BERLIN BRITISH SCHOOL
Course overview
History

Grade 6	
History of Berlin	This is a short unit, allowing the students to discover more about the roots of the city we live in. By sharing research responsibilities, students will investigate different time periods in Berlin's life, and learn from each other. A key focus is to use historical maps to explore the changes and developments the citizens of Berlin experienced through time.
Mediaeval Realms	'Mediaeval Realms' begins with the invasion of England in 1066 and covers the time period until the late 15th century and start of the Renaissance. Students will be introduced to the key skill of source analysis and will examine how dominant social and religious ideas and structures influenced people's thoughts and behaviour. We look at the Black Death pandemic to gain an insight into medical ideas of the era. In this term, students complete a research project and presentation on an aspect of Mediaeval life.
The Renaissance and the Age of Discovery	The key focus of this topic is examining how Renaissance philosophies differed from the way Medieval Europeans viewed the World. We zoom in on Italy and Florence, but we also make comparisons between key figures for change from this time period of multiple nationalities. Developing ideas within the disciplines of science, art, architecture, politics and philosophy are considered. The key skills students focus on are constructing timelines, justifying their selection of the most significant events and people and writing an argumentative essay.
Exploration	This topic aims to give students an overview of how exploration shaped the Western European's view of the World, and how Ancient, Medieval and Renaissance ideas and inventions impacted exploration. Students will learn to separate truth from fiction regarding piracy, and will consider the themes of perspective and empathy. Source

	analysis is a key skill for this term. The topic also encompasses an introduction to the concept of Colonisation, which leads to the Grade 7 topics of the Slave Trade and Civil Rights movements.

Grade 7: Civil Rights and Protest	
Transatlantic Slave Trade	This topic aims to gain and deploy a historically grounded understanding of abstract terms such as 'empire' and the impact this had on the wider world. It will look at the transportation of slaves from Africa to the Americas.
Civil Rights Movement	This topic aims to help the learners understand historical concepts such as continuity and change, and use them to make connections, draw contrasts, analyse trends, and frame historically-valid questions. It looks at how key figures such as Martin Luther King and Rosa Parks, as well as groups such as the Black Panthers sought to improve the lives for Black Americans in the 20th century. We will go on to consider how successful these protests were and what may still need to be done in modern times.
Imperialism	This topic aims to analyse the complexities of 19th-century Imperialism and Colonialism, aiming to achieve several key learning objectives. Firstly, a grasping of the historical context and motivational forces behind Imperialism. Second, they will explore the impact of European colonialism on various regions and indigenous peoples, fostering an awareness of the social, cultural, and economic consequences of this expansion. Third, students will analyse racial motivations employed by European powers to establish and maintain their colonial empires. Finally, students will develop critical thinking skills by evaluating the ethical and moral dilemmas posed by colonialism and its lasting implications on the modern world.
What is History?	This topic aims to help the student understand the methods of historical enquiry, including how evidence is used rigorously to make historical claims, and discern how and why contrasting arguments and interpretations of the past have been constructed.

Grade 8	
World War One	This unit allows the student to gain historical perspective by placing their growing knowledge into different contexts, understanding the connections between local, regional, national and international history. We examine the causes and key events of the First World War. It will look at the impact of these events at a local, national and international level.
The Holocaust	We study this topic in the context of understanding how gradually increasing levels of persecution in a state can lead to horrific outcomes. This helps the student see the importance of studying History as a means of learning from our mistakes. We then consider why there have been other examples of genocide in other countries since this time.
The Causes of the American Civil War	Students will explore the main causes of the American Civil War and why divisions between the **Northern free states** and **Southern slave states** grew increasingly severe. The course will examine differences in the economies, societies, and political views of the North and South, with a focus on the central role of **slavery**. Students will investigate how the expansion of the United States created disagreements over whether new states and territories should allow slavery. The **Missouri Compromise of 1820** will be introduced as an attempt to maintain a balance between free and slave states and reduce political tensions. Students will also learn about **Harriet Tubman** and the Underground Railroad, providing a human perspective on slavery, resistance, and the struggle for freedom. By the end of the course, students should be able to explain the main differences between the North and South, describe the importance of the Missouri Compromise, and understand how growing disagreements over slavery and political power contributed to the outbreak of the Civil War

IGCSE	
Were the peace treaties of 1919-1923 fair?	The peace treaties of 1919–23: – the roles of individuals such as Wilson, Clemenceau and Lloyd George in the peacemaking process – the impact of the treaties on the defeated countries – contemporary opinions about the treaties
To what extent was the League of Nations a success?	The League of Nations: – strengths and weaknesses in its structure and organisation: work of the League's agencies/ humanitarian work – successes and failures in peacekeeping during the 1920s – the impact of the world depression on the work of the League after 1929 – the failures of the League in the 1930s, including Manchuria and Abyssinia
Why had international peace collapsed by 1939?	• The collapse of international order in the 1930s • The increasing militarism of Germany, Italy and Japan • Hitler's foreign policy to 1939: – the Saar – remilitarisation of the Rhineland – involvement in the Spanish Civil War – Anschluss with Austria – appeasement – crises over Czechoslovakia and Poland – the outbreak of war
Who was to blame for the Cold War?	• The origins of the Cold War: – the 1945 summit conferences and the breakdown of the US–Soviet alliance in 1945–46 – Soviet expansion into Eastern and Central Europe to 1948, and American reactions to it – the occupation of Germany and the Berlin Blockade – NATO and the Warsaw Pact
How effectively did the USA contain the spread of Communism?	• Events of the Cold War • Case studies of:

	– American reactions to the Cuban revolution, including the missile crisis and its aftermath – American involvement in the Vietnam War, e.g. reasons for involvement, tactics/strategy, reasons for withdrawal – American reactions to North Korea's invasion of South Korea, involvement of the UN, course of the war to 1953
How secure was the USSR's control over Eastern Europe, 1948- c.1989?	Soviet power in Eastern Europe: – resistance to Soviet power in Hungary (1956) and Czechoslovakia (1968) – the Berlin Wall – 'Solidarity' in Poland – Gorbachev and the collapse of Soviet control over Eastern Europe
Why did events in the Gulf matter, c. 1970-2000?	• The rise to power of Saddam Hussein in Iraq • The rule of Saddam Hussein up to 2000, and the consequences of his rule for different groups in Iraq • The nature of the Shah's rule in Iran and the Iranian Revolution of 1979 • The causes and consequences of the Iran–Iraq War, 1980–88; Western involvement in the war • The causes, course and consequences of the Gulf War, 1990–91
Depth Study: Germany 1918 - 1945	The depth study focuses on the Weimar Republic and whether it was doomed from the start. We then consider how Hitler was able to rise to power. Finally, we look at what life was like for Germans under the Nazi regime.

IB Standard Level	
The Move to Global War	This prescribed subject focuses on military expansion from 1931 to 1941. The first case study explores Japanese expansionism from 1931 to 1941, and the second case study explores German and Italian expansionism from 1933 to 1940. Discussion of domestic and ideological issues should be considered in terms of the extent to which they contributed to this expansion; for example, economic issues, such as the long-term impact of the Great Depression, should be assessed in terms of their role in shaping more aggressive foreign policy.
Authoritarian States	This topic focuses on exploring the conditions that facilitated the rise of authoritarian states in the 20th century, as well as the methods used by parties and leaders to take and maintain power. The topic explores the emergence, consolidation and maintenance of power, including the impact of the leaders' policies, both domestic and foreign, upon the maintenance of power.
Cold War: Superpower and tensions	The Cold War dominated global affairs from the end of the Second World War to the early 1990s. This topic focuses on how superpower rivalries did not remain static but changed according to styles of leadership, strength of ideological beliefs, economic factors and crises involving client states. The topic aims to promote an international perspective on the Cold War by requiring the study of Cold War leaders, countries and crises from more than one region of the world.

IB Higher Level	
Italy (1815-1871) and Germany (1815-1890)	This section deals with the history of both Germany and Italy from 1815; in the case of Italy, from the Congress of Vienna to 1871, and in the case of Germany, up to 1890. There is consideration of the impact of the congress system on both Italy and Germany, and of the causes, events and consequences of revolutions from 1815–1849. There is also a focus on the emergence and growth of nationalism in the German states and the Italian peninsula, as well as the social, economic and political factors involved in the unification process.
Imperial Russia, Revolution and the Establishment of the Soviet Union (1855-1924)	This section deals with modernization and conservatism in tsarist Russia and the eventual collapse of the tsarist autocracy, as well as the revolutions of 1917, the Civil War and the rule of Lenin. There is a focus on the concepts of change and continuity, with examination and consideration of the social, economic and political factors that brought about change.
The Soviet Union and post-Soviet Russia (1924-2000)	This section examines the consolidation of the Soviet state from 1924 and the methods applied to ensure its survival, growth and expansion inside and outside the borders of the Soviet Union. It explores the rise and nature of the rule of Stalin, Khrushchev, Brezhnev and their policies. East–West relations post-1945 in relation to Soviet aims and leadership should also be considered. Finally, the decline and collapse of the Soviet Union should be considered, as well as political and economic developments in post-Soviet Russia.

IB New Curriculum - first exam June 2028

Standard Level	
Paper 1 - Climate and Innovation	This course explores how climate, environment, and innovation influenced the development of the Aztec and Viking civilisations. Students will investigate how societies adapted to environmental challenges and how technological and cultural innovations helped them survive and expand. The Aztec case study will examine the challenges of living in the Valley of Mexico, including the development of chinampas, water management, agriculture, and the organisation of Tenochtitlan. The Viking case study will explore how the Scandinavian environment, climate, shipbuilding, navigation, and agricultural practices influenced Viking expansion, trade, exploration, and settlement. Students will develop the skills required for Paper 1, including source analysis, interpretation, comparison, and evaluation. Particular attention will be given to understanding the origin, purpose, value, and limitations of historical sources. By the end of the course, students should be able to explain how environmental conditions influenced both societies, assess the importance of innovation in overcoming challenges, and effectively analyse historical sources in preparation for the Paper 1 examination.
Paper 2 - Authoritarian States	This course examines the rise, consolidation, and maintenance of **authoritarian rule**, focusing on **Adolf Hitler in Germany** and **Fidel Castro in Cuba**. Students will investigate the circumstances that allowed both leaders to gain power, including political, economic, and social factors. The course will then explore how Hitler and Castro consolidated their authority through **propaganda, repression, control of opposition, political institutions, and support from different groups within society**. Students will compare the methods used by both leaders while considering the importance of ideology, leadership, economic policies, and foreign affairs in maintaining their regimes. The course will develop the analytical and comparative skills required for **Paper 2**. Students will practise constructing

	arguments, using specific historical evidence, comparing leaders and regimes, and responding directly to essay questions. By the end of the course, students should be able to explain the rise and maintenance of authoritarian rule, evaluate the methods used by Hitler and Castro, and construct well-supported comparative arguments in preparation for the Paper 2 examination.
Paper 3 - Higher Level Only.	This course explores the processes of **German and Italian unification** during the nineteenth century. Students will examine how nationalism, political leadership, diplomacy, war, and economic developments contributed to the creation of unified states. The German case study will focus on the role of **Otto von Bismarck**, Prussia, the German states, and the wars that contributed to unification in 1871. Students will assess the importance of **Realpolitik, nationalism, military strength, and diplomacy**. The Italian case study will examine figures including **Cavour, Garibaldi, Mazzini, and Victor Emmanuel II**, considering the different approaches to Italian unification and the challenges involved in creating a united Italy. Students will develop the skills required for **Paper 3**, including the use of detailed historical knowledge, analysis of interpretations and perspectives, and the construction of sustained, evidence-based arguments. The second Paper 3 topic will be selected later by the class based on **student interests and areas of particular historical interest**.