Sutton Grammar School History Department
Assessment Policy

General overview

History is obviously a writing intensive subject and it is easy for students to produce lots of written work that can lead to an overload of work to be marked. Careful planning of lessons to ensure different types of assessment are used is crucial to ease this load and ensure that the work we mark is focused and useful to the students. Ineffective marking is a waste of valuable time and resources.
Book marking does not form the central part of our assessment policy – the key assessment focuses and the general book marking guidelines detailed below should be combined with active classroom assessment to ensure a good balance of assessment methods that appeal to all learners and ensure that we have the time to plan and execute good quality lessons.

Formal Assessment

Key Stage 3 Assessment

The most formal aspect of KS3 assessment consists of three key assessments set throughout the year and they are standardised within the dept. These look at
- Essay writing
- Source analysis
- Historical enquiry

and provide a good balance of key historical skills to measure and track. There are no end of year exams in History in KS3, the key assessments are felt to be a much more worthwhile form of summative assessment. Marking of the key assessment should be done clearly on the marking sheet templates and be target focused and inform students of the best ways to improve their work, whilst also acknowledging their strengths and successes. Grades will be based on the SGS curriculum levels (1-7) that were borne from the legacy NC levels (3-EP). Students will complete a 'tracker' sheet in their books to record their progress each year for the three skills. These three KA marks will be entered centrally on the school admin system and will help to inform HTRs and Report writing. They will form part of the all-round mark for these reports – they will not be the only thing that decides a CAP or EFF grade.

Key Stage 4 Assessment

GCSE provides a different focus in developing independent learners and a clear understanding of final exam technique is the ultimate goal of formal assessment. In Y10, there should be two unit tests carried out and also an end of year exam marked by the dept as a whole. In Year 11, given the shortness of the year, there will be a December mock exam and it is likely that more intensive exam question practice will take place in the latter part of the Y11 Spring term as part of the revision programme. Formal assessment will hence be 4 mock exams across the course, with additional exam practice as and when appropriate. Grades will be based on GCSE exam thresholds and marked as numbers (9-1).

Key Stage 5 Assessment

Again, final exam questions will ultimately be the focus of formal assessment and an average of one practice question per half term is suggested as a guide. There is a formal end of year mock to be

internally assessed at the end of Y12. In Year 13 there will also be a dissertation to mark for teachers delivering that unit, as well as some internal moderation of that. Grade structure will be A* to E. Essay marking will become intensive in the revision periods at the end of Y12 and Y13.

Other Assessment

As stated above, book marking is not the central part of our ongoing assessment but a part of overall teaching and learning. Classroom assessment methods including Q and A, paired or group presentations, verbal assessment, peer and self-assessment and other AfL strategies should all be used to help students' development and will create a sound formative assessment balance.

The suggested guide from the dept. is that key assessment books should be looked at about 4 times in an academic year (inclusive of key assessment marking). This will allow teachers to manage their marking load sensibly and avoid piling up book marking at times when key assessments come in, which invariably will be in quick succession across KS3 given the timing of modules. **To help the management of marking, students will be given two exercise books; one for note work and one for assessed work. Note books will not be formally marked or assessed (though teachers may look them over and ensure they are well organised and presented) but the 4 or so pieces of assessed work will be completed in the formal assessed work book in a well organised and well-presented manner. This will ensure that all formally assessed work is kept together and becomes an easy record of progress for students, parents and teachers across KS3.**

For consistency it is planned that in addition to the three key assessments the other possible two pieces of assessed work in each year will be a short answer response and/or a group presentation.

It is not expected that KS4 and KS5 books and folders are checked for note taking (of course, teachers may do so at their discretion) – given the nature of the subject, the desire to promote independent learners and the extent to which formally assessed work is both lengthy and difficult to mark at GCSE and A Level, these areas are expected to be mostly assessed through classroom discussion, Q and A, group work and peer / self-assessment as well as the formal exams outlined above.

If marking and assessment become an issue or teachers are struggling to cope with the demands outlined above then they should discuss this with the Head of Dept as soon as possible to get the necessary support and advice.

Summation

Whilst assessment is a key part of the development of students and a way of clearly checking progress, we also believe that it has to be balanced against other important practices. Planning and delivery of good lessons (with assessment built in), extra-curricular opportunities and enjoyment of the subject are all equally important strands of teaching that should not be diminished by unduly heavy marking loads. This balance should provide the students with a well-rounded educational experience in History and allow teachers to perform effectively and maintain an appropriate and healthy work-life balance.

Simon Shergold - Head of History
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