

Continuing your professional development as an early career history teacher

This document is designed for history teachers in years 2-4 of their career. Whilst teachers with more experience will find inspiration here, its primary purpose is to nurture subject-specific career development immediately after the intense NQT year. Working with these ideas will help prepare an early career teacher for academic leadership roles and/or an application for [HA Chartered Teacher of History](#) status in the 5th year of teaching.

This document will provide inspiration for mentors working with early career teachers, but can equally be used in a self-led way in order to help an early career teacher to build on their classroom practice. We recommend discussion of these ideas with the department in school.

There are six possible strands that can be addressed in any order, or with a mix and match approach. Please note that examples and tips are provided to be helpful and are certainly not exhaustive.

Strand A: consciously develop your subject knowledge.

Step 1: audit your existing subject knowledge against the curriculum you are teaching and decide on areas of relative weakness.

Step 2: research possible sources of knowledge.

Step 3: make a plan that is realistic and engaging.

Tip: there are so many ways of doing this...

- Reading a history book with a colleague/mentor
- Listening to podcasts e.g. BBC In Our Time, HA and The History of England
- Joining a book-group – real and virtual (including on Twitter)
- Attending local lecture programmes – e.g. local HA branch and local university public lectures
- Visiting historic and heritage sites at home and further afield
- Watching TV documentaries
- Reading historical fiction, TV dramas etc.
- Work with your local or community history group
- Use the resources of a special interest group e.g. local migrant association, Holocaust remembrance association, Justice2History
- Join your local HA branch

Step 4: adapt and develop your lessons and resources to reflect your new learning.

Strand B: consciously develop your knowledge of history teaching.

Step 1: Audit – e.g. read a book such as *'Debates in History Teaching'* ed. Ian Davies (2017) and identify an area you wish to focus on for your own development.

Step 2: Go to the [HA website](#) and access *'What's the Wisdom On'* and *'New, Novice and Nervous'* features to start exploring what history teachers have already thought and done about this area of history teaching.

Step 3: Implement some of the thinking within your own practice. Tip: focus on one lesson sequence at a time.

Strand C: redevelop a short sequence of lessons from scratch for the department.

Step 1: Find out what historians are saying about this topic at the moment. Tip: history sections of quality bookshops, or BBC4 documentaries can be a useful starting place, you can follow historians on Twitter too!

Step 2: Identify what you want your students to learn. Tip: read Riley TH99 *'Into the History Garden'* and Ford and Kennett TH171 *'Conducting the Orchestra'*, then decide the concepts and content that you want to emphasise. Check that your plans are reflecting the diverse past. Develop your working enquiry question.

Step 3: Scope out the number of lessons and other constraints you are working within.

Step 4: Identify the barriers to learning that you will need to remove for all your students to be able to learn and how you will know that learning has happened.

Step 5: Plan and resource your sequence, thinking about the strategies that will best achieve the learning.

Step 6: Trial it, tweak it and share it with your department colleagues.

Strand D: champion history beyond the classroom within your school.

Examples could include:

- Lead an assembly e.g. for Remembrance Day, Holocaust Memorial Day
- Organise whole-school engagement with a month or anniversary e.g. Black History Month, VE Day
- Lead a History Society e.g. a book club, a film review club, a local history club
- Organise a history visit
- Set up a history lending library
- Coach students to take part in the HA Great Debate

- Take students to a university history outreach event
- Work with your art department to create a history corridor gallery
- Engage with another department to provide the historical context to a topic they teach

Strand E: engage with the history teaching community

- Attend a subject specific CPD event one evening or weekend e.g. HA Forum, TMHistorylcons, HA and SHP conferences
- Join the HA and read '*Teaching History*'
- Take part in a subject specific webinar e.g. one of those offered by the HA
- Join local history teacher networks e.g. Bristol Clio group, YorkClio, via a local SLE
- Regularly read blogposts from experienced history teachers e.g. [onebighistorydepartment](http://onebighistorydepartment.com), sallythorne.com, www.thinkinghistory.co.uk

Strand F: contribute to the history teaching community

- Regularly share your favourite classroom practices, or a sequence of lessons, or your thinking on a concept on Twitter
- Write a blogpost for [onebighistorydepartment](http://onebighistorydepartment.com)
- Lead some department CPD e.g. about how you have applied some whole-school CPD to the discipline of history
- Mentor an ITE trainee
- Write or co-write an article for '*Teaching History*'
- Co-present at a subject specific CPD event or local network meeting