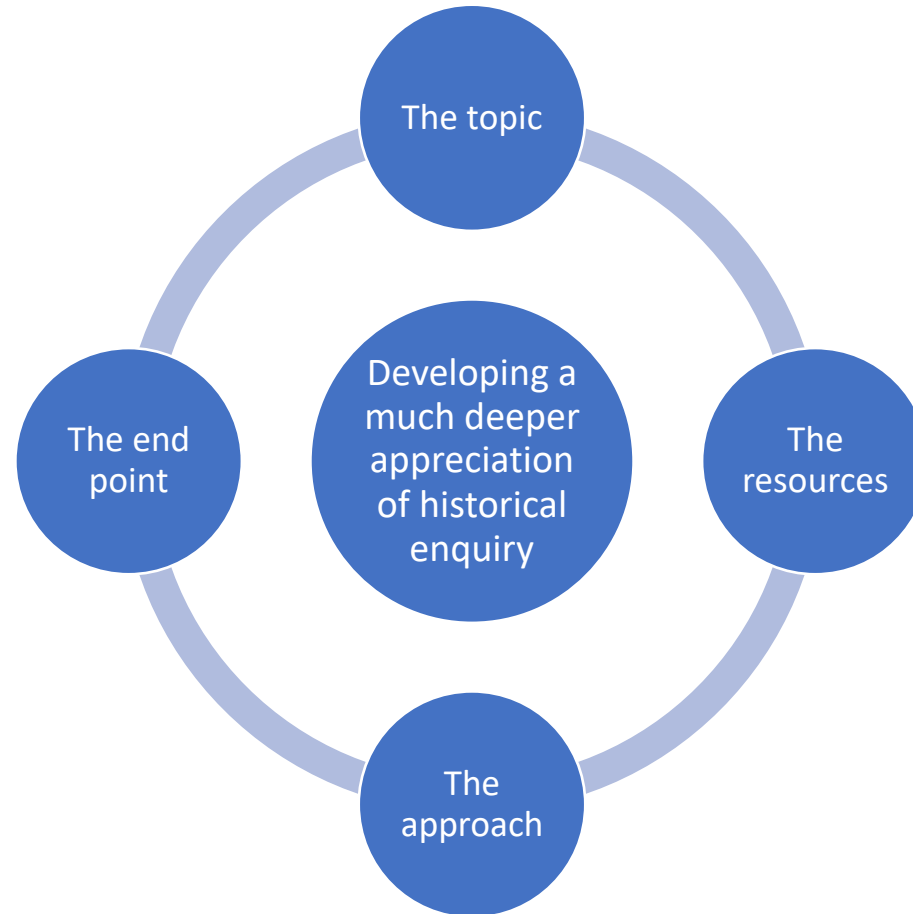




For those thinking of studying History at University....possibly Oxford or Cambridge?

Year 11 History Extension Work

What might be different at university level?



University/Oxbridge

Themes in History: revolutions, democracy, etc.

Historians: Beyond just textbooks

Historical knowledge: What *can* we know about the past?

Wider reading: Building on A levels

A level

20th Century Russia and China

Focus on key concepts: change and continuity, significance, similarity and difference, etc.

Text books and more source material

Some wider reading

GCSE

International relations. Broken down into key themes/questions

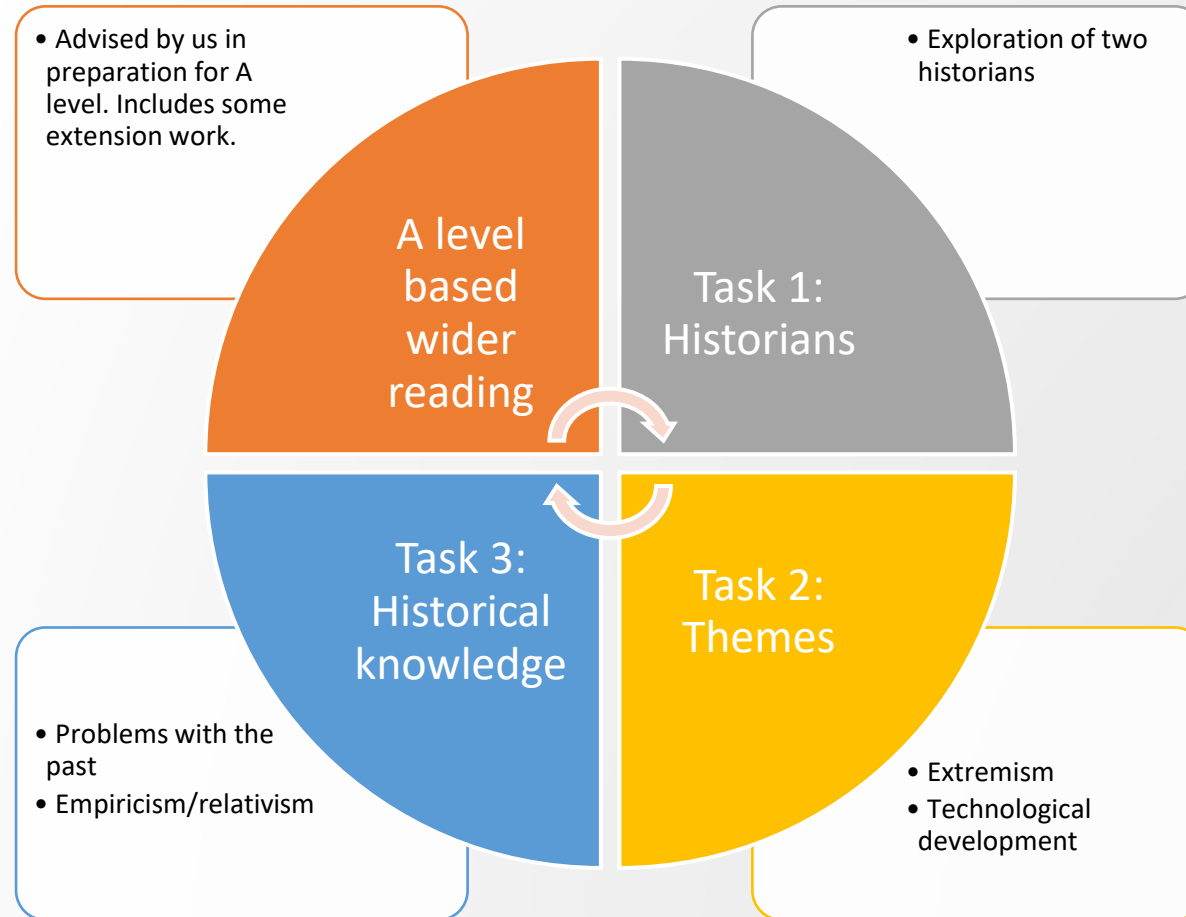
Textbooks, including more primary material?

Lower School

Norman Conquest and beyond

Possibly a single textbook

Three further areas to investigate in the tasks below...



Task 1: Compare and Contrast...

Karl Marx



Edward Gibbon



Task 1 - Criteria

Context

- When writing?
- Where?
- Why?

Main works

- Titles
- Dates

Subject matter

- Period of history
- Theme of works

Ideology/Beliefs

- View of the past
- Methods of working
- Links between past, present and future

Impact

- In their own time
- Since

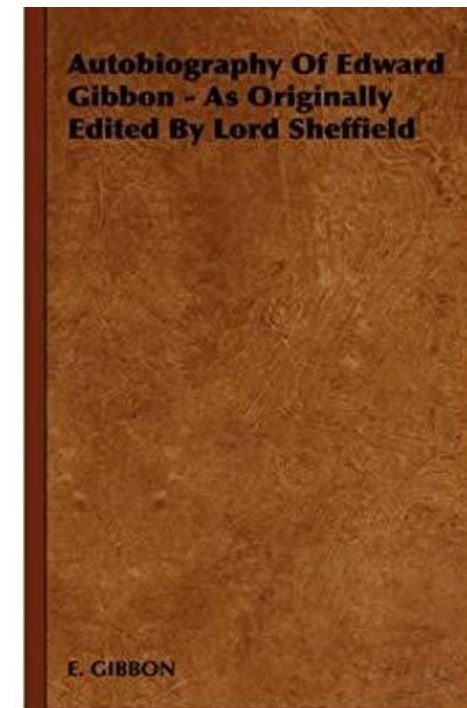
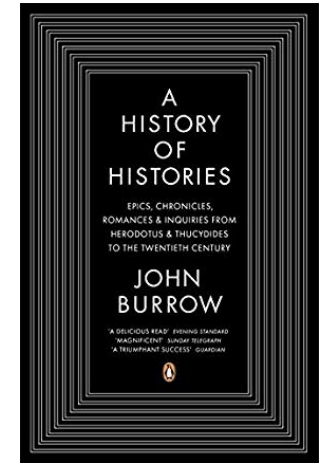
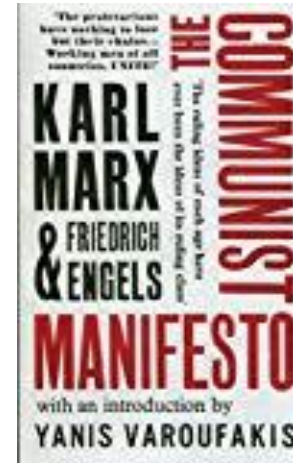


Task 1 Resources

- In addition to the splendid resources available via the Library, I have included some other specific suggestions of books to find, podcasts to listen to, or articles I have linked you to...

Task 1 Resources

- The Communist Manifesto, Marx and Engels
- The Autobiography of Edward Gibbon
- A History of Histories by John Burro - excellent chapters on both Historians
- <https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p003k9jg>
- Journal article: Gibbon's Contribution to Historical Method by Arnaldo Momigliano (on Jstor)



Themes/Patterns in History

- Historians as you have now discovered sometimes like to look for patterns in the past, and some like to think about what light that might shed on the present or the future.
- Lord Macaulay writing in the mid-19th century was interested in the rise of parliamentary democracy in GB which he saw as a story of progress just as Marx, saw a different kind of story unfolding...
- In most cases the issues facing historians are faced by experts in other areas of study, thinkers can share a similar framework even if their subject matter is different.
- So in the 19th century you find Charles Darwin, whose approach arguably has much in common with Marx as one late 19th century writer argued...
- <https://www.marxists.org/archive/aveling/1897/darwin/index.htm>

Task 2: Revolutions/ Extremism

In the Lower Sixth we will explore some revolutions, but for now you could consider political extremism....specifically in the context of Western Liberal Democracies

A **political extremist** is someone whose beliefs fall outside mainstream societal values and on the fringes of the ideological spectrum.

Normally these views are held by a minority but sometimes they become adopted by a larger number of people, sometimes a majority leading to what could be called 'extremist' governments or leaders.

Task 2

- Find some examples since 1900 of extremism rising as a significant political force in Western Liberal Democracies
- Compare and contrast any two of these
- Can you draw any conclusions about the rise of extremism in such countries?



Task 2 Resources

- As this is a very open task use the general resources as described above. Think also about periods you have studied at GCSE and the current political situation

Problems with the past



Two opposite (extreme?) positions

Empiricism

- The past is there to be uncovered
- The historian with the right methods can uncover it
- The past is unaffected by historians methods/efforts of uncovering it
- Objective History is possible

Relativism

- There is no fixed past
- There is no one truth to be uncovered whatever the methods only a series of possibilities
- The role of the Historian always shapes the History they write about
- There is no absolute truth about the past only relative narratives

Task 3: Answer these questions...

- Some say, that there must be an agreed set of facts about the past upon which all agree, it is only the interpretations which are different. Do you agree?
- Looking back to Marx and Gibbon what does studying them suggest about the influence of the historian on the period they write about?
- Does it matter whether we accept empiricism or relativism?

Task 3

Resources

- Two articles (definitely) and three books (only if time..)
 - <https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Historiography> Look at the section British debates which is very good on setting the context of these various approaches
 - 'Beyond Post Modernism: A critique of some recent trends in western historiography' by Devesh Vijay. (You can find this excellent overview on Jstor)
 - E H Carr, 'What is History?'
 - Keith Jenkins, 'Re-Thinking History'
 - Richard J Evans, 'In Defence of History'