



# Wallington High School for Girls

## Sixth Form

<b>Subject: History</b>	<b>Exam board: Edexcel</b>
<b>Course information:</b> There are four units to the History A level; three examinations and one piece of course work. <b>Unit 1: Russia 1917-91: from Lenin to Yeltsin (30% of the A level; written examination, 2 hours 15 mins)</b> This unit comprises a study in breadth, in which students will learn about the key political, social and economic features of communist rule in Russia during the twentieth century, an era that saw its authority and influence rise to the status of a superpower, only to diminish and decline later in the century. The focus of study is on developments and changes over a broad timescale, and so the content is presented as themes spanning a significant duration: 1917–85. This option also contains a study in depth of historical interpretations on a broad question, which is contextualised by, and runs on from, the themes: reasons for the fall of the USSR, c1985–91. <b>Unit 2: Mao's China, 1949-1976 (20% of the A level; written examination, 1 hour 30 minutes)</b> This option comprises a study in depth of the transformation of communist China in the years 1949–76. The aftershocks of these changes are still being felt today as China emerges as a great economic and political power on the world stage. Students will gain an in-depth understanding of the nature and extent of change in this period, the effects of Mao Zedong's policies on the lives of the Chinese people, and Mao's role in driving dramatic political, social and economic changes. <b>3. Britain: losing and gaining an empire, 1763-1914 (30% of the A level; written examination, 2 hours 15 mins)</b> This option comprises two parts: the <i>Aspects in breadth</i> focus on long-term changes and contextualise the <i>Aspects in depth</i> , which focus in detail on key episodes. Together, the breadth and depth topics explore the nature of the British Empire and its mostly unimpeded growth from the conclusion of the Seven Years War to the start of the First World War. We will study the various challenges the Empire faced both political and economic, the nature of change in colonial government over the period and the changing relationship between the Empire and key sections of colonial society. Key events studied include the American Revolution, a study of how the Empire functioned in Australia, Canada and in Egypt; also looking at India, around the Indian Mutiny/First War of Independence. The option enables students to explore the way in which the British Empire was and continues to be a hugely important development in world history. <b>Unit 4: Coursework essay, 3000 to 4000 words, focusing on historical interpretation (20% of the final A level mark)</b> Following a series of taught lessons which focus on the skill of working with historical interpretations, students will select to write their course work essay in response to one of six questions, two from each of the taught units. <b>Summer Transition Work:</b> <ol style="list-style-type: none"><li>1. Read Sheila Fitzpatrick's 'Shortest History of the Soviet Union', particularly Chapter 1 and 2. Take detailed notes about why there was a Russian Revolution in February and October 1917.</li><li>2. Read Linda Jaivin's 'Shortest History of China', particularly from Chapter 9. Create a detailed timeline of events in China from the First Opium War (1839-1842) to the Chinese Revolution (1949).</li></ol> <b>Approximate completion time:</b> 4-6 hours <b>Suggested Summer Wider Reading:</b> <b>Paper 1: Russia 1917-91: from Lenin to Yeltsin.</b> A good place to start is with <i>The Russian Revolution: A very short introduction</i> by <b>S A Smith</b> . The whole period of our course is covered by the very readable <i>Revolutionary Russia, 1891-91: A Pelican Introduction</i> by <b>Orlando Figes</b> . Another good one is ' <i>The Shortest History of the Soviet Union</i> ' by	



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**Sheila Fitzpatrick.** Reading these books before September would be good place to start. Discover the riches of the BBC radio programme "In Our Time". Log on to the BBC radio i-player and follow the links. Once there, search the archive and listen to the programme on Lenin. Take some notes and be ready to discuss this programme on your return in September.

<http://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/p00546pv>. You are bound to discover other episodes of interest to you. Download them and listen over the next few months.

### **2. China: 1949-1976**

There are countless books about this fascinating period of history, but you should at the very least obtain a copy of *Mao: A Very Short Introduction* by **Delia Davin**, along with a copy of *Wild Swans* by **Jung Chang**. Read both of these - the former gives a great overview of all of the History you will study for this paper, whilst the latter will give you a good idea of what China was like both before and during the Mao era, which will be incredibly useful. *Wild Swans* is a huge book, but very easy to read and interesting, so please don't be overwhelmed by its size! Other useful and fascinating reads include *Do not say we have nothing* by **Madeleine Thien**, *Life and Death in Shanghai* by **Nien Cheng**, *Tombstone* by Yang Jisheng and *To Live* by **Yu Hua** (which has also been made into a film, if you can find a copy).

### **3. Britain: losing and gaining an empire, 1763-1914**

There are so many books about the British Empire you will be spoilt for choice. However, we would like you to obtain a copy of *Empireland* by **Sathnam Sanghera**. Read all of this if you have time and potentially look at the new sequel *Empireworld*. There are plenty of podcast series that you can listen to; a particularly good one to listen to is 'Empire' by **Anita Anand** and **William Dalrymple**; this contains lots of mini-series on different aspects of the British Empire, from the Raj to the causes of the American Revolution (also covered in the Rest is History podcast). Other good books include; *Legacy of Violence* by **Caroline Elkins** and **William Dalrymple** has written a lot of relevant material to Indian colonisation by the British; *The Last Mughal*, *The White Mughals* and *The Anarchy* to name a few!