

History PGCE Pre-course Reading

Subject Knowledge Enhancement

The secondary school history curriculum covers the broad sweep of history from c.600 (Anglo Saxons) to 2000 (some schools still cover the Romans too). There is no 'cannon' of knowledge as academies do not have to follow the KS3 National Curriculum, rather they must provide a broad and balanced curriculum. The Holocaust is the only statutory curriculum topic. This is a challenge for all history teachers.

It is a good idea to spend some time gaining a secure sense of the key periods, for example medieval, early modern, modern and some of the key events of history that frequently dominate the English curriculum.

- The [Key Stage 3 curriculum](#) will help you to identify the possible 'gaps' in your subject knowledge.
- The [One Big History Department](#) site hosts helpful reference lists for developing your substantive and disciplinary knowledge
 - [Reading list with reviews](#)
 - [Podcasts](#)
 - [List and indices of sources of knowledge](#)
- We would also recommend engaging with some historical fiction – you can find recommendations on our [reading novels as preparation for the history PGCE reading list](#)

Developing your subject knowledge about Thomas Becket and Henry II

In addition to your general subject knowledge enhancement we would like you to do some work on developing your understanding of the 'story' of Thomas Becket and Henry II to support your initially exploration of planning.

There are many ways you could develop your SK on Thomas Becket and Henry II, but the following links should help you to get started. Last year the British Museum hosted an exhibition on Thomas Becket and have produced several blogs and two webinars which provide a very helpful introduction to this topic (you may need to fast forward through their plugs for the exhibition).

British Museum Resources:

Blogs

- [Thomas Becket: the murder that shook the Middle Ages | British Museum](#)
- [Who killed Thomas Becket? | British Museum](#)
- [Why did they move Thomas Becket's bones? | British Museum](#)
- [How to erase a saint: Thomas Becket and Henry VIII | British Museum](#)

Webinars

- [Curators' introduction Thomas Becket: murder and the making of a saint - YouTube](#)
- [The construction and destruction of a saint: Thomas Becket - YouTube](#)

Accessing subject knowledge enhancement resources

The **local public library** is a good place to find recent historical scholarship to build your subject knowledge. We also recommend registering for the [Borrow Box app](#) which allows you to borrow eBooks and eAudiobooks with free membership of your local library.

Membership of the [Historical Association](#) will give you access to webinars and podcasts and resources to support your subject knowledge enhancement.

The [OUP Very Short Introduction](#) series of books is very good for getting a quick reference point for a range of periods and substantive historical areas. If you can't find these in a library, these can often be bought second-hand online for one or two pounds.

The nature of history as a discipline

It is important that you think about history as a discipline. We know that many of you will have read all or part of the following historiographical texts during your degree study. However, if you are not familiar with these books (or the memory of them is now a little hazy), then engaging with them ahead of your PGCE will help you navigate some of the big ideas we explore at the start of the course and in the first assignment:

- **Carr, E. H. (2001). *What is history?* Basingstoke: Palgrave.**
There will be points of this work with which you disagree, but it has had an important influence, not least on the ways that history - particularly causation - is taught. If you haven't read Carr, do so before you read Richard Evans.
- **Carr, H., & Lipscomb, S. (2021). *What is history, now? how the past and present speak to each other.* Weidenfeld & Nicolson.**
This recent book explores many of aspects of the 'new' historiographical debate now influencing curriculum construction in school history. We would recommend the following chapters:
 - *Why global history matters* by Peter Frankopan
 - *How can we write the history of empire?* by Maya Jasanoff
 - *How can we recover the lost lives of women?* by Suzannah Lipscomb
 - *How making space for Indigenous peoples changes history*, by Leila K. Blackbird and Caroline Dodds Pennock
 - *History, naturally*, by Simon Shama
- **Evans, R. J. (2000). *In defence of history.* London: Granta.**
A key text and we recommend you read all of this book.

History education in practice

There are many ways that we can inspire and get pupils excited about studying history. As a history teacher you will be joining a vibrant community of professionals who are constantly thinking, debating, sharing, and writing about their own practice and critically scrutinising the views of others. We strongly recommend that you subscribe to [Teaching History](#) via membership of the [Historical Association](#). The journal is full of new creative ideas, and it will keep you up to date with new developments in the world of history teaching.

- **Chapman, A. (2021). *Knowing History in Schools: Powerful knowledge and the powers of knowledge* (1st ed.). London: UCL Press.**
This book is available as a [free download](#). It will introduce you to some of the big ideas currently being debated in history education. We will investigate these themes at various points on the course.