

### PART 1: RADICALISM AND THE FIGHT FOR PARLIAMENTARY REFORM c.1783 - 1848

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 effectiveness of the policies of Pitt and Lord Liverpool*
- *the extent of the Liberal Tory reforms*
- *the growth of working class movements and consciousness*
- *the Reform Act crisis 1828-1832.*

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 were Whig, Marxist and Revisionist schools of History on the Reform Act crisis of 1828-1832, 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 **Reform and Protest in Wales and England c.1783 - 1848**.

It focuses on both the appropriate historical context and the wider historical debate. This example is based on the key issue of the Reform Act crisis 1828-1832.

#### 1. The appropriate historical context

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

*the unreformed electoral system; impact of Catholic Emancipation and the fall of the Tory government in 1830; reasons and pressure for parliamentary reform and radical protest; the election of the Whigs in 1830; the Merthyr rising 1831; rural protest and Captain Swing 1830-1831; the Reform Bill crisis 1830-1832; aims and terms of the Great Reform Act 1832*

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 Reform Act crisis and that there has been a debate on this issue. This should include considering that historians debating the Reform Act crisis may represent schools of thoughts such as:

Interpretation	School of thought	Supporting context
To rectify the abuses of the electoral system	A political interpretation	Discontent with the pocket and rotten boroughs
To recognise the growing middle class	A social interpretation	The changes to the franchise
To reflect the impact of the industrial revolution	An economic interpretation	Redistribution of seats to the manufacturing areas
To prevent revolution by the working class	A political, social and economic interpretation	Radical protests
To gain political advantage	An electoral and political interpretation	The Whigs wanted to take advantage of divisions in the Tory party

Learners should be made aware that the Reform Act crisis was brought about by a demand for political reform in view of the social and economic transformation of Wales and England during the previous century – that it was a concession to popular demands. They should also be aware of another interpretation that the Reform Act crisis was a reaction to the threat of revolution at that time – that it was a cure to the problems of that time.

Learners should also be taught that over the past hundred years historians have made different interpretations of the Reform Act crisis and have created different schools of history regarding this issue. For example they could learn that the long held nineteenth century Whig view that the Reform Act crisis was the culmination of a long struggle against the power of the Crown and tyrannical government and was a progressive measure designed to cure the problems facing the nation. The early Twentieth century historians tended to stress that the Reform Act crisis was a progressive reform to prevent

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revolution and develop democracy. In the middle decades of the twentieth century Marxist historians tended to stress that the threat of working class agitation drove the crisis of 1828-32. Such views were challenged in the 1970s by revisionist historians who have tended to point out the Reform Act crisis was largely the result of the political struggles of that time both with and within the Whig and Tory parties, in particular the divisions within the Tory party caused by the destruction of the Anglican supremacy in church and state.

### 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?**