

2 What should go in the handbook?

“What should go in the handbook?”

It is too easy to reply “Everything”. History teachers are advised that they shouldn’t put everything in their handbook, unless they want to end up with something which resembles a piece of monumental architecture. It’s supposed to be a *handbook*, after all; carrying it is not supposed to increase the muscular development of the department.

Nevertheless, a handbook should contain a basic number of sections. Teachers can always add to these if they want to, and this is in any case both highly probable and desirable. From time to time schools are swept by this or that current idea – differentiation, quality assurance, literacy, numeracy, the performance of boys – and on really bad weeks a school can be swept by all of these ideas simultaneously. It’s a good idea to be prepared to add to a handbook at any time.

The basic structure of the handbook should be as follows:

- Introduction
- A statement of aims
- A statement of methodologies
- A section on departmental policies
- Schemes of work
- A catalogue of resources

The following sections in this pack each consider these parts of the handbook.

Presentation

There is some dispute about exactly how the handbook should appear when completed. HMI advice, a few years ago, was that it should be presented in a ring-binder. The thinking behind this was clear. It is very much easier to amend sections or to add new ones if a handbook is collated in this fashion. It encourages the department to consider the handbook, not as a finished product to be eventually disregarded, but as a resource in a constant state of change and renewal.

That, at any rate, is the theory. There are, however, some points against the ring-binder approach. The very fact that it looks unfinished can tell against it. Teachers can easily come to feel that the policies and other materials within are as impermanent as the binding. Equally, it can be hard to look after such a binder: ironically, the more it is used, the more insubstantial it will come to appear. Pages are quite as likely to fall out of it as to be added.

Methodology

No one method of teaching History is likely to be successful. Nor does the department consider this to be desirable. It is likely that there will be a consensus of agreement on the following methods.

The teaching of History, like all other subjects, requires the creation of a disciplined environment within the classroom if effective learning is to take place.

A wide variety of approaches will also help alleviate boredom on the part of teacher and student. These approaches will include:

- Whole-class exposition
- Discussion
- Simulation and role-play
- Drama
- Open and closed questioning
- Short and extended writing
- Source-based work
- Worksheets
- Silent reading
- Reading aloud
- Group and project work
- Graphic and artwork
- Graph and number work
- Using Information and Communications Technology
- Using artefacts
- Making and interpreting film
- Visiting and recording historical sites
- Display work

All of these approaches will be supplemented and assisted by means of appropriate technology. It is the responsibility of History teachers to familiarise themselves with the necessary resources.

Where appropriate, students should be encouraged to participate in the setting up, running and putting away of equipment. Equipment can include:

- Videocassette recorder
- Video camera
- Slide projector
- Overhead projector
- Computer – with CD-ROM, Internet access, etc
- Tape-recorder

In addition to this equipment, the department teachers should be familiar with and able to deploy effectively, other available resources. For example:

- Textbooks
- Worksheets
- Source sheets
- Artefacts
- School library
- Study packs
- Historical artefacts

The department will also consider the benefits to be obtained from activities such as:

- Visits to museums and galleries
- Visits to historical sites – local, national and foreign
- Visits to temporary exhibitions
- Visits to outside lectures

Members of the department responsible for the organisation of such visits will take care to follow established DfEE, LEA and school policies for the safe administration and supervision of off-site activities.

The department will consider the closer involvement of parents in its activities by:

- Organising Open Evenings
- Welcoming participation in outside visits
- Where appropriate permitting classroom visits

ICT INSET Self-evaluation Form

A number of ICT skills are listed below. Members of the History department are not expected to be competent in all these areas, and some may not be relevant to any area of their teaching.

Teachers should evaluate their skills using the boxes below:

- **Basic setting-up skills** – Can you connect a monitor to a computer, switch on, set monitor contrast, etc?
- **Word processing**
 - Can you justify, delete, format, or move text?
 - Can you copy text, set font size and style?
- **Spreadsheets** – Are you able to create tables of data which you can then analyse and model by entering formulae?
- **Disk managing skills**
 - Can you format, create directories, back-ups and copies?
 - Can you save files onto disk?
- **Desktop publishing** – Can you set up frames and import text and pictures to generate worksheets, letters and bulletins?
- **Computer art** – Are you able to draw with a computer?
- **Hardware peripherals** – Do you know how to use CD-ROM, scanners, digital cameras and data-loggers?
- **Internet and World Wide Web**
 - Are you able to use electronic mail via the Internet?
 - Do you know how to obtain and download the World Wide Web for resources?
 - Just as important, do you know how to encourage students to use these facilities selectively and intelligently?
- **Software knowledge**
 - Do you know what History software would be of benefit to you? (eg encyclopaedias, simulations)
 - Do you know where to obtain it?

- **Databases**
 - Are you aware of databases for your subject?
 - Are you able to create a database of your own?
- **Computer graphing** – Are you able to enter data so that you can select its presentation from a number of graphs?
- **Departmental data-handling** – Are you aware of software that could help you manage departmental records and assessment?
- **Multimedia authoring** – Can you create presentations that incorporate text, pictures, animation and sound?

Answer the following questions and return them to the head of department:

- Would you benefit from INSET in ICT?

- Which particular area(s) of ICT would you like to learn more about?

- What type of INSET would you prefer? (Please tick)

- | | |
|-------------------------------------|---|
| Solo <input type="checkbox"/> | Staff groups <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Department <input type="checkbox"/> | Staff/student groups <input type="checkbox"/> |
| Other <input type="checkbox"/> | |

If other, please detail: