RGS
NEWCASTLE

INTRODUCTION TO

HISTORY

at RGS











As befits a school founded in the sixteenth century in a city shaped by the Normans, History at RGS spans a thousand years of the past. While our surroundings emphasise tradition, the History Department is firmly focused on preparing students for the modern world.

We believe that History has a vital role in a well rounded education. Our aim is not simply to teach what happened, but to foster curiosity, enjoyment, and intellectual independence. Through debate, discussion, and rigorous analysis, students learn to question received ideas, construct arguments of their own, and explain complex events with clarity and confidence.



HISTORY AT RGS

History is one of the great enabling subjects. It teaches students how to manage large amounts of information, evaluate evidence, and make balanced judgements about people, power, and change. Above all, it develops the ability to think independently and argue persuasively, skills that are increasingly valued in universities and the modern workplace.

Most importantly we aim to leave students with a lifelong pleasure in reading, watching, and talking about history, and a deeper understanding of the world they inhabit today.





YEAR 7-9 - FOUNDATIONS

All students study History up to Year 9, following a carefully chosen programme:







- Year 7 focuses on Medieval Britain, from William the Conqueror to the Wars of the Roses. Topics include Thomas Becket, castles, the Black Death, and power in medieval society.
- Year 8 explores Early Modern Britain, including Henry VIII and the Reformation, the Spanish Armada, and the English Civil War.
- Year 9 examines Britain's transformation into a modern industrial nation and imperial power, charting the growth of democracy and Britain's global role.

Across all three years, students engage with local, national, and world history, developing chronological understanding alongside analytical skills through debate, group work, presentations, and extended writing.













GCSE History

At GCSE level, the focus shifts to modern world history (post 1945), with students following the Edexcel International GCSE course. This builds directly on Year 7-9 foundations and prepares students for Sixth Form study.

Topics studied include the major events and issues following World War II:

- The Cold War - From WWII allies to Mutually Assured Destruction
- Civil Rights in the USA - The "Communist Threat", Black Civil Rights, Women's rights, LGBT+ Rights.
- China, c.1900–1990 - From Imperial China to Mao, the transformation of China
- The Vietnam War - America, the Super Power 'defeated' and the effect of war on the Vietnamese people

Assessment consists of two 90 minute examinations, sat at the end of Year 11, using a clear and accessible mix of short answers, structured essays, and source based questions.

History is consistently one of the most popular and successful GCSE options at RGS, with excellent outcomes year on year.



A-LEVEL HISTORY

IHistory is a popular and intellectually demanding A Level choice at RGS. Students follow the OCR specification, designed to encourage depth, perspective, and independent thinking.

Course content includes:

- Twentieth Century British History, with a depth study on Winston Churchill
- Popular Culture and the Witchcraze in the Early Modern period
- The USA in the Nineteenth Century, including Westward Expansion and the Civil War

Coursework constitutes 20% of the exam, which is a 4,000 word independent essay on a topic of the student's choice, closely supported by staff and modelled on university style research.

At this level, students are expected to read widely, engage with historians' debates, and develop sustained, well argued written work.

Results are consistently strong, with RGS History students progressing to leading universities including Oxford, Cambridge, St Andrews, UCL, Durham, and Edinburgh.





















BEYOND THE CLASSROOM

We strongly believe that history should be experienced as well as studied.

- Trips are a key part of our provision, including the ever popular Year 7 Castles Trip and an annual First World War battlefields or Normandy (D Day) visit for older students.

- Year 13 students visit Edinburgh in support of the Witchcraze course and wider historical study.

- HistSoc, the departmental academic society, provides students with university style seminars, debates, and guest lectures from leading historians.

- We benefit from an archive at RGS, which includes artifacts from the school's 500 year history, rooting our students learning in tangible ways.

- We enjoy strong links with Newcastle University, including full day experiences of undergraduate history and regular visiting speakers.

The department also runs the RGS History Blog (www.rgshistory.wordpress.com), showcasing student writing and extending discussion beyond the classroom.



HISTORY BEYOND RGS

History is an excellent foundation for a wide range of degrees and careers. It develops research, analysis, written and spoken communication, independent judgement, and the ability to handle complex information with clarity. These skills are prized by universities and employers alike.

Popular degree routes include

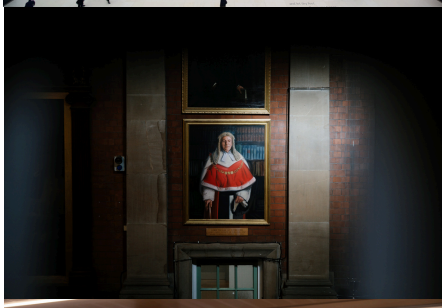
- History, Politics, International Relations, Law, PPE, Economics and Economic History, Archaeology, Classics, English, Human Geography, Sociology, and Journalism.

Career sectors where historians thrive include:

- Law and Public Service: Solicitors, barristers, policy advisers, civil service fast stream, local government, diplomatic service.
- Business and Finance: Management consulting, project management, marketing, communications, public relations, banking, accountancy, data and insight roles.
- Media and Creative Industries: Journalism, broadcasting, publishing, copywriting, content strategy, film and television research.
- Heritage and Culture: Museums, archives, galleries, curation, conservation, cultural programming, visitor experience.
- International and Third Sector: NGOs, charities, international development, think tanks, campaigning and advocacy.
- Education and Academia: Teaching, university research and administration, educational publishing.
- Technology and Emerging Fields: User research, policy and ethics in tech, information governance, compliance, risk analysis. skills that transfer directly to undergraduate study.

History equips students to understand how decisions are made and how change happens. It gives the intellectual toolkit to lead, to advise, and to communicate in any field you choose. It is a subject that opens doors and keeps options wide.









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From medieval castles to modern conflicts, from first principles in Year 7 to independent scholarship in the Sixth Form, History at RGS offers a challenging and rewarding journey into understanding the past and shaping the future.

If you would like further information about History at RGS please contact Mr Diccon Tyreman, Head of History via d.tyreman@rgs.newcastle.sch.uk

