

Why should your KS3 and KS4 curriculum be enquiry based?

Sarah Herrity



The latest history subject report for history recognises enquiry as the most effective way to teach history:

*The best learning in history took place when teaching developed **pupils' historical knowledge and historical thinking.***

Fundamental to effective learning and high achievement: a focus on well-structured enquiry.

OFSTED History for all
report 2011

Michael Maddison (Former HMI National Lead for History, England) speaking to the Hampshire History Leadership Conference

The most effective subject pedagogy, ensuring high achievement in history, was shown by teachers whose approach focused on well-structured enquiry, which helped pupils think for themselves

The 2014 National KS3 curriculum aims include that students will:

- Pursue **historically valid enquiries** including some they have framed
- Understand how different types of sources are used rigorously to make historical claims
- Create relevant, structured and evidentially supported accounts

Exam boards are emphasising the importance of enquiry based learning . The new GCSE OCR B Specification contains the following:

Engaging in historical enquiry – Historical enquiry underpins the approach that is needed to make sense of the content in each of the studies. The preambles to individual studies set out the historical issues and the conceptual focus that will shape the thinking required in each study. They reflect both best practice in school history and the live historical debates that surround the selected content.

Why bother with an enquiry -led learning?

- It simulates real historical research involving students in working like a historian grappling with conflicting evidence to reach firmer and firmer conclusions
- It provides opportunities to test the validity of evidence and interpretations
- It encourages independence, high level reasoning and the justification of conclusions
- It develops more sophisticated understanding of the topic beyond the generalised narrative.
- It makes history more motivating, meaningful and memorable