

## Linking the purpose of study and aims of history to global learning

### Purpose of studying history

The National Curriculum for history states that ‘A high-quality history education will help pupils gain a coherent knowledge and understanding of Britain’s past and that of the wider world.... teaching should equip pupils to ask perceptive questions, think critically, weigh evidence, sift arguments and develop perspective and judgement...’

This ties in closely with global learning and development education aims to, ‘consider the relative merits of different approaches to...’ as well as to ‘think critically about...’

The methods of studying history and global development therefore have many approaches in common – developing the skills in one subject will mean getting better at them in another.

### The aims of studying history

These include:

- knowing and understanding significant aspects of the history of the wider world; the nature of ancient civilisations; the expansion and dissolution of empires; and characteristic features of past non-European societies
- understanding historical concepts such as continuity and change, cause and consequence, similarity, difference and significance, and use them to make connections, draw contrasts, analyse trends, frame historically-valid questions and create their own structured accounts, including written narratives and analyses
- understanding the methods of historical enquiry, including how evidence is used rigorously to make historical claims, and discern how and why contrasting arguments and interpretations of the past have been constructed
- gaining historical perspectives by placing their growing knowledge into different contexts, and understanding the connections between: local, regional, national and international history; between cultural, economic, military, political, religious and social history; and between short-term and long-term timescales.

All of these tie in with the key drivers of global learning:

- developing a better understanding of pupils’ own role in a globally-interdependent world
- becoming more familiar with the concepts of interdependence, development, and globalisation
- thinking critically about global issues
- exploring alternative models of development
- considering the relative merits of different approaches to reducing global poverty and draw conclusions about the causes of global poverty and how it can be addressed.



How better to equip pupils to understand the issues of global development and interdependence than by exploring these issues in real contexts in a historical context, where arguments can be rehearsed, ideas developed, and orthodoxies challenged in a non-threatening way. We all know pupils understand history better when they can see the relevance of what they are studying. By linking bygone periods and problems, for example, why was slavery acceptable to most British people in the 18th century but not in the 19th century? – to similar issues today – for example, the continuing presence of child labour in many developing countries, we are making both global learning and history more relevant to our pupils.

Global learning is about continuity and change, cause and consequence, significance, drawing contrasts and analysing trends. All these key historical skills and concepts are just as essential for understanding the world today as they are for understanding the world of the past. And don't forget, that asking questions is central to understanding history. If you critically examine life, actions and motives in the past, it is quite likely that you will do the same about the present day. How often do your pupils say things like, 'It's just not fair!' when studying an historical topic; isn't it just as important that they realise that the same can be said about some aspects of life today?