

Syllabus

Cambridge O Level For centres in Brunei History 2171

For examination in November 2023, 2024 and 2025.



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Changes to this syllabus

For information about changes to this syllabus for 2023, 2024 and 2025, go to page 24.



1 Why choose this syllabus?

Key benefits

Cambridge O Level is typically for 14 to 16 year olds and is an internationally recognised qualification. It has been designed especially for an international market and is sensitive to the needs of different countries. Cambridge O Level is designed for learners whose first language may not be English, and this is acknowledged throughout the examination process.

Our programmes balance a thorough knowledge and understanding of a subject and help to develop the skills learners need for their next steps in education or employment.

Cambridge O Level History offers the opportunity to study the history of Brunei and Malaya from the nineteenth century to the late twentieth century, and the Second World War in Asia. It encourages learners to develop knowledge and understanding, and to deploy historical skills in order to provide historical explanations.

Our approach in Cambridge O Level History encourages learners to be:

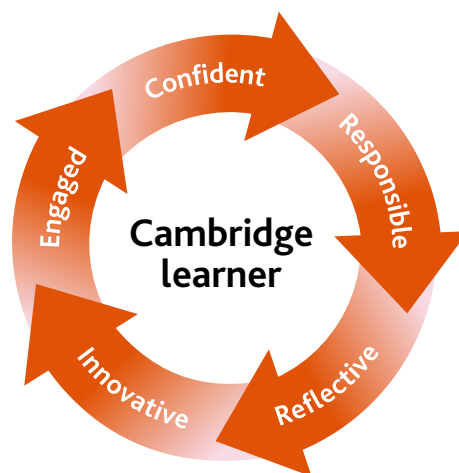
confident, developing the ability to share ideas and knowledge to describe past events, consider the role of key individuals, to explore the causes and impacts of events, to learn how to develop and support arguments and consider historical significance

responsible, acquiring the necessary skills, such as independent reading and enquiry, to equip them to plan and carry out independent work and prepare them for further study

reflective, making connections between different events in the past, recognising patterns of change and continuity, similarity and difference, cause and effect and becoming secure in their own skills to raise and seek answers to historical questions

innovative, learning how historians work by beginning to evaluate historical evidence in terms of its nature, origin and purpose and by developing an enquiring approach to the past

engaged, being keen to learn, developing an enthusiasm for history and beginning to express informed opinions through an appreciation of different perspectives.



'Cambridge O Level has helped me develop thinking and analytical skills which will go a long way in helping me with advanced studies.'

Kamal Khan Virk, former student at Beaconhouse Garden Town Secondary School, Pakistan, who went on to study Actuarial Science at the London School of Economics

Recognition and progression

Our expertise in curriculum, teaching and learning, and assessment is the basis for the recognition of our programmes and qualifications around the world. The combination of knowledge and skills in Cambridge O Level History gives learners a solid foundation for further study. Candidates who achieve grades A* to C are well prepared to follow a wide range of courses including Cambridge International AS & A Level History.

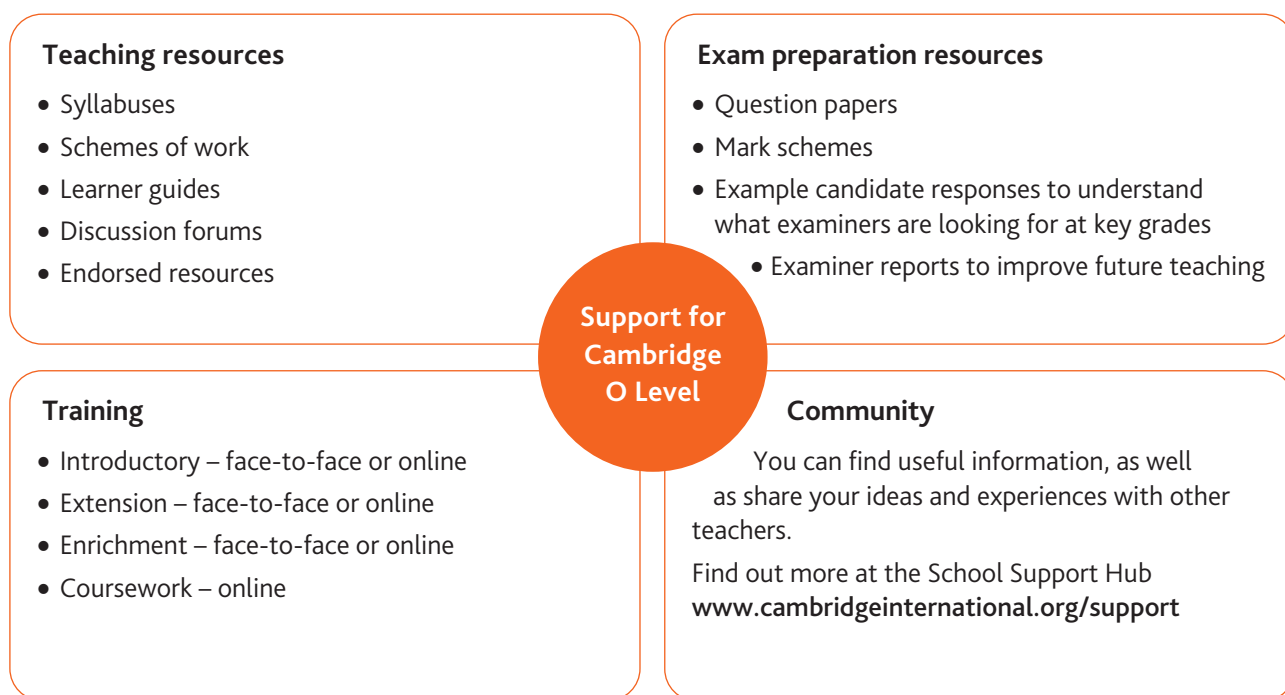
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Learn more at www.cambridgeinternational.org/recognition

Supporting teachers

We offer a wide range of practical and innovative support to help teachers plan and deliver our programmes and qualifications confidently.

Please see the syllabus materials DVD for more information.



2 Syllabus overview

Aims

The aims are to:

- stimulate candidates' interest in the study of the past
- promote the acquisition of knowledge and understanding of human activities in the past, linking them with the present
- promote the understanding of historical concepts, such as cause and consequence, continuity and change, similarity and difference
- encourage the development of historical skills, including investigation, analysis, evaluation and the ability to explain historical issues and events
- inculcate a greater awareness and appreciation of the national values and cultural heritage, in line with the MIB philosophy
- foster national and international understanding of history.

Content overview

All candidates study all the content in sections A, B and C.

Section A: History of Brunei, 1800–1984

The content focuses on the following key questions:

- 1 What was life like in Brunei in the early nineteenth century?
- 2 What was the political impact of foreign intervention in Brunei in the period 1824–1946?
- 3 How did Brunei move towards independence in the twentieth century?
- 4 How did Brunei's economy develop in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries?
- 5 What were the main social and religious developments in Brunei during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries?

Section B: History of Malaya, 1874–1963

The content focuses on the following key questions:

- 1 What was the political impact of foreign intervention on Malaya, 1874–1945?
- 2 What were the main developments in the process of achieving Malayan independence, c.1920–63?
- 3 How great were the economic and social changes in the years 1874–1963?

Section C: Second World War in Asia, c.1929–53

The content focuses on the following key questions:

- 1 Why did war break out in the Pacific?
- 2 What were the main events of the Second World War in Asia?
- 3 What were the consequences of the Second World War for Japan and China?

Assessment overview

All candidates take two components. Candidates will be eligible for grades A* to E.

All candidates take:	and:
Paper 1 40 marks 40 Multiple-choice questions Questions are based on all three sections of syllabus content: Section A: History of Brunei, 1800–1984 (15 marks) Section B: History of Malaya, 1874–1963 (10 marks) Section C: Second World War in Asia, c.1929–53 (15 marks) Externally assessed	Paper 2 100 marks 2 hours 30 minutes 71% Candidates answer five questions in total. All questions have three parts (a, b, c). Section A: History of Brunei, 1800–1984 Candidates answer two out of three questions. Section B: History of Malaya, 1874–1963 Candidates answer one out of two questions. Section C: Second World War in Asia, c.1929–53. There are two questions, one based on sources. Candidates answer both questions. Externally assessed

Information on availability is in the **Before you start** section.

Assessment objectives

The assessment objectives (AOs) are:

AO1 Knowledge

Recall, select, organise and deploy knowledge of the syllabus content.

AO2 Understanding and analysis

Understand, analyse and explain:

- cause and consequence, continuity and change, similarity and difference
- the motives, emotions, intentions and beliefs of people in the past.

AO3 Interpretation and evaluation

Understand, interpret, evaluate and use a range of sources as evidence, in their historical context.

Weighting for assessment objectives

The approximate weightings allocated to each of the assessment objectives (AOs) are summarised below.

Assessment objectives as a percentage of the qualification

Assessment objective	Weighting in O Level %
AO1 Knowledge	36
AO2 Understanding and analysis	50
AO3 Interpretation and evaluation	14
Total	100

Assessment objectives as a percentage of each component

Assessment objective	Weighting in components %	
	Paper 1	Paper 2
AO1 Knowledge	50	30
AO2 Understanding and analysis	50	50
AO3 Interpretation and evaluation	0	20
Total	100	100

3 Subject content

Section A: History of Brunei, 1800–1984

The content in Section A focuses on five key questions. All of this content should be studied.

- 1 What was life like in Brunei in the early nineteenth century?
- 2 What was the political impact of foreign intervention in Brunei in the period 1824–1946?
- 3 How did Brunei move towards independence in the twentieth century?
- 4 How did Brunei's economy develop in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries?
- 5 What were the main social and religious developments in Brunei during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries?

1 What was life like in Brunei in the early nineteenth century?

Focus points:

How was Brunei governed in the early nineteenth century?

What was Brunei's social structure during the early nineteenth century?

What was the basis of Brunei's economy?

Who controlled Brunei's land and revenue?

Specified content:

- The role of sultans as head of the government, religion and institutions, the State Council, rents and taxes.
- The Islamic religion and religious officials: Kadhi, Khatib, Imam, Mudim.
- Brunei's social structure: Dato, Pengiran, Sharif, Wazir, Cheteria, Menteri, Rakyat, Hamba.
- Brunei's trade with China and with the other states in the Malay Archipelago, Brunei's trade bases.
- Land rights: Kerajaan, Kuripan and Tulin.
- The importance of river settlements in Brunei, river checkpoints, kampongs.

2 What was the political impact of foreign intervention in Brunei in the period 1824–1946?

Focus points:

Why and how did the British become interested in Brunei before 1847?

What role did the United States play in Brunei in the nineteenth century?

How did the British establish their influence in Brunei in the years 1847–1941?

How did the Japanese occupation and post-war administration affect how Brunei was governed?

Specified content:

- Importance of trade, rivalry between Western powers in the region, the Anglo–Dutch Treaty (1824), rebellion in Sarawak.
- Pengiran Muda Hashim, James Brooke as Governor of Sarawak and his increasing ambition, the Treaty of Labuan (1846).
- American interest in Brunei, the arrival of the USS *Constitution*, the US–Brunei Treaty of Friendship and Commerce (1850).
- Charles Brooke in Sarawak, the Treaty of Friendship and Commerce (1847), the Yankee Consul Affair and its consequences, the British North Borneo (Chartered) Company (1881), objections from the Spanish and Dutch, the Oath of Amanat, (1885), the importance of internal rivalries and revolts in Brunei.
- The Weld Mission (1887) and the Protectorate Agreement (1888), the seizure of Limbang (1890) and Trevenan mission, McArthur's report, the Supplementary Protectorate Agreement (1905–06) and the establishment of the Residential System.
- Impact of the Residential System up to 1941, changes in Brunei's administration, changes to land rights, law and order, the impact on Islam.
- Japanese invasion and administration, Miri Shyu, State Secretary Enche Ibrahim, the Sultan.
- The British Military Administration and the resumption of the Brunei State Council.

3 How did Brunei move towards independence in the twentieth century?

Focus points:

How did nationalism develop in Brunei in the 1920s and 1930s?

How did the Japanese occupation and post-war administration affect the development of nationalism in Brunei?

How important was Barisan Pemuda in influencing Brunei opinion?

How was independence gained?

Specified content:

- Early nationalist associations in the 1920s and 1930s, the importance of Maktab Perguruan Sultan Idris (MPSI) and the Sultan Idris Teachers' Training College, the impact of Indonesian nationalism, P M Yusof and H Salleh.
- The formation of nationalist organisations; Kesatuan Melayu Brunei (KMB), Persatuan Sahabat Pena Brunei (PSPB), Persekutuan Guru-Guru Melayu Brunei (PGGMB).
- Impact of Japanese propaganda, 'Asia for Asians', anti-colonialism amongst young Brunei Malays, 'Brunei for the Bruneians', growing resentment at all foreign control.
- British Military Administration attitude to Bruneians, resentment at BMA's failure to involve locals in government and administration.
- Barisan Pemuda (BARIP): its formation and leaders, its objectives, BARIP's growth, support from Sultan Ahmad Tajuddin, British reaction and BARIP's decline.
- The creation of the post of High Commissioner, Tujuh Serangkai, the 1959 Constitution, the Malaysia Plan (1962), Brunei Revolt (1962–63), political developments and reasons for rejection of Malaysia Plan, the abdication of Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddien III, the 1971 and 1979 Constitutional Agreements, the role of Sultan Hassanal Bolkiah, the Proclamation of Independence and the declaration of the MIB (Melayu Islam Beraja / Malay Islamic Monarchy) philosophy. International recognition of Brunei as an independent state (membership of ASEAN, UN and British Commonwealth).

4 How did Brunei's economy develop in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries?

Focus points:

How did the arrival of the British affect the economy of Brunei?

How did changes in the cutch, coal and rubber industries affect Brunei's economic development?

What has been the impact of the oil industry on Brunei's economy?

How did Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddien III develop Brunei's economy?

Specified content:

- The impact of James Brooke and Charles Brooke and territorial losses on Brunei's economy; reducing opportunities for the Dutch, the loss of trade to the British, the impact of the Treaty of Friendship and Commerce, the impact of the British North Borneo (Chartered) Company.
- Economic impact of the establishment of British Residency; impact of the Supplementary Protectorate Agreement, special terms for British merchants, changes in land rights, transfer of monopoly rights, improvements in agriculture.
- The cutch, coal and rubber industries; the importance of cutch to the Brunei economy, its uses, the Island Trading Syndicate, problems in the industry, decline. William Cowie and the coal industry, the development of coal mining in Muara, production and decline. The introduction of rubber and its spread, output, methods of production and decline.
- The discovery of oil and its impact on Brunei up to 1941: early exploration, oil production and revenue, the growth of Seria and other towns, developments in housing, transport and recreational facilities.
- Oil-fields sealed by British, the impact of Japanese bombing, neglect of Brunei industry, oil denial measures, impact on trade, post-war reconstruction.
- The First and Second National Development Plans, improvements in agriculture, communications, infrastructure, diversification, conservation, Muara as a free port, the development of new industries such as plastics, the building of Brunei International airport, the development of oil and gas industries up to 1984, introduction of Brunei's own currency to replace the Straits dollar.

5 What were the main social and religious developments in Brunei during the nineteenth and twentieth centuries?

Focus points:

What steps did the sultans take to promote Islam?

What was the impact of the British Residency on Islam?

How were living conditions affected by foreign intervention in Brunei?

How did Sultan Omar Ali Saifuddien III improve social welfare in Brunei?

Specified content:

- The role of sultans in promoting Islam in the nineteenth century, the importance of religious officials and their roles in government, religious education in schools, the building of mosques and surau.
- The work of Sultan Omar Saifuddien III, improvements in provision of education, the new state mosque, the formal establishment of Islam as the state religion in the 1959 Constitution Agreement.
- The Sultan confirmed as head of religion: British acceptance of Brunei's control of religious matters. Kadhi courts and their role: right of the Resident to overrule Kadhi courts. The role of the ulama in the State Council and in protecting Islamic interests.
- The Residency: improvements in education and health, town planning and Sanitary Boards, improvements in law and order and policing.
- The work of Shell in housing and recreational facilities, the development of a cosmopolitan community in Belait, population growth.
- Life during the Japanese occupation: the work of the Kempetai, atrocities, hardships and shortages, new currency and inflation, the impact of Nipponisation.
- Education, teacher training, social welfare and transport as part of the First National Development Plan, social welfare measures in the Second National Development Plan; improved health facilities, schools and teacher training, building of mosques.

Section B: History of Malaya, 1874–1963

The content in Section B focuses on three key questions. All of this content should be studied.

- 1 What was the political impact of foreign intervention on Malaya, 1874–1945?
- 2 What were the main developments in the process of achieving Malayan independence, c.1920–63?
- 3 How great were the economic and social changes in the years 1874–1963?

1 What was the political impact of foreign intervention on Malaya, 1874–1945?

Focus points:

Why did the British intervene in the Malay Peninsula in 1874?

How far did the Residential System prove to be beneficial to Malaya?

How did the British extend their influence in Malaya up to 1941?

What was the impact of the Japanese occupation on the way Malaya was governed?

Specified content:

- Threat to trade, fear of foreign intervention, change of government in Britain (1874), the disputed Perak succession, Raja Abdullah, the terms of the Pangkor Engagement.
- J W W Birch, his character and policies, his murder. Hugh Low and the establishment of the Perak State Council, political, administrative and economic reforms.
- British intervention in Selangor, Negeri Sembilan and Pahang.
- Benefits and demerits of the Residential System; stability, law and order, lack of uniformity, loss of powers for the sultans.
- Reasons for foundation of the Federated Malay States, its administration, the Federation Agreement (1896), the work of Frank Swettenham, decentralisation and the proposals of Sir Lawrence Guillemard and Sir Cecil Clementi. The Bangkok Treaty (1909), the transfer of the northern Malay States, differences between the Federated Malay States and the Unfederated Malay States.
- Reasons for Japan's swift victory in Malaya and introduction of Japanese military government.
- The division of Malaya into provinces, each with a Japanese Governor and Advisory Council of State, role of the sultans.

2 What were the main developments in the process of achieving Malayan independence, c.1920–63?

Focus points:

How much influence did Malay nationalism have in the period up to 1948?

Why did the communists not succeed in the Malayan Emergency?

How did the British prepare Malaya for independence?

Specified content:

- The beginning of Malay nationalism, opposition to Chinese and Indian immigration, the role of Kesatuan Melayu Muda (KMM) and the work of Ibrahim Yaacob, the growth of nationalism among English-educated Malays and the establishment of Malayan associations and clubs in the 1930s, Kaum Muda.
- The impact of the Second World War on nationalism: the effect of the Japanese anti-Chinese and pro-Indian policy, the role of the Malayan Peoples' Anti-Japanese Army.
- Nationalism in the post-Second World War period: Sir Harold MacMichael and reasons for the formation of the Malayan Union, reasons for non-Malay opposition to the Union and the work of the United Malays National Organisation (UMNO), Dato Onn bin Jaafar; the formation of the Federation of Malaya and opposition to it, Tan Cheng Lock.
- Reasons for the outbreak of the Emergency. The roles of Chin Peng and Lau Yew, the murder of Gurney, reasons for the British defeat of the Communists including the work of Briggs and Templer and the weaknesses of the Communists, the Baling Talks.
- Preparations for independence, the Member System, the growth of political parties such as the Malayan Chinese Association and the Malayan Indian Congress, the 1955 elections, the Reid Commission, the Merdeka Constitution, independence.
- The need to protect Malay rights and culture in the Merdeka Constitution, the fears of the Malay population, Malay as the national language, Islam as the official religion, special rights for Malays in the civil service, education and business.

3 How great were the economic and social changes in the years 1874–1963?

Focus points:

What was the economic impact of the establishment of the Residential System?

What were the economic effects of the Japanese occupation?

How did the government of Malaya attempt to manage the economy, 1956–63?

What was the impact of immigration on Malaya?

To what extent was Malaya a multi-cultural society in the early twentieth century?

Specified content:

- Hugh Low's economic reforms, revenue collection, land rights, communications, investment, agriculture.
- The development of the tin industry after 1874: changing demands, improvements in communications under the British, mechanisation and overproduction, competition from other countries, regulation, the International Tin Agreement.
- The introduction of rubber to Malaya by Hugh Low, reasons for declining coffee industry leading to rubber as an alternative, the promotion of rubber by H N Ridley, improved cropping techniques, rubber's impact on the economy, increased demand, overproduction, regulation, the Stevenson Restriction Scheme, the International Rubber Regulation Scheme.
- The economic impact of the Japanese invasion: British destruction of tin-mining machinery, rubber production halted due to the Japanese ban on exporting rubber and felling of rubber trees to grow food, challenge from US synthetic rubber to meet wartime shortage, recovery after the war and increase in prices.
- The First and Second Malayan Five Year Plans; investment in agriculture, rural infrastructure and social services.
- The impact of nineteenth century immigration: disputes between Chinese societies, the threat to British trade from the Chinese wars in Perak, British arbitration in Pangkor, threats from Chinese unrest in Selangor, Chinese Protectorates in Straits Settlements.
- The indenture system and its faults, its abolition, kangani system and the arrival of Indian labour, the Indian Immigration Fund, conditions of employment and the 1912 Labour Code, British encouragement of Chinese immigration through the indenture or co-operative systems.
- The effects of Chinese and Indian immigration on Malaya: development of a multi-cultural society, different occupations, separate schooling and its impact, restrictions on immigration, the Immigration Ordinance (1930).

Continued

3 How great were the economic and social changes in the years 1874–1963? continued

How was the way of life of the people of Malaya affected by the Second World War and the Emergency?

- Social impact of the Japanese occupation, unequal treatment of different people by the Japanese, the kempetai and the policy of Nipponisation, unemployment, poverty, food shortages, lack of medicine, restriction in movement, the Peace-living Certificate.
- Briggs Plan, new villages, operation starvation, Templer's 'hearts and minds' policy.

How did the government seek to improve educational standards?

- The 1961 Education Act: greater access to education, compulsory primary education for all, free education up to upper secondary level, common curriculum, Bahasa Malaysia as the main medium of instruction, emphasis on vocational education.

Section C: Second World War in Asia, c.1929–53

The content in Section C focuses on three key questions. All of this content should be studied.

- 1 Why did war break out in the Pacific?
- 2 What were the main events of the Second World War in Asia?
- 3 What were the consequences of the Second World War for Japan and China?

1 Why did war break out in the Pacific?

Focus points:

Why did militarism grow in Japan in the 1930s?

How far did economic problems lead to Japan's expansionist foreign policy?

What was the impact of Japan's expansionist foreign policy on China?

How did the United States respond to continuing Japanese aggression?

Specified content:

- The growth of support for the military in Japan in the late 1920s, the League of Blood Incident (1932), the 15 May Incident (1932), the 26 February Incident (1936).
- The impact of Japan's rapid population increase, reduction in the amount of land available for individual farmers, traditional Japanese farming methods and lack of mechanisation, underproduction of rice and the unpopularity of the government.
- Great Depression, US and UK protectionism and ending of free trade, the decline of Japanese exports – especially silk, economic depression in Japan.
- Japan's expansionist foreign policy: Japanese economic interests in Korea, the Mukden Incident (1931) and the occupation of Manchuria, the establishment of Manchukuo under Puyi, the reaction of the League of Nations, the Lytton Report, Japan's withdrawal from the League.
- The Marco Polo Bridge Incident (1937) and its impact on Sino–Japanese relations, the failure of the League of Nations to intervene, the Second Sino–Japanese War, Shanghai and the Nanjing Massacre, the 'New Order' in China.
- Further Japanese expansion in northern Indo–China, the non-aggression pact with the Soviet Union (1941), the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere. US response – termination of 1911 Treaty of Commerce and Navigation with Japan (1939), US embargo on oil (1940).
- Failure of talks between the United States and Japan, the Japanese attack on Pearl Harbor, US declaration of war.

2 What were the main events of the Second World War in Asia?

Focus points:

How successful was Japan in the first year of the war?

To what extent was mid-1942 a turning point in the war?

Why and how was Japan defeated in 1945?

What were the impacts of the war on civilians in occupied lands and in Japan?

Specified content:

- Early Japanese success: the occupation of Thailand, the Philippines, Indonesia, Malaya and Singapore, Brunei and Burma. Reasons for the Japanese success, the temporary weakness of the United States, the Western powers' focus on fighting Nazi Germany.
- The survival of much of the US Pacific fleet after Pearl Harbor and US ability to repair damaged battleships quickly, the failure of the Japanese to destroy oil reserves at Pearl Harbor, the industrial might of the United States, the US switch to war production.
- The Doolittle Raid (April 1942) and its impact on Japanese morale, the Battle of the Coral Sea (May 1942), the use of aircraft launched from ships and the loss of guaranteed protection of its troops for Japan, the Battle of Midway (June 1942), Japanese losses and the impact of the battle on the remainder of the war.
- Reasons for Japanese defeat, island hopping and the US submarine blockade, Japanese problems in defending an extended empire, Guadalcanal, Okinawa, Iwo Jima, the bombing of Japan, Hiroshima and Nagasaki, the Japanese surrender, liberation of Japanese prisoners of war.
- Indonesia and the Philippines: Japanese invasion, military administration, the exploitation of raw materials, conscription of forced labour, harsh measures carried out by the Kempetai, Nipponisation, social and economic impacts.
- Attempts to win support of nationalist groups. Indonesia: Triple A movement, Putera, Peta, Masjumi, Angkatan Muda; Philippines: Kalibapi and the Constitutional Commission.
- Resistance and collaboration, movements and leaders. Indonesia: Sukarno, Hatta, Sjarifuddin, Sjahrir. Philippines: Hukbalahap, Taruc and Alejandrino, J P Laurel, the 'peso millionaires'.
- The experience of Japanese civilians: impact of fire bombs, Operation Starvation and food shortages, evacuation and refugees, use of propaganda, reverence for the emperor and the shock of defeat.

3 What were the consequences of the Second World War for Japan and China?

Focus points:

What actions were taken against Japan for its role in the Second World War?

What reforms took place in Japan's government, society and economy after defeat?

Why was there a civil war in China?

Why did the Communists win the Chinese Civil War?

Specified content:

- War crimes trials in Tokyo, dismantling the Japanese Army, bans on former military officers taking roles in the new government, downgrading the emperor's status.
- Post-war reconstruction in Japan: Allied occupation, Supreme Command of Allied Powers (SCAP), General MacArthur.
- The 1947 Constitution, more power for parliament, greater rights for women, renouncing the right to wage war, land reform and attempts to break up the zaibatsu, emergency food relief.
- The 'reverse course' in Japan: economic reconstruction, the importance of the Korean War for the Japanese economy, Japanese rehabilitation, the San Francisco Peace Treaty (1951), changes in the education system.
- Chinese Nationalist and Communist Party beliefs, the Northern Expedition and Shanghai Massacre, the Extermination campaigns, the Long March and its importance in communist survival, the role of Mao Zedong and peasant support for the Communists, the Yan'an Soviet.
- The impact of the Japanese invasion in 1937, the weaknesses of the Nationalists and strengths of the Communists, the Chinese Civil War, the Battle of Huaihai, the flight of Chiang Kai-shek to Formosa.
- Political, economic and social reasons for the Communists' victory, the military leadership of Mao, the Communist military tactics, the discipline and motivation of the Communist troops, the treatment of the peasants, Chiang's poor leadership, tactical errors by Nationalist forces, Nationalist forces less unified, the establishment of a Communist regime in China in 1949.

4 Details of the assessment

For Cambridge O Level History, candidates take both Papers 1 and 2. All the components are externally assessed.

Paper 1

Written paper, 1 hour, 40 marks.

There are 40 multiple-choice questions based on all three sections of syllabus content.

15 questions are from content in Section A: History of Brunei, 1800–1984.

10 questions are from content in Section B: History of Malaya, 1874–1963.

15 questions are from content in Section C: Second World War in Asia, c.1929–53.

Candidates should attempt to answer all the questions.

Paper 2

Written paper, 2 hours 30 minutes, 100 marks.

The paper is in three sections. Candidates answer **five** questions in total.

Section A: History of Brunei, 1800–1984: candidates answer **two** questions from a choice of three. The questions are in the form of structured essays, split into three parts: (a), (b) and (c).

Section B: History of Malaya, 1874–1963: candidates answer **one** question from a choice of two. The questions are in the form of structured essays, split into three parts: (a), (b) and (c).

Section C: Second World War in Asia, c.1929–53: there are two questions, candidates answer **both** questions. The first question in this section requires source analysis. There will be three sources (primary and secondary material) printed in the paper, one of these may be pictorial. This question has three parts: (a), (b) and (c). The second question will be on a different topic and does not require source analysis. This question is in the form of a structured essay, split into three parts: (a), (b) and (c).

Command words

The table below includes command words used in the assessment for this syllabus. The use of the command word will relate to the subject context.

Command word	What it means
Describe	state the points of a topic / give characteristics and main features
Explain	set out purposes or reasons / make the relationships between things evident / provide why and/or how and support with relevant evidence

Additional guidance

Phrases such as 'How far do you agree?', 'What can we learn from this source?', 'Do these sources support this statement?' may also be seen in the assessment for this syllabus.

5 What else you need to know

This section is an overview of other information you need to know about this syllabus. It will help to share the administrative information with your exams officer so they know when you will need their support.

Before you start

Previous study

We recommend that learners starting this course should have studied a history curriculum such as the Cambridge Lower Secondary programme or equivalent national educational framework.

Guided learning hours

We design Cambridge O Level syllabuses based on learners having about 130 guided learning hours for each subject during the course but this is for guidance only. The number of hours a learner needs to achieve the qualification may vary according to local practice and their previous experience of the subject.

Availability

You can enter candidates in the November exam series.

Private candidates can enter for this syllabus.

Combining with other syllabuses

Candidates can take this syllabus alongside other Cambridge International syllabuses in a single exam series. The only exceptions are:

- syllabuses with the same title at the same level.

Cambridge O Level, Cambridge IGCSE™ and Cambridge IGCSE (9–1) syllabuses are at the same level.

Making entries

Exam administration

To keep our exams secure, we produce question papers for different areas of the world, known as administrative zones. We allocate all Cambridge schools to one administrative zone determined by their location. Each zone has a specific timetable. Some of our syllabuses offer candidates different assessment options. An entry option code is used to identify the components the candidate will take relevant to the administrative zone and the available assessment options.

Retakes

Candidates can retake the whole qualification as many times as they want to. This is a linear qualification so candidates cannot re-sit individual components.

Equality and inclusion

We have taken great care to avoid bias of any kind in the preparation of this syllabus and related assessment materials. In compliance with the UK Equality Act (2010) we have designed this qualification to avoid any direct and indirect discrimination.

The standard assessment arrangements may present unnecessary barriers for candidates with disabilities or learning difficulties. We can put arrangements in place for these candidates to enable them to access the assessments and receive recognition of their attainment. We do not agree access arrangements if they give candidates an unfair advantage over others or if they compromise the standards being assessed.

Candidates who cannot access the assessment of any component may be able to receive an award based on the parts of the assessment they have completed.

Information on access arrangements is in the *Cambridge Handbook* at www.cambridgeinternational.org/exams officers

Language

This syllabus and the related assessment materials are available in English only.

After the exam

Grading and reporting

Grades A*, A, B, C, D or E indicate the standard a candidate achieved at Cambridge O Level.

A* is the highest and E is the lowest. 'Ungraded' means that the candidate's performance did not meet the standard required for grade E. 'Ungraded' is reported on the statement of results but not on the certificate. In specific circumstances your candidates may see one of the following letters on their statement of results:

- Q (result pending)
- X (no result)
- Y (to be issued).

These letters do not appear on the certificate.

How students and teachers can use the grades

Assessment at Cambridge O Level has two purposes:

- to measure learning and achievement

The assessment:

- confirms achievement and performance in relation to the knowledge, understanding and skills specified in the syllabus, to the levels described in the grade descriptions.

- to show likely future success

The outcomes:

- help predict which students are well prepared for a particular course or career and/or which students are more likely to be successful
- help students choose the most suitable course or career.

Changes to this syllabus for 2023, 2024 and 2025

The syllabus has been updated. This is version 2, published February 2025.

The syllabus has been reviewed and revised for first examination in 2023.

You are strongly advised to read the whole syllabus before planning your teaching programme.

Changes to version 2 of the syllabus, published February 2025

Changes to assessment overview	There was an error in the component weightings published in version 1 of the syllabus. The component weightings have been corrected. Paper 1 is weighted at 29% Paper 2 is weighted at 71%
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Changes to version 1 of the syllabus, published March 2019

Changes to syllabus content	- The time period has changed: - Section A: History of Brunei has been extended to 1984 - Section B: History of Malaya has been changed to start in 1874 - The content has been restructured under key questions and focus points - Section C: History of Southeast Asia has been removed. There is a new section C covering the Second World War in Asia, c.1929–53.
Changes to assessment (including changes to specimen papers)	Changes to the assessment - The assessment objectives (AOs) have been revised and the weighting of AOs is now stated. Changes to Paper 1 - The number of questions based on each section of content has changed. - Questions now assess both AO1 and AO2. Changes to Paper 2 - The duration has been extended to 2 hours 30 minutes - Candidates answer five questions - There are no optional questions in Section C - The question style has changed: - one question in Section C includes three sources and candidates are required to analyse the sources - all the other questions are structured essays, split into three parts (a), (b) and (c) - the mark scheme has been revised. Levels of response marking has been introduced.

In addition to reading the syllabus, you should refer to the updated specimen assessment materials. The specimen papers will help your students become familiar with exam requirements and command words in questions. The specimen mark schemes explain how students should answer questions to meet the assessment objectives.

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