focus on the arguments they had over finance and religion. You will carefully consider the role of Charles' personality had in the conflict, as his stubbornness is often identified as a significant problem for parliament in the 1620s and 1630s. Against the backdrop of the Gunpowder Plot (1605) and fear of witchcraft, you will think about the influence religious beliefs had on the growing rift in England between Royalists and Parliamentarians. In Year 13 you will study the English Civil War itself and trace the political rise of Oliver Cromwell, from low-level cavalryman to eventually the 'Lord Protector' in the 1650s. You will study the controversial event of King Charles' execution (sorry spoiler alert!) and the consequences of this for political authority in England, for how would England be governed without a monarch? Essentially this course boils down to the personalities of a handful of 'great men' and how they sought to rule over a divided kingdom.

Key themes/ideas:

- Conflict between Crown and Parliament
- Radical thinking in the C17th
- Experiments in government

Get Set... Things To Watch

TV

All4—The Devil's Whore

Films

Cromwell

To kill a king

Documentaries

BBC iplayer—The Stuarts

Clickview—Charles I: Downfall of a king

Clickview—Charles I: Killing a king

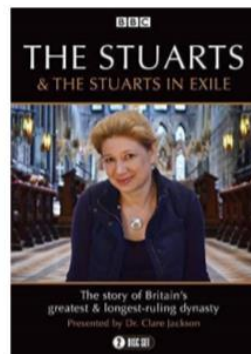
Clickview—The Stuarts: a bloody reign

All4—Britain's most historic towns: Oxford

Clickview—A history of Britain by Simon Schama (Revolutions)

The English Civil Wars: blood on our hands (youtube)

Timelines TV: History of Britain: Civil war, History of Britain: Oliver Cromwell (youtube)



Get Set....Things To Read



Historical Fiction

The King's General by Daphne Du Maurier

By the sword by Alison Stuart

Traitor's Blood by Michael Arnold

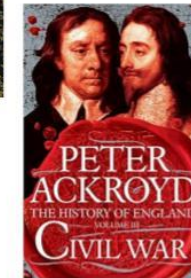
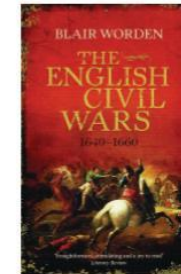
Academic

BBC Historyextra—Oliver Cromwell: Hero or villain?

The English Civil wars by Blair Worden

Civil War by Peter Ackroyd

White King by Leanda de Lisle



Get Set...Things To Listen To



'Open Yale courses' podcast—Crown and political nation 1604–1642

In our time' podcasts by Melvyn Bragg (The trial of Charles I, The Divine Right of Kings)

'Revolutions' podcast series by Mike Duncan

History Hub podcast—Citizens: 800 years in the making

For even more information please visit the CNS History Department website via the CNS cloud portal. And don't forget to follow us on twitter

[#cns_history](#)



Things you will need in September...

For each unit (Russia and English Civil War) you should bring your completed preparation tasks...

- Glossary task
- Factfiles of key individuals
- Preparation reading notes
- Comments on wider reading/watching (optional)**



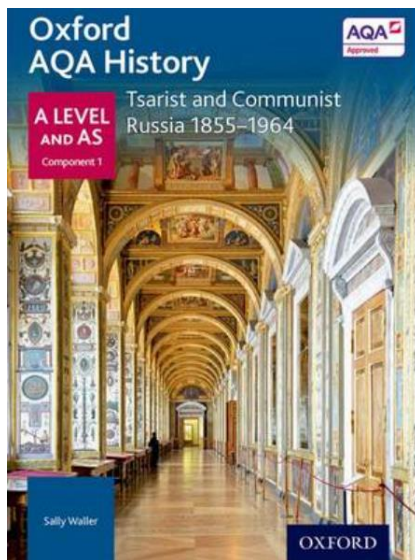
We recommend you start in September with a fully stocked stationary pack, including:

- A folder for each unit
- Pens
- Highlighters
- Plastic wallets
- Folder dividers

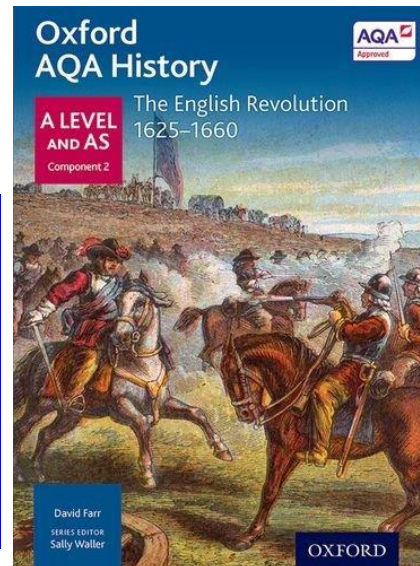


We strongly recommend you buy your own copies of the core textbooks (if you are entitled to any bursary support these books can be purchased in September with this money)

<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Oxford-AQA-History-Level-Communist/dp/0198354673>



<https://www.amazon.co.uk/Oxford-AQA-History-Level-Revolution/dp/019835472X>



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