

UPPER SECONDARY SUBJECT CHOICE

History or Geography?

A guide to help you choose the
Humanities subject that fits you
best.



Before we start...



Would you rather investigate why a war broke out, or why an earthquake happens?



Do you enjoy building an argument from evidence more, or reading maps & data more?



Documentary Night: World War II, or Extreme Weather?

What should guide your choice?



Interest

Which topics make you want to read more, ask more questions, watch a documentary?



Aptitude

Which skills come more naturally — building arguments, or working with data & maps?



Relevance

Which subject connects more to the kind of work or issues you care about?

What's the difference?

Both challenge you to study the world around you — but in fundamentally different ways.

History

Understanding how events from the past still shape our world today.

e.g. how World War II reshaped global politics

Geography

Understanding how the Earth works — land, water, weather — and how people affect and adapt to it.

e.g. climate change, tourism, everyday city life

Let's bust a few myths

HISTORY

Myth: "It's just memorising dates."

REALITY:

60% of your grade is **source analysis** &

40% **essay writing**

— **evaluating evidence and building arguments**, not recall.

GEOGRAPHY

Myth: "It's just interviews and common sense."

REALITY:

You'll dig into real issues — climate change, tourism impact, disaster planning — **using real data and case studies**.

History Syllabus — 20th Century Modern World

1

Setting the Stage

World War I &
the Paris Peace
Conference

2

Rise of Dictators/ Authoritarian Regimes

Nazi Germany &
***Militarist Japan**

3

Path to WWII & the End

Outbreak & end of
World War II
In Europe & Asia
Pacific

4

The Cold War

Origins of Cold War,
***Korea**/Vietnam
case studies and
end of Cold War

*Core topics are the same at **G3 Level** and **G2 Level** — the depth of treatment differs.
Topics highlighted and marked with astérix are those not in the G2 Syllabus*

Geography Syllabus

1

**Geography in
Everyday Life**

Thinking
geographically &
sustainable
development

2

***Tourism
[G3]**

Tourism activity &
sustainable
development

3a

Climate*

Weather, climate
change & climate
action

3b

Tectonics*

Plate tectonics,
earthquakes &
disaster risk

****Syll requires students to choose EITHER Climate OR Tectonics – Our School does Climate
Tourism not in the G2 Syllabus***

What does a real question look like in **HISTORY?**

Illustrative examples — check actual past papers for the exact format.

History - Source Based



a) Study Sources A and B.

How different are these sources? Explain your answer. [6]

b) Study Source C.

How reliable is Source C as evidence about the reason for the outbreak of World War II in Europe? Explain your answer. [6]

What does a real question look like in **HISTORY?**

Illustrative examples — check actual past papers for the exact format.

Section B: Essays

Answer **two** questions.

2. 'US policy towards Japan in the 1930s was responsible for the outbreak of World War II in the Asia-Pacific'. How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. [10]
3. 'The Viet Cong together with the North Vietnamese were the primary cause of the Vietnam War.' How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. [10]
4. 'Gorbachev's reforms were responsible for the end of the Cold War.' How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer. [10]

What does a real question in **GEOGRAPHY** look like?

Illustrative examples — check actual past papers for the exact format.

**Geography —
Data-Response**

1 Cluster 1: Geography in Everyday Life

- (a) Study Fig. 1.1 (Insert), which shows the Peranakan houses in Joo Chiat, Singapore.

Using Fig. 1.1, describe how the Peranakan houses help residents in Joo Chiat develop a sense of place.

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- (d) A group of Singapore students investigated the economic sustainability of Punggol Coast Mall. They aimed to find out if there were enough visitors to support local businesses.

They collected primary data on a Friday afternoon from 3 to 5pm. This was done through convenience sampling, using a questionnaire survey and tally counts of visitors entering the mall from Punggol Coast LRT Station at 30-minute intervals.

Refer to Fig. 1.4 (Insert) for the survey and Fig. 1.5 (Insert) for the neighbourhood map and tally count location.

- (i) With reference to Fig. 1.4, evaluate the usefulness of the questions in the questionnaire survey.

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What does a real question in **GEOGRAPHY** look like?

Illustrative examples — check actual past papers for the exact format.

Geography — ESSAY

- (e) 'Tourists are the most effective stakeholders in influencing sustainable tourism development.'

How far do you agree with this statement? Explain your answer.

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How you're assessed

	History	Geography
Duration	1 hr 50 min	1 hr 45 min
Total marks	50 (50% of Humanities grade)	50 (50% of Humanities grade)
Section A	Source-based case study — 5 sub-questions	Structured Questions – Largely Data Response Qns and GI related qns + Content too
Section B	2 of 3 essays, 10 marks each	Structured Response + Essay [G3]

G3 HIST SYLL DOC: https://isomer-user-content.by.gov.sg/334/9693ea6d-0d6f-48c5-b373-346b4ba87255/K336_y27_sy.pdf

G2 HIST SYLL DOC: https://isomer-user-content.by.gov.sg/334/839a8f3b-d9ce-45d9-b48f-0753fbf29dc9/K230_y27_sy.pdf

G3 GEOG SYLL DOC: https://isomer-user-content.by.gov.sg/334/d0f7ac48-111c-431d-862f-bab833a35e7b/K335_y27_sy.pdf

G2 GEOG SYLL DOC: https://isomer-user-content.by.gov.sg/334/e4ce2971-da90-4514-afdf-f0b7cf9fc357/K229_y27_sy.pdf

What's it actually like day-to-day?

History

- Reading, evaluating & debating primary sources
- Writing structured argumentative essays
- Class discussions, Investigative Journalism & Mock Trials
- Tracing Timelines and understanding what was happening in different parts of the world at the same time

Geography

- Fieldwork & data collection outdoors
- Reading maps, graphs & GIS tools
- Case studies of real places & events
- Group investigations & presentations

Who tends to enjoy each subject?

History fits you if you...

- Are curious why countries & conflicts turned out the way they did
- Like building a case from evidence
- Are interested in policy, leadership & lessons from the past

Geography fits you if you...

- Are curious about the planet, cities & the environment
- Like working with maps, data & real-world patterns
- Are interested in sustainability, tourism & urban planning

What skills does each subject actually build?

Most of you won't grow up to be a historian or a geographer — but the skills stick with you in almost any job, science ones too.

History builds...

- **Spotting what's true**

Telling a reliable source from a dodgy one — so you don't get fooled by fake news or a "fact" someone forwarded you

- **Making a strong argument**

Getting people to actually see your point — in a debate, an essay, or convincing your parents

- **Connecting the dots**

Understanding why things happened the way they did, so you can guess what might happen next

Geography builds...

- **Reading graphs & numbers**

Making sense of the charts and stats you'll see everywhere — news, sports, your future job

- **Seeing how things connect**

Realising how one change ripples into others — like how weather affects farms, which affects prices at the supermarket

- **Solving real problems**

Using real places and real data, not just theory — so it actually applies outside the classroom

Thinking of studying this further?

History → historian, archivist, museum/heritage, journalism, law, policy

Geography → urban planning, GIS, environmental science, tourism & market analysis

Before you decide, ask yourself...

1 Which topics do I actually enjoy reading or watching documentaries about?

2 Do I prefer building an argument, or working with data and maps?

3 Have I looked at a real past-year paper for each subject?

4 Have I talked to a senior or teacher from each subject?

5 Does my choice connect to what I might want to study or do later?

Whichever you choose —

make it the one that keeps you curious.

Questions? Speak to your Humanities teacher or level coordinator.