

### PART 1: THE PRESSURE ON THE MONARCHY AND THE DRIFT TO CIVIL WAR, c.1625-1642

This guide is in two sections – an introduction to the issue followed by a worked example on teaching and learning on one of the issues in the Depth Study.

#### PART ONE: INTRODUCTION

In approaching the teaching of Unit 2 for the interpretation question (Question 2) teachers need to focus on Assessment Objective 3 which demands that learners:

*analyse and evaluate, in relation to the historical context, different ways in which aspects of the past have been interpreted.*

The Assessment Objective uses the key phrase “in relation to the historical context” which goes beyond just general factual knowledge of what happened.

In the Specification each of the depth studies identifies at least FOUR aspects of the past to be studied in relation to the different ways they have been interpreted by various historians or groups of historians. These are identified in the Specification where it states:

#### Historical interpretations of key issues from this period

*different historical interpretations of key issues in this period covering a range of developments including:*

- *the attitude and policies of Charles I*
- *Personal Rule and the recall of Parliament*
- *reasons and responsibility for the outbreak of war*
- *the impact of developments in Scotland, Ireland and Wales.*

The Teacher Guide that supports the qualification advises teachers that:

*It is expected that learners will be aware of a range of possible interpretations of these key issues made by historians but specific knowledge and recall of particular historians and their careers or publications is not required. Question 2 will focus on assessing the extent to which candidates are able to analyse and evaluate the validity of the two provided interpretations on a specific issue in **the appropriate historical context** and also to show an awareness of different interpretations of the issue set. Centres should encourage candidates to debate and offer a judgement on the key issue set and consider a number of interpretations within **the wider historical debate** over this issue. Candidates are expected to be aware of the debate - and able to consider other possible interpretations than the ones presented - but detailed knowledge of particular historians, their career and works are not required. Centres should encourage their learners to analyse and evaluate the two extracts provided not only to identify differences in interpretations but also to discuss how and why different interpretations have been formed.*

The two key phrases in this guidance are:

1. the **appropriate historical context** by which we mean learners should be taught the historical events and developments associated with all FOUR of the issues identified in the specification.
2. the **wider historical debate** by which we mean learners should be taught and understand how and why historians have formed different historical interpretations of each of the key aspects - but they do not need to discuss the historiographical development.

**Learners need to be aware of the wider historical debate** surrounding these identified issues and different schools of thought - and different schools of history. So, for example, they will be aware that there are traditional and revisionist schools of History on the reasons for the outbreak of the Civil War but it is not required for them to know names of specific historians or that one historian was influenced by the work of another. Those are expectations in the NEA at Unit 5 - what we call there the developing historical debate - but not in the examinations at Unit 2. At best learners should be aware developments in History can be seen in a variety of ways and are able to appreciate that interpretations are formed for certain reasons and that they are provisional and open to challenge and change.

This may be done at Unit 2 by explaining that historians may make and debate different interpretations based on a number of considerations such as

- the availability of primary evidence
- the emphasis that they place on particular events and developments
- their focus on the varying importance of political, social, religious, economic and / or other aspects of history
- the influence of other historians who represent a similar school of thought.

The approach above is reinforced by the requirement at each of the mark schemes that *“Overall candidates will analyse both interpretations using their own understanding of the debate over this issue, offer an evaluation of the validity of the given interpretations and provide a judgement on the issue in the question that ....”*.

### PART TWO: A WORKED EXAMPLE

This example is taken from the Specification on **The Pressure on the Monarchy and the Drift to Civil War, c.1625-1642**.

It focuses on both the appropriate historical context and the wider historical debate. This example is based on the key issue of the attitude and policies of Charles I and how it impacted on the Petition of Right of 1628.

#### 1. The appropriate historical context

The specification outlines that teachers should ensure that learners are taught about:

*the character and aims of Charles I; challenges to the government of Charles I; growth of parliamentary opposition to the king; the Petition of Right; the dissolution of Parliament and the King's commitment to Personal Rule.*

Knowledge and awareness of this content will enable candidates to become familiar with the context surrounding the issue to be interpreted.

#### 2. The wider historical debate

Teachers should also ensure that the learners are taught about how and why historians have formed different historical interpretations of the attitude and policies of Charles I and that there has been a debate amongst historians on this issue. This should include considering that historians investigating the attitude and policies of Charles I may represent schools of thoughts such as:

| Interpretation  | School of thought  | Supporting context  |
|---|--|---|
| the attitude and policies of Charles I were stubborn and arbitrary  | an anti-monarchical interpretation                               | examples of arbitrary policies such as the Forced Loan and martial law                            |
| opposition of radical parliamentarians was more destabilising   | a pro-monarchical interpretation                                 | the Petition of Right was more focussed on rights and liberties                                   |
| personal ambition of politicians was more disruptive  | revisionist interpretation of the role of politicians            | attitudes and ideas of Pym, Coke and Hampden  |
| events such as the passing of the Petition of Rights were the outcome of two conflicting forces coming together | an interpretation based on long-term social and political change | growth of parliamentary demands since reign of Elizabeth; growth of merchant and commercial class |

Learners should also be taught that over the past four hundred years historians have made different interpretations of the attitude and policies of Charles I and have created different schools of history regarding this issue. For example they could learn that the debate began straight after the conclusion of the Civil War in the 1660s and remained focused on political causes well into the nineteenth century as historians mainly saw the period as one of progress from older societies with limited political liberty to societies where there was more political and individual liberty. Here blame tended to be placed on the failings of the monarchy – Charles I in particular. This view was largely unchallenged until some historians in the mid twentieth century applied Marxist ideas to look at the period. These tended to focus on social and economic factors rather than political demands. Their views are supported by

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emphasis on the influence of Protestant and the growth of a merchant class. In this interpretation the monarchy is seen as an obstacle to an historical process. Other historians writing since the 1990s have argued that both political ambition and social and economic change played a major role in creating tension in the 1620s and 1630s leading eventually to the outbreak of Civil War by 1642.

### 3. Testing validity

In order to discuss and test the validity of different interpretations, student may like to consider the following issues in making their judgments:

- What interpretation is being made?
- What historical support is there for this interpretation?
- How does this interpretation fit into the wider historical debate?
- How valid / convincing is this interpretation when compared to others?

### 4. Checking your work

Use this checklist to assess your response to the interpretation exercise set in Unit 2, Question 2.

| Have you:   | YES | NO |
|---|-----|----|
| Understood the set question.  |     |    |
| Analysed Interpretation 1 and 2 to identify the interpretation contained in each extract.   |     |    |
| Analysed Interpretation 1 and 2 to identify the historical developments and date range referred to in each extract [ <i>the context of each interpretation</i> ]. |     |    |
| Discussed, using the context of the appropriate historical events and developments, why these historians have made different or differing interpretations.        |     |    |
| Analysed Interpretation 1 and 2 to identify the school of history or school of thought represented by these historians [ <i>the historical debate</i> ].          |     |    |
| Discussed, using the context of the historical debate over the set issue, why these historians have made different or differing interpretations.                  |     |    |
| Discussed and evaluated the validity of Interpretation 1 and 2 using your awareness of a range of other interpretations of the set issue.                         |     |    |
| Provided a judgement on the validity of the interpretation in the question set.   |     |    |
| Read over and corrected any mistakes?   |     |    |

**Are there any aspects of your response which need to be improved?**