New Line Learning Academy
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Ancient History GCSE Curriculum Intent

Year 11

The intent of our Ancient History GCSE curriculum is to ignite students' curiosity about the ancient world, fostering a deep understanding of the cultures, conflicts, and legacies that have shaped human civilisation. Through the study of key ancient societies, including Rome, Greece, and the Near East, students will explore political systems, military campaigns, social structures, religion, and cultural achievements that continue to influence modern life.

Our curriculum is designed to provide a broad and balanced view of the ancient world, allowing students to examine diverse perspectives and to think critically about the sources of evidence available. Students will develop essential skills in historical enquiry, interpretation, and argumentation, as well as the ability to assess the reliability and utility of ancient sources. By analysing primary texts, archaeological evidence, and modern interpretations, learners will understand how history is constructed and contested.

We aim to create a strong narrative of the ancient past, helping students appreciate the complexity and interconnectedness of ancient civilisations. The curriculum also seeks to promote inclusivity by highlighting the contributions of different cultures within the ancient world, as well as encouraging discussion of gender, class, and ethnicity where appropriate.

This course not only equips students with subject-specific knowledge but also develops transferable skills in critical thinking, structured writing, and evidence-based reasoning. It lays a solid foundation for further study in history, classics, archaeology, and related disciplines, while cultivating a lifelong interest in the past.

Ultimately, our intent is for students to leave the course with a confident understanding of ancient history, an ability to draw connections between past and present, and a respect for the complexity of historical narratives across time and place.

Throughout Year 11, students complete the two OCR GCSE Ancient History depth studies through a parallel curriculum model. Teaching is delivered by two specialist teachers, enabling students to study The Roman Republic and Cleopatra and the End of the Hellenistic World concurrently across the academic year. This approach allows students to develop secure knowledge of both civilisations whilst making meaningful comparisons between different systems of government, leadership, warfare and historical interpretation. The parallel structure also supports regular retrieval practice, interleaving and sustained GCSE examination preparation, ensuring students revisit and strengthen knowledge throughout the year before completing a comprehensive programme of revision and exam practice.

Term 1
Topics 3 and 4

The Foundations of Rome and the Birth of the Republic
Egypt under the Ptolemies and the Rise of Cleopatra

Big Picture
What are the main ideas and big questions in this topic?

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Roman Unit: Students explore the legendary and historical origins of Rome, investigating how a small settlement on the banks of the River Tiber developed into one of the most influential political systems in history. Through examining the stories of Aeneas, Romulus and Remus, the rule of the Seven Kings and the overthrow of the monarchy, students consider how myth, archaeology and literary evidence combine to shape our understanding of Rome's earliest history. The enquiry introduces the creation of the Roman Republic and the development of its political institutions, laying the foundations for the remainder of the Roman Republic depth study.

Cleopatra Unit: Students begin their study of Cleopatra by exploring the political, cultural and social world of Ptolemaic Egypt. They investigate how the Ptolemaic dynasty ruled Egypt following the death of Alexander the Great and examine the political instability, dynastic rivalries and growing influence of Rome that shaped Cleopatra VII's accession to the throne. Throughout the enquiry, students consider how power, leadership and propaganda influenced one of history's most famous rulers whilst evaluating the evidence used to reconstruct her life.

Zoom In

What knowledge, skills and key vocabulary will we learn step by step?

Roman Unit: The enquiry begins by exploring the legendary foundations of Rome through the stories of Aeneas, Romulus and Remus, before investigating the influence of the Etruscans upon the early city. Teacher modelling supports students in evaluating the reliability of literary sources alongside archaeological discoveries, demonstrating how historians distinguish between myth and historical evidence.

Substantive knowledge develops through an examination of the Seven Kings of Rome, focusing upon their political, military and religious contributions to Rome's development. Students then investigate the reign of Tarquinius Superbus, analysing the causes and consequences of the overthrow of the monarchy and the establishment of the Roman Republic. Attention turns to the creation of republican institutions, including the Senate, consuls and popular assemblies, whilst exploring the differing roles of patricians and plebeians within Roman society.

Disciplinary knowledge is developed throughout the enquiry as students investigate cause and consequence by explaining why the monarchy collapsed, change and continuity by identifying what changed within Roman government and what remained, historical significance by evaluating the creation of the Republic and historical interpretations by comparing literary and archaeological evidence. Vocabulary is embedded naturally throughout, including Republic, monarchy, consul, Senate, patrician, plebeian, magistrate, assembly, tyranny, constitution, Forum, archaeology, mythology, interpretation and provenance.

The enquiry concludes by evaluating why the establishment of the Roman Republic became one of the most significant political developments in the ancient world.

Cleopatra Unit: The enquiry begins by introducing the creation of the Ptolemaic Kingdom following Alexander the Great's empire, examining the role of Ptolemy I and the development of Greek rule within Egypt. Students investigate the structure of Ptolemaic society, the importance of Alexandria as a centre of learning and trade and the challenges faced by successive rulers in maintaining power.

Attention then turns to the early life of Cleopatra VII, examining her family background, education, political ambitions and the circumstances surrounding her accession to the throne. Teacher modelling supports students in evaluating literary evidence from Roman historians alongside coins, statues and archaeological evidence, demonstrating how different interpretations of Cleopatra have developed over time.

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As the enquiry progresses, disciplinary knowledge develops through investigating cause and consequence by explaining why political instability emerged within the Ptolemaic dynasty, change and continuity by examining the relationship between Greek and Egyptian traditions, historical significance by evaluating Cleopatra's importance within the ancient world and historical interpretations by comparing Roman propaganda with modern historical scholarship. Students confidently apply subject-specific vocabulary including Ptolemaic, dynasty, pharaoh, succession, propaganda, Alexandria, Hellenistic, legitimacy, interpretation, provenance, alliance, diplomacy and civil war.

The enquiry concludes by evaluating the challenges Cleopatra inherited as ruler of Egypt and considering how these shaped the decisions she would make throughout her reign.

Pre-Requisite Knowledge

What have we already learned that will help us with this topic?

Roman Unit

Students build upon their understanding of monarchy, empire and leadership developed through their study of Ancient Persia and Alexander the Great. They have experience of evaluating literary and archaeological evidence, recognising historical interpretations and constructing balanced historical judgements. Their understanding of Greek civilisation and mythology also provides valuable context for understanding Rome's early development.

Cleopatra Unit

Students draw upon their understanding of Alexander the Great and the Hellenistic world developed during Year 10. They have previously examined how Alexander's empire fragmented following his death and understand the development of successor kingdoms. Students also bring forward their growing confidence in evaluating literary and archaeological evidence and recognising differing historical interpretations.

Pitch Up

How will we challenge ourselves?

Roman Unit

Students move beyond recounting Rome's foundation myths by critically evaluating the reliability of different historical sources and considering how myth and history overlap. They synthesise literary and archaeological evidence, compare competing interpretations and construct increasingly sophisticated historical arguments explaining why the Roman Republic emerged and why it proved historically significant.

Cleopatra Unit

Students move beyond traditional portrayals of Cleopatra by critically evaluating how Roman writers, archaeological evidence and modern historians present her in different ways. They compare competing interpretations, recognise the influence of propaganda and construct balanced historical arguments using a range of historical evidence.

Wider Framework

How does this learning connect to future topics and bigger goals?

Roman Unit

This enquiry provides the essential foundations for the remainder of the Roman Republic depth study. Understanding Rome's origins, republican government and early political institutions enables students to explain later constitutional conflicts, territorial expansion and the eventual collapse of the Republic whilst

Curriculum Hinterland

What wider knowledge will deepen our understanding of this topic?

Roman Unit

Students deepen their understanding by exploring the geography of central Italy, the influence of Etruscan civilisation and archaeological discoveries from the Roman Forum and Palatine Hill. They investigate how modern archaeology continues to reshape historians' understanding of Rome's earliest history and

strengthening the analytical and evaluative skills required throughout GCSE Ancient History. **Cleopatra Unit** This enquiry establishes the foundations for the Cleopatra depth study by introducing the political, cultural and international context within which she ruled. Students develop the knowledge required to investigate her relationships with Julius Caesar and Mark Antony, the expansion of Roman influence and the eventual collapse of the Ptolemaic Kingdom.	consider the lasting influence of Roman political ideas on modern democratic systems. **Cleopatra Unit** Students enrich their understanding by exploring the city of Alexandria, the Great Library, Hellenistic culture and the blending of Greek and Egyptian traditions. They investigate archaeological discoveries, coins, inscriptions and monumental architecture, considering how material evidence continues to influence modern interpretations of Cleopatra and Ptolemaic Egypt.

Authentic connections

How does this topic connect to real life, careers, other subjects and important values?

Through these parallel enquiries, students reflect on how leadership, identity and legitimacy influenced the decisions of rulers across both the Roman Republic and Ptolemaic Egypt. They consider how individuals and societies use myths, traditions and political beliefs to establish authority and create a shared sense of identity. Students explore how power can be gained, justified and challenged, recognising that historical leaders were shaped by both personal ambition and the societies in which they lived.

Students develop social understanding by comparing the organisation of Roman and Egyptian societies, investigating how citizenship, social class, gender and political authority influenced everyday life. Moral understanding is strengthened through evaluating the ethics of monarchy, republican government, dynastic succession and political propaganda, encouraging students to consider fairness, justice and responsible leadership. Cultural understanding develops through exploring the interaction between Greek, Egyptian and Roman civilisations, recognising how trade, conquest and cultural exchange shaped the ancient Mediterranean and continue to influence the modern world.

These enquiries have strong links with English, where students analyse literary sources, evaluate different viewpoints and construct evidence-based arguments. Connections with Politics and Citizenship enable students to compare ancient systems of government, leadership and constitutional development with modern democracies. Students also build upon learning in Religion and Worldviews through exploring kingship, divine authority and religious traditions within both Rome and Egypt, whilst Geography supports understanding of the Mediterranean world, trade networks and the strategic importance of different locations.

Skills Builder

- Listening
- Leadership
- Creativity

Careers

- Museum Curator
- Political Historian

- Archaeological Conservator

Across both enquiries, students strengthen their ability to evaluate evidence, compare competing interpretations, synthesise information from multiple sources and communicate balanced historical arguments. These transferable skills prepare students for further study across the humanities and support careers requiring critical thinking, research, analysis and effective communication.

Resources
What books, websites, videos and materials will support our learning?

Teaching and learning throughout these enquiries are supported through a carefully selected range of primary and secondary sources designed to develop historical knowledge, disciplinary thinking and GCSE examination skills.

- Teacher modelling of historical interpretations, source analysis and examination responses.
- OCR GCSE Ancient History Specification and assessment materials.
- *OCR Ancient History: Roman Republic and the Reign of Augustus* (Bloomsbury).
- *OCR Ancient History: Greece and Persia* (Bloomsbury), where relevant to contextual links.
- University of Warwick Ancient History resources.
- Prescribed literary sources including **Livy**, **Dionysius of Halicarnassus**, **Plutarch**, **Cassius Dio** and other OCR prescribed sources.
- Archaeological evidence, inscriptions, coins, statues, maps, timelines and historical reconstructions.
- Knowledge organisers, retrieval practice activities, GCSE examination-style questions and examiner reports.

Assessment
How will we show what we know, remember and can apply?

Assessment throughout the term focuses upon students' ability to retrieve secure substantive knowledge, analyse literary and archaeological evidence, evaluate historical interpretations and construct balanced historical judgements across both the Roman Republic and Cleopatra depth studies. Students demonstrate their understanding through retrieval practice, source analysis, extended historical writing and GCSE examination-style questions, preparing them for the demands of the OCR Ancient History specification.

50% Substantive Knowledge:
Students demonstrate secure understanding of the origins of the Roman Republic alongside the political, cultural and dynastic context of Ptolemaic Egypt. They explain key events, individuals, institutions and developments using accurate historical knowledge and appropriate subject-specific vocabulary.

50% Disciplinary Knowledge:
Students evaluate literary and archaeological evidence, compare historical interpretations, analyse cause and consequence, identify continuity and change, assess historical significance and construct balanced, evidence-based historical arguments using the disciplinary concepts that underpin GCSE Ancient History.

Term 2
Topics 3 and 4

Roman: Tarquinius Superbus to plebeian unrest
Cleopatra: Julius Caesar to Mark Antony

Big Picture
What are the main ideas and big questions in this topic?

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Roman Unit
This enquiry explores the fragile beginnings of the Roman Republic following the removal of Tarquinius Superbus. Students investigate how Rome transitioned from monarchy to republican government, examining the political uncertainty, social tensions and constitutional developments that shaped the early Republic. Through studying the growing demands of the plebeians and the responses of the patrician elite, students consider how conflict, compromise and reform enabled Rome to establish a more resilient political system capable of supporting future expansion.

Cleopatra Unit
This enquiry follows Cleopatra's rise from vulnerable ruler to one of the most influential political figures of the ancient world. Students investigate how her relationships with Julius Caesar and later Mark Antony transformed both Egyptian and Roman politics. They examine diplomacy, propaganda and military conflict, considering how Cleopatra balanced personal ambition with the survival of her kingdom as Rome increasingly dominated the Mediterranean.

Zoom In
What knowledge, skills and key vocabulary will we learn step by step?

Roman Unit
The enquiry begins by examining the removal of Tarquinius Superbus and the collapse of Rome's monarchy, exploring the political motivations behind the establishment of the Republic. Students investigate the creation of republican institutions, considering how power was redistributed between magistrates, the Senate and the assemblies. Teacher modelling supports students in analysing literary evidence alongside archaeological sources, demonstrating how historians evaluate reliability, purpose and historical context.

Students then explore the growing tensions between patricians and plebeians, investigating the causes of social unrest and the gradual development of constitutional reform. They examine the emergence of the Tribunes of the Plebs, the significance of the Twelve Tables and the changing balance of political power within Roman society. Throughout the enquiry, students evaluate whether reform strengthened or threatened the stability of the Republic.

Disciplinary knowledge is woven throughout as students analyse cause and consequence, explore continuity and change within Roman government, assess the historical significance of constitutional reform and evaluate differing historical interpretations presented by ancient authors. Vocabulary is embedded naturally, including Republic, patrician, plebeian, tribune, Senate, consul, magistrate, veto, Twelve Tables, constitution, reform, interpretation and provenance.

Cleopatra Unit
The enquiry begins by examining Cleopatra's alliance with Julius Caesar, exploring how political necessity, diplomacy and personal ambition combined to secure her position as Queen of Egypt. Students investigate the Alexandrian War, Caesar's intervention in Egyptian politics and the restoration of Cleopatra to the throne. Teacher modelling supports students in comparing Roman literary accounts with archaeological evidence, encouraging critical evaluation of historical interpretations.

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The enquiry then follows Cleopatra after Caesar's assassination, investigating the changing political landscape of the Roman Republic and the emergence of Mark Antony as Cleopatra's principal ally. Students explore how diplomacy, propaganda and military strategy shaped the relationship between Egypt and Rome, considering the significance of Cleopatra's political decisions for both kingdoms.

Disciplinary knowledge develops through analysing cause and consequence, evaluating the historical significance of political alliances, recognising continuity and change within Roman politics and comparing competing historical interpretations of Cleopatra's leadership. Vocabulary is embedded throughout, including Alexandrian War, propaganda, alliance, legitimacy, triumvirate, diplomacy, succession, Caesarion, interpretation and provenance.

Pre-Requisite Knowledge

What have we already learned that will help us with this topic?

Roman Unit

Students build upon their understanding of Rome's legendary origins, the Seven Kings and the establishment of the Republic developed during Term 1. They already understand the structure of early Roman government and now extend this knowledge by exploring how political institutions evolved in response to social conflict and constitutional challenges.

Cleopatra Unit

Students build upon their understanding of Ptolemaic Egypt, the political instability surrounding Cleopatra's accession and the wider Hellenistic world. They draw upon prior knowledge of Roman expansion and Julius Caesar's growing influence to explain why Egypt became increasingly entangled in Roman politics.

Pitch Up

How will we challenge ourselves?

Roman Unit

Students are challenged to move beyond describing constitutional developments by evaluating the effectiveness of political reform in resolving social conflict. They compare ancient and modern interpretations, synthesise evidence from literary and archaeological sources and construct increasingly sophisticated judgements about the strengths and weaknesses of the early Republic.

Cleopatra Unit

Students critically evaluate the extent to which Cleopatra controlled events rather than reacting to them. By comparing Roman literary accounts with archaeological evidence, they develop balanced historical arguments about Cleopatra's leadership, political skill and the significance of her alliances with Julius Caesar and Mark Antony.

Wider Framework

How does this learning connect to future topics and bigger goals?

Roman Unit

This enquiry provides the political foundations for understanding Rome's later military expansion and the constitutional tensions that would eventually contribute to the collapse of the Republic. Students continue to develop the analytical skills required throughout GCSE Ancient History by evaluating evidence, interpretations and historical significance.

Curriculum Hinterland

What wider knowledge will deepen our understanding of this topic?

Roman Unit

Students enrich their understanding by exploring the evolution of Roman law, the symbolism of republican government and the archaeological remains of the Roman Forum. They consider how concepts such as civic responsibility, constitutional government and political representation continue to influence many modern democratic systems.

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Cleopatra Unit This enquiry establishes the political relationships that define the remainder of Cleopatra's reign and prepares students for the conflicts that ultimately led to the fall of the Ptolemaic Kingdom. It deepens students' understanding of the interconnected nature of Roman and Egyptian history during the first century BC.	**Cleopatra Unit** Students deepen their understanding by exploring Alexandria as a centre of learning, trade and culture, investigating the role of coins, statues, temples and surviving monuments in shaping historians' understanding of Cleopatra's reign. They also consider how literature, art and film have contributed to her enduring legacy.

Authentic connections

How does this topic connect to real life, careers, other subjects and important values?

Through these parallel enquiries, students reflect on the nature of power, responsibility and moral leadership. They consider how individuals respond to political uncertainty and how personal ambition, loyalty and duty influence the choices made by historical leaders.

Students develop social understanding by exploring how societies respond to inequality, political instability and constitutional change. Moral understanding is strengthened through evaluating leadership, justice, civil conflict and the ethics of political alliances. Cultural understanding develops through examining the interaction between Roman and Egyptian civilisations, recognising how cultural exchange, diplomacy and conquest shaped the ancient Mediterranean.

These enquiries have strong links with Politics and Citizenship, where students compare republican government, constitutional reform and political leadership with modern democratic systems. Links with English strengthen source evaluation and analytical writing, whilst Religion and Worldviews provides opportunities to examine belief, authority and kingship. Geography supports understanding of the strategic importance of Italy, Egypt and Mediterranean trade networks.

Skills Builder

- Leadership
- Speaking
- Problem Solving

Careers

- Barrister
- Intelligence Analyst
- Museum Education Officer

Across both enquiries, students continue to develop the ability to evaluate evidence critically, compare historical interpretations, construct balanced arguments and communicate complex ideas with confidence. These skills prepare students for further academic study and careers requiring analytical thinking, research, communication and informed decision making.

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Resources *What books, websites, videos and materials will support our learning?*	Assessment *How will we show what we know, remember and can apply?*
Teaching and learning throughout these enquiries are supported through a carefully selected range of primary and secondary sources designed to develop historical knowledge and disciplinary thinking. • Teacher modelling of source evaluation, historical interpretations and extended examination responses. • OCR GCSE Ancient History Specification and assessment materials. • *OCR Ancient History: Rome* (Bloomsbury, Baddeley et al., 2023). • OCR Cleopatra and Caesar lesson materials and associated resources. • University of Warwick Ancient History resources. • Prescribed literary sources including Livy, Plutarch, Caesar, Cassius Dio and other OCR source material. • Archaeological evidence, inscriptions, coins, maps, timelines and historical reconstructions. • Knowledge organisers, retrieval practice, GCSE examination-style questions and examiner reports.	Assessment throughout this enquiry focuses upon students' ability to retrieve secure substantive knowledge whilst applying disciplinary concepts through source analysis, interpretation, explanation and extended historical writing. Students demonstrate their understanding through regular retrieval practice, teacher assessment, examination-style questions and evaluative writing across both the Roman Republic and Cleopatra enquiries. 50% Substantive Knowledge Students demonstrate secure understanding of the transition from monarchy to republic, plebeian unrest and constitutional reform alongside Cleopatra's political alliances with Julius Caesar and Mark Antony, explaining key individuals, events and developments using accurate historical terminology. 50% Disciplinary Knowledge Students analyse literary and archaeological evidence, compare historical interpretations, evaluate cause and consequence, identify continuity and change, assess historical significance and construct balanced historical judgements supported by precise historical evidence.

Term 3
Topics 3 and 4

Roman: Plebeian unrest to the Second Secession
Cleopatra: From Julius Caesar's death to Actium

Big Picture
What are the main ideas and big questions in this topic?

Roman Unit
This enquiry explores how continued social conflict transformed the Roman Republic during its formative years. Students investigate the growing demands of the plebeians, the political reforms introduced to address inequality and the constitutional developments that culminated in the Second Secession. By examining how Rome responded to internal division, students develop an understanding of how compromise, legislation and political participation strengthened the Republic and laid the foundations for centuries of expansion.

Cleopatra Unit

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This enquiry follows the dramatic events that unfolded after the assassination of Julius Caesar, examining how Cleopatra navigated one of the most turbulent periods in Roman history. Students investigate her alliance with Mark Antony, the formation of the Second Triumvirate, the increasing rivalry with Octavian and the events leading to the Battle of Actium. Throughout the enquiry, students consider how political ambition, military power and propaganda shaped the fate of both Egypt and the Roman world.

Zoom In
What knowledge, skills and key vocabulary will we learn step by step?

Roman Unit
The enquiry begins by examining the continuing tensions between patricians and plebeians, exploring why earlier constitutional reforms failed to resolve social inequality completely. Students investigate the political significance of the First and Second Secessions, considering how collective action enabled ordinary Roman citizens to secure greater political influence. Teacher modelling supports students in analysing literary sources alongside archaeological and legal evidence, demonstrating how historians reconstruct the constitutional development of the early Republic.

Students then examine key reforms that expanded plebeian rights, including changes to political representation, legislation and access to public office. Throughout the enquiry, students evaluate the extent to which the Roman Republic became a more representative political system whilst recognising that significant inequalities remained.

Disciplinary knowledge is developed through analysing cause and consequence, identifying continuity and change within Roman government, evaluating the historical significance of constitutional reform and comparing historical interpretations of Rome's political development. Vocabulary is embedded throughout, including Secession, Tribune, Concilium Plebis, Senate, magistrate, veto, legislation, plebiscite, citizenship, constitution, reform, significance and interpretation.

Cleopatra Unit
The enquiry begins with the assassination of Julius Caesar, investigating the political instability that followed and its consequences for both Rome and Egypt. Students explore Cleopatra's position within this changing political landscape before examining her alliance with Mark Antony and the emergence of the Second Triumvirate. Teacher modelling supports students in evaluating literary accounts, coins, monuments and archaeological evidence, enabling them to compare differing historical perspectives.

Students investigate Antony's eastern campaigns, Cleopatra's political influence and the growing propaganda campaign led by Octavian. They examine how political rivalry escalated into military conflict before culminating in the Battle of Actium, evaluating the significance of this decisive event in bringing an end to both Cleopatra's reign and the Ptolemaic Kingdom.

Disciplinary knowledge develops through evaluating cause and consequence, assessing the historical significance of Actium, comparing competing historical interpretations of Cleopatra and Antony and recognising continuity and change within the late Roman Republic. Vocabulary is embedded throughout, including Triumvirate, Actium, propaganda, alliance, civil war, legitimacy, succession, naval warfare, interpretation, provenance and significance.

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Pre-Requisite Knowledge
What have we already learned that will help us with this topic?

Roman Unit
Students build upon their understanding of the establishment of the Roman Republic, the removal of the monarchy and the early constitutional reforms studied during previous enquiries. They apply prior knowledge of Roman political institutions to explain why further reform became necessary as the Republic developed.

Cleopatra Unit
Students build upon their understanding of Cleopatra's alliance with Julius Caesar and the political relationship between Rome and Egypt. They use this knowledge to explain the consequences of Caesar's assassination and understand why Cleopatra became increasingly involved in the Roman civil wars.

Pitch Up
How will we challenge ourselves?

Roman Unit
Students move beyond describing constitutional developments by evaluating the effectiveness of political reform in addressing inequality within Roman society. They compare differing historical interpretations and synthesise literary and archaeological evidence to produce increasingly sophisticated historical judgements.

Cleopatra Unit
Students critically evaluate Cleopatra's political leadership by considering whether her downfall resulted primarily from her own decisions, Octavian's political skill or the wider instability of the Roman Republic. They develop balanced arguments supported by a range of historical evidence.

Wider Framework
How does this learning connect to future topics and bigger goals?

Roman Unit
This enquiry strengthens students' understanding of how constitutional development enabled Rome to become one of the most successful republics of the ancient world. It provides an essential foundation for understanding later political tensions and the eventual collapse of republican government.

Cleopatra Unit
This enquiry concludes the story of Cleopatra whilst establishing the political conditions that led directly to the emergence of the Roman Empire under Augustus. Students appreciate how events in Egypt became central to one of history's most significant political transformations.

Curriculum Hinterland
What wider knowledge will deepen our understanding of this topic?

Roman Unit
Students deepen their understanding by exploring the continuing influence of Roman constitutional principles on modern systems of government. They investigate Roman legal traditions, civic participation and the archaeological remains of republican Rome, considering how historians interpret evidence from both written and material sources.

Cleopatra Unit
Students broaden their understanding by exploring the legacy of Cleopatra in literature, art, film and popular culture. They investigate how propaganda shaped her historical reputation and compare modern portrayals with the surviving evidence from the ancient world, encouraging critical reflection on how history is constructed.

Authentic connections
How does this topic connect to real life, careers, other subjects and important values?

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Students reflect on the responsibilities of leadership, the balance between personal ambition and public duty and the moral challenges faced by individuals during periods of political instability. They consider how decisions made by influential leaders continue to shape societies long after their own lifetimes.

These enquiries encourage students to explore themes of equality, representation, justice and political participation within the Roman Republic, alongside questions surrounding loyalty, power and propaganda during the final years of Ptolemaic Egypt. Students develop cultural understanding by recognising the interconnected nature of Roman and Egyptian civilisations and the lasting influence of both societies on the modern world.

These enquiries have strong links with Politics and Citizenship, where students examine constitutional reform, representative government and political leadership. Connections with English develop analytical writing and source evaluation, whilst Religion and Worldviews provides opportunities to explore authority, morality and the responsibilities of rulers. Links with Classical Civilisation and Geography further develop understanding of the ancient Mediterranean world.

Skills Builder

- Planning
- Leadership
- Speaking

Careers

- Civil Servant
- Political Adviser
- Heritage Interpretation Officer

Students continue to develop the ability to evaluate evidence critically, synthesise information from multiple sources, construct balanced historical arguments and communicate complex ideas effectively. These transferable skills support success across the wider curriculum and prepare students for careers involving research, public service, education, law and heritage.

Resources *What books, websites, videos and materials will support our learning?*	**Assessment** *How will we show what we know, remember and can apply?*
Teaching and learning throughout these enquiries are supported through a carefully selected range of primary and secondary sources that encourage historical enquiry, critical thinking and examination success. • Teacher modelling of source evaluation, historical interpretations and extended examination responses. • OCR GCSE Ancient History Specification and assessment materials. • *OCR Ancient History: Rome* and *OCR Ancient History: Cleopatra* (Bloomsbury, 2023).	Assessment throughout the enquiry focuses on students' ability to apply secure substantive knowledge whilst demonstrating increasingly sophisticated disciplinary thinking. Students retrieve prior learning, evaluate historical evidence, compare interpretations and construct well-supported historical arguments through regular retrieval practice, source analysis and OCR examination-style questions. 50% Substantive Knowledge: Students demonstrate secure understanding of the constitutional reforms that shaped the Roman Republic, the causes and

• University of Warwick Ancient History resources. • Prescribed literary sources including Livy, Plutarch, Appian, Cassius Dio, Suetonius and other OCR source material. • Archaeological evidence, coins, inscriptions, maps, timelines and battle reconstructions. • Knowledge organisers, retrieval practice activities, GCSE examination-style questions and examiner reports.	consequences of the Second Secession, Cleopatra's alliance with Mark Antony, the significance of Octavian's propaganda campaign and the impact of the Battle of Actium on both Egypt and Rome. 50% Disciplinary Knowledge: Students analyse literary and archaeological evidence, evaluate historical interpretations, explain cause and consequence, identify continuity and change, assess historical significance and communicate balanced historical judgements using accurate and precise historical evidence

Topic 4
Topic

Roman and Cleopatra Units (Synoptic Enquiry)

Big Picture
What are the main ideas and big questions in this topic?

This enquiry brings together students' knowledge from both the Roman Republic and Cleopatra depth studies, encouraging them to think beyond individual events and develop a broader understanding of the ancient world. Students revisit the major political, social and military developments studied throughout the course, identifying common themes such as leadership, power, constitutional change, propaganda and the exercise of authority. Through increasingly sophisticated historical enquiry, students strengthen their ability to compare events across time, evaluate historical interpretations and synthesise knowledge from multiple topics in preparation for the final stages of the GCSE course.

Zoom In
What knowledge, skills and key vocabulary will we learn step by step?

Roman Unit

Students revisit the development of the Roman Republic from its legendary foundations through to the constitutional reforms of the early Republic. Rather than studying each enquiry in isolation, they draw connections between monarchy, republican government, social conflict and political reform, considering how these developments collectively shaped Rome's emergence as a dominant Mediterranean power. Teacher modelling supports students in revisiting literary and archaeological evidence, demonstrating how historians evaluate provenance, reliability and interpretation whilst constructing balanced historical arguments. Students compare the significance of key individuals, events and reforms across the Roman depth study, revisiting concepts such as constitutional development, citizenship, military leadership and political representation. Retrieval practice is carefully sequenced to strengthen long-term memory whilst exposing misconceptions and reinforcing secure substantive knowledge.

Cleopatra Unit

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Students revisit Cleopatra's life and reign through a thematic rather than chronological approach, exploring the changing relationships between Egypt and Rome, the influence of Julius Caesar and Mark Antony, and the political consequences of the Roman civil wars. They compare the significance of diplomacy, military conflict, propaganda and leadership, considering how Cleopatra's decisions shaped both Egyptian and Roman history.

Teacher modelling demonstrates how historians evaluate differing literary accounts alongside archaeological evidence, enabling students to compare interpretations and construct increasingly sophisticated historical judgements. Retrieval activities revisit the entire depth study, strengthening students' ability to make synoptic links and apply their knowledge confidently across a range of examination questions.

Throughout both enquiries, disciplinary knowledge is explicitly developed through analysing cause and consequence, identifying continuity and change, evaluating historical significance, interpreting literary and archaeological sources and comparing competing historical interpretations. Students continue to embed and apply specialist historical vocabulary confidently within both discussion and extended writing.

Pre-Requisite Knowledge

What have we already learned that will help us with this topic?

Roman Unit

Students draw upon all learning from the Roman Republic depth study, including the legendary foundations of Rome, the overthrow of the monarchy, constitutional development, plebeian unrest and political reform. Secure substantive knowledge enables students to identify patterns, compare developments and construct increasingly sophisticated historical explanations.

Cleopatra Unit

Students consolidate their understanding of Cleopatra's reign from her accession to the throne through to the Battle of Actium. Prior learning relating to dynastic politics, Roman intervention, political alliances and the collapse of the Ptolemaic Kingdom provides the foundation for deeper historical analysis and synoptic thinking.

Pitch Up

How will we challenge ourselves?

Roman Unit

Students move beyond recalling individual events by evaluating long-term patterns of political development across the Roman Republic. They compare competing historical interpretations, synthesise evidence from across the course and justify increasingly sophisticated historical judgements supported by precise evidence.

Cleopatra Unit

Students critically evaluate the changing historical reputation of Cleopatra, considering how literary sources, archaeological evidence and later interpretations have shaped our understanding of her reign. They develop increasingly nuanced arguments by drawing upon evidence from across the entire depth study.

Wider Framework

How does this learning connect to future topics and bigger goals?

This enquiry prepares students for the demands of the OCR GCSE examinations by strengthening their ability to think synoptically across both depth studies. Students recognise recurring themes, compare different societies and evaluate historical developments within their wider political and cultural contexts. The enquiry reinforces the disciplinary skills required for further historical study

Curriculum Hinterland

What wider knowledge will deepen our understanding of this topic?

Students enrich their understanding by exploring how the Roman Republic and Cleopatra have continued to influence literature, politics, philosophy, film and popular culture. They investigate how changing historical interpretations have shaped modern perceptions of key individuals and events whilst considering why the ancient Mediterranean remains one of the most studied periods of world

whilst demonstrating the continuing relevance of the ancient world to modern discussions surrounding leadership, government and historical interpretation.	history. Students are encouraged to engage with museum collections, documentaries, academic scholarship and historical debates to appreciate the evolving nature of historical enquiry.

Authentic connections

How does this topic connect to real life, careers, other subjects and important values?

Students reflect upon the qualities of effective leadership, the ethical responsibilities associated with power and the ways in which individual decisions can shape the course of history. They consider how ambition, loyalty, justice and integrity continue to influence political leadership in the modern world.

Students strengthen their understanding of democracy, representation, political participation and social reform by comparing the development of the Roman Republic with modern systems of government. They evaluate moral questions surrounding leadership, conflict, propaganda and political decision-making whilst recognising the cultural significance of both Roman civilisation and Ptolemaic Egypt in shaping Western history.

This enquiry strengthens links with Politics and Citizenship through the study of constitutional development, representative government and political leadership. English supports increasingly sophisticated source evaluation and analytical writing, whilst Religion and Worldviews encourages discussion surrounding morality, authority and leadership. Connections with Classical Civilisation, Archaeology and Geography deepen students' understanding of the wider Mediterranean world.

Skills Builder

- Problem Solving
- Speaking
- Planning

Careers

- Archaeologist
- Historian
- Policy Adviser

Students develop increasingly sophisticated retrieval, synthesis and evaluation skills by drawing together knowledge from across the GCSE course. They strengthen their ability to analyse evidence critically, identify patterns across different historical contexts and communicate balanced, evidence-based judgements. These skills underpin success across a wide range of academic disciplines and prepare students for further study in history, law, politics, archaeology and the wider humanities.

Resources

What books, websites, videos and materials will support our learning?

Teaching and learning during this synoptic enquiry draw upon the full range of resources used throughout Years 10 and 11, enabling students to revisit, consolidate and connect their knowledge across the GCSE course.

Assessment

How will we show what we know, remember and can apply?

Assessment throughout this enquiry focuses upon students' ability to retrieve, connect and apply knowledge from across both Year 10 and Year 11. Through regular retrieval practice, source analysis, thematic essays and examination-

• Teacher modelling of synoptic essays, source evaluation and examination responses. • OCR GCSE Ancient History Specification, past papers and mark schemes. • OCR examiner reports and exemplar responses. • OCR Ancient History textbooks (Bloomsbury). • University of Warwick Ancient History resources. • Prescribed literary sources and archaeological evidence revisited from across both depth studies. • Knowledge organisers, retrieval quizzes, thematic revision activities, timelines and examination-style questions.	style questions, students demonstrate increasingly sophisticated historical thinking by synthesising evidence, evaluating interpretations and constructing balanced historical arguments that draw upon the full breadth of the GCSE Ancient History course. 50% Substantive Knowledge: Students demonstrate secure understanding of the major individuals, events, political developments and historical concepts from both the Roman Republic and Cleopatra depth studies. They confidently retrieve and connect knowledge across the entire course, recognising overarching themes and patterns within the ancient world. 50% Disciplinary Knowledge: Students analyse and evaluate literary and archaeological evidence, compare historical interpretations, explain cause and consequence, identify continuity and change, assess historical significance and produce increasingly sophisticated historical judgements supported by accurate, precise and well-selected historical evidence.

Term 5
All Topics

Preparing for Success in OCR GCSE Ancient History

Big Picture
What are the main ideas and big questions in this topic?

This final enquiry enables students to consolidate and master the entire OCR GCSE Ancient History course in preparation for their final examinations. Students revisit all substantive and disciplinary knowledge developed throughout Years 10 and 11, strengthening long-term retention through carefully sequenced retrieval practice, thematic revision and examination preparation. By drawing together learning from every enquiry, students refine their understanding of the ancient world whilst developing the confidence, resilience and independence required to apply their knowledge successfully under examination conditions.

Zoom In
What knowledge, skills and key vocabulary will we learn step by step?

Throughout this enquiry, students revisit every component of the GCSE Ancient History course through a carefully planned programme of retrieval, spaced practice and thematic revision. Rather than learning new substantive content, students strengthen their understanding of key concepts, historical events, individuals and themes from across both the Period Study and the Depth Studies, ensuring knowledge is retained, connected and readily accessible.

Teacher modelling supports students in refining examination technique through regular practice of source analysis, interpretation questions and extended historical writing. Students revisit literary and archaeological evidence, compare historical interpretations and practise selecting precise evidence to construct balanced historical arguments. Retrieval activities are deliberately sequenced to expose misconceptions, revisit weaker areas and strengthen long-term memory, enabling students to become increasingly independent and reflective learners.

New Line Learning Academy
Believe and Achieve

Alongside substantive knowledge, students continue to develop disciplinary thinking by evaluating historical significance, analysing cause and consequence, identifying continuity and change, comparing interpretations and applying evidence confidently within examination-style responses. Revision is personalised through feedback, allowing students to target areas for improvement whilst building confidence across the full GCSE specification.

Pre-Requisite Knowledge
What have we already learned that will help us with this topic?

Students draw upon all knowledge and skills developed throughout the GCSE course. Previous enquiries provide the substantive knowledge required for successful retrieval, whilst prior experience of source analysis, historical interpretations and extended writing enables students to refine their disciplinary thinking and examination technique.

Pitch Up
How will we challenge ourselves?

Students move beyond remembering historical knowledge by demonstrating mastery of the entire course. They independently identify gaps in their understanding, evaluate the effectiveness of different revision strategies and apply historical knowledge flexibly across unfamiliar examination questions. Increasing emphasis is placed upon metacognition, enabling students to become confident, self-regulating learners.

Wider Framework
How does this learning connect to future topics and bigger goals?

This enquiry prepares students not only for success in their GCSE examinations but also for future academic study. Students recognise that effective revision involves retrieval, spaced practice, interleaving and self-reflection, developing learning habits that support success across all subjects at Key Stage 5 and beyond.

Curriculum Hinterland
What wider knowledge will deepen our understanding of this topic?

Students explore how historians continue to revisit, reinterpret and debate the ancient world as new archaeological discoveries emerge and historical scholarship develops. They also examine how memory, revision and retrieval contribute to effective learning, recognising that historical understanding is continually strengthened through repeated practice, reflection and critical evaluation.

Authentic connections
How does this topic connect to real life, careers, other subjects and important values?

Students reflect upon resilience, perseverance and self-belief as they prepare for their final examinations. They consider how sustained effort, reflection and determination contribute to personal growth and academic success.

Students revisit themes of leadership, democracy, justice, conflict, belief and identity from across the GCSE course, recognising their continuing relevance within modern society. They also develop an appreciation of the importance of honesty, responsibility and academic integrity throughout the examination process.

This enquiry explicitly supports learning across the wider curriculum by developing transferable revision techniques, retrieval strategies and examination skills. Students strengthen analytical writing in English, evidence evaluation in the Humanities, and metacognitive approaches that enhance learning across all GCSE subjects.

Skills Builder

- Problem Solving
- Adapting

New Line Learning Academy
Believe and Achieve

- Planning

Careers

- Teacher
- Educational Psychologist
- Learning and Development Specialist

Students develop lifelong learning habits through effective retrieval practice, organisation, time management, critical thinking and self-evaluation. They learn to plan revision strategically, monitor their own progress, respond positively to feedback and communicate well-supported arguments with confidence. These transferable skills prepare students for further education, employment and lifelong learning.

Resources

What books, websites, videos and materials will support our learning?

Teaching and learning throughout this enquiry utilise the full range of resources developed across the GCSE course alongside carefully selected revision materials that promote retrieval, reflection and examination success.

- Teacher modelling of examination responses, revision strategies and metacognitive thinking.
- OCR GCSE Ancient History specification, past papers, mark schemes and examiner reports.
- Knowledge organisers from every enquiry across Years 10 and 11.
- OCR Ancient History textbooks and revision guides.
- Retrieval quizzes, flashcards, low-stakes testing and spaced revision activities.
- Timelines, thematic revision booklets and vocabulary organisers.
- Literary sources, archaeological evidence and historical interpretations revisited from across the entire course.
- Personalised revision resources informed by ongoing assessment and feedback.

Assessment

How will we show what we know, remember and can apply?

Assessment throughout this enquiry focuses on students demonstrating mastery of the complete GCSE Ancient History curriculum. Regular retrieval practice, full examination papers, source analysis and extended historical responses enable students to consolidate knowledge from across the entire specification whilst refining examination technique. Assessment is increasingly diagnostic, allowing teachers to identify misconceptions, provide targeted feedback and personalise revision so that every student is fully prepared for the demands of the OCR GCSE examinations.

50% Substantive Knowledge
Students confidently retrieve and apply knowledge from every enquiry studied throughout Years 10 and 11, demonstrating secure understanding of the full OCR GCSE Ancient History specification and making connections across different historical periods, themes and case studies.

50% Disciplinary Knowledge
Students demonstrate mastery of historical enquiry by analysing sources, evaluating historical interpretations, explaining cause and consequence, identifying continuity and change, assessing historical significance and constructing well-supported historical arguments under examination conditions.