

# British Politics and Social History Higher 1850 – 1930: Course Notes

## General

The exams are set to find out how well you have learned the subject and how well you can apply the knowledge. They are not set to catch you out.

As the timetable will be known well in advance, you will know the date and times of the exams well in advance. As the school can slightly vary the start time of exams it is your responsibility to check these times and the place you will sit. It is also your responsibility to bring all equipment needed, in this case at least a pen and a spare one. You must also know your Scottish Candidate Number which must be entered on your paper.

Any coursework submitted must be your own. If you submit someone else's you could have all your awards cancelled. Make sure the school holds your personal records correctly. Make sure the school has a record of your name the way you want it to be shown on your certificate.

## Check List

**The Study leave is not a skive so plan to use it properly.**

- Don't leave it to the last minute. Leave plenty of time to revise and don't rely on cramming in the last few days before the exam.
- Draw up a realistic timetable so you can allocate enough time to each subject.
- The brain works better in the morning, when it is less tired, so study accordingly. Try a three hour study session in the morning, two hours in the afternoon and one hour in the evening.
- Do not spend too much time on the subjects you enjoy and put others off.
- Refresh the brain by varying the topic you study in each session. Don't spend all day on one topic.
- Keep taking short breaks. As soon as you start to lose concentration get some air, walk round and clear your mind.
- Experiment with several alternative revision techniques to find the one that works for you. You might like mind maps or more structured notes.
- Try studying with friends, which can make revision less boring and more tolerable.
- Go through past exam papers to see the kind of questions that come up.
- Once you are familiar with your subjects, practice answering questions in real time.
- If you don't understand something, try a classmate. If that fails check with your teacher.
- Take regular moderate exercise, which will help you concentrate and keep you feeling calm.
- Stay positive and don't get stressed. Failing is not the end of the world. As long as you have tried your best no one will blame you if you fail.

## **On the Day**

Get up in enough time to have a good breakfast and get to the exam hall without rushing. Make sure you have all the equipment you need. You should be ready to enter the exam hall about 10 minutes before it starts. If you are late you must report to the person in charge who will decide whether or not you may enter. If you are not allowed in, the reasons for your lateness will be reported to the SQA and may be taken into consideration.

There are a number of things you must not take into the exam hall. Any candidate found in possession of a mobile phone or any other electronic communication device (including MP3 players) will have their examination entry cancelled. If you accidentally take anything prohibited into the exam hall including bags, give it to the invigilator for safe keeping till the end of the exam.

## **Sitting the Exam**

Take a deep breath before you start to read the paper and read it thoroughly. First, make sure it is the correct paper. If it is not the one you expected to sit, inform the invigilator. Read the instructions on the front of the paper and follow them carefully. Ask if you need paper and keep it inside your answer book.

Work out the time allocation for each question and stick to it. Write a plan for your answers and start with an answer you are confident about. Do not use scrap paper and only write rough work in the answer book. Cross rough work out when you have finished with it.

## **Problems**

If you are prevented by illness or any other good reason from sitting the exam, you should report this to the teacher in charge as soon as possible. If you provide a medical certificate, make sure it covers the day of the exam. If you become ill during the exam, you do not need to provide a medical certificate. If you feel unwell or upset during the exam, tell the invigilator you will arrange for you to leave the room. The SQA will review the school estimates and results of absent candidates before the results are finalised. In certain circumstances, awards may be improved.

# Taking Notes

## Notes from the spoken word

1. Rely on your own words
2. Listen carefully and watch out for the beginning of a new point
3. Listen for pauses or stresses which often indicate important new points
4. Each major point or new stage would be given a clear heading, in BLOCK CAPITALS and numbered.

## ADVICE ON NOTEMAKING AND NOTETAKING

Increasingly you will be asked to make your own notes. Here are some tips.

GOOD NOTES CAN INCLUDE:

Diagrams Patterns and flowcharts

- Use of " quotation marks"
- Indented subheadings
- Capital letters for keywords
- Underlining once or twice
- Diagrams
- \* asterisks in the margins against main points
- Use of double spacing to allow for extra notes
- A wide right or left hand margin for more notes
- Keyword maps

## Notes from the spoken word

- As above, rely on your own words.  
Listen carefully and watch out for the beginning of a new point, section or idea.
- Listen for pauses or stresses, which often indicate important new points.
- Each major or new stage should be given a clear heading, in BLOCK CAPITALS and numbered.

## Notes from the written word

1. Avoid writing too much
2. Use only brief quotations - **DO NOT COPY**
3. Do not rush into making notes on first reading. Read the article or chapter right through and then go back and make your notes
4. Sum up the main part of the topic by giving it a heading then use sub-headings
5. You might like to develop your own shorthand e.g. by shortening words

Use of "quotation marks": Indented sub headings: Capital letters for keywords: Highlighting:  
Boxes around important words: Underlining once or twice

# The structure of the History Exam

## There are three elements in the Higher Still Exam

### Paper One

1. Preparation. Revise carefully over a good number of topics. Do not try and spot exam questions and do cover topics done earlier in the course.
2. Sitting the exam. Time management is crucial. Divide the time up equally between the two essays. (40 minutes each).
3. Choose the questions carefully and answer the question asked. Do not just look at the theme and do not answer the question that you like to have been asked.

### **Read the Question! What does it ask you to do?**

One essay is on Modern British History and the other on Russia. Each essay is worth 20 marks. Remember that 2 evenly balanced answers will give a better mark than one good essay and one unfinished answer. A second essay gaining 5 marks will gain more marks than if you polished the first essay.

A 'C' pass will rely heavily on telling a story to answer the question. The essay might contain some relevant information but will at least show that the writer knows what the question is about and there some attempt to use the information to arrive at a conclusion.

A 'B' pass will show that the writer understands what the question is really about. It will contain a lot of relevant information but structured in such a way as it backs up the points made in the introduction. In each paragraph it will be clear how it links back to the main question.

An 'A' pass will also have a good and relevant structure, but the candidate will also show that they know that history is about debate. Every essay in the paper will ask in different ways why things happened or what you think about a certain topic. An 'A' pass will be able to explain the different points of view that individual historians have and perhaps even name them and include supporting quotes.

## What Types of Essay Questions will be asked?

In the examination 2 essay questions have to be answered in Paper 1:

There are many different questions some of which you will have practised in Standard Grade and/or Intermediate 2:

- Questions which ask you to explain historical events and issues;
- Questions which ask you to explain longer term trend or development;
- Questions asking you to compare different causes of a historical development, event or issue;
- Questions asking you to debate an issue.

Remember you will not have to answer all these types of questions. You will choose those which are best for you to answer.

- In the British topic you have to answer 1 question from the 3 given
- In the Russian topic you have to answer 1 question from the 3 given.

Each essay is worth 20 marks. The exam lasts for 1hr 20min.

In the internal assessment (NAB) you will have a choice of at least two questions. You have 1 hr to write the essay under exam type conditions. If you should fail the NAB you have the chance to re-sit it once. You should pass the NAB before being allowed to sit the final exam.

### Types of questions.

1. Direct questions. *Why did Democracy grow in Britain between 1851 and 1918?* Don't just give a narrative, the reasons need to be covered therefore concentrate on the factors leading to Democracy. Give an order of importance.
2. Make a judgement. *How popular were Hitler's domestic policies between 1933 and 1939?* Balance force against popularity.
3. Isolated factor questions can occur in this type of question. *How important were the Suffragettes in getting the vote for women?* Rephrase the question. Why did women get the vote? Use all the factors. World War One, War Work, Suffragist pressure, Suffragette pressure, etc. Then write your conclusion deciding the importance (or not) of the Suffragette influence.

There is no right answer. It is your evaluation which counts. If your argument and analysis are good, you must get good marks.

## Structure

- A clear introduction proves an understanding of the question. Development paragraphs should deal with arguments supported by evidence, not just a narrative of what happened. The Conclusion should sum up the arguments and answer the question.
- Good analytical style is based on comparing and debating the factors and arguments in the topic chosen.
- Knowledge should be used to illustrate and develop points, not just presented.
- Evidence should be organised into paragraphs.
- Use linking phrases to show understanding of connections between factors and the relationship between points made. Links should tie each paragraph to the next and bring it back into the overall argument.

## The History Exam (Paper 1)

The greatest sin in Higher History is irrelevance. In this exam, where there are two essays to write, it is important to be sure what the question is asking you. You need to pick the question you will answer based on how well you understand the question, not just because it ties in with your revision.

All essays must have an introduction, a main body and a conclusion. Be sure you know what the question is asking you. Your introduction gives your line of argument, without any great detail. The detail comes in the main body. Your conclusion should sum up your argument by prioritising the points made before finally making a judgement and answering the question asked.

Structure your essay properly, jot down a plan with the important evidence you don't want to omit. Make sure each paragraph starts with a key sentence that the rest of the paragraph develops, and that your paragraphs are linked. Make absolutely certain that you end up with a conclusion. If there is any doubt about time, leave out a paragraph and go on to the conclusion. **You cannot pass without a conclusion.** If you want an A grade bring in different historical interpretations. When revising, condense your notes to get them into paragraph lengths.

## Model Introductions

### Liberal Origins

It is undoubtedly true that the Liberal Government in 1906 took notice of the rise of the Labour movement but it is inadequate to suggest that this was the only, or even the main reason, for the reforms. The old Laissez Faire system of the mid 19<sup>th</sup> century had been failing to deal with the problems of poverty for some time and the findings of Booth and Rowntree had made this public in a manner that the government could not ignore. There had also been a

change in the philosophy of Liberalism itself, which suggested that the Government should involve itself more in the lives of the most vulnerable of its citizens. It was not only in internal British politics that there was worry.

There were also fears about Britain's place in the world. The ideas of Social Darwinism suggested that weak societies would 'go to the wall' and this was shown to the Government of the day during the Boer war. This idea extended into Britain's industrial performance and the fear was that the country would lose further ground to her new vibrant European rival, Germany. Germany, especially, was seen as danger who the British may have to fight and there was a fear that their State social welfare programme might give them an advantage should the situation between the two nations worsen.

### **Assessment of Liberal Reforms**

When the Liberal Government took office in 1906 many of its leading 'New Liberals', believed that the time had come for the government to take direct action to tackle the problems of poverty. The New Liberals desire for change was backed up by the social investigations of Booth and Rowntree. These men discovered that the main causes of poverty were outwith the control of the individual, such as old age; sickness; unemployment and low wages. However, did the burst of legislation carried out by the 'Liberal government from 1906-1914 to help the young, the elderly, the sick, the unemployed and low earners successfully tackle the problem of poverty at the turn of the 20<sup>th</sup> century? This essay will discuss each of these areas and detail what was done, what could be considered successful and which reforms were not as successful as might have been hoped.

### **Assessment of Labour Reforms Introduction**

In 1945 a new Labour government swept into power on a manifesto of great new social reform. During the next five years they made progress in the fields of tackling Beveridge's five giants. They attacked want, disease, ignorance, squalor and idleness.

This essay will detail the Acts they passed for each of these giants, discuss which of their policies was successful and note the parts of their policy that failed to address the problem faced. Finally the essay will address factors of the overall policy which were successful or not.

### **Why did Democracy Increase?**

Britain was not a democratic country in 1850 but by 1928 had progressed well down the road of greater democracy. This essay will discuss the various reasons why such moves were made. Firstly various pressure groups pushed for the right to vote at a time when the two main political parties both felt that they could gain by enfranchising various sectors of society. Political ideologies were changing and becoming more national at the same time as the working class ceased to be viewed as a mob. As the century progressed the fear of revolution decreased with the length of time after the French Revolution. With the advent of a national popular press allied to the various education Acts more people were reading about politics and as they lived in vast industrial towns, discussing them more. Finally in World war One the relationship between Governors and Governed changed.

## **How Democratic was Britain by ????**

For a country to be called a democracy certain conditions have to exist. The main conditions of a democracy are the right to vote, a fair distribution of seats, a fair system of voting free from corruption, a choice of political parties, access to information to make an informed choice, for people from all backgrounds to be allowed to become MPs and for parliament to be accountable to voters. However, by 19?? only some of these conditions of democracy had been met in Britain. Therefore, Britain was more of a democracy than in 1850 but not entirely democratic. It is also fair to suggest that in some ways Britain has become less democratic during the 19th and 20th centuries.

## **Why did women get the vote by 1918?**

At the end of the First World War in 1918, certain women over the age of 30 were enfranchised by David Lloyd George's Coalition Government. This marked a milestone in the adoption of full democracy in Britain, as it was the first time that any electoral power had been given to females. It would be simplistic to suggest that women's role during the First World War was the only reason for this. This essay will discuss the various reasons that contributed to women being granted the vote. War work is undoubtedly important as it showed the economic value of women in a time of total war and also gave a sense of social freedom not allowed before the war. During the war many of the political conditions changed with the advent of a coalition government under Prime Minister Lloyd George, a more sympathetic figure than Asquith. The war also changed the relationship between government and governed, which opened up the whole idea of constitutional reform. The war itself proved to be a complete watershed between the old and new world and the sense of loss put the issue of female suffrage into a clearer perspective than pre war. A war weary public were unwilling to return to the urban terrorism of the pre war Suffragette campaign and finally at a time when Britain was fighting for democracy, the example of more democratic allied countries left the 'mother of parliaments' embarrassed and more willing to listen to democratic ideas.

**Second Paragraph in all cases should be Historiography apart from How Democratic essays.**

## **Development**

1. Make sure your development is **planned into clear main sections** and has an **element of argument or discussion**. Make sure that there is a **clear line of argument or discussion**. This can be helped by skilful use of topic sentences and linkages (see below)

## **2. Topic Sentences**

**A topic sentence is usually at the beginning of a paragraph and it announces what the paragraph is about e.g.:**

- Evidence to support the argument that Bismarck's role was exaggerated is...
- A further argument suggesting exaggeration of Bismarck's role is...
- Perhaps the most persuasive evidence of the over-estimation of Bismarck's role is...



- However Bismarck contributed substantially to unification through...
- Nevertheless, some aspects of his role have not been exaggerated...
- On the other hand, it can be said, without exaggeration that Bismarck...
- In conclusion, Bismarck's role was not exaggerated because...
- Having considered the arguments, it can be argued that Bismarck's contribution was somewhat exaggerated.

### 3. Linkage

Here are some helpful linking words and phrases.

Furthermore, in addition, moreover, also, nonetheless, however, on the other hand, in conclusion, to sum up, in summation, to conclude.

### 4. Formality

Your examination essays should be written in quite a formal style. Some examples/illustrations are given below.

#### Informal

He did a good job

I'm not saying that...

I'm going to look at the arguments

It was a good move

Overall, I think

#### Formal

He performed impressively

Of course, it could be argued that ....

The arguments must be considered

It was a well - judged decision

In conclusion, it can be stated

**Also**, avoid using contractions such as can't, shouldn't, didn't, wasn't.

**N.B.** Attached, you will find templates (blank plans) to help you practise planning past-paper essay questions.

**Question** \_\_\_\_\_

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**Introduction**

(Define your terms  
address your task)

**Development**

(Main sections of  
essay)

**Conclusion**

(Bring main points/  
arguments together  
sum up)

**Conclusion**

Ideally your conclusion should be quite stylish and confident but the most important thing is to come to a **clear conclusion/decision** and to support it by **restating briefly the main arguments** you have used in your essay. It is wise, also, in your conclusion; to **restate/paraphrase the key words of the question** ... This gives the impression of **overall relevance and attention to the task**.

## Recognising Essay Questions

The four types of questions you are likely to be asked to answer for the Liberals and Labour parts of the course are :-

- a. Origins of the Liberal reforms.
- b. Assessment of the Liberal Reforms
- c. Assessment of the Labour Reforms
- d. Origins of the Welfare State

Listed below are the questions which have appeared for Liberals and Labour from Past papers. Look at the question and put a. b. c. or d. beside each one to decide what the question is asking you.

2008 How important were concerns about the extent of poverty in Britain in the Liberal Government's decision to introduce social reforms between 1906 and 1914?

2007 To what extent were the Liberal social reforms of 1906 - 1914 a response to the challenge from the Labour Party?

How successfully did the Labour government of 1945 - 1951 deal with the social problems identified in the Beveridge Report of 1942?

2006 To what extent did the social reforms of the Liberal government of 1906 - 1914 improve the lives of the British people?

2005 How far were the reports on poverty produced by Booth and Rowntree responsible for the Liberal social reforms of 1906 - 1914?

How successful were the social reforms introduced by the Labour government of 1945 - 1951?

2004 Assess the impact of the welfare reforms of the Labour Government of 1945 - 1951 on the lives of the British people?

2003 To what extent did the Liberal Reforms (1906 - 1914) improve the lives of the British people?

2002 'Simply a response to the growth of the Labour movement.' How adequate is this explanation for the social reforms of the Liberal government between 1906 and 1914?

2001 How effective were the welfare reforms of the Labour government of 1945 - 1951 in meeting the needs of the British people?

2000 How effectively did the Liberal government (1906 - 1914) deal with the problem of poverty?

How successfully did the Labour government promote social welfare in Britain between 1945 and 1951?

1998 To what extent did the Liberal government (1906 - 1914) set up a welfare state in Britain?

1997 How successful were the welfare reforms of the Labour government of 1945 - 1951 in improving social conditions in Britain?

1996 'More a product of political necessity than of social concern.' Is this a fair judgement on the social reforms of the Liberal Government 1906 - 1914?

1995 To what extent had Britain moved away from being a laissez faire society by 1900?

Did the Liberal government of 1906 - 1914 or the Labour government of 1945 - 1951 do more to promote social welfare in Britain?

1994 How true is it to say that the Labour government of 1945 - 1951 set up the welfare state?

1993 'Between 1906 and 1914 the real causes of poverty were tackled successfully by government action.' To what extent would you agree with this statement?

1992 To what extent were the social reforms of the Liberal government (1906 -1914) prompted by feelings of genuine concern for the masses?

## Potential Problems with Essays

### 1. Irrelevance

- Far too much information included that does not help to answer the given question.
- " gives an answer which is relevant to the question and relates explicitly to the question's terms"

### 2. Bullet Points/Listing

- NEVER USE!!!
- Explain every point in full.  
It interrupts the flow of the essay.
- Markers hate them!!
- "answers with clarity and fluency, and in a language appropriate to historical writing at this level"

### 3. Not tackling question directly

- Introducing relevant evidence but losing valuable marks by not linking it back to the question.
- What is significant about this? How does it help answer the question?
- Each paragraph should address the question directly.
- **"where required, explains, analyses, discusses and assesses rather than simply describes or narrates"**

### 4. Lack of detailed explanation

- You must presume your reader has no prior knowledge.
- Do not introduce new information without fully explaining its relevance in full.

### 5. Use of Quotations

- These must be used in context.
- not considering their relevance.
- They are not linked into the argument within the essay.
- They should be used to: introduce a historian's view; illustrate a point being made or to provide evidence to support your argument.
- They can either highlight your excellent understanding of an issue or serve to highlight a lack of understanding. Hence, be very careful when using them!!

### 6. Descriptive

- This arises, as a result of lack of analysis of the question.  
The structure of your essay can also make it easier to fall into this trap. E.g. Chronological
- See point 3

### 7. Structure

- Lack of adequate planning.
- You must consider the best way of tackling the question.
- A paragraph by paragraph plan should be completed prior to writing the essay. This can be as detailed or succinct as you like, so long as you know exactly what is coming next, and what your conclusion is!

### 8. Dates

- Be careful of careless mistakes or typos!! i.e. 1867 not 1967!!!
- Do not discuss dates that are out with the period outlined in the essay question. Unless you are briefly mentioning something prior to the period in order to set a point in its historical context.

### 9. Weak Conclusions

- Key points - It should summarise your argument/views on the topic. It should not introduce any new information. It should address all of your main points. Above all, it should answer the question!

## Paper Two. Evaluating Skills.

Paper 2 lasts 85 minutes and consists of a document or source based paper. Our topic is The Scottish Wars of Independence. This paper is worth 30 marks.

All the questions in the Special Topic are based on sources. In the examination there will usually be **five** sources and five questions which appear together in Paper 2. Most sources are written but there can be cartoons, maps or drawings.

Questions on the sources include:

- Reliability usefulness of the source in explaining developments/ events / issues;
- Comparison of points of view between sources;
- Accuracy of the source in reflecting opinions at the time.
- How fully the sources explain the reasons behind the developments/events/issues;
- The extent to which you will accept the explanations offered in the source.

There is a NAB to sit also and it will take a similar form to the final exam. It will be worth less marks and will last 1 hr. Again you should pass this NAB or its re-sit before the final exam.

- ❖ Answer all five questions. You are likely to get a better mark from five partial answers than three or four full answers.
- ❖ Divide the time carefully. Base this broadly on the marks awarded for each question. (Just over  $2\frac{1}{2}$  minutes a mark).
- ❖ Read the question. What does it ask you to do?
- ❖ Don't waste time on irrelevant detail. In comparison of sources it is irrelevant to talk about the source. It may be relevant in How useful types of questions. (Beware the idea that primary sources are always correct. It may only be one person's view.)
- ❖ Don't give a routine start to each question. Think about the particular question asked.
- ❖ Extract relevant evidence from the source to back up particular arguments. Do not forget to look for the overall view as well as the detail.
- ❖ Comparisons. Compare the overall views of the sources before moving to the detail. Direct comparisons are needed point by point. Don't list all the points from one source and all the points from the other source.
- ❖ Placing a source in Historical context. First identify the issue. Then what does the author think. Is he for or against the issue? Pick out support detail from the source to back up your argument. Use recall such as has the author ignored any factors. Finally make a judgement and give a direct answer to the question.

# The Extended Essay

There is a 3<sup>rd</sup> element, an extended essay which you will research through the school year and will be sat under exam conditions in the classroom. This will be sent away and is worth 30 marks.

The Extended Essay is done in school about February. This tends to be the highest scoring piece of work. In the year 2000, 90% of the candidates scored over 50% and most students did better. It is designed to let the student study a topic of interest to them. It allows a chance to do research, plan the essay and write the question. It also gives the student a chance to demonstrate their best work.

The character of the extended essay is exactly the same as the essays in Paper 1. The marking schemes are the same. The focus is on analysis rather than narrative in both papers.

## How to choose a title for your extended essay.

Make sure it is a title that will help you.

## Examples of Bad Titles

1. *Why did the Liberals introduce social reforms from 1906 to 1914 and how successful were they?* This is really asking 2 questions and will require 2 conclusions. It will be difficult to focus properly on such a title.
2. *Democracy in Britain?* This is not really a question but just a theme from the course and it has no focus so it is impossible to come to a conclusion.
3. *"Were the Germans so bad and the British so innocent"?* (Actually a question about the Spanish Civil War). This question does not show the topic clearly so there is no focus and this makes it difficult to answer.
4. *Was Hitler Reich or wrong?* The attempt at humour has taken away from the focus of the question. Do not attempt to be humorous: write seriously.

## How to pick a good Title

1. Pick a topic that interests you.
2. Write a question that will encourage analysis and discourage narrative.
3. Avoid titles that are statements or phrases.
4. Avoid double questions.

Titles are vetted. Use Paper 1 type questions.

## **Researching your extended essay**

This will involve reading primary and secondary sources to get enough information to write the essay. Before researching the essay you should make a rough plan.

## **Essay Plan**

A 200 word length essay plan is required. It will be punished if overlong but be sure to use the full 200 words as you will take this into the extended essay exam with you as a help to develop your essay. The essay is written up under examination type conditions but you can use your plan while writing the essay. Therefore, a good plan helps produce a good essay.

## **Types of Plan**

1. A list of facts you wish to cover in the essay. This type of plan is weak as it leads to narrative rather than analysis.
2. A better plan will outline the structure of the essay by dividing it up into sections.

Introduction. Outline the overall argument in the order you will argue. Do not just list points but try to make a logical progression from one paragraph to the next.

Development. Separate paragraphs to show how information will be used to support analysis of individual facets of the overall argument.

Conclusion. This will answer the question based on the line of argument throughout the development sections and should be signposted by these sections.

This type of plan helps organise the materials found in research and link it to the line of argument of the essay.

## **Writing the Essay**

The essay has to be written in 2 hours under examination type conditions, supervised by your teacher. The essay is sent to the Scottish Qualifications Authority for marking. It is marked out of 30 marks.



## **Campbeltown Grammar Higher Course**

The Higher course will cover four topics in this section.

We will first investigate the Liberal social reforms between the years 1906 and 1914. This topic will lead to the acquisition of detailed knowledge about why the Liberals involved themselves in such a programme and an assessment of how successful they were in solving the social problems of the day.

The second part of the course follows the theme of social reform. In this topic we shall investigate the Labour reforms between the years of 1945 and 1951. The topic will investigate in detail their success in solving the problems of poverty.

At the end of these two topics the student should feel confident in writing the following essays, should they come up in the exam.

Why did the Liberals undertake their social reforms?

How successful were they in solving the problems of the day?

How successful were the Labour Party in solving the problem of poverty?

The third topic to be covered will be that of how democracy increased in Britain between the years of 1850 and 1930. It will concentrate on the definition of democracy, continue to look at each Act and its impact on the improvement of democracy in the country and investigate the underlying reasons that made it possible, and sometimes desirable, for these Acts to be passed.

The final topic to be covered will be that of how women got the vote. It will concentrate on the parts played by the Suffragists, the Suffragettes and the First World War. Especially it will look at the impact of the Suffragettes and just how successful their approach was.

At the end of these two topics the students should feel confident in answering the following essays should they come up in the exam.

Why did democracy increase in Britain throughout the period 1850 and 1930?

How democratic was Britain by (whatever date)?

Why did women get the vote in 1918?

The course will lead to writing one properly structured, analytical essay on whatever of the questions out of the above the student feels most confident about.

The student can also choose to use one of the above topics in their extended response should they choose.

There will also be one N.A.B. which will require the writing of one essay from the above topics.

The teaching approach in all the topics will be as follows:-

The student will be issued with a disk at the beginning of the course with power points showing a summary of each lesson together with the detailed background reading.

It will be the student's responsibility to complete the background reading from the GLOW website which will expand on these notes with sources and full descriptions of each topic at home in time for each lesson.

The actual class lessons will consist of going through the power points adding 'meat to the bones' of the summaries. Students will be expected to take full notes throughout the lesson to enable them to complete the homework given. There will also be videos to give a flavour of the arguments of the time and discussion of the points raised during the lesson. The earlier lessons will concentrate on essay writing techniques to enable the student to display their knowledge to their best advantage.

Homework will be issued each week. Normally it will be to condense the information from each lesson into a well argued paragraph. At appropriate times, the students will be asked to write a full essay at home about the topic in question. They will also be expected to revise these essays because soon after the home essay there will be a timed essay in class, without notes, to replicate the exam as closely as possible.

Students are advised that although the homework reading documents in the disk are very full, there are also various textbooks in the department which they are encouraged to use. These may be signed out at any time. As there are not full class sets, it would be appreciated if students would return these books after use to ensure that all students have access to them, should they wish.

These books are

Britain and Scotland 1850s - 1979.

Changing Britain 1850 - 1979.

Changing Britain 1850 - 1979.

Britain and Scotland 1850s - 1979.

Britain 1850 - 1979 A developing democracy.

Britain 1890 - 1939.

John Kerr

Morrison, Morrison and Monaghan.

Morrison and Morrison.

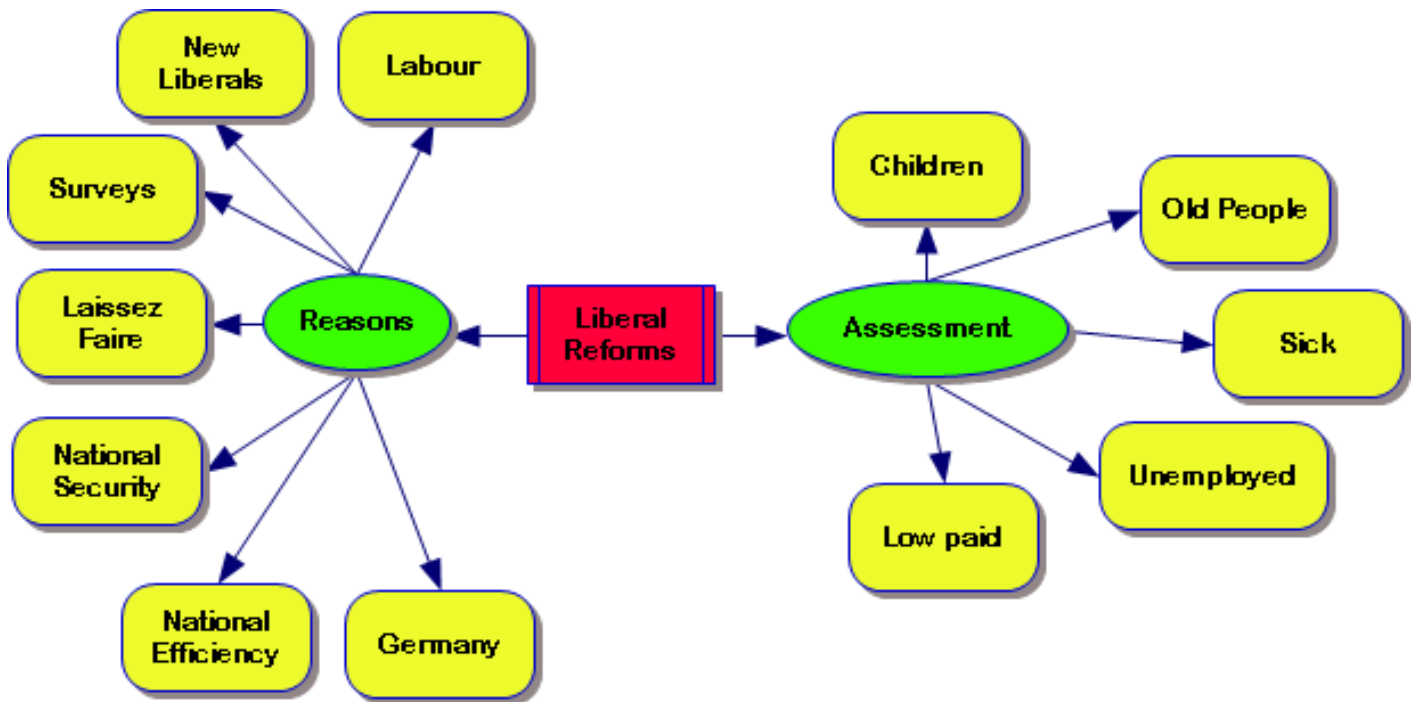
Sydney Wood.

Sydney Wood.

Rosemary Rees.

As the exam approaches there are also a selection of revision materials available for use by the students.

# Liberal Reforms



## I. Reasons

There are several reasons why the Liberals embarked on a series of Reforms.

They can be broadly put into 2 groups. Internal reasons to do with life in Britain and external Reasons concerning Britain's position in the world

### A. Laissez Faire

During the late 19<sup>th</sup> century, the British government, under the Liberal party, acted according to the principles of Laissez Faire. Individuals were solely responsible for their own lives and welfare. The government did not accept responsibility for the poverty and hardship that existed among its citizens. A popular point of view at the time was that poverty was caused by idleness, gambling, drunkenness and other such moral weaknesses on the part of the working classes. The poor were seen by the wealthy as an unfortunate but inevitable part of society. The state's only tasks were maintain law and order, defend the country and provide a level playing field for competition. The only help available came from the Poor Law or charities. The Poor Law had been set up in 1834 at a time when Britain was a rural society. By the end of the century it was unable to cope and was hated. By the 1900s the workhouses housed the elderly, the sick, the frail and the orphaned: few able people went there. Indeed 90% of the unemployed never touched poor relief despite living in circumstances that were desperate. Charles Booth commented on workhouses in 1895 '*Aversion to the "House" is absolutely universal and almost any amount of suffering and privation will be endured by the people rather than go to it.*'

Moreover the evidence pointed to a problem that was beyond the ability of charities to solve alone. Even Octavia Hill admitted that the housing that philanthropists had worked so hard to

build over the previous thirty years provided homes for only 26,000 people. London's population rose by that number in six months.

## B. Surveys

At the end of the nineteenth century two middle class social explorers, Charles Booth and the Quaker social reformer Seebohm Rowntree, independently highlighted unprecedented levels of poverty in different parts of England by using more quantitative, scientific methods.

One of the most famous investigations into poverty was carried out by **Charles Booth**. He was a wealthy ship owner who moved his offices to London. He refused to believe official statistics that 25% of working people were living in poverty.

He conducted extensive research in London and presented his findings as hard, statistical facts rather than anecdotal opinions. His sources of information came from the Census, School Board attendance officers' reports interviews with Poor Law Boards of Guardians, teachers, police, sanitary inspectors, trade union officials, charity workers and clergy. He was assisted by a talented team including Beatrice Webb.

He showed that poverty had causes often beyond the control of the poor themselves. These causes included low pay, unemployment, sickness and old age. From Booth's investigation of the social conditions in London he published *The Life and Labour of the People of London*, which appeared 1889 - 1903. From a survey of 4,000 people, he found that 30.7% of the East London population was living below what Booth called a 'poverty line' which meant that the family income was insufficient to meet basic needs such as food, rent and clothing. He also found that 85% of those living in poverty were poor because of problems relating to employment; unemployment, short time working or low pay.

These findings were amplified by Seebohm Rowntree who was the son of the chocolate magnate, Joseph Rowntree. His study of conditions in York which found that 28% of the people of York were living in some degree of poverty, either what he called 'primary' poverty when a family income fell below the 21 shillings required to maintain 'spartan physical efficiency', or 'secondary' poverty, where spending took the residual income below the poverty line. He also showed that in York wages were so low that even men in full time employment were forced to live close to starvation level.

As a result of this people realised that if York, a relatively small English city, had such problems then so would other British cities and that the problem of poverty was therefore a national one. Rowntree stated that *'we are faced with the startling possibility that from 25 to 30 per cent of the town populations of the United Kingdom are living in poverty'*.

The importance of the findings by Booth and Rowntree as a motive for social reform was that they exploded the myth that poverty was due to personal inadequacies and character defect,

but attributed to low levels of wages, the uncertainty or irregularity of employment, and from the ravages of sickness, infirmity and old age.

Their findings agreed on two key points. Up to 30% of the population of the cities was living in or below the poverty level and that these conditions were such that they could not pull themselves out of poverty by their own actions alone. They also both identified the main causes as being illness, unemployment and age, both the very young and the old.

### **C. Labour**

Many historians believe that the Liberal Reforms were passed for selfish reasons. Since 1884, most working class men had the vote and the Liberals wanted to attract those votes.

From 1900 the Labour Party was founded to represent the working classes in Parliament. This new party was threat to the main two parties of the time, the Liberals and the Conservatives. By 1900 most working men had the right to vote. They would obviously vote for the party which promised to improve their conditions. The workers now had some political power and by 1906 the Labour Party, was competing for their votes. If the Liberals were seen as unsympathetic to the poor, what might happen at elections in the future? It was therefore to the political advantage of the Liberal government to offer social reform, even if some of them did not fully believe in the principle of government intervention. The Labour Party had gone from 1 seat in 1892 to 2 seats in 1901 to 29 seats in 1906 and 42 seats by 1910 so were seen to be an increasing danger

### **D. New Liberals**

There was a change in direction in Liberal thinking that had begun at the beginning of the twentieth century and came to be called '**New Liberalism**'. This left wing '**New Liberal**' group broke away from traditional Gladstonian ideology and included some of the most important politicians in twentieth century history such as, Asquith, Lloyd George and Winston Churchill.

They had rethought a lot of the basic principle and strategies of liberalism. It differed from Old Liberals in that it said that there were times when the state should intervene while Old Liberals thought the state should have as little impact as possible in the working of market forces. Old Liberals felt that helping people would take away their independence and give them no incentive to help themselves while New Liberals said that helping the poorest members of society would give them independence. Finally, old Liberals thought that taxes should be as low as possible to allow people to spend their money as they wished while New Liberals felt that taxes needed to be raised to pay for welfare schemes to help the vulnerable.

This 'New Liberalism' had been greatly influenced by the philosopher T.H. Green and the writer J.A Hobson. Under their guidance, a new approach was drawn up and presented to the party as the way forward. The New Liberals argued that, in the past, Liberals had been too concerned with individual liberty. This had led them to ignore the needs of those who lived and worked in such appalling conditions that they were denied the liberties that the Liberal Party so earnestly to promote. New Liberals argued that the state had to intervene to help the most vulnerable in

society because to live in poverty, hardship and uncertainty meant they were denied individual liberty. This became in practice a change in attitude towards the state and how it should operate in relation to its citizens.

## **E. National Security**

It was clearly brought to the public notice by Britain's lamentable performance in the Boer War (1899 - 1902). Not only had British forces struggled to overcome an inferior enemy with 400,000 regular troops taking three years to defeat 35,000 irregular Boer farmers, but the details that emerged from army recruiting centres suggested that a high proportion of volunteers had been rejected on grounds of physical incapacity.

When the Boer War started in 1899 volunteers rushed to join up. Initial ideas suggested that at least 25% of recruits were unfit for service. Hyndeman, the Marxist Social Democrat, claimed that the figure could be as high as 50%. Public conscience was shocked by the fact that so many of these recruits failed to meet the army's standards of height, weight and eyesight, a rejection rate of about 1 in 3. In Manchester 8,000 out of the 11,000 men who volunteered for the army had to be rejected as physically unsuitable at once; only 1200 were eventually accepted. In 1903 Major general Sir Frederick Maurice claimed that only two out of five enlisted men remained fit for service after two years. This, he stressed was not a reflection on the hardships of army life but on the level of unfitness within the population.

If men of military age were so unfit for service, the government worried about Britain's future ability to defend itself against a stronger enemy. At a time when other countries were building up their armed forces, Britain seemed potentially weak. The founder of the Boy Scout movement, Robert Baden-Powell, who was one of the Boer War heroes, warned that *'recent reports on the deterioration of our race ought to act as a warning to be taken in time before it goes too far. One cause which contributed to the downfall of the Roman Empire was the fact the soldiers fell away from the standards of their forefathers in bodily strength.'*

## **F. National Efficiency**

Towards the end of the 19<sup>th</sup> century concerns were increasingly expressed regarding the 'efficiency' of the British population.

In the middle of the 19<sup>th</sup> century Britain was clearly the world's foremost economic power and if it was to remain so its workforce would have to be at least as fit as its competitors. By the end of the nineteenth century, Britain was no longer the world's strongest industrial nation and was facing serious competition from new industrial nations such as Germany. The success of such foreign economies in catching up with Britain, and in some cases overtaking her, suggested that the British work force was inferior to her rivals. This was reflected in concern at the slower growth of the economy and the relative decline in industrial production compared with Germany and the USA.

This linked in to National Security as Britain was engaged in a naval race with Germany while France and Russia were also building new Dreadnoughts. If Britain could not build ships as fast as

the opposition the country would soon become vulnerable to attack. Also the growth of highly mobile European armies was dependent on the transport and armaments industry.

There was a widespread concern about the 'physical deficiency' of the country's people (highlighted by the poor condition of working class recruits to the Boer War and the surveys of Booth and Rowntree) and many people argued that having so many unhealthy members of society was a waste of the country's resources in a period where it was under pressure from foreign competitors. Because of the higher fertility rates by the poor, it was feared that the 'national stock' would continue to deteriorate. Social action to improve the health and welfare of the disadvantaged was therefore in the national interest by providing a people who could produce more and fight harder. In 1905 a group of experts reported '*No country can permanently hold its own in the race of international competition if hampered by an increasing load of this dead weight of poverty.*' Finally, the ideas of National Efficiency came to affect the government itself. There was feeling that it was run by amateurs who were incompetent in the fields of administration and incapable of generating social policy. The Treasury, where conservative thinking kept a tight rein on the purse strings also received criticism for not supporting innovative interventionist ideas. It was suggested that more experts and businessmen become involved in government to streamline the system and make it more efficient. It also suggested military training for all men.

## **G. Germany**

By the end of the nineteenth, Britain was no longer the world's strongest industrial nation and was facing serious competition from new industrial nations such as Germany. It was believed that if the health and educational standards of Britain's workers got worse then Britain's position as a strong industrial power would be further threatened. With the mishaps of the Boer War and a decline in the British economy and industry (taken over by Germany and America) it was clear that Britain was weak compared to its European neighbour, Germany. Although ideas of Social Darwinism were only theories a very real potential enemy could be found. Germany had emerged as an economic rival to Britain and, increasingly, was also being seen as a military rival. Bismark, the German Chancellor of the time, had introduced limited social reforms in Germany in the 1880s. The Bismarkian model army, network of social insurance, and highly organised educational system were far in advance of anything Britain had to offer. The reference to 'Bismarkian' was to the compulsory sickness and accident insurance and old age pensions introduced by the German Chancellor Bismarck, in the 1880's. If a main competitor could afford to do it why could Britain not do likewise?

This point was not lost on Churchill when he said in a letter to Asquith in December 1908 "*There is a tremendous policy in social organisation. The need is urgent and the moment ripe. Germany, with a harder climate and far less accumulated wealth has managed to establish tolerable basic conditions for her people. She is organised not only for war, but for peace. We are organised for nothing except party politics.*"

## **II. Assessment**

### **A. Children**

- **1906 Education Provision of Meals**

It enabled local authorities to provide school meals for poor children.

Local authorities were given the right to put a  $\frac{1}{2}$  p on the rates (local tax) to pay for this.

Children who were from better-off families were expected to pay for their food.

This Act was successful in that 3 million children were getting free meals in 1906 and this rose to 14 million by 1914. It also led to compulsory meals by 1914. Children were seen to lose weight in holidays suggesting that they were not properly fed when not at school. It also challenged the ideas of Laissez faire.

However it was expensive and only School Children were helped. The main initial flaw in the Act was that it was not compulsory.

- **1907 Medical Inspections**

Medical inspections of all Elementary school children were to be inspected 3 times during their school career.

In Scotland School Boards were given the power to take action against parents who sent their children to school in a "neglected" state.

This Act identified problem with children's health by giving them 3 medical inspections in their school career. It was a step towards collectivism by inspecting all school children as a group and it led to School Clinics by 1912.

However it only offered inspections not treatment and this was too expensive for poor parents.

- **1908 Children's Charter**

It became an offence for parents to neglect their children.

If children were not cared for properly it was the states responsibility to care for them.

Children were banned from buying cigarettes under the age of 16 and were not allowed in public houses under the age of 14.

Forbidden to give alcohol to the under 5's unless it was to treat illness.

It allowed for the inspection of children's homes.

It ordered parents to guard their fires because 1,000 children were burnt to death every year.

Child criminals were no longer to be sent to prisons with adults. The Act set up special Juvenile Courts and the borstal system.



Remand homes were set up to keep child offenders out of prison while awaiting trial.

The death sentence for children was abolished

Children were forbidden to beg.

This Act gave children separate legal status and challenged the self help idea.

However it was seen as interference by many parents.

## **B. Old People**

- **1908 Old Age Pensions Act**

People over 70 with an annual income of between £21 and £31 were to be given a pension of 5 shillings to 1 shilling on a sliding scale. Savings could be used to provide an income. Only 70 year olds who were British and who had lived in Britain for the past 20 years had avoided prisons for the past 10 years and who were not habitually drunk or work shy got the pension. The pension was to be paid for from general taxation. No contributions had to be made by those who received it.

This Act was successful in that 1 million people getting the pension by 1914. It removed stigma of Poor House from old people and it was non contributory. It also highlighted the scale of Poverty and was designed to top up savings rather than cover all living costs.

However, it was too little to live on. You had to be 70 years of age to get it and there were too many exemptions which pandered to the idea of deserving and undeserving poor.

## **C. Sick**

- **Nat Ins Act Part I 1911**

### **Payments:**

Employees contributed 4d a week if they earned under £160 a year, employers contributed 3d a week, state contributed 2d a week giving workers "9d for 4d" according to Lloyd George.

Those earning over £160 could join but had to pay the employers part.

Contributions were recorded by placing stamps on cards.

### **Benefits:**

Insured workers were entitled to 10 shillings a week for 13 weeks and 5 shillings for another 13 weeks if ill (women less).

Benefits did not start until the fourth day of an illness (to stop people going off work for trivial illnesses).

Insured workers were entitled to free medical treatment from a doctor chosen by a local Insurance Commission as well as treatment at a T.B. Sanatorium.

After 26 weeks disablement benefit was 5s per week.

Maternity benefit of 30s became payable. Insured workers were entitled to 30 shillings maternity benefit for the birth of each child.

This Act was successful in that it removed fear of Poor House from poor people who were ill. All low waged people were covered as it was compulsory and it was insurance based which meant it was a right rather than charity.

However only the worker was covered and it provided no hospital treatment. It only lasted for 26 weeks then the worker had to resort to the Poor House. Finally the contributions put people in poverty if they were close to it already.

#### **D. Unemployed**

- **Nat Ins Act Part 2 1911**

Part 2 of the National Insurance Act dealt with unemployment. It was also a combination of state help and contributions paid by workers and employers. Contributions were 2.5d employee, 2.5d the employer and 3d the govt. The worker was to register at a Labour exchange and pick up money there. After 1 week unemployed he would get 7s a week up to 15 weeks a year as long as he was not dismissed for misconduct. A week's benefit was paid, for every 5 weeks of contributions made.

This Act was successful in that 2.2 million people were insured and this gave them a breathing space it also attacked the Laissez faire idea.

However, only cyclical trades were helped and only the worker was covered, not his family. It only lasted for a limited time and the contributions could put people in poverty.

- **Labour Exchange Act 1908**

By the 1<sup>st</sup> February 1910, 83 Labour exchanges opened their doors across the country. Winston Churchill visited 17 on the first day they opened. They were run by government officials. The idea behind a labour exchange was that unemployed workers could go there to find work. Employers would also go to these exchanges in order to find workers if they needed to.

This was an original idea to give employers and workers information about job opportunities. There were 414 of them by 1911. They also gave people a place to mend clothes and wash.

However they were not compulsory and tended to help skilled workers more. In many cases the workers did not like them as they felt the employer was trying to get

workers cheaply, while employers did not like them because they felt they were getting the laziest worker who could not be bothered finding a job for themselves.

#### **E. Low paid**

The Liberal Government tried to improve the working conditions in some jobs. The jobs that they tried to improve were either dangerous or poorly paid.

1906 Workmen's Compensation Act Compensation for injuries sustained at work.

1908 Mines Act 8 hour working day established for miners

1909 Trade Boards Act controlled wages and working conditions in small workshops but did not specify a minimum wage for 200,000 "sweated trades" workers (mostly women)

1911 Shop Hours Act Shop assistants were granted a weekly half-day holiday, a maximum working week of 60 hours was established and washing facilities had to be provided in each shop. The Liberal Government also tried to improve conditions for those who relied on casual labour who often experienced periods of short-term unemployment. This was believed to be a major cause of poverty. Such workers were not covered by insurance schemes run by the trade unions nor could they contribute to schemes run by friendly societies.

In all cases the government showed that they were prepared to get in the market place and enforce minimum standards.