

## 2c. Content of unit group 3: Thematic study and historical interpretations (Units Y301 to Y321)

### Introduction to unit group 3

There are two elements to the thematic study and historical interpretations unit group:

- the thematic essay which will require learners to consider developments over at least 100 years
- the in-depth interpretation element where learners will comprehend, analyse and evaluate the ways in which the past has been interpreted by historians, by using their knowledge of specific individuals, events or developments that are prominent within the theme. Learners will be required to show an understanding of the wider historical debate connected to the issues. Three such depth studies are specified for each option.

This unit group seeks to develop an understanding of connections and interpretations between different elements of the subject and for learners to draw together knowledge, understanding and skills of diverse issues centred upon a common theme.

The topics covered by the units in this group are based on themes covering an extended period of at least 100 years with a focus on continuity, development, change and evaluation of interpretations appropriate to the topic. The emphasis is on developing and interpreting a broad overview of the period studied, whilst also considering the validity of historical interpretations on specific topics within the theme being studied, therefore combining breadth and depth. The themes identified within each topic in the unit are not to be studied in isolation to each other. They are not self-contained and learners need to examine the inter-relationships within the theme being studied.

The thematic essays will focus on making links and comparisons between different aspects of the topics studied and of testing hypotheses before reaching a judgement.

The depth studies will require learners to evaluate historians' interpretations of the named events (etc). This will provide learners with the opportunity to assess and evaluate the arguments using their analytical skills and knowledge of the wider historical debates. They will have the opportunity to show they can discriminate between different interpretations to reach a supported judgement on the issue on which they are being examined.

There will always be **one** interpretation style question set for examination on **one** of the three depth studies. The interpretations selected will always be deliberate constructs by historians, produced much later than the historical event. They represent progression from interpretations as examined at AS level in that they will require analysis of a greater depth and range of evidence. Therefore, the interpretations set will always be longer extracts (substantial paragraphs). The interpretations set for examination will provide candidates with the opportunity to analyse and evaluate by locating them in the wider historical debate. Interpretations will be fully attributed and will only be edited for accessibility.

Further advice and guidance on this unit group is available from the OCR website. The following pages detail the content options available.

## Unit Y312: Popular Culture and the Witchcraze of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries

This theme focuses on the rise and decline in witchcraft during the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries and how far it emerged out of the popular culture of the time. It will examine the reasons for the increase and subsequent decline in persecutions, the nature of the Witchcraze, the reactions of the authorities and its impact on society. Learners should consider the Witchcraze in a variety of countries and regions in order to be able to establish patterns and make comparisons; (however, essays will not be set on particular countries). There are a wide range of

European countries, as well as America, that can be used as examples and learners should draw on a range of examples from these. The strands identified below are not to be studied in isolation to each other.

Learners are not expected to demonstrate a detailed knowledge of the specification content, except for the named in-depth studies, but are expected to know the main developments and turning points relevant to the theme.

<b>Thematic Study: Popular Culture and the Witchcraze of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries</b>	
<b>Key Topics</b>	<b>Content</b> <b>Learners should have studied the following:</b>
<b>Popular culture</b>	Urban and rural popular culture; popular and elite culture, their definitions; participation in popular culture and the withdrawal of the elite; the significance of ritual; the role of pageants and the festivals of misrule; public humiliation; moral regulation; the role of magic in society; challenges to popular culture; religious change; political change; economic change; social control.
<b>The main reasons for the growth and decline in the persecution of witches</b>	Developments from the Papal Bull of 1484 and the Malleus Maleficarum (1486) to the end of the period; causes of growth and decline, including religious changes and confessional strife, economic causes, social structure, changes and divisions within society, scapegoats and minorities, popular culture and cultural changes, growth of rationalism and enlightened thinking, understanding of medicine and remedies; persecution from above or below; the role of wars and natural disasters, including plague and the mini Ice Age.
<b>The persecuted</b>	The geography of the Witchcraze in Europe and North America; regional variations; towns; countryside; religious variations, gender, age, social and employment composition of those prosecuted for witchcraft.
<b>Responses of the authorities to witchcraft</b>	Legal developments including the Inquisitorial system of criminal procedure, secular courts on both a local and regional scale; campaigns against medieval superstition; torture, trials, felony, burnings, sleep deprivation, confessions; survival of popular beliefs, impact on the Reformation; mistrust and fear, denunciations; impact on legal procedure.

<b>Popular Culture and the Witchcraze of the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> Centuries</b>	
<b>Depth Studies</b>	<b>Content</b> <b>Learners should be aware of debates surrounding the issues outlined for each in-depth topic:</b>
<b>The Witchcraze in Southern Germany c.1590–1630</b>	Popular culture in Southern Germany; the impact of the Reformation; political, social and economic changes and their impact on order and conformity; the reasons for the increase in persecution; the frequency, nature and geography of witchcraft in the region; the responses of the authorities and its impact on society.
<b>Hopkins and the witch hunt of 1645–1647</b>	The religious, political, social and economic situation and their impact on order and conformity; moral regulation and the challenges to popular culture in the 1640s; the reasons for the persecution; the frequency, nature and geography of the persecutions; the response of the authorities to witchcraft and its impact on society.
<b>The Salem witch trials</b>	The religious, political, social and economic situation and their impact on order and conformity; Salem's relationship with England and the legal situation; the reasons for the persecution; the frequency, nature and geography of the persecution; the response of the authorities to witchcraft and its impact on society.