The Crusades NEA

**The Requirements**

* It must be independently written and researched by you
* It must take the form of a question set in the context of approximately 100 years. This does not have to be exactly 100 years. ( see below for more detail on this)
* It must be presented as one piece of continuous writing of between approximately 3000 to 3500 words
* A substantiated judgement must be reached
* There must be evaluation of at least three primary sources. At least two different types of primary sources should be evaluated
* There must be explicit analysis and evaluation of at least two differing interpretations by academic historians (i.e. **not** school textbooks). This should be set in the context in which the work was written.
* Your teacher is not permitted a. to provide detailed specific advice on how to improve drafts to meet the assessment criteria b. give detailed feedback on errors and omissions c. intervene personally to improve the presentation or content of work
* Your final piece is marked internally and a sample submitted to the exam board for moderation.

**The skills necessary for success**

* The ability to evaluate, analyse and argue a clear, substantiated case as would be expected in any essay for your examined units
* The ability to analyse and evaluate source material as would be expected for Paper Two (The Making of Modern Britain, 1951-2007)
* The ability to analyse and evaluate ways in which the past has been interpreted, building upon skills used on Paper One (Tsarist and Communist Russia, 1855-1964) - see below for more detailed guidance

-The NEA is worth 20% of your overall A Level grade; of this 20%, half of the marks are weighted towards Assessment Objective One (demonstrate, organise and communicate knowledge and understanding to analyse and evaluate the key features related to the periods studied, making substantiated judgements and exploring concepts, as relevant, of cause, consequence, change, continuity, similarity, difference and significance); a quarter of the marks are weighted towards Assessment Objective Two (analyse and evaluate appropriate source material within its historical context) and finally a quarter of the marks are weighted towards Assessment Objective Three (analyse and evaluate, in relation to the historical context, different ways in which aspects of the past have been interpreted).

**The importance of the 100 years rule**

-Answers should have a genuine contextual element running throughout - questions that tend to leap-frog entire decades are not offering an appropriate context

* To meet this requirement it is often helpful to think thematically - perhaps initially thinking of what the period was like at the start and comparing it to the end. What has changed, what has stayed the same?

**Presenting the final piece**

-The NEA should be typed up using a font that is readable and of sufficient size

-The NEA should be paper clipped or stapled - not placed in a ring binder or plastic wallet

-A word count should be included

-There should be a title at the top of the work, or even a separate title page. Your name and Centre Number (66715) should be clear.

-There is no preference of style of footnoting as long as one system is deployed consistently throughout

-There should be a bibliography. The interpretations, contemporary material, and the other resources referenced and used in the NEA should be specifically identified in the bibliography.

**Secondary Sources / interpretations**

-Within the Historical investigations there must be explicit analysis and evaluation of two differing interpretations by academic historians where students analyse and evaluate the differences between the interpretations, show an awareness of the time and/or context of the interpretations and demonstrate an understanding of the limitations placed on historians

-Your analysis and evaluation of historical interpretations must be based on the work of academic historians. It is not acceptable that the analysis and evaluation is based on textbook historians or course books.

-Once you have chosen your question, you must establish the view you are going to argue i.e. like in any essay you will need to know the answer you are going to try to prove

-Interpretations can be expected to come from a variety of sources. These might include A Level texts, academic articles, monographs ( a monograph is a detailed written study of a single specialized subject or an aspect of it) , general histories. However, at least two of the interpretations should come from academic sources.

-You will need to collect together a number of different interpretations - some of which will support your argument but a good number of them should form the basis of informed debate. Without these differing interpretations you will be unlikely to be able to answer the question effectively.

-Merely describing the views of others is not enough - evaluation of the reasons for these differences is absolutely crucial

-Using quotations to prove an interpretation is not an end in itself. You should not quote simply to provide historical information which is readily provable elsewhere. Most quotes will illustrate a clear view which you will go on to utilise, either to support or critique. You should never simply quote as a means of proving a view - you must debate it using knowledge and informed understanding.

*It is important to consider what might make an extract convincing. This might include:*

-Factual accuracy (However, how likely is it for a published interpretation to be factually inaccurate?)

-Provenance of the extract (but avoid broad, sweeping generalisations, often referring to bias)

-The context in which the interpretation was written - this type of evaluation is expected for at least two of the sources used. However this should be informed and be focused on the source itself, not generic comment about country/time/place etc)

-Don't tag a section on interpretations onto the end of your answer - there will be a natural moment when criticism of two (or more) academic sources fits more naturally into the flow of the argument.

-In order to criticise the context in which the source was written you will need to have researched the historian and the piece of work.

-The most effective responses tend to be those that are written in the third person yet offer an opinion on the interpretation given by another historian.

-Simply describing each source in turn or the author is not, of course, an evaluation!

*Acquiring the interpretations*

-You do not need to read a huge number of monographs from start to finish to gain knowledge of differing interpretations - you will become skilled at quickly establishing the view of any historian

-Google Scholar can be useful - especially the 'cited by' key as this will help you establish the extent of historical debate the topic has engendered

-Book reviews are a useful initial guide - especially those on sites that are pitched at a more general readership such as History Today or BBC History Magazine

-Reviews by readers on sites such as Amazon may also be useful initially.

**Primary sources/sources contemporary to the period**

Acquisition and use of sources contemporary to the period

-Your investigation must contain an evaluation of at least three primary sources. At least two different types of primary source should be evaluated. These may be different types of primary sources, for example: official publications, reports, diaries, speeches, letters, chronicles, observations of 'elite' or 'ordinary' people (from the inside or the outside). Other appropriate sources may include artefacts, archaeological or visual sources.

-In commenting and making judgements on the value of sources, you will be expected to apply your own contextual knowledge and perspectives of time and place in order to assess the value and limitations of their sources as evidence.

You are expected to comment on the following:

-the differing perspectives of the sources chosen

-the social, political, intellectual, religious and/or economic contexts in which the sources were written

-the credibility, authority, authenticity, consistency and comprehensiveness of the sources

-the bias, distortion or propagandist elements found in the sources

You should integrate your three primary sources into the overall analysis and ensure that they offer a range of type. Crucially there must be commentary and judgement about the value of the sources.