



Bhutan Council for School Examinations and Assessment

History Civics & Citizenship Education Assessment Syllabus

**Key Stage V
2026 – 2030**

Contact Us

Bhutan Council for School Examinations and Assessment
Kawajangsa, Thimphu
Post Box No. 156

Email: bcsea@bcsea.bt

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Why Choose this syllabus?

This syllabus offers a balanced and enriching approach to history education, promoting a thorough understanding of the past while equipping learners with critical skills needed for further studies, informed citizenship, and meaningful careers.

Bhutan History focuses on themes that foster civics and citizenship education, encouraging learners to understand national identity, values, governance, and their roles as responsible citizens.

World History introduces learners to a diverse range of topics, from ancient civilizations to contemporary global developments. It broadens their perspectives, nurtures global awareness, and fosters a deep, critical understanding of the past. Through this study, learners are guided to:

This programme equips students with skills that are required at university after completing the higher secondary level. The essential skills required are as follows:

- Comprehensive knowledge of their subjects
- Advanced thinking abilities, including analysis, critical evaluation, and problem solving
- Competence in organizing and communicating clear, logical arguments
- The capacity for self-directed learning and independent research

This approach nurtures thoughtful, reflective, and responsible learners who can make sense of the past and apply historical insights to contemporary issues. It empowers them to be:

- Confident, developing the ability to analyse, explain and evaluate historical issues and arguments
- Responsible, acquiring knowledge and skills through independent reading and enquiry
- Reflective, reflecting on their growing understanding of how history works and making links with new areas of
- Innovative, improving their historical understanding through dealing with sources and interpretations of past events from different perspectives
- Engaged, developing their interest in history and broadening their knowledge and understanding of different perspectives.

Key Concepts

Key concepts are the big ideas that underpin the study of History. They enable students to connect past and present, think critically about evidence, and apply historical understanding to personal, civic, and global life.

Historiography

History is constructed, not just recorded. Learners examine artifacts, documents, oral traditions, and images, questioning their reliability and exploring how different contexts and perspectives shape interpretation.

Evolving Civilisation

Civilisations develop, adapt, and transform across time. Learners study the growth of early societies, their political and cultural legacies, and how revolutions, ideologies, and technological change reshaped human progress.

Identity, Spirituality and Culture

History shape's identity and belonging. Learners consider how beliefs, values, and traditions influence societies, and how art, narratives, and cultural practices preserve memory and meaning.

Governance and Citizenship

Societies organise themselves through systems of governance and civic life. Learners study how authority, justice, rights, and responsibilities have developed, and reflect on their role as informed citizens.

Recognition and Support

National and International Recognition

BCSEA qualifications are designed to meet high academic standards and prepare learners for success both within Bhutan and globally. Our history curriculum equips students with the knowledge, critical thinking skills, and historical awareness that are valued by universities, employers, and civic institutions worldwide.

Students who complete the History syllabus can confidently pursue higher education locally or internationally, as our programmes align with global expectations for inquiry, analysis, interpretation, and ethical understanding. Graduates are well-prepared to continue studies in history, political science, law, international relations, or cultural studies, and are equally equipped to contribute to civic life, policy-making, education, research, or any career that demands analytical thinking, adaptability, and a deep understanding of human society.

Supporting Teachers

Effective education depends on the alignment of curriculum, teaching, learning, and assessment. BCSEA ensures that assessment practices are consistent with the intended learning outcomes of the History curriculum. To support this, teachers are provided with clear assessment guidelines, exemplar materials, and professional development opportunities that help them design and administer valid, reliable, and fair assessments. This alignment strengthens the quality of learning and ensures that candidates are assessed on the historical knowledge, critical skills, and conceptual understanding the curriculum intends to develop.

Teachers have access to:

- Planning and preparation resources: syllabus frameworks, schemes of work, sample papers, and teacher guides.
- Learning and revision tools: model answers, past papers, and exemplars to support students' inquiry skills, interpretation, and analytical writing.
- Results analysis and reporting: insights from assessments to inform teaching strategies, track progress, and improve student outcomes.
- Professional Development in Assessment
- BCSEA as an awarding body, offers targeted professional development focused on History assessment. This ensures teachers and examiners:
 - understand assessment objectives and criteria specific to historical knowledge, interpretation, and evaluation.
 - can accurately interpret and apply marking schemes to both factual recall and analytical responses.
 - are skilled in providing feedback that strengthens learners' critical thinking, source analysis, and historical writing.
 - stay up-to-date with changes in assessment standards, practices, and curriculum developments.

Through this approach, BCSEA ensures high-quality assessment, fairness, and reliability, supporting both learners and educators in achieving excellence in History education.

Syllabus overview

Aims

The aims are to enable students to develop:

- An interest in and enthusiasm for learning about the past
- Knowledge and understanding of individuals, societies, and events in historical contexts
- Understanding grounded in the nature and use of historical evidence
- A clear grasp of key historical concepts, including cause and consequence, change and continuity, and similarity and difference
- Awareness of international issues and global historical developments
- A range of historical skills such as investigation, analysis, evaluation, and effective communication
- A strong foundation for further study and the pursuit of personal interest in history

Assessment Objectives

The assessment objectives (AOs) are:

AO1: Historical Knowledge

Candidates should be able to:

- Recall, select and use appropriate historical knowledge.

AO2: Historical Explanation, Analysis and Judgement

Candidates should be able to:

- Identify, explain and analyse the past using historical concepts:
 - cause and consequence
 - change and continuity
 - significance
- Explain and analyse connections between different aspects of the past.
- Reach a judgement.

AO3: Historical Sources

Candidates should be able to:

- Understand, analyse, evaluate and interpret a range of historical sources in context.

Weighting for Assessment Objectives

The approximate weightings allocated to each of the assessment objectives (AOs) are summarised below. Assessment objectives as a percentage of the qualification.

AO	Weighting in AS Level %
AO1 Historical knowledge	44
AO2 Historical explanation, analysis and judgement	44
AO3 Historical sources	12
Total	100

Assessment Objectives as a Percentage of Each Component

AO	Paper 1	Paper 2	Paper 3
AO1 Historical knowledge and understanding	50	40	40
AO2 Historical explanation, analysis and judgement	50	40	40
AO3 Historical sources	0	0	20
Total	100	100	100

Details of the assessment

General Notes

- Candidates must make use of the historical concepts and methods outlined in the syllabus appendix.
- Where a candidate misinterprets a historical source or fact, no credit will be given for that point, but relevant and consistent arguments developed from the candidate's own interpretation will be credited.
- Sources or extracts will not provide ready-made conclusions; candidates must analyse and evaluate them within their historical context.
- Where candidates are asked to make judgements, they are expected to support their answers with a balance of evidence and reasoning, and to justify their conclusions.

Paper 1 – History and Civics of Bhutan

Marks: 60 marks

Duration: 1 hour 45 minutes

Assessment Objectives

- AO1: Knowledge & Understanding
- AO2: Historical explanation, Analysis and Judgement

Strand Focus:

- Governance and Peace
- Monarchy: *An era of Stability and Reforms*
- Media, Democracy and Constitution of the Kingdom of Bhutan
- Identity, Spirituality and Culture

Paper structure

SECTION A: Structured Questions (18 Marks)	SECTION B: Short Essay Questions (18 Marks)	SECTION C: Extended Essay Questions (24 Marks)
Answer all questions	Answer all questions	Answer any two questions out of three
Number of Questions: 2	Number of Questions: 3	Number of Questions Provided: 3
Marks per Question: 9	Marks per Question: 6	Marks per Question: 12
Total Marks: 18	Total Marks: 18	Questions Attempted: 2
Question 1: 9 marks (Set from Class XI topics)	Question 3: 6 marks	Question 6: 12 marks
• (a) 3 marks	Question 4: 6 marks	Question 7: 12 marks
• (b) 6 marks	Question 5: 6 marks	Question 8: 12 marks
Question 2: 9 marks		Total Marks Awarded: 24
• (a) 3 marks		
• (b) 6 marks		

Marks Distribution Summary

Section	Question Distribution	Marks
Section A: Structured Questions	2 × 9 marks	18
Section B: Short Essay Questions	3 × 6 marks	18
Section C: Extended Essay Questions	2 × 12 marks (Choose 2 out of 3)	24
Total		60 Marks

Content Focus:

- The assessment will be based on 70% Class XII content and 30% Class XI content
- Content coverage follows the National School Curriculum – History, Civics and Citizenship Education Curriculum Framework (Key Stage V, 2026–2030).

Weighting: 40% of AS

Assessment: Externally assessed

Paper 2 – World History

Marks: 60

Duration: 1 hour 45 minutes

Assessment Objectives

- **AO1:** Historical Knowledge and Understanding
- **AO2:** Historical explanation, analysis and judgement
- **AO3:** Historical sources

Strand Focus

- Historiography
- Evolving Civilisation
- Governance and Peace
- Identity, Spirituality, and Culture

Paper Structure

SECTION A: Structured Questions (18 Marks)	SECTION B: Short Essay Questions (18 Marks)	SECTION C: Extended Essay Questions (24 Marks)
Answer all questions	Answer all questions	Choose two questions out of three
Number of Questions: 2	Number of Questions: 3	Number of Questions Provided: 3
Marks per Question: 9	Marks per Question: 6	Marks per Question: 12
Total Marks: 18	Total Marks: 18	Questions Attempted: 2
Question 1: 9 marks (<i>Set from Class XI topics</i>) • (a) 3 marks • (b) 6 marks	Question 3: 6 marks	Question 6: 12 marks
	Question 4: 6 marks	Question 7: 12 marks
Question 2: 9 marks • (a) 3 marks • (b) 6 marks	Question 5: 6 marks	Question 8: 12 marks

Marks Distribution Summary

Section	Question Distribution	Marks
Section A: Structured Questions	2 × 9 marks	18 Marks
Section B: Short Essay Questions	3 × 6 marks	18 Marks
Section C: Extended Essay Questions	2 × 12 marks (<i>Choose 2 out of 3</i>)	24 Marks
Total		60 Marks

Paper 3 – Coursework: Historical Inquiry Assignment

Marks: 40 marks

Assessment Mode: Internally assessed and externally moderated

Time expected: 2-3 weeks (approx. 10-15 hours)

Weightage: 20% of total assessment

BCSEA coursework assignment is a historical inquiry carried out by students testing assessment objectives AO1, AO2 and AO3. Students are expected to use primary and secondary historical sources to complete their historical inquiry. Candidates will submit a single coursework assignment.

Further details about suitable coursework tasks, sequence of inquiry, mark schemes and guidance around the administration of coursework will be provided before the first year of assessment.

Grade Descriptions

Grade descriptions describe the level of performance typically demonstrated by candidates achieving the different grades awarded for a qualification. For A Levels, they describe performance at three levels – grades 'E', 'C' and 'A'.

Grade descriptions sit alongside other key documents that illustrate examination standards, including:

- the syllabus, which presents what students should be taught over a course of study and explains how this is assessed
- the specimen assessment materials, which illustrate the structure of the assessment and the kinds of tasks that candidates complete
- grade thresholds, which show the total mark required to achieve a grade.

Grade descriptions are produced with a wide range of audiences in mind. For teachers, they support lesson planning and curriculum development, while students may gain useful insights into what is required to achieve a high grade and what candidate performance at lower grades typically looks like. For university admissions staff and employers, they paint a picture of typical performance at different grades.

How to use

Grade descriptions are presented as a grid, with content areas at the start of each row and the different grades at the top of each column.

For each content area there is a descriptor for each grade. Reading across the row from left to right, the descriptors represent increasing levels of performance, with each grade descriptor building on, and including, the last.

Each column represents overall performance at a particular grade. Reading down the column from top to bottom, the descriptors capture the range of knowledge, understanding and skills that a candidate 'comfortably inside the grade' is likely to demonstrate.

Grade Descriptors

Area of knowledge, understanding and skills	Typical performance at Grade 2	Typical performance at Grade C	Typical performance at Grade A
Recalling, selecting, organising and deploying historical knowledge	Recalls basic historical knowledge. Selects limited information and writes with a simple structure. <i>Example:</i> Lists basic facts about the First Druk Gyalpo or names events of World War I.	Recalls relevant knowledge with some accuracy. Selects and organises mostly relevant information in structured writing. <i>Example:</i> Describes reforms of the Third Druk Gyalpo or outlines key events of World War II.	Recalls accurate and detailed knowledge. Consistently selects and deploys information to produce coherent and logically developed writing. <i>Example:</i> Detailed account of Bhutan's democratic transition or analysis of the Cold War.
Understanding events, developments and key features of the past	Shows basic understanding and mainly describes events. <i>Example:</i> Describes the 2008 Constitution of Bhutan or events of the French Revolution.	Shows sound understanding with some awareness of broader context and explains events. <i>Example:</i> Explains why Bhutan adopted a written constitution or explains causes of the French Revolution.	Shows good understanding with strong contextual awareness; analyses and supports arguments. <i>Example:</i> Analyses impact of constitutional democracy in Bhutan or evaluates how far the French Revolution changed Europe.
Understanding motives, intentions and beliefs of people and societies	Shows some knowledge and mainly describes actions. <i>Example:</i> Describes actions of Zhabdrung Ngawang Namgyal	Shows sound understanding and explains reasons for actions. <i>Example:</i> Explains why Bhutan followed a policy of isolation or why Hitler expanded German territory.	Shows good understanding and analyses and evaluates motives. <i>Example:</i> Evaluates reasons behind Gross National Happiness or European imperialism.

	or Nazi Germany.		
Understanding the importance of inter-relationships in the past	Recognises basic inter-relationships. <i>Example:</i> Identifies link between monarchy and religion in Bhutan or between colonies and imperial powers.	Explains inter-relationships and their effects. <i>Example:</i> Explains interaction between monarchy and democracy in Bhutan or impact of World War I on Europe.	Demonstrates strong awareness and constructs complex explanations. <i>Example:</i> Explains how education, governance and media shaped modern Bhutan, or how economic and political factors interacted in interwar Europe.
Understanding and evaluating historical significance	Describes impact of events or people. <i>Example:</i> Describes impact of road development in Bhutan or the Great Depression.	Explains why something was significant. <i>Example:</i> Explains significance of infrastructure development for Bhutan or why the Great Depression mattered globally.	Assesses significance in different ways and for different reasons. <i>Example:</i> Assesses significance of education reforms in Bhutan or the Great Depression for different countries.
Constructing historical explanations	Describes simple causes and consequences. <i>Example:</i> Describes events leading to Bhutan's first democratic elections or World War II.	Explains cause and consequence clearly. <i>Example:</i> Explains one cause of Bhutan's political reforms or one cause of World War II.	Constructs complex, multi-causal explanations with support. <i>Example:</i> Multi-causal explanation of Bhutan's democratic transition or the outbreak of World War II.
Constructing arguments and reaching judgements	States simple opinions or conclusions. <i>Example:</i> States that democracy was good for Bhutan or appeasement was wrong.	Constructs supported arguments and valid conclusions. <i>Example:</i> Explains why democracy strengthened Bhutan's governance or why appeasement failed.	Constructs balanced, reasoned and substantiated judgements. <i>Example:</i> Weighs advantages and challenges of democracy in Bhutan or balances arguments on appeasement before concluding.
Interpreting and evaluating sources in context	Understands surface meaning of sources. <i>Example:</i> Identifies information from a royal decree or war poster.	Interprets and begins to evaluate sources in context. <i>Example:</i> Explains purpose of a royal speech or a World War II cartoon.	Critically analyses and evaluates sources in context. <i>Example:</i> Evaluates reliability of Bhutanese constitutional documents or wartime propaganda.

Using sources to reach and support judgements	Uses one or two sources to reach simple conclusions. <i>Example:</i> Uses one source to explain Bhutan's modernization or causes of World War I.	Uses several sources to support judgements. <i>Example:</i> Explains how multiple sources support views on Bhutan's reforms or World War II causes.	Uses a wide range of sources critically to reach well-supported judgements. <i>Example:</i> Compares sources to judge Bhutan's path to democracy or differing views on World War II causes.
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Command Words

Command words are the words in assessment tasks that tell candidates what they need to do. Understanding these words is essential, as they guide the depth, detail, and type of response expected. BCSEA uses command words consistently across its syllabuses and assessments to ensure clarity and fairness.

Command Word What It Means in History

State	Give a short, clear factual answer.
Identify	Name key events, people, dates, or features.
Define	Give the exact meaning of a historical term or concept.
Describe	Explain the key features or facts of an event, person, or development.
Explain	Give reasons for events or developments and show links between causes and effects.
Interpret	Explain the meaning of a source, event, or evidence in its historical context.
Apply	Use your historical knowledge in a new situation or context.
Compare	Identify and explain similarities and differences between events, people, or sources.
Analyse	Examine an event, idea, or source in detail to understand causes, effects, or patterns.
Assess	Make a judgement about the importance or impact of an event, idea, or person using evidence.
Justify	Support an answer or opinion with historical evidence.
Evaluate	Judge the reliability, usefulness, or impact of sources, events, or actions using evidence.

What else you need to know

This section provides key information about the syllabus and administrative processes. It is intended to help teachers, candidates, and schools understand how to manage entries, assessments, and access arrangements effectively. More information is available on the BCSEA portal (www.bcsea.bt) and through official guidance documents.

Before you start

Previous study

- Learners beginning this course are recommended to have completed prior study in Social Studies, History, or related subjects equivalent to the Bhutan Certificate of Secondary Education (BCSE).

Guided learning hours

- The course is designed to require approximately 120 guided learning hours for Class XI and 120 guided learning hours for Class XII.

Combining with other syllabuses

- Candidates may take this syllabus alongside other BCSEA syllabuses, except where syllabuses have the same title and level.

Making entries

- Schools are responsible for submitting candidate entries. Schools should ensure candidates are entered for the correct syllabus components. Entry instructions are available in the Operational Guidelines for Examination and Assessment (OGEA) available at www.bcsea.bt.

Retakes

- Candidates may retake any component of the History syllabus (Paper 1, Paper 2, or Coursework) as required.

Language

- This syllabus and all assessment materials are available in English only.

Accessibility and equality

Syllabus and assessment design

- BCSEA aims to avoid discrimination and maximise inclusivity for all candidates, including those with special educational needs and disabilities (SEN), religion, gender, or other protected characteristics.
- Materials are designed to be accessible, using clear language and design principles.

Access arrangements

- BCSEA provides access arrangements to minimise barriers for candidates with SEN, disability, illness, or injury.
- Arrangements should reflect a candidate's normal way of working. Approval must ensure that adjustments are reasonable, cost-effective, and do not compromise assessment integrity.
- Schools should confirm access arrangements at the start of the course. For special arrangements not included in standard lists as per OGEA, schools must contact BCSEA for guidance.
- Candidates unable to access all components may receive an award based on completed components.

After the exam

Grading and reporting

- Grades **A – E**, with '**A**' as the highest and '**E**' as the lowest.
- **Ungraded (U)**: Candidates not meeting the lowest grade standard are reported as Ungraded.