

Help! Where do we start? - a short guide to making a start with redesigning the curriculum for the new, novice and/or nervous

Hello! If you have found this A4 page then you have probably made it to the ‘Secondary Curriculum Area’ of the HA’s website. Here you will find lots of help with the redesign of your curriculum.

It is important that colleagues know that Heather Fearn, Ofsted Curriculum and Development lead, said, in her keynote address at the 2019 HA conference, that Ofsted is NOT expecting teachers to give up their summers to have a completely updated curriculum ready by September. The curriculum is an organic and evolving thing and it is the clear progress on the journey that is the key. She has also emphasised that curriculum is about WHAT is taught and should not be confused with teaching and learning strategies which are about the HOW. Also, that “Intent is not a statement. It is your curriculum plans - the outline of what you intend children should learn. This outline of your curriculum is probably held in schemes of learning not a statement.” (@Twitter 16/6/19).

We realise that the task of curriculum redesign is huge and these steps are to help you make a start.

Steps	Questions to ask
Talk to SLT/line manager	What are the parameters that you need to work within? What are the plans for the whole school curriculum?
Pause and think	What are your first thoughts about where you want to go? (To help you with this and the next stages it is a good idea to work with the ‘Questions to help you review your KS3 curriculum’ that you can find here: https://onebighistorydepartment.com/2019/02/04/questions-to-help-you-review-your-ks3-curriculum/) What are your own parameters and priorities?
Talk to ‘stakeholders’	These will/could include your wider school colleagues, MAT adviser, SLE, parents, students and questions to them could be: What does our current curriculum do well? How would you want to change our current curriculum? What should our priorities be?
Discuss and decide as a department	How have we justified our curriculum in the past? What principles should now underpin our curriculum and why? What are the criteria we should use to decide what is in/out and where it appears across KS3? What does our ideal curriculum look like? (One way to think about this is to discuss the curriculum using the ‘Diverse curriculum prompt questions’ you can find in the curriculum section of the HA website. Another way is to think how successfully students develop substantive and disciplinary conceptual knowledge over time. The HA is offering webinars to help – see the HA website for details.)
Make a plan	Make a two-three year plan for curriculum development. Ask: which parts will you redevelop first and why? Who is going to carry out this initial work over the next year? What department time will be dedicated to this? When will you review progress and provide support as needed?
Stay connected	So many people are re-designing their curricula right now and there is a great opportunity to be creative together, to test ideas and to share thinking. We suggest: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engaging with the history community on Twitter – start with @histassoc; • Following the onebighistorydepartment.com blog from HA secondary committee; • Taking part in an HA Webinar; • Reading Teaching History; • Attending local HA events and the national conference.

And finally, this document had been put together by the HA Secondary Committee. We are a group which includes lots of experienced, practising teachers. If you would like some support and advice please get in touch via www.history.org.uk.