



Wigston College

Ancient History A Level



Examination Board: OCR

Entry Requirements: GCSE Grade 5 in History. If you have not studied this subject at GCSE level you will need GCSE Grade 5 in English Language or English Literature.

What will I be studying?

There are two components covering the two years of study. Both are divided into two sections – a period study and a depth study.

Component 1: Ancient Greece

Unit 1: Period Study - Relations between Greek states and between Greek and non-Greek states, 492–404 BC (25% of the A Level)

This unit will focus on the unfolding narrative of the relations between the Greek city-states, particularly Athens and Sparta, and with the Persian Empire. You will study the changes in relations between states and the substantial developments in interstate relations.

You will study: *The challenge of the Persian Empire 492–479; Greece in conflict 479–446 BC; Peace and Conflict 446–431 BC; The Archidamian War 431–420 BC; The end of the Peloponnesian War and its aftermath 419–404 BC*

Unit 2: Depth Study - The Society and Politics of Sparta, 478–404 BC (25%)

This unit explores the complexity of Spartan society, examining the interaction of social, political, and military forces. It develops understanding of Sparta's key features and the roles, experiences, and contributions of different groups and individuals within this unique civilisation.

You will study: Education in Sparta; The social structure of Sparta; The political structure of Sparta; The Spartan military culture and its importance in the society and politics of Sparta; Other states' views of Sparta and the effect of Spartan system on policy

Component 2: Ancient Rome

Unit 1: Period Study - The Julio-Claudian Emperors, 31 BC–AD 68 (25%)

This unit examines the rise and development of the principate under the five Julio-Claudian emperors, focusing on military, social, religious, and political developments across Rome and the Empire, and analysing how these emperors were portrayed by ancient sources.

You will study: Augustus 31 BC–AD 14; Tiberius AD 14–37; Gaius AD 37–4; Claudius AD 41–54; Nero AD 54–68

Unit 2: Depth Study - The Breakdown of the Late Republic, 88–31 BC

This unit is centred on the interplay of political, military, social and economic factors that the late Roman Republic faced, and ultimately brought about its disintegration and reformation under the sole rule of Octavian.

In this unit, you will study: The form of the Constitution; The challenges to the Constitution; The means by which politicians achieved success and their importance in the breakdown of the Republic; Social and Economic relationships and their importance in the

breakdown of the Republic; The roles and importance of individuals in the breakdown of the Republic

How will I be studying?

This course, led by two experienced History teachers, is supported by Classics for All and the University of Leicester. Lessons have a seminar-style approach, expecting students to complete prior reading and actively participate in discussions. Activities focus on recording information, source analysis, and extended writing. Students will build on GCSE analytical and evaluative skills, complete A Level-style assignments, and have opportunities to reflect on their learning, fostering independent critical thinking and deeper historical understanding.

How will I be assessed?

Both components are externally assessed through 2 hour 30 minute written exams, each worth 98 marks and 50% of the A Level grade. The two papers have two sections.

Section A covers the period study with two 30-mark essay questions, where students analyse and evaluate ancient sources, and a 20-mark question on a historical debate using an unseen modern historian's extract.

Section B focuses on the depth study, beginning with a 12-mark question assessing the utility of stimulus material from one to four ancient sources, followed by a choice of essay questions requiring analysis and evaluation of sources.

Where Next?

An Ancient History A Level develops critical thinking, analytical, and research skills valued by universities and employers. It encourages independent judgment, logical argument, and the ability to evaluate complex evidence — skills useful across many fields. Students often progress to degrees in History, Classics, Archaeology, Politics, Law, or related humanities subjects. The qualification also supports careers in education, heritage, museums, journalism, law, public service, and business. By exploring ancient societies, learners gain insight into political systems, culture, and human behaviour, building transferable skills in communication, analysis, and problem-solving that are highly regarded in higher education and the workplace.