

Year 11

Year 11 is spent studying two complementary and closely linked 20th Century history units.

Modern depth study – Russia and the Soviet Union 1917-41

As fascinating and macabre the study of the USSR is on its own this unit links really well with the Superpower Relations unit that we also cover. We are in the process of fine tuning the year 9 curriculum to give all students a greater base of knowledge of Russia and the USSR. This should prove to be beneficial for those students choosing GCSE History as it should help to create a greater understanding of Russian and Soviet history as a precursor to starting .

This unit requires coverage of key political concepts such as autocracy, democracy and dictatorship and exploration of political ideologies such as Communism, Liberalism, Conservatism and Nationalism. This can only be of value, given the current political climate of conflict over Brexit, populism and the rise of nationalist movements around the globe. This module is also concerned with concepts such as the acquisition and retention of political power, how dictatorships control the media and culture to reinforce their messages. As teachers we are keen for our students to share our passion for these vital topics as well as the interest we have in keeping up to date with the ever-changing interpretations of soviet-era history. Vladimir Putin's speculations about restoring Stalingrad as the official name of Volgograd, the current fractious relationship between Russia and the Ukraine and other former soviet republics and the 'Holodomor' controversy are three obvious examples of this.

A final factor for consideration is that both main BHASVIC and Varndean sixth form colleges (the post year 11 destinations for the majority of our GCSE History) offer Modern History modules in Russian history. Past students frequently speak about the excellent foundation of knowledge this unit provided for them and are appreciative of the level of academic rigour with these units instil.

Period study – Superpower Relations and the Cold War 1941-91

This unit is a very popular topic amongst students, possibly because it contains the most links to understanding the 21st Century world and the superpower relations that still exist today. The Superpower Relations unit helps to explain Russia's often problematic relationship with 'The West', the historic 'special relationship' between the UK and USA, the complex and troubled relationship between Russia and former Soviet/Warsaw Pact states such as Ukraine, Belarus, Georgia and Poland and touches on the increasing importance of China and India in the modern world. In short, this unit encourages students to consider the origins of 'macro' issues within European and global perspectives.

This unit requires students to revisit key lessons on democracy and dictatorship and the contrast between the rival political and economic systems of communism and capitalist democracy, albeit at a deeper level than in year 9.

As part of our teaching of the Superpower Relations unit we feel that it is vital to touch on ideas that encourage students to develop their own personal political philosophies and encourage them to think about how governments have, and continue to, interact with citizens. This is perhaps best

demonstrated by examining the nature of control and indoctrination of citizens by governments. Primarily in communist states but also how democratic nations portrayed 'the enemy'. 'We' in the West were equally adept at manipulating information as communist governments in the Eastern bloc. The Berlin Airlift of 1948-49 and the construction of the Berlin Wall in 1961 are two examples of this in one city!

Students also revisit the role of protest but this time with specific reference to the role of people power in the collapse of dictatorial 'communist' rule in the period 1989-91. We also examine different processes of change such as the peaceful overthrow of communism in Hungary and Czechoslovakia compared to the more violent nature of uprisings in Romania and East Germany.

We have found that this module links well with the 'Russia and USSR 1917-41' module. The rationale behind covering the Russia and USSR unit before Superpower Relations is that the development of the Cold War makes more sense once contextual knowledge of events in Russia in the 1920s/30s has been established.