



Dear Parent,

*At the age of 14 most young people will be making choices about the subjects they will be studying in the last few years of their education at school. This sheet is about*

## CHOOSING HISTORY AT 14.

*Please take a moment to read it and to think about the importance of your child continuing to study history.*

### HISTORY AND JOBS

*If you look at the kinds of jobs people with qualifications in history do, there are the obvious ones like museum work, archaeology, conservation and history teaching. But there are many other jobs which you might not have expected to see: architect, banker, barrister, civil servant, economist, journalist, market researcher, personnel officer, police officer, publisher, social worker, solicitor.*

*Why so many? Why such a varied list?*

*Over many years, employers have found that people who have studied history are well-prepared for jobs like those on the list above. This is because history is:*

*About People – real people, well-known and unknown, good and bad, who face real situations, some of which are very like those we face today, some of which are very different. In history, you study their words and actions and try to work out their motives and beliefs.*

*Clearly this is useful in any job which involves understanding what makes people tick and how they are motivated.*

*About Investigating – when we study history, we investigate the lives of people in the past by using the evidence that survives. But we can never know everything about the past. If we are to get anywhere near the truth, we have to analyse this evidence, deal with the contradictions and ask awkward questions.*

*Clearly this is a useful skill in any job which involves weighing up arguments, sifting a mass of material and reaching a conclusion.*

*About Communicating – when people who study history have investigated a past situation and evaluated the available evidence, they have to communicate their conclusions to others. This means putting together a clear explanation in an organised way and using the evidence to support the points made. This is often, but not always, in writing.*

*Clearly this is useful in any job which involves explaining something to others, preparing and presenting a report or justifying decisions.*

*In short, employers in this rapidly changing world want people who are:*

*INDEPENDENT THINKERS,  
OPEN-MINDED,  
DISCIPLINED,  
GOOD AT PROBLEM SOLVING,*

*They often choose people who have studied some history.*

## *HISTORY AND EDUCATION*

*Preparation for work is important, but education from 14 onwards should be about more than this.*

*At this important stage in education young people become more aware of the adult world and the place they are soon to take in it. Only history can explain to them:*

*what the world is like now and how it got that way;  
the heritages of Britain's many communities;  
why the place where you live looks the way it does and how it has changed.*

*History plays a major part in informing young people about democratic institutions and in developing democratic values. In particular, it shows them that:*

*human beings have sometimes caused terrible human suffering;  
some people in the past have had to fight hard and make sacrifices to win rights and freedoms;  
difficult moral choices sometimes have to be made.*

*The importance of history in the education of young people over the age of 14 is widely accepted. Britain is the only country in Europe, apart from Albania, where history is not compulsory at this age. The Assembly of the Council of Europe has stated that:*

*“historical awareness should be an essential part of the  
education of all young people”.*