



Singapore Examinations and Assessment Board



CAMBRIDGE
International Education

**Singapore–Cambridge General Certificate of Education
Ordinary Level (2026)**

Humanities
(Social Studies, History)
(Syllabus 2261)

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Humanities

(Social Studies, History)

Singapore–Cambridge General Certificate of Education Ordinary Level (2026)

(Syllabus 2261)

INTRODUCTION

This Humanities syllabus aims to enable students to acquire knowledge and understanding of events and phenomenon, issues and perspectives, and human actions and behaviours.

Humanities syllabus (2261) comprises two components: Social Studies and History. Both components are compulsory.

The examination format is shown in the table below.

Paper No.	Component	Marks	Weighting	Duration
1	Social Studies	50	50%	1 hr 45 min
2	History	50	50%	1 hr 50 min

Paper 1

Social Studies

INTRODUCTION

Philosophy of the Singapore Social Studies Curriculum

At the heart of the Singapore Social Studies curriculum is the preparation of students to be effective citizens by helping them to better understand the interconnectedness of Singapore and the world they live in and appreciate the complexities of the human experience.

Drawing on aspects of society that are of meaning and interest to students, Social Studies seeks to ignite students' curiosity to inquire into real-world issues that concern their lives. Through inquiry and authentic learning experiences, Social Studies helps students to attain relevant knowledge and understanding about these issues, develop critical and reflective thinking skills, and appreciate multiple perspectives.

Social Studies seeks to inculcate in students a deeper understanding of the values that define the Singapore society, nurture dispositions that will inspire them to show concern for the society and the world in which they live and demonstrate empathy in their relationships with others. The curriculum therefore envisions students as informed, concerned and participative citizens, competent in decision-making with an impassioned spirit to contribute responsibly to the society and world they live in.

Figure 1.1 reflects the philosophy underpinning the Singapore Social Studies curriculum.

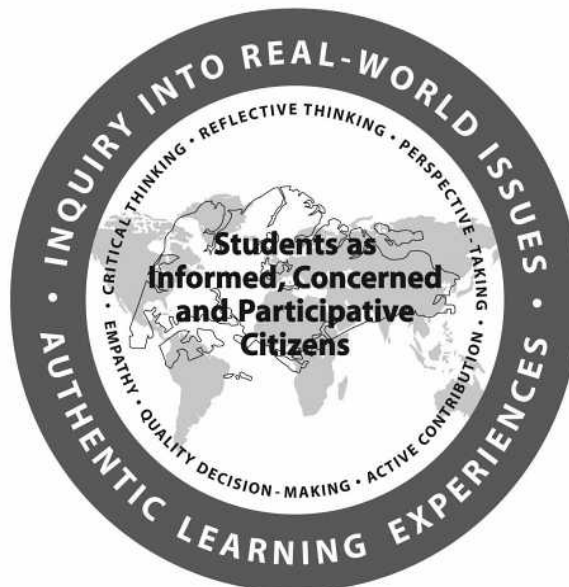


Figure 1.1 The Singapore Social Studies Curriculum

The syllabus content is organised around three Issues and is anchored in a set of knowledge, skills and values outcomes. The three Issues correspond to societal issues that have been shaping Singapore, the region and the world. The knowledge, skills and values acquired through exploring these Issues will develop students' competencies to be informed, concerned and participative citizens. The following table shows an overview of the three Issues in the Social Studies O-Level syllabus.

<p>Issue 1: Exploring Citizenship and Governance</p>
<p><i>Inquiry Focus – Working for the good of society: Whose responsibility is it?</i></p> <p><i>Why this Issue matters</i></p> <p>This Issue invites students to begin exploring what it means to be an informed, concerned and participative citizen. Students will deepen their understanding of citizenship and governance and learn how citizens and government play complementary roles in working for the good of society. In a complex society and world, understanding their roles as citizens will influence how they respond to various situations and issues in Singapore and the world. This will serve to develop a stronger sense of civic consciousness, enhancing the roles they play as citizens who are rooted in Singapore with a global outlook.</p>
<p><i>Key Understandings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizenship is varied and complex. • Government is a political institution with important functions and roles to govern. • Different groups of people in society have differing needs, interests and priorities, and experience unequal sharing of costs. Managing these differences often requires trade-offs to be made. • Both citizens and government can play complementary roles in working for the good of society.
<p>Issue 2: Living in a Diverse Society</p>
<p><i>Inquiry Focus – Living in a diverse society: Is harmony achievable?</i></p> <p><i>Why this Issue matters</i></p> <p>This Issue helps students appreciate diversity and the importance of harmony. Students will develop an understanding of who they are as individuals and accept, respect and celebrate diversity as well as common practices and values in a diverse society. This will heighten students' awareness of the need to develop personal and collective responsibility in promoting and maintaining harmony in a diverse society.</p>
<p><i>Key Understandings</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identities are diverse and complex. • Living harmoniously in a diverse society means respecting our differences and appreciating what we share in common. • People respond to diversity in a variety of ways to achieve harmony.

Issue 3: Being Part of a Globalised World***Inquiry Focus*** – Being part of a globalised world: How can we respond to globalisation?***Why this Issue matters***

This Issue helps students understand and make meaning of their lives in a globalised world where countries and individuals are interconnected and interdependent. Students will explore the impacts of globalisation in three areas: economy, culture and security. They will understand the complex process of globalisation through examining how the impacts of globalisation in these areas result in trade-offs and different responses from countries and individuals. Students will therefore appreciate the complex decision-making process behind the responses towards the impacts of globalisation. This understanding will help them to make well-reasoned and responsible decisions as informed, concerned and participative citizens in a globalised world.

Key Understandings

- Globalisation shapes the interconnections and interdependence among countries and people.
- Globalisation creates impacts in the economy, culture and security.
- The impacts of globalisation result in differing responses from countries and people.

AIMS

As **informed** citizens, students would:

- understand the rights and responsibilities of citizens and the role of the government in society
- understand their identity as Singaporeans, with a regional and global outlook
- understand the Singapore perspective on key national, regional and global issues
- analyse and negotiate complex issues through evaluating multiple sources with different perspectives; and
- arrive at well-reasoned, responsible decisions through reflective thought and discernment.

As **concerned** citizens, students would:

- have a sense of belonging to the nation, appreciate and be committed to building social cohesion in a diverse society
- be motivated to engage in issues of societal concern; and
- reflect on the ethical considerations and consequences of decision-making.

As **participative** citizens, students would:

- take responsible personal and collective actions to effect change for the good of society; and
- be resilient in addressing concerns of society in spite of challenges faced.

ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

AO1 – Knowledge with Understanding

Candidates should be able to:

- demonstrate an understanding of societal issues.

AO2 – Interpreting and Evaluating Sources/Given Information

Candidates should be able to:

- comprehend and extract relevant information
- draw inferences from given information
- analyse and evaluate evidence
- compare and contrast different views
- distinguish between fact, opinion and judgement
- recognise values and detect bias
- draw conclusions based on reasoned consideration of evidence and arguments.

AO3 – Constructing Explanations

Candidates should be able to:

- analyse societal issues through different perspectives
- construct reasoned arguments and make informed judgement and recommendations.

O-LEVEL ASSESSMENT SPECIFICATION GRID FOR SOCIAL STUDIES

Assessment Objective	Weighting
Objective 1 + Objective 2	35%
Objective 1 + Objective 3	15%
Total	50%

Note: Objective 1 is inevitably part of the testing of Objectives 2 and 3.

SCHEME OF ASSESSMENT

O-LEVEL SOCIAL STUDIES

- One paper of 1 hour 45 minutes.
- Paper comprises 2 sections:
 - Section A: (35 marks)
One source-based case study testing Assessment Objectives 1 and 2.
 - Section B: (15 marks)
Two structured-response questions testing Assessment Objectives 1 and 3.
- Candidates are required to answer the compulsory source-based case study from Section A and the compulsory structured-response questions from Section B.

Source-Based Case Study

The compulsory source-based case study can be set on any of the three Issues:

- Exploring Citizenship and Governance
- Living in a Diverse Society
- Being Part of a Globalised World.

Candidates will be expected to have an understanding of the ways in which sources may be evaluated. The case study will be set on one of the three Issues of the syllabus and will require the skills and concepts taught during the course. The issue of the case study will be related to the syllabus and may or may not be covered in the syllabus content. Candidates are expected to use their knowledge, skills and conceptual understanding developed during the course to help them use the given sources to answer the questions.

The source-based case study comprises five questions:

Question	Skills Tested	Mark Allocation
1–4	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source-handling skills on specific sources 	25
5	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Source-handling skills requiring use of multiple sources – question will require candidates to consider the issue of the case study from a different perspective 	10

A 'Levels of Response Marking Scheme' (**LORMS**) will be used to assess candidates' responses.

Structured-Response Questions

The compulsory structured-response questions will be set on any of the three Issues in the syllabus. However, in an examination, the question set will not be on the same Issue as the source-based case study.

The structured-response questions comprise two questions:

Question	Skills Tested	Mark Allocation
6	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constructing explanation by giving reasoned argument and/or making recommendation on an issue (multiple strategies/multi-causal) – question will require candidates to consider the issue in the context of Singapore 	7
7	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Constructing explanation of two factors / perspectives on an issue and making judgement on the relative importance of factors or giving balanced conclusion on the issue 	8

A 'Levels of Response Marking Scheme' (**LORMS**) will be used to assess candidates' responses.

Issue 1: Exploring Citizenship and Governance		
Descriptor	Key Understandings	
<p>Inquiry Focus – Working for the good of society: Whose responsibility is it?</p> <p>Why this Issue matters This Issue invites students to begin exploring what it means to be an informed, concerned and participative citizen. Students will deepen their understanding of citizenship and governance, and learn how citizens and government play complementary roles in working for the good of society. In a complex society and world, understanding their roles as citizens will influence how they respond to various situations and issues in Singapore and the world. This will serve to develop a stronger sense of civic consciousness, enhancing the roles they play as citizens who are rooted in Singapore with a global outlook.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizenship is varied and complex. • Government is a political institution with important functions and roles to govern. • Different groups of people in society have differing needs, interests and priorities, and experience unequal sharing of costs. Managing these differences often requires trade-offs to be made. • Both citizens and government can play complementary roles in working for the good of society. 	
Knowledge Outcomes	Skills Outcomes	Concepts
<p>Students will be able to understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • different attributes can shape one's understanding of citizenship • the functions and roles of government in working for the good of society • the challenges of determining what is good for a society, with decisions guided by the principles of governance • how citizens and government can work together for the good of society. 	<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • examine societal issues critically by gathering, interpreting, analysing and evaluating information from different sources to make well-reasoned and substantiated arguments, recommendations and conclusions on societal issues • demonstrate sound reasoning and responsible decision-making that considers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Singapore's unique contexts, constraints and vulnerabilities; and – the consequences of one's actions on those around them • demonstrate perspective-taking when encountering differing views • demonstrate reflective thinking when reviewing their understanding of societal issues and examining personal assumptions and beliefs about others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizenship • Governance • Trade-offs

Issue 1: Exploring Citizenship and Governance	
Guiding Questions	Content
1 What does citizenship mean to me?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Attributes can shape one's understanding of citizenship <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Legal status <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Rights and obligations of citizens – A sense of identity – Shared values – Civic participation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Participate in public affairs as individuals and community groups
2 What are the functions and roles of government in working for the good of society?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Functions and roles of government in a representative democracy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Functions of government <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Makes and passes laws ○ Implements and enforces laws ○ Interprets and applies laws – Roles of government <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Maintains law and order ○ Ensures economic and social well-being of citizens ○ Promotes and protects a country's national interests
3 How do we decide what is good for society?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deciding what is good for society <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Challenges in deciding what is good for society <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Differing needs and interests ○ Differing priorities ○ Unequal sharing of costs – Managing trade-offs – Principles shaping governance <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Having good leadership ○ Anticipating change and staying relevant ○ A stake for everyone, opportunities for all ○ Practising meritocracy
4 How can we work together for the good of society?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizens and government working together for the good of society <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Addressing the needs of society – Influencing decision-making in public affairs – Strengthening citizens' sense of belonging

Issue 2: Living in a Diverse Society		
Descriptor	Key Understandings	
<p>Inquiry Focus – Living in a diverse society: Is harmony achievable?</p> <p>Why this Issue matters This Issue helps students appreciate diversity and the importance of harmony. Students will develop an understanding of who they are as individuals and accept, respect and celebrate diversity as well as common practices and values in a diverse society. This will heighten students' awareness of the need to develop personal and collective responsibility in promoting and maintaining harmony in a diverse society.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identities are diverse and complex. • Living harmoniously in a diverse society means respecting our differences and appreciating what we share in common. • People respond to diversity in a variety of ways to achieve harmony. 	
Knowledge Outcomes	Skills Outcomes	Concepts
<p>Students will be able to understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the factors that shape identities of people and contribute to a diverse society • the experiences and effects of living in a diverse society • the various ways in which individuals, communities and governments can respond to the effects of living in a diverse society. 	<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • examine societal issues critically by gathering, interpreting, analysing and evaluating information from different sources to make well-reasoned and substantiated arguments, recommendations and conclusions on societal issues • demonstrate sound reasoning and responsible decision-making that considers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Singapore's unique contexts, constraints and vulnerabilities; and – the consequences of one's actions on those around them • demonstrate perspective-taking when encountering differing views • demonstrate reflective thinking when reviewing their understanding of societal issues and examining personal assumptions and beliefs about others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Identity • Diversity • Harmony

Issue 2: Living in a Diverse Society	
Guiding Questions	Content
1 What are the factors that shape the identities of people and contribute to a diverse society?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Factors that shape the identities of people and contribute to a diverse society <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Race and ethnicity – Religion – Socio-economic status – Nationality
2 What are the experiences and effects of living in a diverse society?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Interactions in a diverse society and common space • Experiences and effects of living in a diverse society <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Cultural exchange and appreciation – Exchange of knowledge and skills – Stereotypes, prejudice and discrimination – Competition for resources
3 How can we respond to diversity in society?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Citizens and government responding to socio-cultural diversity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Responses of citizens as individuals and community groups – Responses of government <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Assimilationist policy and its tensions ○ Integration policy and its tensions • Citizens and government responding to socio-economic diversity <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Responses of citizens as individuals and community groups – Responses of government <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ A government-financed approach and its challenges ○ A shared responsibility approach and its challenges

Issue 3: Being Part of a Globalised World		
Descriptor	Key Understandings	
<p>Inquiry Focus – Being part of a globalised world: How can we respond to globalisation?</p> <p>Why this Issue matters This Issue helps students understand and make meaning of their lives in a globalised world where countries and individuals are interconnected and interdependent. Students will explore the impacts of globalisation in three areas: economy, culture and security. They will understand the complex process of globalisation through examining how the impacts of globalisation in these areas result in trade-offs and different responses from countries and individuals. Students will therefore appreciate the complex decision-making process behind the responses towards the impacts of globalisation. This understanding will help them to make well-reasoned and responsible decisions as informed, concerned and participative citizens in a globalised world.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Globalisation shapes the interconnections and interdependence among countries and people. • Globalisation creates impacts in the economy, culture and security. • The impacts of globalisation result in differing responses from countries and people. 	
Knowledge Outcomes	Skills Outcomes	Concepts
<p>Students will be able to understand:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • the key driving forces of globalisation • different responses of countries and individuals to economic, cultural and security impacts of globalisation. 	<p>Students will be able to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • examine societal issues critically by gathering, interpreting, analysing and evaluating information from different sources to make well-reasoned and substantiated arguments, recommendations and conclusions on societal issues • demonstrate sound reasoning and responsible decision-making that considers <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Singapore’s unique contexts, constraints and vulnerabilities; and – the consequences of one’s actions on those around them • demonstrate perspective-taking when encountering differing views • demonstrate reflective thinking when reviewing their understanding of societal issues and examining personal assumptions and beliefs about others. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Globalisation • Interconnectedness • Interdependence

Issue 3: Being Part of a Globalised World	
Guiding Questions	Content
1 What are the factors that contribute to globalisation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Driving forces of globalisation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Technological advancements <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Developments in transportation ○ Developments in digital technology – Growth of Multinational Corporations
2 How can we respond to the economic impacts of globalisation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Economic impacts of globalisation and responses of countries and individuals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Economic impacts of globalisation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Economic growth and economic vulnerability experienced by countries ○ Employment opportunities and challenges experienced by individuals – Responses to economic impacts of globalisation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Government support ○ Acquisition of knowledge and skills by individuals
3 How can we respond to the cultural impacts of globalisation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cultural impacts of globalisation and responses of countries and individuals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Cultural impacts of globalisation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Spread of culture ○ Dilution of culture – Responses to cultural impacts of globalisation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Varying degrees of acceptance and rejection
4 How can we respond to the security impacts of globalisation?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Security impacts of globalisation and responses of countries and individuals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Security impacts of globalisation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Transnational terrorism ○ Cyber threats – Responses to security impacts of globalisation <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Vigilance by individuals ○ Security measures by governments within their countries ○ Cooperation among countries

Paper 2

History

INTRODUCTION

History education in Singapore seeks to develop in students an appreciation of past human experiences, critical awareness of the nature of historical knowledge, and the ability to make connections between the past and present. In a world where attention is often divided between concerns over the present and the future, the relevance of History is often questioned. Learning to manage the present and anticipate the future would not be possible without knowing the past.

History prepares students to thrive as citizens in a complex and fast-changing world by equipping them with the knowledge and skills to understand how forces, events and developments of the past shaped today's world. It also develops in students a disciplined and critical mind to discern and make informed judgements based on consideration of multiple perspectives, reasoned and well-substantiated conclusions. History also helps students to participate actively in a globalised world, as they learn to make sense of ambiguous and complex global developments, appreciate local contexts and engage with different cultures and societies sensitively. These are encapsulated in the seven qualities of a history learner which the History curriculum aims to develop:

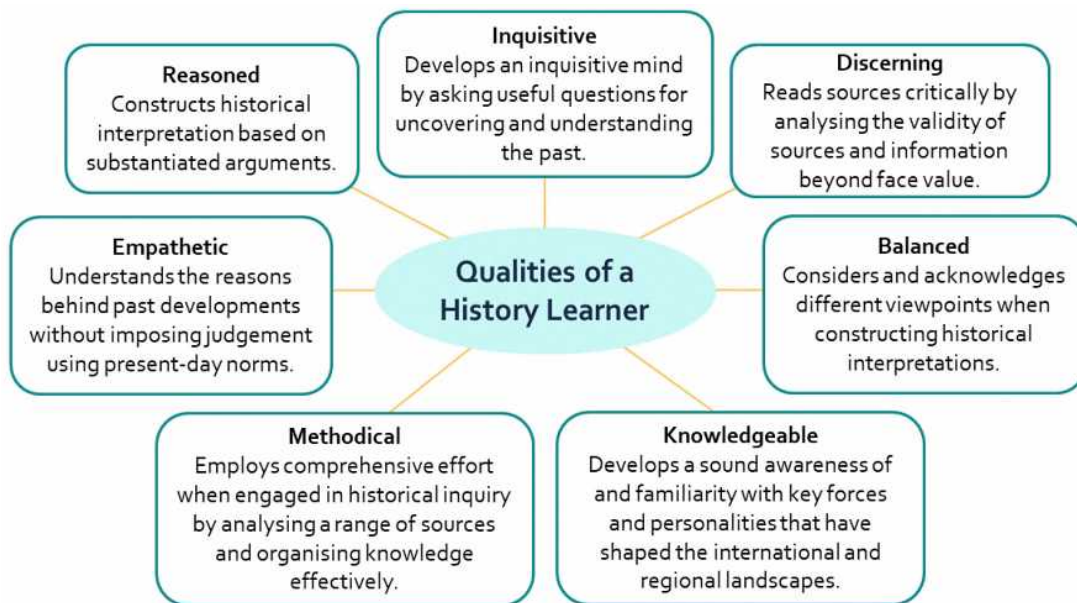


Figure 1. Qualities of a History learner

AIMS

The Upper Secondary History syllabus reflects the value placed on the study of history by seeking to:

- engage students actively in historical inquiry so as to develop them into confident, self-directed, critical and reflective thinkers
- enable students to acquire knowledge and understanding of how the past has been interpreted, represented and accorded significance for different reasons and purposes
- develop an inquisitive mind in students with the ability to ask relevant questions about the past and examine a range of sources critically in their historical context to reach substantiated judgements about the past
- develop in students the ability to organise and communicate their historical knowledge and understanding through a variety of ways using different media
- equip them with the necessary historical knowledge, understanding, dispositions and skills to understand the present and contribute actively and responsibly as local and global citizens
- inspire them to further study and pursue their personal interest in the past.

LEARNING OUTCOMES

Knowledge and Understanding

At the end of the course, students should be able to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of:

- History as a construct – History is constructed from evidence and there are different interpretations of historical events
- the key characteristics of the periods studied – this includes the social, economic, cultural and political contexts of the societies studied and the experiences of the peoples who lived in these societies at that point in time
- the interconnections between individuals, societies, events and developments studied and those in the present day
- key individuals, groups, forces, events and ideas that shaped the development of the political, social and cultural contexts of our world today
- the process of change by showing change and/or development within and across the periods of study.

Skills

Students should be able to employ the following skills to demonstrate their knowledge and understanding:

- establishing historical patterns and relevance to the present
- comparing different aspects of the periods, events and issues studied to establish change and continuity
- analysing and evaluating causation (cause and effect) of historical events and situations whilst avoiding abstract generalisations
- assessing and establishing the significance of individuals, ideas, events, forces and developments on societies
- identifying points of view in History through distinguishing bias, fact and opinion in history writing
- analysing, evaluating and synthesising historical information from a variety of media to make informed conclusions
- organising and communicating historical knowledge and understanding in a coherent way.

Values and Attitudes

Students should also be able to demonstrate the core values and mindsets associated with history learning when they:

- show sensitivity to how people's values and beliefs shape their interpretations of events, issues or developments in any specific time and space
- are aware of how cultural, intellectual and emotional contexts shape the thinking, value systems, decisions and actions of different peoples and groups in different times and places
- show openness to and respect for diverse, and sometimes opposing viewpoints
- empathise with people from different social, cultural, economic and political backgrounds
- modify and adapt their thinking and actions according to multiple sources of information, perspectives and different circumstances, guided by core values
- are able to handle ambiguity and pose relevant questions to conduct further investigation independently
- identify and embrace connections between themselves and the larger community (past and present) and realise that their actions impact others, thus promoting a commitment to improving the community and country
- make judgements on historical events and determine the ways in which they can respond to these events guided by the core values.

ASSESSMENT OBJECTIVES

Candidates should be able to:

Objective 1: Deploy Knowledge

- select, organise and use relevant historical knowledge in context.

Objective 2: Construct Explanation and Communicate Historical Knowledge

- analyse and explain historical events and periods studied using key historical concepts (causation and consequence, change and continuity, significance) in order to arrive at a reasoned conclusion.

Objective 3: Interpret and Evaluate Source Materials

- interpret, evaluate and use a range of sources as evidence in their historical context through:
 - comprehending and extracting relevant information
 - drawing inferences from given information
 - comparing and contrasting different views
 - distinguishing between facts, opinion and judgement
 - recognising values and detecting bias
 - establishing utility of given information
 - drawing conclusions based on a reasoned consideration of evidence and arguments.

SCHEME OF ASSESSMENT

Assessment Specification Grid

Assessment Objectives	Weighting
AO1 + AO2	20%
AO1 + AO3	30%
Total	50%

Note: AO1 forms part of the testing of AO2 and AO3.

Assessment Format

The examination consists of **one** paper and the duration of the paper is **1 hour 50 minutes**. This paper is assessed by a source-based case study and essay questions.

The Making of the 20th Century Modern World, 1910s–1991	
Section A: Source-Based Case Study (30%) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maximum of 6 sources Q1(a)–(e): source-based questions (AO1 + AO3) 	30m
Section B: Essay Questions (20%) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Answer 2 out of 3 questions set (AO1 + AO2) The questions require candidates to analyse, evaluate and make judgement on historical events and/or issues Each question carries 10 marks 	20m
Total marks for Paper	50m

Section A: Source-Based Case Study

Candidates are required to answer the compulsory source-based case study. The topics for the source-based case study are prescribed and indicated by the symbol (*) in the syllabus content. Candidates are expected to have a sound knowledge of the prescribed units and an understanding of the ways in which sources may be evaluated.

A maximum of **six** sources may be set for the source-based case study. No individual source will exceed **150 words**. One or more differing accounts of the same topic or issue might be set, showing different views as time progresses or in communicating to different audiences. Sources may be simplified where necessary.

Each source-based case study will have five sub-questions, testing Objectives 1 and 3. The first four sub-questions will test specific sources. The fifth sub-question will require candidates to use the evidence in multiple sources to demonstrate the skills of analysis, explanation and judgement for an issue related to the topic assessed in the source-based case study. The weighting for each sub-question will be indicated in brackets. A 'Levels of Response Mark Scheme' (LORMs) will be used to assess candidates' answers.

Section B: Essay Questions

Candidates are required to answer 2 out of 3 questions set. The questions will test Objectives 1 and 2 and require candidates to analyse, evaluate and make judgement on events and/or issues. Each question is worth a total of 10 marks. The questions will be marked using the 'Levels of Response Mark Scheme' (LORMs).

Questions will be set on any issue/topic within the units in the syllabus except for the issue assessed in the source-based case study in Section A in the same year of examination.

SYLLABUS CONTENT

The revised syllabus seeks to develop in students an understanding of how the present world system came into being and the interconnectedness of nation states and peoples. This understanding is important for our students to function as effective citizens and participants in the 21st century. The syllabus is framed by a metanarrative to help students to acquire an understanding of the key forces and events that shaped the history of the 20th century. Students will examine the changing context of world politics and the different responses of individuals and groups at the global, regional and local levels to these developments. They will evaluate the consequences and impact of the decisions and actions taken by individuals and states. Through studying the key developments of the rise of authoritarian regimes, World War II and the Cold War, students will be better equipped to comprehend and explain contemporary developments in the region and the world today.

The Making of the 20th Century Modern World, 1910s–1991

After World War I

- Overview of World War I [*Non-examinable*]
- Aims and terms of the Paris Peace Conference and its immediate impact on Europe in the 1920s

Rise of Authoritarian Regimes

- Overview of the attempts at establishing viable political systems after World War I [*Non-examinable*]
- Case Study of Nazi Germany*
- Case Study of Militarist Japan, 1920s–1930s

War in Europe and the Asia-Pacific

- Key developments leading to the outbreak of World War II in Europe*
- Key developments leading to the outbreak of World War II in Asia-Pacific
- Reasons for the end of World War II

Note: Teachers should note that, although detailed study of the military campaigns of World War II is not required, students will need to be aware of the major turning points of the war leading to the defeat of Germany and Japan.

The Cold War

- Origins and development of the Cold War in Europe*
- Extension of the Cold War outside Europe: Case study of Korean War, 1950–1953* and Vietnam War, 1954–1975

Note: Teachers should note that, although detailed study of the military campaigns of the Korean War and Vietnam War are not required, students will need to be aware of the major turning points of the wars.

End of the Cold War

- Overview of different phases of thawing and rising tensions between the USA and the USSR in the 1960s and 1970s [*Non-examinable*]
- Decline of the USSR and the end of Cold War

Source-based case studies will only be set on the topics indicated by the symbol [*].

AMPLIFICATION OF SYLLABUS DETAILS

The Making of the 20th Century Modern World, 1910s–1991		
<p>Focus This paper studies the key forces and developments that shaped the post-World War I world, including the attempts at collective security, the rise of authoritarian regimes in Nazi Germany and Militarist Japan, and the developments that led to the outbreak of World War II in Europe and the Asia-Pacific. This paper also examines the development of the shifting world order after World War II. Students will look specifically at the Cold War by examining the confrontation between the United States of America (USA) and the Union of Soviet Socialist Republics (USSR), and their emergence as superpowers during this period. They also examine the causes and consequences of this rivalry on Europe and Asia.</p>	<p>Making Connections The study of the impact of World War I and World War II, League of Nations and the rise of authoritarian regimes will allow students to recognise that the interests and ambitions of individuals and nations can have significant consequences on societies and the world and appreciate the need for and importance of international cooperation and collective security to prevent future conflicts. An understanding of the key developments of the Cold War will enable students to make sense of the world today. Through the study, students will also recognise that decisions and actions of individuals made in specific contexts can lead to momentous changes and have consequences on people and countries. This will in turn allow them to better relate and respond to present-day issues of geopolitical significance.</p>	
Key Knowledge	Learning Outcomes (Knowledge and Skills)	Key Concepts
<p>After World War I</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of World War I [<i>Non-examinable</i>] • Aims and terms of the Paris Peace Conference and its immediate impact on Europe in the 1920s <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Treaty of Versailles and its immediate impact on Germany <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ War Guilt Clause, reparations, demilitarisation, territorial reductions – Re-drawing of national boundaries and the creation of new nation-states <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Breakdown of old empires ○ Self-determination – Attempts at collective security in the 1920s <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Successes and failures of the League of Nations at peacekeeping in the 1920s 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the impact of post-war peace settlements on Europe. • Assess the attempts at collective security in the 1920s and its outcomes. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Collective security • Self-determination • Balance of power

Key Knowledge	Learning Outcomes (Knowledge and Skills)	Key Concepts
<p>Rise of Authoritarian Regimes</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of the attempts at establishing viable political systems after World War I [<i>Non-examinable</i>] <p>Case Study of Nazi Germany*</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circumstances leading to the rise and establishment of authoritarian rule in Germany <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Weaknesses of the Weimar government: problems of the Weimar constitution, unpopularity of the Weimar government – Appeal of Hitler and the Nazi Party <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Role of Hitler ○ Methods of Nazi Party (use of propaganda and force, participation in elections) – Economic challenges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Inflation, unemployment and Great Depression • Consolidation of Nazi rule in Germany <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Establishment of Hitler's dictatorship and one-party rule – Economic policies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Re-employment and improvement of working conditions and move towards war economy – Social policies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ German nationalism and persecution of ethnic and minority groups ○ Control of and responses by German society 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Demonstrate awareness of political developments after World War I. • Examine the rise of authoritarian regimes and evaluate their impact on the political, economic and social context of countries. • Evaluate the roles of key players in the establishment of authoritarian rule. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Communism • Nationalism • Authoritarianism • Militarism • Parliamentary rule

Key Knowledge	Learning Outcomes (Knowledge and Skills)	Key Concepts
<p>Case Study of Militarist Japan, 1920s–1930s</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Circumstances leading to the rise and establishment of authoritarian regime in Japan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Weaknesses of the democratic government in Japan – Economic challenges <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Inflation, unemployment, landlord-tenant disputes, Great Depression – Appeal of ultranationalist faction <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Military successes and political assassinations • Increased influence of the militarists in Japan from the 1930s <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Consolidation of military power in the government – Economic policies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increased government control over industry and campaign for economic revitalisation – Social policies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Militarisation of education ○ Control of labour unions 		

Key Knowledge	Learning Outcomes (Knowledge and Skills)	Key Concepts
<p>War in Europe and the Asia-Pacific</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Key developments leading to the outbreak of World War II in Europe* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ineffectiveness of the League of Nations in the 1930s <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Failure of at disarmament in the 1930s ○ Abyssinian Crisis (1935) and its implications – Germany’s aggressive foreign policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Plebiscite in the Saar region, 1935 ○ Remilitarisation of the Rhineland, 1936 ○ Anschluss with Austria, 1938 ○ The Munich Agreement and the invasion of Czechoslovakia, 1938–1939 ○ Nazi–Soviet Non-Aggression Pact and the invasion of Poland, 1939 – Policy of appeasement • Key developments leading to the outbreak of World War II in the Asia–Pacific <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ineffectiveness of the League of Nations in the 1930s – Worsening of US–Japan relations – Japan’s expansionist foreign policy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Aggression towards China from 1937 ○ Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere ○ Bombing of Pearl Harbour, 1941 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Evaluate the reasons for the outbreak of World War II in Europe and the Asia–Pacific. • Evaluate the roles played by individuals and groups in developments leading to the outbreak of World War II. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Appeasement • Theatres of war • Alliances • Expansionism • Militarism

Key Knowledge	Learning Outcomes (Knowledge and Skills)	Key Concepts
<p>War in Europe and the Asia-Pacific</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Reasons for end of World War II <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Strengths of the Allies <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ American entry into the war (economic resources and manpower) ○ Allied strategies (D-Day, island hopping, dropping of the atomic bomb) ○ Role of the Soviet Union – Military weaknesses of Germany and Japan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Germany <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ineffective command structure ▪ War on two fronts ○ Japan <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Overextension of empire ▪ Inability to access raw materials from empire <p><i>Note: Teachers should note that, although detailed study of the military campaigns of World War II is not required, students will need to be aware of the major turning points of the war leading to the defeat of Germany and Japan.</i></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the reasons for the end of World War II. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Conflict

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<p>The Cold War</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Origins and development of the Cold War in Europe* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – End of World War II and its impact on Europe <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Circumstances in post-war Europe ○ Emergence of the USA and USSR as superpowers – Growing mistrust between USA and USSR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Differences in ideology ○ Breakdown of wartime alliances ○ Division of Europe after World War II – Intensification of superpower rivalry <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ American containment policy: Political, economic and military actions ○ Soviet responses: Political, economic and military actions • Extension of the Cold War outside Europe: Case study of Korean War, 1950–53* <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Post World War II developments in Korea <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Post-war occupation, partition of Korea, border clashes – Emergence of communist China <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Expansion of a communist bloc, Sino–Soviet Alliance – Outbreak of the Korean War <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Role of key players in the conflict: North Korea, South Korea, USA, UN, China and the USSR – The Korean Armistice Agreement and the immediate aftermath <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Demilitarised zone, impact on US policy in Asia, escalation of tension between NATO and Warsaw Pact 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the immediate impact of World War II on Europe. • Examine how Cold War tensions were manifested in Europe. • Assess the impact of rivalry between the USA and USSR in the aftermath of World War II. • Assess the impact of the emergence of Communist China on Cold War tensions. • Assess the reasons for the outbreak of the Korean War and the Vietnam War, and their aftermath. • Evaluate the extent and impact of superpowers involvement in civil wars with reference to the Korean War and the Vietnam War. • Examine the immediate aftermath of the Korean War and the Vietnam War on Cold War developments. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cold War • Bipolarity • Containment • Communism • Command economy • Democracy • Capitalist economy • Superpower rivalry • Proxy war • Civil War

Key Knowledge	Learning Outcomes (Knowledge and Skills)	Key Concepts
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Extension of the Cold War outside Europe: Case study of Vietnam War, 1954–75 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Key developments in North and South Vietnam in the 1950s <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Partition of Vietnam in 1954, consolidation of communist control in North Vietnam and instability in South Vietnam <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Discontentment over the Geneva Accords ▪ Failure to carry out national elections in 1956 ▪ Unpopularity of Ngo Dinh Diem’s actions and the support from the North for the insurgency in the South – Escalation of tensions between North and South Vietnam from 1954 <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Role of key players in the conflict: North Vietnam, South Vietnam, USA, USSR and China – The end of the Vietnam War and the immediate aftermath <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Reunification of Vietnam, beginning of détente <p><i>Note: Teachers should note that, although detailed study of the military campaign of the Vietnam War is not required, students will need to be aware of the major turning points of the war.</i></p>		
<p>End of the Cold War</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Overview of different phases of thawing and rising tensions between the USA and the USSR in the 1960s and 1970s [<i>Non-examinable</i>] • Decline of the USSR and the end of the Cold War <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – Ineffectiveness of Soviet command economy <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Structural weaknesses and their effect on Soviet standards of living – External economic burdens of the USSR <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Increased military spending ○ Increased resistance within the communist bloc ○ Commitment to Warsaw Pact – Escalation of USA–USSR tensions in the 1980s <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ USA economic might and the re-intensification of arms race – Impact of Gorbachev’s economic and political reforms on the USSR and its fall <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Failure to revive the Soviet economy ○ Loss of confidence in the Soviet government ○ Collapse of the Eastern European bloc ○ Disintegration of the USSR 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Assess the reasons that led to the decline of the USSR. • Evaluate the reasons for the end of the Cold War. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cold War • Bipolarity • Détente • Arms race • Diplomacy • Communism • Command economy • Democracy • Capitalist economy • Glasnost • Perestroika • Reform

Source-based case studies will only be set on the topics indicated by the symbol (*).