

Comenius Project: 2009/2011

Multicultural Interdisciplinary Handbook: Tools for Learning

History and Geography in a Multicultural Prospective.

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Analysis of National Curricula of Geography and History

Elaborated by Cinzia Crivellari

History and Geography Curricula in Europe: General Remarks.

History and geography feature in the national curriculum of all the project partner states; differences exist, however, in denomination and practice, considering them either as separate subjects or combining them with one another (geo–history) or with other social sciences. In most cases history and geography are treated as distinct subjects, even where a single teaching qualification covers both subjects and therefore are taught by the same teacher who possesses the qualifications that covers the humanities. In some countries there is a teacher who deals solely with these two subjects (as in France) while elsewhere the corresponding teaching qualification includes other subjects such as literature or philosophy (as in Italy and Spain). Further differences can be seen when comparing the first level of compulsory secondary schooling, where all national curricula aim for the acquisition of a basic grounding in the subject–area, with upper secondary schooling where the depth of study in the single areas is determined by the course of studies. The timetable also differs from country to country and between lower and upper secondary school; however, it is noteworthy that the total number of periods per subject per week does not exceed 3. It is not possible to compare the learning achievements of the pupils within the same age–group in different countries as each national education system has devised different systems and stages. In most cases this is two 8–year units of schooling (France, Spain & Austria), in other cases the second unit lasts till the age of 19 (Italy). The passage from one unit to another takes place at different ages, while the chance to get a school–leaving certificate at the end of the first unit is offered only in certain countries (Germany).

<http://eacea.ec.europa.eu/education/eurydice/documents/tools/108EN.pdf>

In all 7 of the European nations taken into consideration, the most up-to-date history and geography curricula are part of a general educational framework which make up the national curriculum. From 2001 onwards, governments in power set to work on revising and overhauling of school curricula in order to fulfil the education policy guidelines set by the Lisbon Treaty and later EU international agreements. All national curricula refer to building awareness and a sense of European citizenship; it is widely recognised that education plays a fundamental role in this process by promoting skills and abilities essential in a knowledge-based society in which learning is no longer confined to the years of compulsory schooling but is life-long. These shared intentions and goals can also be traced in the common choice of wording used by different governing bodies. As well as shared terminology, there is overall harmony in teaching method guidelines which supplement the subject-contents lists, although the level of prescription does vary. In France, for example, the teaching-method frame of reference is the most exhaustive and prescriptive of our sample. In particular, emphasis is placed on the pupils' skills and on their ability to "learn to learn"; that is to say, not only deal with different types of input but also to learn in a variety of settings and situations outside the realm of school.

In some cases, these renewal processes have rebuilt national curricula from scratch, very often coinciding with a switch in government (Spain and currently in Italy). In other countries, as is the case of France and Germany, the new guidelines were phased in level by level; beginning with compulsory schooling and overlapping with existing curricula, aiming for cultural and political continuity, despite the risk of uneven if not plainly contradictory outcomes.

Space and Time: two key concepts for understanding the world around us.

"History proceeds not only in time, but also in space". Even language underlines the inescapable ties between space and time. Events *take place*. History has its own *settings*. We might refer to the scene of the crime. The names of capitals can be a by-word for a kingdom or a whole era. We talk about "the battlefields of history", "realms of experience", "trials of the plains", "the peaks of power", "the stations of the cross" and "horizons of expectation". Space rings out in the metaphors of the "political landscape" with its breakdown into left, centre and right. Even the highly abstract meta-language refers to the historical or social "position" of an idea.

Such observation may come across as obvious and simplistic, however beyond the cliché they are actually able to highlight the spatial dimension of all human history and, consequently, the deep link between history and geography as subjects.

While this interdependence has long since been taken on board by historians (at least by the historiography of the *Annales* and particularly from the work and ideas of Fernand Braudel up to *spacing history*), this cannot be taken for granted in the realm of education, where the outlooks are kept distinct or may feebly intermingle in planning but some teaching practice demonstrates that the two subjects have really blended.

These difficulties, that crop up in all the different situations present in each country can be traced back to a variety of factors. First of all, teacher training; only in a few countries (E.g. France) do teachers receive special training in history and geography. Elsewhere their training

is lumped together with other subjects under a general category of either ‘humanities’ or ‘literature’. A second stumbling block has been the delay with which national curricula have incorporated breakthrough academic research. All in all, it appears to be difficult to put together coherent multi-disciplinary courses for geography and history, where the use of means specific to either history or geography helps us trace new mind-maps which link events and phenomena of the past with the fact that they took place in a particular realm, territory or location. It is not just a case of “making geography historical”, nor of overlapping the content of one subject with the other. Instead, the aim is to construct a framework which, without altering the epistemology of either subject, can provide an outlook and skills that can be applied in both fields and can be transferred from one to the other.

The most convenient point of convergence is current affairs; an outlook that links, say, problems connected with economic sustainability on a global scale with the factors that created present-day dynamics of exploitation and distribution of resources. The interplay between history and geography is inescapable when dealing with demographic issues that affect not only the make-up of today’s population but also contributed to the population trends of the past that had a profound effect on periods of boom or recession in the pre-industrial era.

Another area where this reciprocity comes into play are the changes in place names through history: locating historical events in the ancient world involves deciphering the language used in written vestiges, as well as the criteria, used by ancient peoples to name their settlements.

A geo-historical approach offers therefore a reliable tool for overcoming the problems related to creating and using mind-maps, especially when employing them as a frame of reference for organizing and memorizing events, bringing together diverse skills and putting subject-specific and multi-disciplinary knowledge into context.

History and Geography Teaching in Europe.

History as a school subject has seen a remarkable transformation in recent years due to changes in legislation which have practically revolutionized this area of study. The reasons lie both in political issues and in the far-reaching revision this area of study has witnessed recently. Ever since it became a school subject in the second half of the 19th century, the same issue has cropped up on the agenda of every new government or regime: which (hi)story to tell the coming generation? This issue became even more pressing with the advent of mass education, when this subject took on a key social role in fostering a sense of citizenship as well as selecting the ‘content’ with which to build a public story shared by the community. There is also the issue of which citizen to mould: tethered to national values or open to European integration and multicultural dialogue? Inclusive towards sub-national identities whilst preserving values and customs at a local and regional level? The issue has been recently dealt with, for example, by countries in Eastern Europe, especially those nations that have recently joined the EU and those which would like to join in the near future.

Whenever controversy sparks up over school curricula, history is often the sore point. Whether heightening certain topics or excluding others entirely, the content of history curricula can generate political feuds and public controversy, echoed and amplified in the media, depending, of course, on how strong a sense of heritage the country in question has. In

some countries, especially those created recently (for example Germany following reunification), the reaction has been both engaged and worthwhile and has reached large portions of the general public through the media. Elsewhere, the problem has been considered marginal and has not gone beyond the pundits, involving only historical institutes and societies but largely ignored by the general public. The Italian scenario is a case in point!

This is a clear indication of how little a country's own history counts for the political élite and points to a dangerous willingness to forgo history as a tool for bequeathing wisdom to future generations, for disseminating knowledge and for moulding civilization and customs.

Starting the 1980's, the debate surrounding the teaching of history, and therefore the historical and cultural heritage to be preserved and handed down, has been joined by professional historians who have joined forces with the Ministries for Education in *ad hoc* boards. In other cases, instead, they have disputed the excessively prescriptive nature of curriculum content guidelines. It is not hard to imagine how the two factions come into conflict: on one hand the historian who endeavours to describe and interpret events with the sole aim of investigating, understanding and reconstructing how a given event or phenomenon of the past came into being and "those who define school curricula to be taught in classrooms [;] there is an inevitable division and tension between their roles: the aims of the former to not match those of the latter, even when we are dealing with the very same person" [1]. The main matters that have caused a rift between civil servants and historians concern, on one hand, the choice of suggested topics for schools, on the other the methodological guidelines given in curricula, which have not always been in keeping with the epistemological features of the area of study.

It must be recognised that the reality of classroom practice calls for over-simplification, similarly, it may be awkward for teachers to review their own way of 'doing' history and take on board methodological directives and breakthrough topics in historical research. Each and every country has its own 'canon' set by its own historiographic and educational tradition, that can only be broadened or modified with difficulty. In order to avoid 'sacrificing' any feature of national heritage we run the risk of cluttering curricula with topics and investigations. Let us consider the issue raised by immigration and the integration in European schools of pupils originally from other countries. This phenomenon calls for and has already elicited a review of traditional national and/or European history contents with the purpose of widening mental and spatial horizons inside which to locate and analyse historical dynamics. Current curricula or those presently undergoing approval in European countries appear to be moving in this direction, albeit without severing ties with cultural overtones that are still firmly bound to 'Western' outlook.

Another problem faced by all countries, and linked directly to the former issue, is how much space to give history-teaching in a curriculum that is increasingly crammed with "old" and "new" subjects. One possible consequence of the competition between the subjects which fall into the "humanities" or "social" area (this includes geography) is the way in which the amount of time set aside for history is being eaten away.

When this takes place, the choice varies according to the type of school: in technical or vocational schools the periods of history are taken up by sociology, economics or law (in Germany and Spain). In traditional secondary school curricula a grounding in other social sciences is often tacked on to history (France & Italy).

The accumulation of content is also due to the fact that the content now takes us right up to the present day. Contemporary history spreads inevitably towards today's world, growing

more and more complex and requiring students to handle an increasing range and depth of analytical skills. Expanding the “present” means having to trim or squeeze ancient & medieval history in order to leave space for the modern and especially the contemporary eras. This appears to be the case in all the curricula surveyed. This does not mean to say that ancient history is not studied at all; elements of Greek and Roman history feature in all European curricula. Rather, the depth of the analysis is reduced within the topic, making way for other subjects to deal with the ancient world (such as art history or philosophy). This trend is less significant in Italy, for example, where ancient culture occupies an important position in the educational tradition. Even the most recently–created curricula “forgo” some topics in recent history for final year students, so as not to alter the periodization of ancient and medieval history.

National History

The true key issue regarding history curricula involves another matter: that is the prominence and space reserved for “national” history as opposed not only to “universal” or “world” or European history but also to local history. The backbone of history curricula remains national events, difficult as it is to break free of the ‘political’ and patriotic purpose of promoting a sense of national awareness in each and every country. Knowledge of a shared heritage helps strengthen social cohesion, it spreads common values and can become a way to foster a sense of national pride, keeping the memory of the individuals and the places that built the nation. If compared to the past, the reading of the values and the cultural content to be preserved and handed down have changed over the last few decades, however these elements are still present. The ‘nationalistic’ acclamation of ‘our forefathers’ heroic courage has been replaced by the civic pride and political commitment of those who fought to bring democratic constitutions into being.

Be that as it may, the prominence of national history currently appears to be weakened if not actually unsure. Having compared different curricula a trend is evident: the need to supplement the traditional topics in each country’s history following the canon of popular history and patriotic narratives with a wider perspective that stretches from European, to Western to Global points of view. There are at least three separate reasons for this:

- 1) 20th century history is largely the history of the disasters and tragedies caused by “nationalism”, “imperialism” and by “colonialism” as they occurred in European countries
- 2) The dynamics of globalization, the increase in migration and the growing need for integration of citizens originally from other countries all call for a review of the centrality of national history.
- 3) The emergence of local identities at a sub–national level has in recent decades become ever more pressing, thanks to the burgeoning of regional macro–areas.

Hence, an excessively Eurocentric perspective is seen as simplistic, and especially so when such a perspective rarely covers Europe in its entirety (this is the case only in Poland), its focus does not often go beyond a handful of the ‘most important’ western countries. Practically all the curricula surveyed now tend to complement traditional topics with notions regarding the Middle and Far East, Africa, South America and Australasia. The establishment of a “universal” history is on the teaching and educational agenda. Similarly, ministry

guidelines devote at least one section to the process of European integration, with the purpose of cultivating “European citizenship”, this is mentioned in all the curricula. This theme is dealt with mainly from an “institutional” point of view, regarding the function of European bodies rather than taking a truly “historical” approach which focuses on analysing the processes which engendered the idea of Europe and European “culture”. For this very reason, it belongs more in a geography curriculum rather than a history one.

However, the factor most undermining the centrality of national history is that of local or regional “histories”. How the matter has been dealt with varies from country to country, depending on the political and institutional profile and the balance of power between regional authorities and central government. Germany, since its constitution as a federal state, has never had a single, central educational legislation. All matters concerning education and culture are, in fact, two of the fundamental responsibilities of the *Land*. Thus, each member–state has full autonomy in determining the regional variants that feature alongside the common core of content. The issue is dealt with differently in Spain, and in part in Italy, too, where the relationship between the “centre” and the “province” has triggered political and cultural debates that have challenged the very meaning of national identity and the historical reconstructions associated with it. The emergence of new or “ancient” regional identities, which call for devolution have impacted on the space that should be devoted to “local” history. The current convention seems to agree on devoting a portion of the periods spent on “common” topics to learning about one’s own region and its past. Naturally, the issue hinges on what meaning can be attributed to the term “local”. On one hand, learning about one’s own area is recognised as essential and can also contribute to building respect for historical and environmental heritage. On the other, isolating local events from the wider context could turn into isolation and distort reality, and may become actual historical short–sightedness.

There are further matters regarding the definition of what is mutually relevant on a European level: the presence of “unsettled issues” in 20th Century history. Every national event sparks off fracture, discord and rows (very often within a country) over how the incidents relating to the mid–1900s should be commented.

The tricky process of critical review that has been undertaken in recent decades by the historical community is no exception. Typical of this are the debates that have arisen in Germany, Italy, France and Spain. Slowly but surely, the outcome of unbiased research on this topic has made its way into the mainstream, especially among the generations born after the end of the Second World War, thus making clear that a general shake–up of school–book history is necessary. In some countries, such as those with a greater “historical burden” like Germany and Italy, this reconsideration has caused further rifts by prompting politicians to take a stance and stirring up conflict between the veterans still alive today. Elsewhere, attempts at delineating, or at least suggesting, a mutual memory, a public account that deals with the “sensitive” or “thorny” issues of recent history have been better received and have been more successful. This due, also, to *ad hoc* legislation which has made history teaching easier (we can take Spain as an example of what has happened). The matter is of wider significance, as it regards the public use of history, which is inevitably linked to the criteria used when compiling history curricula and the methods used to teach it. In addition, we must not overlook the role of the media in shaping both public opinion and history teaching. It is not unusual to come across pupils whose outlook on these “controversial” issues has already been shaped by information picked up outside school, a growing proportion from films and TV series rather than from their family.

Partly due to this, throughout the second half of the 20th century the teaching of controversial issues in national history has required a special approach, as in some cases, where curricula entirely skipped incidents or figures which in some way could tarnish “national pride”. This was, for example, the stance taken in Italy immediately following WW II on Fascism or that taken in Germany and Austria on Nazism up to the 1960’s. Another approach was that of assuming a neutral position, by making a distinction between events and interpretations: in class the bare facts are presented, leaving it up to politicians, the media or each individual’s conscience to make judgements. This is what happened in Spain in the years immediately after the passage from the Franco regime to democracy, later repeated in many ex–Eastern Bloc countries after the demise of the communist regimes, during which only ‘official’ versions of history had prevailed for far too long.

In present–day European democracies, no longer neatly split between opposing forces, a common strategy seems to be emerging: *the recognition and reproduction of the controversial issues*, even if in some countries the temptation to hush or suppress things is still too strong. Such a choice in teaching and education practice springs from the precept that if a topic contains thorny issues, the teaching of that subject adjust to accommodate them: when faced with contrasting interpretations the wisest approach is to state them, to give them due account and create space for discussion and comparison. The decision not to skip the controversial issues is a political choice and is in the hands of governors. It is then up to teachers to deal with them discerningly and pass them on through an approach which expresses historical complexity.

Epistemological considerations

This topic brings us onto another key concern regarding history curricula: whether curricula should include (alongside the list of key themes) teaching methodology guidelines and an epistemological framework.

In some cases, as with the new Spanish curriculum, the list of topics follows an index of macro–themes, each of which carries with it epistemological considerations and teaching–method guidelines, in keeping with the overall educational model of the whole curriculum. This is the structure the new Italian curricula are supposed to resemble. These new curricula, that will come into force with the upper secondary reform, as yet lack any epistemological connotation. In other countries, such as France, the standards are set even more clearly both in terms of the topics that are to be dealt with as well as the teaching methodology and classroom practice guidelines. In the French curricula, teachers are provided with a list of sources, with corresponding practical examples. These are meant to be used for teaching a given topic or historical period so as to work towards compiling a shared dossier of material and sources to which each teacher can refer.

Curricula are still presented using the most customary structure: a list which clearly states all the secondary themes that can be explored through each historical period or historiographic nucleus. In this case the teaching methodology guidelines are limited to goals and general subject–related objectives, these, in turn, refer to the related educational model (E.g. Poland.)

In other countries, the content profile and the corresponding teaching–method guidelines vary from region to region: as occurs in Germany where subject models based on “knowledge” ordered chronologically paired with highly prescriptive guidelines appear alongside models which leave individual teachers free rein to develop single topics and therefore give greater

importance to study and life skills acquired through work on the topic.

Observing the *status quo* and imaging the shape of things to come, history teaching appears to both converge and merge with Citizenship to an ever greater extent. In some countries this subject has already been introduced as a fully-fledged curricular subject, occupying a place between history and legislation, with its own assessment. Elsewhere, teachers are instructed to include, when dealing with a particular era in national history, certain topics regarding the functions of the state and the features of each nation's own Democratic Constitution. A common aim, shared Europe-wide, is to provide youngsters with the right tools with which to figure out what they encounter day-to-day. Through their understanding of the role of public bodies these young people can become empowered citizens, exercising their duties and their rights within the national community established in their nation's constitutional texts.

Spanish Curricula

General features

The curricula currently in use were set in December 2006 by the Ministry of Education and Science (Royal Decree 1631) as part of an across-the-board overhaul of Secondary School curricula. Those general directives outlined, as is now the case across the whole of Europe, the principles of education and training that provide the backbone of the curriculum: minimum learning targets, basic skills, content and assessment criteria. The Spanish secondary education system (E.S.O.) is split into two levels: the first phase provides general education and training, it is compulsory and free of charge and goes from the age of 12 to 15. The second phase, that follows up compulsory schooling, separates into 5 different courses of study and lasts two years (from 16 to 18); this qualification gives access to university admission exams.

Looking more closely at the aims set for compulsory secondary education, we can see alongside the subject-related targets a more general goal: that of helping pupils develop their own personal sense of responsibility towards the shared values of tolerance, lawfulness, multiculturalism and gender tolerance. These goals are achieved through the study of Citizenship and Human Rights, a compulsory subject which features in all of the first three phases of schooling. This subject is taught by an assortment of humanities teachers, especially geography and history.

In these general directives special relevance is given to the 8 basic skills, which embody the core learning content of the curriculum. The emphasis in this case is on what the pupils can do, without this kind of active features it is inappropriate to speak in terms of across-the-board education and empowered citizenship in a democratic society. All subjects contribute to developing these skills (communication skills, mathematical skills, skills for understanding and interacting with the environment, information technology skills, social and citizenship skills, cultural and artistic skills, learning-to-learn skills, autonomy and personal initiative). Similarly, when using an integrated outlook, subject-related knowledge is the key to achieving these skills.

The subject Social Sciences, History and Geography features throughout the secondary school curriculum, the spread of the individual subjects and the number of periods varies from level to level and depends on the course of studies in the final year. This subject is taught/studied as a key to understanding the present day, with a focus on the ever-changing nature of today's society analysed in context. Thus, other social sciences, such as economics, sociology, art history and environmental studies play an important role, too, as they provide further analytical perspectives on present-day reality. The ministry directives which supplement the content listings are highly detailed, both in terms of the teaching-method guidelines and both in the definition of the learning targets and assessment criteria. What is more, these directives also provide an epistemological key as they are in keeping with the distinctive features of each subject, not only up-to-date with the latest developments but also acknowledging the fundamental classifications typical for each subject (space, time and cause-and-effect for history), each of these divisions is covered in a specific introductory section. The overlap between history and geography content gives the teacher the opportunity to work on the meaning of space and time and the sphere of awareness, each and every historical beginning or transformation occurs within a defined space which will concurrently be transformed or

modified. The two subjects are also spread within the “units” in a complementary fashion with the aim of triggering an exchange of information and enhancing knowledge.

The First Year of Compulsory Secondary Education (12 years of age) – **Subject: Social sciences (Geography & History)** (4 periods per week).

Main content:

- Reading and interpretation of images and maps with different scales and characteristics. Graph interpretation and graph drawing using data provided.
- Collecting information from a variety of sources and presenting this data in a textual format.
- Locating cultures and civilisations in space and time and historical contextualization. Graphical representation of temporal sequences. Identification of the multiple causes and their consequences in processes of transformation and evolution.
- The Earth (the Solar System, structure, tectonic plates, continents, oceans, the atmosphere.)
- The ecosystem in Spain, Europe and on other continents. Interaction between humankind and nature.
- Prehistory and Ancient history (Mesopotamia, Ancient Persia, Greece and Rome)

The Second Year of Compulsory Secondary Education (13 years of age) – **Subject: Social sciences (Geography & History)** (3 periods per week).

Main content:

- The fundamentals of demography. Demography dynamics. Demography in Spain, Europe and the rest of the world.
- The Byzantine Empire and Islam. The Middle Ages in Europe. Medieval Spain. Islamic Spain and Christian kingdoms. Romanesque and Gothic art and architecture.
- Modern history. The strengthening of monarchy. The Spanish Empire: rise and fall. The conquest and colonization of America. The Renaissance, Baroque and Classicism.

The Third Year of Compulsory Secondary Education (14 years of age) – **Subject: Social sciences (Geography & History)** (3 periods per week).

Main content:

- Ecosystems and human activities
- Sectors of economic activity
- Political Systems. Social organization and social structures in Spain and in the European Union.
- Changes and inequality worldwide. Globalization.

The Fourth year of Compulsory Secondary Education (15 years of age) – **Subject: Social sciences (Geography & History)** (3 periods per week).

Main content:

- Absolute monarchy and revolutions in Europe and America.
- Napoleonic Europe.
- The 19th Century: political and economic changes in Spain and around the world. Liberalism, socialism and anarchy. The industrial revolution. European imperialism.
- The 20th Century: the Spanish Civil War and the Francoist regime. The two World Wars. The roots and the spread of Communism, Fascism and Nazism.
- The Post-war world. The end of Colonialism.
- 19th and 20th Century art.
- The world today.

The First year of non-compulsory schooling (16 years of age) – **Subject: Social Sciences and Humanities course of studies (only contemporary history)**

(3 periods per week)

Main content:

- The decline of the Old Order. Revolutions and new economic systems in the 19th Century.
- German and Italian unification.
- The 20th Century: the Russian revolution, the two World Wars, the Post-war era, the Cold War.
- The world today.

The Second year of non-compulsory schooling (17 years of age) – **Subject: Spanish history (compulsory in all courses of study)** (4 periods per week)

Main content:

- History of Spain from the Atapuerca site (an archaeological find with fossils and Western Europe's oldest known stone human utensils) up to the birth of democracy at the end of the 20th Century.

The Second year of non-compulsory schooling (17 years of age) – **Subject: Geography of Spain (Social Sciences)** (4 periods per week)

Main content:

- Spain and Europe on the world stage: unity and diversity.

- Administrational and territorial structures in Spain.
- The European Union. Present-day centres of global power.
- Nature and the environment in Spain.
- Raw materials and energy sources.
- The structure of the Spanish economy. Sectors of economic activity and resources: regional differentiation of the economy.
- Demography. Urban structures and regional differentiation.
- Geography of the pupils' own area.

The Second year of non-compulsory schooling (17 years of age) – **Subject: History of Art (only for the Humanities course of study)** (4 periods per week)

- From classical art to the 20th Century

FRENCH CURRICULA

General features

As in the case of Spain, the curricula for single subjects in France fit into the across-the-board guidelines: education and training curricula which embody national educational policies and Europe-wide agreements. In order to grasp the interrelationship between the targets and specific objectives for each subject area and the overall framework of education and training behind the education system it is necessary to refer to these underlying guidelines.

The Common Base of Knowledge and Skills, a decree issued by the Ministry of Education in 2006 and overseen by the then-minister Gilles de Robien, is seen as a thorough re-establishment of the entire educational structure. In it key knowledge and skills that pupils are supposed to gradually master from primary school through to upper secondary school. The aim here is to provide more than just theoretical knowledge; alongside, the educational system should be able to focus on knowledge, skills and attitudes that can serve as goals and that the pupils, future citizens, will be able to put into practice in different situations in their day-to-day life (*living knowledge*). This base of knowledge, picked up at school, will be a factor in nurturing individuals well-equipped for life: able to adapt to new situations and able to plan for the future; not only, they will be able to adapt their behaviours to mirror the educational goals promoted by the educational system. The usefulness of knowledge (in line with OCSE plans) can make personal attitudes clearer which in turn can help incubate more discerning choices regarding one's own career.

The ministry document pinpoints 7 key, across-the-board skills:

- 1) French-language proficiency
- 2) Threshold skills in one modern foreign language.
- 3) The acquisition of a basic grounding in maths, sciences and technology.
- 4) The development of a European humanist culture (here geography and history play a major role as subjects which teach a correct spatial and temporal frame of reference)
- 5) Proficiency in using common information and communication technologies
- 6) The acquisition of social and civil skills.
- 7) The development of personal autonomy and individual initiative.

Among the main aims of humanist culture, based mainly on the study of literature and works of art from the past, we encounter that of making the past meaningful by focussing on continuity and change and at the same time learning how to perceive self-hood and other. Knowing about the past therefore plays an important role in appreciation of works of art and culture, our present-day heritage as well as broadening our horizons to include the whole gamut of human experience through space and time. The skills carried by humanist culture connect in a synergic way with those associated with social and civic education, whose main objective is that of developing empowered citizenship and respect for human rights.

Alongside these general educational guidelines the following, more detailed subject-related directives are provided.

Knowledge

Geographic references;

- the major physical features_(oceans, continents, relief, rivers, major climatic and bio-geographic realms) and human units (distribution of the world's population, leading contemporary world powers and their main cities, States of the European Union and their capital cities);
- major types of settlements;
- main geographic features of the European Union;
- French territory: organisation and localisations, regional units, overseas territories;

Historical references:

- the different periods in the history of mankind (characteristic founding events that help situate them in relation to each other by connecting facts, whether political, economic, social, cultural, religious, scientific and technical or literary and artistic), as well as breaking points;
- major features in the history of Europe's construction;
- main periods and dates, leading figures, founding events in the history of France, connecting them to European and world history; be prepared to share European culture;
- through knowledge of the main texts of Antiquity (the Iliad and the Odyssey, stories of the founding of Rome, the Bible);
- through knowledge of the main literary, pictorial, theatrical, musical, architectural and cinematographic works that are a part of French, European and world heritage (ancient, modern and contemporary);
- understand unity and complexity of the world by a preliminary approach to:
 - human rights;
 - diversity of civilisations, societies, religions (history and contemporary spheres of dissemination);
 - religion in France, Europe and throughout the world through the study of founding texts (notably, extracts from the Bible and the Koran) using a secular approach respecting consciences and convictions;
 - major principles of production and exchange;
 - globalisation;
 - inequality and interdependence in the world;
 - notions of resources, restrictions and risks;
 - sustainable development;
 - teaching on political culture: major forms of political, economic and social organisation (particularly the major States of the European Union), the place and the role of the State;
 - world conflicts and notions of defence

Abilities

Pupils should be able to:

- read and use different languages, particularly images (different types of texts, tables and graphs, diagrams, cartographic representations, artistic representations, photographs, computer-generated images);
- situate in time events, literary or art works, scientific or technical discoveries that were studied and connect them with historical or cultural facts which are useful in understanding them;
- locate a place or a geographical unit by using maps with different scales;
- distinguish between cultural consumables and works of art; develop a sensible approach to reality;
- use their knowledge to understand current events;
- cultivate humanist and universal sports values by participating as players and spectators.

Attitudes

The humanist culture taught in schools provides pupils with common references. It also gives every person the desire to have a personal cultural life:

- by reading, visiting museums, and doing leisure activities (cinema, theatre, concerts and other cultural events);
- by having a cultural, artistic or physical activity. This culture aims at cultivating curiosity;
- regarding art, heritage and contemporary productions, whether French or foreign;
- regarding other countries of the world (history, civilisation, current affairs). It develops awareness of the fact that human experiences have a universal aspect.

To successfully complete their schooling, pursue further studies, build their personal and professional future, lead a successful life in society and freely exercise their citizenship, pupils require other skills. Schools should allow each pupil to become fully responsible, autonomous and open to initiative, and fulfil their mission of providing social and civic education more effectively.

These guidelines are the foundations on which the curricula for each of the four years of *Collège* (lower secondary) and the three years of *Lycée* (upper secondary) or two years in some cases of vocational training.

As already mentioned, one of the distinctive features of French curricula is their highly prescriptive nature: every topic comes with detailed instructions on which activities to present, which teaching methods to adopt, which material to use and even how much time to set aside. The intention is to give the pupils as direct an approach as possible, letting them deal first-hand with sources, documents and maps. Correspondingly, all teachers, especially those who don't have their own body of sources, are provided with ideas on how the material can be used and how different teaching approaches can be used to cover individual themes that occur in the curriculum.

In the history curricula, another major feature is the effort to take into account the temporal

differentiation of various “histories” and, in the same way, to highlight the spatial positioning of both long and short-term phenomena. Above all in the case of contemporary history curricula there is an attempt to draw attention to the range of agents at work in history, especially collective agents whose channels of memory are given special importance.

All of these teaching-method and epistemological features mean that French curricula are not only in line with the most recent developments in historiography, primarily the now ‘classic’ stance of the *Annales*, but also they are in keeping with developments in history as taught as a school subject. This can be clearly seen in the detailed descriptions of the learning objectives, broken down into knowledge, abilities and skills, both comprehensive (proficiency in oral and written language) and specific (evaluation of sources and contextualizing them). These learning objectives can be reached through cognitive tasks (sense of time, location, periodization, etc.) that belong specifically to the study of history.

Geography curricula appear to aim at arousing curiosity in pupils with regard to new and different ways of inhabiting planet earth and raising awareness of cultures and values different to those predominant in the western world. As in the case of history, detailed instructions are given on which material to use (physical maps, thematic maps, images or photographs), which cognitive operations to encourage and which teaching methods to put into practice (case studies above all).

Both historical and geographical knowledge play an important role in shaping pupils as future citizens, as both provide a grounding in different aspects of collective existence, the sphere with which each individual must relate. Education for citizenship begins at school, the first institution in which individuals learn the basic rules of public life; moreover, at school we take our first steps towards achieving our own personal goals in life. Lastly, particular attention is paid to understanding Europe and how it has evolved, its geographical make-up and the founding of shared bodies.

Collège (lower secondary) (2008 curriculum) History, Geography and Citizenship Education

The objectives cover knowledge and ability (for pupils) and teaching methods (for teachers)

6ème: the sixth year of compulsory schooling – This is the transition year from Primary (11–12 years of age) – **Subject: History** (the amount of time allocated to the subject varies from topic to topic)

Main content: from the 3rd Millenium B.C. to the 8th Century

- The earliest civilisations in the Near East (10% of the time allocated for history)
- The dawn of Greece: cities, myths and panhellenism.
- The city of Athens: citizenship and democracy (5th – 4th Century B.C.)
- Alexander the Great (all together 25 % of the time allocated for history).
- Rome: from the foundation to the end of the Republic: founding, political organization and conquests.
- The Empire: the emperor, the city, the spread of Roman culture (all together 25% of

the time allocated for history).

- The origins of Judaism and Christianity (20 % of the time allocated for history)
- The Christian Empires of the High Middle Ages (The Byzantine and the Carolingian Empires) (10 % of the time allocated for history)
- The civilisations of the Far East: China and India (10 % of the time allocated for history)

6ème: the sixth year of compulsory schooling – This is the transition year from Primary (11–12 years of age) – **Subject: Geography** (the amount of time allocated to the subject varies from topic to topic)

Main content: Human societies and their diversity.

- Our immediate surroundings: landscapes and territory (10 % of the time allocated for geography)
- Where do we find humans on Earth? (20 % of the time allocated for geography)
- Settlement in rural areas (15 % of the time allocated for geography)
- Settlement in coastal areas (15 % of the time allocated for geography)
- Settlement in harsh environments (15 % of the time allocated for geography)
- Work on a topic chosen by the teacher (5 % of the time allocated for geography)

6ème: the sixth year of compulsory schooling – This is the transition year from Primary (11–12 years of age) – **Subject: Citizenship Education** (the amount of time allocated to the subject varies from topic to topic)

Main content: the pupil, the youngster, the citizen.

- The structure and the “mission” of *Collège* (Lower secondary school) (30 % of the time allocated for civic education)
- The individual (30 % of the time allocated for civic education)
- The structure of the town council and democratic decision-making (30 % of the time allocated for civic education)
- Work on a current affairs topic chosen by the teacher (10 % of the time allocated for civic education)

5ème: the seventh year of compulsory schooling (12–13 years of age) – **Subject: History** (the amount of time allocated to the subject varies from topic to topic)

Main content: The Middle Ages and the Dawn of the Modern Era

- From the Roman Empire to the Middle Ages: the Byzantine Empire until 1453
- The Muslim World
- The Carolingian Empire until the 9th Century A.D. (9/10 periods)

- Western Christianity: the structure of the Church – the political framework and society
- The Kingdom of France (10th – 15th Century): the rise of the State (13/14 periods)
- The Dawn of the Modern era: Humanism, the Renaissance and the Reformation – Europe and The Age of Discovery – The Kingdom of France in the 16th Century: the struggle for monarchical authority (11/14 periods)

5ème: the seventh year of compulsory schooling (12–13 years of age) – **Subject: Geography** (the amount of time allocated to the subject varies from topic to topic)

Main content: Africa, Asia and the Americas

- Africa: the diversity of Africa – The Maghreb (10/12 periods)
- Asia: the diversity of Asia – The Union of India – China (13/15 periods)
- The Americas: the spatial differences between North and South America – Brazil (10/12 periods)

4ème: the eighth year of compulsory schooling (13–14 years of age) – **Subject: History** (the amount of time allocated to the subject varies from topic to topic)

Main content: from the Modern era to the dawn of the Contemporary world

- 17th – 18th Century: introduction to Modern Europe – absolute monarchy in France – The struggle against absolutism (The Glorious and the American Revolutions) – The Age of Reason (9/10 periods)
- The Age of Revolution (1789 – 1815): The principal phases in the French revolutionary period from 1789 to 1815 – The transformation of Europe (The Napoleonic era) (9/10 periods)
- Europe and Expansionism in the 19th & 20th Century (1815 – 1914): the Industrial Era – Liberal and Nationalist movements – Global partition – France from 1815 to 1914 (16/18 periods)

4ème: the eighth year of compulsory schooling (13–14 years of age) – **Subject: Geography** (the amount of time allocated to the subject varies from topic to topic)

Main content: Europe and France

- The European continent – the diversity of Europe – the main features of 3 states chosen between Germany, Russia, Great Britain and one European Mediterranean state (16/19 periods)
- France: unity and diversity – The organization of national territory – The main regional areas (16/19 periods)

3ème: the ninth year of compulsory schooling (14–15 years of age) – **Subject: History & Geography** (the amount of time allocated to the subject varies from topic to topic)

Main content: The World of Today (using an up-to-date atlas, the teacher picks out case studies that show how geography and history can be used together to get a better, more

understandable picture of the status quo.)

- 1914 – 1945: wars, democracy, totalitarianism: The First World War and its aftermath – Stalin's USSR – The Depression of the Thirties, beginning from the cases of France and Germany – The Second World War (17/21 periods)
- The moulding of and the shape of the World today: from 1945 to the present day – the growth of democracy and inequality – the geography of the world today (**the fusion of history and geography is the special feature of this second part of the curriculum**)
- Economic growth and demographic evolution and their social and cultural impact – changes in human mobility, the unequal distribution of wealth and urbanisation.
- From the Cold War to today's world (East – West relations, decolonization, the fall of Communism - World political geography (all together 19/23 periods)
- The leading economic powers: the United States, Japan, the European Union (15/19 periods)
- France: France post-1945 – the changes in the French economy and their impact in geographical terms – France as a European and global power (15/19 periods)

The 3ème curriculum is the logical completion of those of the previous years; thus, the subject-related skills are checked at the end of the entire **Collège** cycle. For history these skills can be summarized as a grasp of medium and short-term time; for geography it is the key skill of localisation without which any study of the organisation of the world does not make any sense.

Lycée(Upper Secondary)

Lycée curriculum aim at building an understanding of the contemporary world; they take for granted that pupils have already covered the general sequence of history in a cursory fashion. (The amount of time allocated to each topic is left to the discretion of the teacher, leaving, however, enough time to go into the last two topics in greatest depth (national history and 19th Century Europe)

2ème: the ninth year of compulsory schooling (15–16 years of age)

In the school year 2010–11(BO 29.4.2010), a new curriculum for all courses of upper secondary study have been introduced, starting from 2ème. As the preliminary remarks explain, 2ème is a transition year from lower to upper secondary and therefore should carry forward the work done so far while laying the foundations for upper school study. At upper school it is not necessary to resume the chronological and spatial scheme followed through lower secondary. Here, instead, the focus is on understanding the world today through the study of societies of the past and analysing the impact of today's societies on their surroundings. The cultural, civic and conceptual targets are thus the same for both subjects. The aim is foster the application of reasoning and a critical stance.

Another guideline draws attention to the use of ICT, both as a source of documentation and as a tool used by pupils in producing their own coursework.

Subject: History – Theme: “Europeans in the World during the population of the world.

- The development of citizenship in the ancient world: Athens 5th–4th Century B.C. and Rome 1st–3rd Centuries A.D.
- Culture and society in Medieval Europe from the 11th to the 13th Century: Medieval Christianity and either “rural cultures and societies” or “urban cultures and societies”
- New geographical and cultural schemes for Europeans in the Modern Age: the expansion of the world and either “Renaissance figures” or “the emergence of a new scientific and technical spirit”
- Revolution, freedom and nationhood at the dawn of the contemporary era: The French revolution, freedom and nationhood in Europe at the beginning of the 1800’s.

Subject: Geography – Theme: “Society and sustainable development”.

The learning target is to familiarize pupils with a systematic approach and with the analysis of complex phenomena. In fact, there is not one sole model of sustainable development, rather, there is a wide range of possible approaches and strategies. The study of geography should lead pupils to understand these.

A multidisciplinary approach, essential when dealing with such a complex issue, will call on the teacher to encompass the complementary approach customary in biology, chemistry and physics when working on issues such as nutrition, energy and water. Particular attention will be paid to city life, given that in 2025 two thirds of the world’s population will be city-dwellers.

Four topics have been selected, the first and the third are compulsory while the choice between the second and the fourth is left up to the teacher. While the first topic is preparatory, and therefore requires a different approach as it provides the theory necessary to deal with the successive topics, the following three will all be covered starting from a case study.

1. Introductory topic: the impact of development.
2. Managing resources: nutrition / water / energy
3. Organization of cities: urban growth / transportation / planning a sustainable city.
4. Managing landscapes on Earth: the Poles / coastlines / high-risk areas

In European schools, history and geography are taught for two periods per month in a foreign language (German, English, Spanish or Italian, depending on what is available in each school).

lème: the tenth year of schooling (non- compulsory) (16–17 years of age) – **Subject: History** – for the Economics & Sciences (ES) course of studies and Letters (L) course of studies

Main content:

- The industrial era and its culture, from the middle of the 19th Century until 1939:

economic, social and ideological transformations in Europe and North America – culture and religion – Europe and global hegemony: changes, colonization and relations (total 15 periods)

- France from the first half of the 19th Century to 1914: a survey of territory and population – From the Second Republic of 1879 onwards: the pursuit of a political regime – The Republic: the growth of political culture (1879 – 1914) (total 10 periods)
- Wars, democracies, totalitarian regimes (1914 – 1945): introduction to political maps of Europe in 1850 and in 1914: States, political regimes and nationalist movements – the First World War and Bolshevism in Europe – liberal democracies in the 1930's: the example of France – totalitarian regimes
- The Second World War: the main phases – the Nazi scheme for extermination – France during WW II (total WW I + WW II 25 periods)

1ème: the tenth year of schooling (non– compulsory) (16–17 years of age) – **Subject: History** – Sciences course of studies

Main Content:

- The industrial era and its culture, from the middle of the 19th Century until 1939: industrialization and growth – society in the industrial era (total 8 periods).
- France from 1900 to 1939: an overview of France during the Belle Epoque – the French and the First World War – The Thirties (total 12 periods)
- Totalitarian regimes and the war – The Second World War (total 12 periods)

1ème: the tenth year of schooling (non– compulsory) (16–17 years of age) – **Subject: Geography** – Economics & Sciences and Letters courses of studies.

Main content:

- Introduction: what is Europe (3 periods)
- Europe and its states: the subdivision in states and the main geopolitical groupings – a community of states being challenged: The European Union – two European Union states chosen between : Germany or Great Britain, Spain or Italy (total 12 periods)
- Transportation networks and flow patterns in Europe and France: urbanization and urban networks – communication networks and trade routes – human mobility (total 10 periods)
- France and its territory: metropolitan areas and DOM–TOM – settlement and distribution of resources – the environment: nature and society – the economy – inequalities in spatial distribution and territorial re–organization (total 17 periods)
- Regional areas in France and Europe: a case study of a European region – regional inequalities in France and in Europe (total 8 periods)

1ème: the tenth year of schooling (non– compulsory) (16–17 years of age) – **Subject:**

Geography – Sciences course of studies

Main content:

- Europe and its states and regions: What is Europe? – Europe and its states and the European Union – a case study: a region in France or another European state (total 10 periods)
- Networks and flow patterns in Europe and France: urban networks and communication networks – human mobility (total 8 periods)
- France and its territory: metropolitan areas and DOM–TOM – the environment: nature and society – the economy – inequalities in spatial distribution and territorial re–organization

The Final Year : Economics & Sciences and Letters courses of study (17–18 years of age) – **Subject: History**

Main content:

- The World, Europe and France from 1945 to the present day: from an industrial society to a communication society –the major ideological models and a comparison between the East and the West – the underdeveloped world: independence, challenging the world order, diversity – the quest for a new world order from the 1070’s onwards. (total 22 periods)
- Europe from 1945 to the present day : Western Europe under construction until the end of the 80’s – the era of popular democracies (1948 – 1989) – European issues post–1989 (total 10 periods)
- France from 1945 to the present day: appraisal and recollections of the Second World War – political changes – economy, society and culture – France on the world stage (total 18 periods)

The Final Year : Sciences course of study (17–18 years of age) – **Subject: History**

Main content: the World today

- International relations post–1945: the Cold War (1947 – 1991) – a new world order (total 12 periods)
- Colonization and independence: European colonization and the colonial system – decolonization and its aftermath (total 8 periods)
- France’s 5th Republic: a new republican system – economy, society and culture – France on the world stage (total 12 periods)

The Final Year : Economics & Sciences and Letters courses of study (17–18 years of age) – **Subject: Geography**

Main content: the global realm

- The globalized realm: globalization and interdependence – alternative models of organization (total 10 periods)

- The three large global powers: North America – the European Union – Eastern Asia (total 22 periods)
- Developing countries: unity and diversity in the South – a northern interface – South: the Mediterranean area – a state and an area being rebuilt: Russia (total 18 periods)

The Final Year : Sciences course of study (17–18 years of age) – Subject: Geography

Main content: the global realm

- The global realm: the uneven distribution of production and development – alternative models of organization of the global realm (total 10 periods)
- The United States: the USA as a superpower – the Atlantic coast of the United States (total 8 periods)
- Eastern Asia: a growth area – the Japanese megalopolis – a northern interface – South: the Mediterranean area (total 6 periods)

In European Schools history and geography are taught partially through a foreign language (three History topics and three Geography topics chosen from a listing very similar to those for ES/L and S courses of study. The language of instruction may be Spanish, English, Portuguese, Italian or German.

Austrian Curricula

General features

The Austrian Education system (the most recent reform dates to 2007) is split into two levels of compulsory schooling: the first (*Volksschule, Grundschule*) lasting four years, has as its main aim that of providing general basic education with the purpose of aiding social integration, intellectual growth and the psychological and physical development of children.

The second level, lasting four years (from 10 to 14) is split into two courses of study: either *Hauptschule*, open to youngsters who have completed primary school well, and *allgemein bildende höhere Schule* open to pupils who attained “good” or “very good” assessments and who would like to continue their studies through to upper secondary (*AHS–Unterstufe*).

The lower level of secondary education assures a basic grounding that varies according to the course of studies and is regulated by national standards. There is also a margin of flexibility for certain subjects that are allocated a minimum or maximum number of periods, the actual number being decided on a discretionary basis by single schools in complete autonomy. History and geography belong to the compulsory subjects, the number of periods per week is given as a sum of the weekly periods in each year (between 6 and 10 periods per week all together for history and 7 to 12 periods for geography (this usually works out as 2 periods per week in each year). History is taught together with social sciences, while geography is paired up with economics. Particular attention is paid to the teaching-methods used to foster the across-the-board and subject-specific skills, the range of skills targeted is the feature that differentiates the streamed groups. Alongside the compulsory subjects, optional subjects and workshops can

also be added. Teachers are given free rein to decide which methods to use and what material to present to their classes.

Those who complete this stage successfully are then admitted to either a pre-vocational school (*Polytechnische Schule*) or an upper secondary technical or vocational school (*berufsbildende mittlere oder höhere Schule*) while pupils who attain good assessments will automatically be able to attend a general upper secondary (*allgemein bildende höhere Schule*). The first stage of general upper secondary is open only to those youngsters, who, during primary school achieved “good” or “very good” assessments in German language, reading skills and maths. This stage of compulsory schooling lasts 4 years (from 10 to 14) can only be completed by attending upper secondary (*AHS–Unterstufe*) which also lasts four years (from 14 to 18 years of age). The first two years of any lower general secondary follow a common curriculum. From the third year onwards, this branches into three distinct courses of studies: *Gymnasium* (humanities), featuring a second foreign language or alternatively Latin, *Realgymnasium*, focused on sciences and maths and vocational training and *Wirtschaftskundliches Realgymnasium*, focused on chemistry and vocational training. The core timetable for all courses schedules two periods per week of History & Social Sciences (from the second year on) as well as 1 period per week for Geography & Economics (from the second year on) for a total of 6 periods for history and 7 for geography (with the possibility of adding further periods up to a maximum of 10 for the former and 12 for the latter throughout the entire stage.

Upper general secondary continues the 3 separate courses of study begun in lower secondary, at this stage the *Gymnasium* (humanities) adds Greek as an optional language while at the *Realgymnasium* the study of scientific subjects becomes more specialized. At technical and vocational schools the courses are differentiated according to the wide range of professional fields they train pupils for.

From 2003 to 2007 some experimental schemes were piloted with the aim of testing the reliability and the application of educational standards by certifying pupils’ skills regularly. Pupils are required to demonstrate the skills they have acquired by converting them into procedural knowledge that can be put into practice in everyday life. Austrian curricula seem to give great importance to the procedural and instrumental aspect of academic knowledge, rather than plain acquisition of subject-related theory. The whole system is geared towards skills learnt at school but relevant to life in general; in future careers, for technical and vocational schools, or in learning and life skills for the humanities courses. Here the emphasis is on learning *rather than schooling*, as can be seen in the introduction of certain transdisciplinary subjects such as Citizenship and Human Rights Education and Education for Europe. The Federal Ministry for Education, Art and Culture has singled these subjects out as fundamental in developing active and responsible citizenship, respect for human individuals and understanding of the steps towards European integration and has set up a range of purpose-built schemes and websites. In particular, the study of Contemporary history serves this purpose well, by providing opportunities to go into themes brought up by Europe’s recent totalitarian experiences, considered not only from a national standpoint, but open towards more general topics such as human rights and democratic tolerance.

Current curricula for **History & Social Sciences**, in the common features for all courses of study, date back to May 2000. Some changes were made in 2008 with the introduction of Civic Education.

The guidelines for teachers pinpoint four general aims: underline the relationship between past, present and future; help pupils build their identity in a plural society; help pupils think about the way they formed their political and social ideas; give pupils the chance to

understand historical and political skills and put them into practice.

The skills related to historical knowledge are:

- 1) reflect upon historical issues.
- 2) use a historical method to re-construct and de-construct historical content.
- 3) grasp and use terminology peculiar to history and social sciences.
- 4) build one's own point of view on the main historical topics and be able to debate this with others.

The most important topics that provide the core of the content for lower secondary:

- Hegemony and power
- Society and the individual
- Economy
- Culture
- Ethics and religion

These *topics* are set in a spatial context: global, continental, national, regional and local. Each macro-topic is linked to the present-day state of affairs from a human rights standpoint, fostering a multilateral outlook on problematic issues in today's society. The study of **History & Social Sciences** also contributes to personal development (individual and social) in Civic Education; it also fits in with other subject areas such as environmental studies and technology and health & hygiene) and at the same time reinforces practical knowledge in fields such as language and communication.

In upper secondary school the main history topics are:

Sixth year of secondary:

- The first humans
- Ancient Eastern and Ancient Greek and Roman cultures
- A project on a topic regarding the Middle Ages.

Seventh year of secondary:

- The origins of globalization with the discovery of new continents
- The Renaissance and Humanism
- The Reformation of the Christian Church
- The birth of modern states and human rights
- the processes of emancipation of the working classes
- Imperialism and the First World War

Eighth year of secondary:

- The world after the First World War
- The creation of the First Austrian Republic
- The seeds of dictatorships in Europe
- Daily life at the time Nazism with further study on the groups persecuted by the Nazi regime

Other topics:

- The Second World War and the Post-War World
- The Second Austrian republic and the European Union

The study of **Geography and Economics** in the first two years secondary school covers the earliest forms of human social and economic organization, paying particular attention to geographical and environmental differences. The examples given are taken from Austria and the rest of Europe in the first year, while in the second year attention is turned to other continents.

During third and fourth year the curriculum furthers the pupils' knowledge and learning on lifestyles and economic systems in Austria, Europe and the rest of the world, adding at this point insight into the state of natural and man-made environments and the world of work with the purpose of providing career guidance. Photographs and diagrams are used and topographic reading skills are encouraged. Case studies are frequently used.

Year five (10 years of age)

- *Let's take a look at the Earth:* gathering information about the Earth, how to use globes, atlases and photographs.
- *How people around the world live and flourish:* how peoples around the world adapt their lifestyles; the influence of the natural environment on social organization and the earliest economic systems; how peoples deal with natural disasters.
- *How people produce and use raw materials and energy:* raw materials and energy sources on Earth.

Year Seven (11 years of age)

- *Life in built-up areas:* comparison between built-up areas and contiguous areas; features, functions and environmental issues at play in built-up areas.

Year eight (12 years of age)

- *Natural and human habitat in Austria:* an overview of the Austrian landscape using maps and satellite images; some of the factors behind population growth and distribution.
- *Human influence on habitat:* living conditions in central and outlying areas; a comparison of the differences in potential in different locations, the links between trade and the exploitation of land.
- *An overview of the world of work:* the importance of choosing a career, an overview of ongoing mutation of the job market, the interplay between diverse economic interests, issues relating to unemployment, national and European strategies/approach.
- *Managing a Household budget :* planning spending, protecting consumer interests in a market economy, the advantages of and the changes due to common European currency.
- *Economic relations between Austria and Europe:* market forces, the public sector, the integration of the Austrian economy and its position in The European Union.

Year Eight (13 years of age)

- The European Community, centre and periphery of the global economy: the importance of different countries and regions; subsidies and assessment of cooperative development schemes.
- Life in a Different World: cultural, social and political differences around the world; learning to relate to an 'Other' free from prejudice.
- Life in a globalized world: the increase in interaction and interdependence in a globalized world; the weight of new corporate power; working towards human responsibility for "One Earth"; the importance of finding different ways to decide on one's own career.

ITALIAN CURRICULA

THE SECONDARY LOWER SCHOOL

The Moratti Reform

Following the 2001 General Election, the new Centre-Right government froze the Berlinguer-De Mauro reform, replacing it with a new framework, outlined by Decree n. 53/2003 which defined a 3-stage education system: *infant school*, *first stage* (including 5-year primary schooling and lower secondary schooling lasting 3 years) and *second stage* (with two separate routes, either academic through upper schools or professional qualifications and training).

This law – a first step towards what will later be known as the ‘Moratti Reform’ (named after the education minister who saw it through) was, in actual fact, solely a mandate for the government allowing it to “draft guidelines on education and the basic levels of services in education and professional training”, thus requiring the government to produce detailed decrees for its implementation.

Ministry Guidelines and education targets

A year later, legislative decree n. 59 on Feb. 19th 2004 laid out the general rules for the entire 1st stage of education, that is to say the first phase of compulsory schooling targeted at children and youngsters from 6 to 14 years of age. The text of the decree is accompanied by noteworthy annexes, particularly relevant are the *National Guidelines for Individualised Curricula in Lower Secondary School* which “define the essential levels of service which all schools belonging to the national education system are obliged to provide in the name of individual, social and civil rights to quality education and training”. These norms define the mandatory levels of service schools and teaching staff are obliged to provide as well as defining the *detailed learning targets* set out according to subject and level. The reform does not foresee a shake-up of teaching posts or qualifications, thus keeping History and Geography in the group of literary subjects along with Italian.

In Lower Secondary School the targets for each subject, spanning the first two years and final year, are set out according to knowledge and skills, noting that the epistemological layout is purely for the fruition of teaching staff – intended as a map of subject matters that they must master and up-date – not to be confused with the class activities with pupils which are left to the discretion of each individual teacher.

New Periodization in History

In the case of periodization in History, we are dealing with the n^{th} change, this time the proposal is a ‘vertical curriculum’ linking primary and lower secondary school. At primary school, in years 3 & 4, history topics deal with the major ancient civilizations up to the emergence of Christianity. At lower secondary school the succession is continued from the Medieval era onwards. In detail, during the first two years the prescribed topics go from the Middle Ages in Europe through to the American and French Revolution. The following year, the final year of lower secondary, begins with Napoleon and reaches the fall of Communism in Eastern Europe and the issues surrounding European unification, with a detailed list of relevant themes.

It is a selection and theming of topics that – although loosely defined – can be considered an about-turn with regard to previous curricula; suggesting, moreover, a contradiction, in that the content is described in detail under the guise ‘guidelines’ and no longer as ‘curriculum’.

Skills

Setting aside any discussion on basic knowledge and modularity, the *Guidelines* go back to thinking about skills with the aim of helping children deal with the major historical changes by using the appropriate learning tools. In the *Guidelines*, alongside the list of themes, a long list of learning goals is given. These aim to initiate pupils in their handling of the tools and procedures of historical enquiry. This takes the form of a list of tasks (that are not ordered according to difficulty) of fundamental importance, such as the use of sources, the use of spatial and temporal organizers, various forms of historical reconstruction (both written or not).

Although it may appear so, this does not prescribe ‘workshop History’, rather, none of the Moratti Reform documentation makes explicit reference to the use of workshops. Presently, workshops are widespread practice, both as an essential tool for individualizing approach, as well as a way of giving meaning to the content learnt through problem-solving activities.

History Targets in the first two years of Lower Secondary school as given in the 2004 *Guidelines*:

<i>Knowledge</i>	Skills
<p>Dealing with the physical, social, economic, technological, cultural and religious context and key incidents, events, figures and institutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Medieval Europe up to the year 1000 - The birth and spread of Islam - European civilization after the year 1000 and cultural and religious unification: the roots of a shared identity despite the diversity of its political systems. - The debut of Europe on a world stage: the discovery of an ‘Other’ and its consequences. - The failure of the cultural, social and political concord of the Middle Ages - Humanism and the Renaissance - The failure of religious unity undermining social ties. - The 17th & 18th centuries: new discoveries and new problems, the birth of the idea of progress and its consequences. - The Age of Reason, the American Revolution and the French Revolution 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Use terminology specific to subject - Construct “snapshots of civilisation” following physical and geographic, social, economic, technological, cultural and religious co-ordinates. - Understand the main features of historical enquiry methods and categories of historical interpretation. - Distinguish between the march of history, micro-histories and community or thematic histories. - Distinguish between and choose different types of historical source, extract information from one or more sources - Use the main features of periodization and temporal organizers appropriately, such as cycle, conjuncture, acceleration and lag. - Use literary texts, epics and biographies for the purpose of historical reconstruction. - Identify Medieval and modern roots in local and regional context. - Examine the local entity and impact of events of national and supernational interest and relevance. - Pick out issues in a historical text that can be dealt with using historiographical tools

History Targets in third year of Lower Secondary school as given in the 2004 Guidelines:

<i>Knowledge</i>	Skills
<p>Dealing with the physical, social, economic, technological, cultural and religious context and key incidents, events, figures and institutions:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Napoleon and post-Napoleonic Europe - The link between citizenship, freedom and nation: the constitution of the principal liberal states in the 1800's - The Italian national state and its relation to regional realities; the meaning of symbols such as the national flag, regional crests, the national anthem. - Europe and the rest of the world in the closing decades of the 1800's - Liberal institutions and the hurdles encountered in the Italian context. - Ideologies as an attempt to make sense of the relation between man, society, history - Rivalry between states and its consequences - The First World War - The age of masses and the end of the centrality of Europe. - The failure and adjustment of democracies - Totalitarianisms - The Second World War - The birth of the Italian Republic - Boom society and the recession of the 70's - The fall of Communism in Eastern Bloc countries. - European integration. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Distinguish between local, regional, national, European and global history, recognizing the links as well as the main differences (also in narrative texts) - Compare documentary and historiographic sources referred to the same incident, figure or issue, then analyze difference and similarities. - Extend the concept of historical source and identify the particularity of historical interpretation. - Use documentary sources in a paradigmatic way to check the degree of bias, be it voluntary or involuntary, especially regarding mass-media sources. - Recognize the traits of feature-film and literary fiction in relation to historical reconstructions. - Use the past to make the present understandable and grasp that the questions raised by the present regarding the future are tied to a knowledge of the past. - Given a newspaper or news broadcast be able to understand the main news items by the identifying historical links essential in contextualizing the incident or know how to get hold of this information.

Geography targets in the first two years of Lower Secondary school as given in the 2004 Guidelines:

Knowledge	Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - The most important forms of graphic representation (ideograms, graphs, bar graphs) and mapping (physical, political, road, thematic maps, topographic and topological) - Concepts such as: route distance, economic distance in terms of time and costs, geographic grid, co-ordinates (latitudine, longitudine, altitudine), time zones. - Population: density, natural movement and migratory flows. - Territorial and anthropophysical systems. - Physical and anthropic features of Europe as a whole and certain member states: physical, socio-economic and cultural features. - The origins of the European Union and its various forms of institution. - Italy in the European Union 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make your way around using a topographic map, a street map and a compass. - Recognise landscape and cityscape changes made by man using maps and images. - Read and interpret: statistics, topographic, thematic, statistical and historical maps, graphs, terrestrial and aerial photography (oblique and vertical) and satellite pictures. - Analyze the most relevant themes in an area (anthropological, economic, environmental or historical) using a variety of sources. - Analyze an area using direct or indirect forms of observation (own borough / region / Italy / Europe) in order to learn about and understand its organization, recognising issues related to the interaction of man with his environment over time. - Compare different territorial situations. - Sketch, using conventional symbols, mental maps of Europe, thematic maps and graphs.

Geography Targets in third year of Lower Secondary school as given in the 2004 Guidelines:

Knowledge	Skills
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Human development, sustainable development and globalization: models of applicability in territorial systems. - Models regarding the organization of an area and the principal global topics and issues. - New tools and methods for displaying spatial information (remote sensing and computerized cartography). - Mental maps of the world with the distribution of landmasses, certain nations and cities, the most important physical features and socio-economic and cultural areas. - Environmental features of areas outside Europe and the interaction between them and the peoples living there, zoned according to cultural and geopolitical factors. - Income around the world: the socio-economic situation, indicators of poverty and wealth. - The most significant contemporary geoanthropic issues either approached via qualitative and quantitative documentation and data or identified in a variety of sources such as specialist texts, daily press or magazines, TV, audiovisual sources or internet. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Make your way around using maps, public transport timetables and distance tables - Sketch mind maps of the world or parts of it, thematic maps, statistical maps and charts using conventional symbols. - Analyze a given geography topic and/or area using organizational models and a variety of sources (maps of different kinds, statistics, graphs, photos, specialist texts, daily press & magazines, TV, audiovisual sources or internet) - Identify ties with historical situations and economic or political forces. - Present a contemporary topic or issue using summaries, maps of different kinds, charts and images. - Present a country making comparisons with other countries and with Italy, using, primarily, maps, statistics, charts and images. - Convert literary descriptions or travel diaries about landscapes or environments into drawings or models. - Use quantitative information regarding geographical events or phenomena and draw qualitative conclusions, then support qualitative assessment using quantitative criteria. - Know about and understand the features of underdeveloped areas, analyzing and linking the factors that contributed to the situation.

The Fioroni Guidelines of 2007

In 2007 the new centre-left majority named Fioroni Minister for Education, who did not dismantle the previous reform, but limited himself to laying out “Curriculum Guidelines” (2007) for pre-school and the first stage. These guidelines aimed to give a new “humanistic” outlook to Education, called-for Europe-wide, tailored to a multicultural, knowledge society.

The new minister’s actions were targeted at diminishing the traditional centralization of curricula and replacing it with a reworking of their content in the form of course guidelines (Ministerial Decree 31/07/2007) that replace the Moratti guidelines (Law 53/2003 e Legislative Decree 59/2004), postponing any decision regarding structural reforms until the end of a trial period.

The curriculum leans towards responding to and enhancing the features of a specific social and cultural context and the didactic and pedagogic guidelines are set at a national level. They are given as *Skills* and *Learning Targets* for the end of the third year of Lower Secondary school.

According to the *Guidelines* schooling must forge citizens “of both Europe and the World” and, at the same time, “raise awareness of the important issues faced by humanity in today’s world (environmental decay, climatic disruption, the energy crisis, the unequal distribution of resources [...] the contact/clash between cultures and religions”. Teachers are called on to make constant references to the phenomena of “today’s world”, a task set specifically for the **areas of history and geography**.

More specifically, history is given the task of “understanding and explaining man’s past, using the commentary and evidence that has been handed down to us”, thus developing a “critical approach”, based on the ability to interpret sources and knowledge acquired. Learning history is an aid to citizenship education for a nation as it allows pupils to find out about the processes behind Italian, European and Global history and understand how national memory and heritage came into being.

Geography is given the task of studying “the impact of humanity on our planet and the consequent processes developed by communities for managing their interaction with nature” and their evolution. For these reasons geography, with its spatial, demographic, socio-cultural and economic features, is closely tied to the present and is best-suited to coupling with other subjects in order to give as broad an outlook on reality as possible.

The Minister himself uses geographic terminology and metaphors: “Subjects should not be presented as *territories* to be protected with strict *borders*, instead they should be a key to interpretation. If a complex issues is to be explored, the different perspectives of different disciplines need to come into contact, recognizing convergence or boundaries between subjects”¹.

In the Fioroni *Guidelines* school is seen a place, and the classroom a human realm where individuals can build relationships and transactions, negotiate conflicts and lay the foundations of knowledge. The subjects of history and geography therefore take on a guiding and decisive role in promoting active, analytical and conscious citizenship.

HISTORY

SKILLS at the end of Lower Secondary School

- *Can handle historical events and issues independently.*
- *Is familiar with the major phases in Italian history from different forms of settlement and government in the Middle Ages to the creation of a unified nation state and the foundation of the Republic.*
- *Is familiar with the main dynamics in European Medieval, Modern and Contemporary History.*
- *Is familiar with the main dynamics principal processes in World History, from Neolithic civilization to the industrial revolution and globalization.*
- *Is familiar with the main features of own surroundings.*
- *Is familiar with and appreciates aspects of Italian and Human cultural heritage.*
- *Has developed a personal method of study, is able to understand history texts, is able*

1

to extract historical information from a variety of sources and is able to re-elaborate this in written texts.

- *Is able to present historical knowledge making connections and arguing own point of view.*
- *Uses knowledge and skills in understanding the complexity of today's world, understanding others' opinions and cultures, understanding the main issues facing the contemporary world.*

LEARNING GOALS

At the end of the third year of Lower Secondary School

The use of documents

- Use different types of sources (documentary, iconographic, narratives, materials, oral, etc.) in order to gather information on a given topic.
- Know about some procedures and working methods used in archaeological sites, libraries and archives.

Organizing information

- Pose problems on the basis of the information gathered.
- Create charts and spatio-temporal maps to organize the information studied.
- Link local history to Italian, European and World history.

Thinking skills and knowledge

- Select, record and organize information with maps, charts, tables and graphs.
- Grasp features and frameworks of the periods studied in Italian, European and World history.
- Know about the cultural heritage related to the topics studied.
- Use knowledge acquired to understand problems regarding the environment and cultural and social concord.

Production

- Produce texts using information of different types, selecting and classifying it, from both textbooks and other sources.

GEOGRAPHY

SKILLS at the end of Lower Secondary School

- *Observe, analyze and understand the dynamics of places both near and far.*
- *Use geographical concepts appropriately (E.g. location, localization, region, landscape, environment, territory, anthropophysical system...), geographical maps, photographs and images from space, graphs and statistic to be able to present clearly spatial information about the surroundings.*
- *Is able to locate the main physical features (mountains, rivers, lakes, ...) and anthropic features cities, ports, airports, infrastructures...) in Europe and around the world.*
- *Is able to take action and get about, referring to mental maps, and is able to use daily experience and knowledge actively.*
- *Is able to relate to others using knowledge about different environmental and socio-cultural contexts, overcoming stereotypes and prejudices.*
- *Recognizes the main physical features of a landscape and the historical, aesthetic, artistic and architectural elements as a natural and cultural heritage to be managed and enhanced.*
- *Assesses the possible outcomes of man's actions and decisions on territorial systems*

of varying scales.

LEARNING GOALS at the end of Lower Secondary School

Mental maps

– Build up and organize the mental map of the surrounding area in a significant way, as well as those of Italy, Europe and the World.

Geographical concepts and knowledge

– Know about, understand and use, both when describing and when working on an area, key concepts in the geography framework: position, localization, region, landscape, environment, territory, anthropophysical system.

Spatial reasoning

– Identify in a territorial dynamic, on varying scales, the most obvious spatial and environmental links: the interdependence of events and phenomena and the correlation between factors.

The Language of geo-graphics

– Read and interpret different types of maps (from topographic ones to planispheres), using cardinal points, scale, symbols and co-ordinates proficiently

– Read about and relate on the territorial system using the language of *geo-graphics*, that is to say terminology, maps, charts, images (also satellite pictures), sketches and statistics.

Geographical imagination

– “View” in a geographically correct and consistent way, landscapes and territorial systems that are distant both in space and time. View different aspects, using maps, graphs, images, statistics, travellers’ accounts, narrative descriptions, etc.

Methods, techniques and tools specific to Geography

– Read road and street maps, use public transport timetables, calculate distances (not only route distances but also economic distances (cost/time) in order to be able to get about wisely.

– Use new tools and methods of spatial representation for geography (remote sensing and computerized cartography).

Curricula for Upper Secondary Schools

The Berlinguer Reform

The Berlinguer Reform (Ministerial Decree 682 dated 4/11/1996 "Modification of the Provisions Concerning the Annual Subdivisions of the History Curriculum.")

The 1996 revision of the chronological structure of history programmes has to be seen in the wider context of a comprehensive review of Education which identified History as the cardinal point of the general reform ("The Plan of Educational Reform", DDL 3/06/1997).

This comprehensive reform, which was interrupted by a change in government majority, was taken up again by Minister De Mauro and approved by the new centre-left government in the year 2000.

The subsequent general election in 2001 led to the formation of a centre-right government which immediately blocked the De Mauro reform. This plan, therefore, never came into effect; the 1996 programme remained in force and is still operative in Italian secondary schools at the present time.

The declared objective of the 1996 Decree (known as the "Berlinguer Decree" after the Minister of Education who signed it) was to place emphasis on the particular circumstances of

the Twentieth Century, dedicating to it the entirety of the final year of secondary schools, both middle and high schools. Art.4 of the Berlinguer Decree states that the curricula aim to provide only a general historical framework leaving to the syllabus the role of indicating particular themes considered relevant by the school body and the teaching staff for in-depth study.

Integration between the general frameworks and local realities was also foreseen, where these were coherent with the educational requirements of the curriculum and, in particular, with the topic of civic education. Responsibility for the specific content of the syllabus was, therefore, left entirely to the teaching staff for whom, as we shall see later, a scheme of updating and training was envisaged.

The Decree emphasised, additionally, the need to plan a specific vertical curriculum for History covering the entire five years of high schooling and the problem of its relationship with other disciplines.

The New Programme.

The periods fixed by D.M. 682/96 for the annual subdivisions of the History programme, valid for the five-year period of high school (except for vocational colleges) are:

1st Year: from Prehistory to the first two centuries of the Roman Empire;

2nd Year: from the Severan dynasty to the mid-14th Century;

3rd Year: from the socio-economic crisis of the 14th Century to the first half of the 17th Century;

4th Year: from the second half of the 17th to the end of the 19th Century;

5th Year: the 20th Century.

The majority of historians gave their approval, even if the "fragmented" treatment of the Middle Ages has led to widespread debate among the medievalists, the majority of whom are against the new chronology; their objections also relate to the fact that the History teacher of 1st and 2nd year is always different from that of the three final years and that, therefore, with the new division there will be less continuity, not only in content but also in teaching method.

Orientation of Teaching Methods

The decree makes specific mention of the need for innovation in historiography and for a thorough revision of didactic methodology in the classroom, reworking the subject so as to foster a sense of history and to provide the students with the tools necessary to understand, and to find their bearings in, the present. What is being challenged is the sequential-logic knowledge measurement model typical of the Italian history-textbook tradition which for decades has produced in the student a superficial level of understanding, structured only in sense of chronological sequence, favouring the short time-span of the political event and a limited consideration of the national dimension.

The profound change proposed by the ministerial text, explicitly inspired by the historiography of the *Annales*, opens the horizons of history-as-taught to a plurality of times, spaces and diversified subjects, introducing a veritable "Copernican revolution" both at the cognitive and the didactic level. The traditional transmission of the subject, which followed a "book-study-test" linearity, is substituted by that more rounded and hands-on approach of the workshop, which reveals the individual level of understanding of the student and his/her ability to reason. In this way the accounts and the sources acquire a fundamental importance as the instruments of justification of historical knowledge, which is no longer "committed to

memory but built-up, also on the basis of teacher input.

The new synchronic-thematic approach was encouraged by the modular model proposed by methodological trends in teaching practices, towards the end of the Nineties, which were well received in the Ministry.

The Particularity of the Twentieth Century.

The revision of the chronological programme had the explicit intention of defining the singularity of the 20th Century, allocating an entire year of study to it and launching teaching methods capable of confronting its more complex problems.

In addition, its complexity and scope called into question the "event-centred" approach traditionally practised by the majority of Italian teachers who, in fact, considered the history of the 20th Century un-teachable because still the subject of controversy. This applies in particular to the second half of the century, in which it is difficult to find a sense of direction, or focal points of significance, which put order into what can appear an indistinct flow of dates and personalities, of wars and phenomena which never manage to become teachable themes and questions, bracketed within defined periods of time.

The problems raised by the teachers reflect the numerous divergences in interpretation present also in the historian community on the wisdom of considering the 20th Century as a historiographic concept in its own right. The most common criticism is obviously that, as for contemporary history in general, one does not know what will happen at a later date. This uncertainty regarding interpretation is reflected in the history taught and justifies the scanty presence of the 20th Century in Italian school curricula and the suspicion with which many teachers deal with a subject considered more journalistic than historical.

The Berlinguer Decree itself suggested that the 20th Century should not be: "simply a means of defining empirically a period of time suitable as an object of study for one scholastic year but as a proper noun, which defines a historic entity, belonging to period types, comparable, therefore, to other proper nouns such as, let us suggest, "the Renaissance"(...) In this case we are dealing with the definition of a new periodization and not with a simple redistribution."

The Training of History Teachers.

Accompanying the above-mentioned Decree, Ministerial Directive 681 was issued which specified a wide-ranging plan of training and up-dating, aimed at all history teachers throughout the range of schools, with particular reference to reform of approach to teaching-method and with the aim of providing "the most suitable aids to teaching recent history". The scheme led to the establishment of school networks which oversaw the training activities, namely 200-hour courses awarding a History Tutor specialisation.

The ongoing "Gelmini" reform

Shifting our attention to the most recent changes, on March 4th 2009, Mariastella Gelmini MP, Minister for Education in the Berlusconi Government issued a document which contained an outline of a new subject: Citizenship and Constitution. The rather vague indications point to a mix of Law, History, Geography and Social Sciences. The new "subject" will be grafted into History and Geography periods in both lower and upper secondary schools, stealing time and resources from two already narrowed subjects. More recently, the

Italian Parliament approved a comprehensive secondary school reform: aimed at reducing the amount of time spent at school and the number of curricula, pruning the school system overall and cutting back drastically on spending for schools.

In the new curricula for upper schools and technical schools, which have yet to be defined, geography will either be radically cut back or done away with altogether. The subject will disappear almost entirely from technical and vocational schools (including nautical and trade and commerce schools). While in upper schools the subject will be reduced and paired up with history.

In the case of scientific upper schools (differently from other upper schools) in the first two years of the curriculum, geography will be squeezed into 3 periods per week along with history, rather than two weekly periods *each* for geography and for history, as at present. During the last three years of scientific upper schools history lessons will be reduced to 2 periods per week as in technical schools. In contemporary society, ever more global and complex, doing away with the learning skills acquired through the study of history and geography means depriving pupils of essential knowledge for dealing with the challenges of today's world.

The curricula for the six types of upper general schools (all called *Licei*) are split up into a first two-year stage, a second two-year stage and the final (and fifth) year at the end of which students take their State Exam.

HISTORY – For upper general secondary

The first two years of Upper Secondary (14-16 years of age)

Main content: the study of civilisations of the Ancient World and the Dark Ages

First Year (3 periods of *geo-history*)

- The most important civilisations of the Ancient Middle East
- Jewish civilisation
- Greek civilization
- Roman civilisation

Second Year (3 periods of *geo-history*)

- The dawn of Christianity
- Roman and Barbarian Europe
- Society and the economy in the Dark Ages
- The Church in Europe in the Dark Ages
- The birth and spread of Islam
- Empires and kingdoms in the Dark Ages
- The noble and feudal system of rights and privileges

The study of each topic includes an analysis of the types of sources used for the study of Ancient and Medieval history and of the contribution given by other disciplines such as archaeology, epigraphy and palaeography.

The second two years of Upper Secondary (17 -18 years of age)

Main content: the formation of Europe and its debut on a world stage between the Middles Ages and the Modern Era.

Third year (2 or 3 periods depending on the course of studies)

- Different features of the *12th Century Renaissance*
- Universal powers (papal and imperial), city-states and monarchies
- The Church and religious movements
- Society and the economy in the late Middle Ages
- Universal powers in decline and the rise of territorial monarchies and duchies
- Geographical discoveries and their impact
- The age of Religious wars
- The construction of modern states and absolutism

Fourth year (2 or 3 periods depending on the course of studies)

- The development of the economy up to the industrial revolution
- The political revolutions of the 1600-1700's (England/America/France)
- The Napoleonic era and the Restoration
- The nationality issue in the 1800's, the Italian Risorgimento and Italian national unification
- The nation-states of the West
- Social issues and workers' movements
- The second industrial revolution
- Imperialism and nationalism
- The development of the Italian state up to the end of the 1800's

Some of the topics (such as The Renaissance, the Scientific Revolution, the Age of Reason and Romanticism) are covered through a range of subjects using an interdisciplinary approach.

The final year of Upper Secondary (19 years of age)

Main content: the Contemporary Era

Fifth year (2 or 3 periods per week depending on the course of studies)

- The dawn of Mass society in the Western world
- The Giolitti years
- The First World War
- The Russian Revolution from Lenin to Stalin
- The post-WW I recession
- Fascism
- The 1929 stock-market crash and its consequences in the USA and all over the world.
- Nazism
- The Shoah and other 20th Century genocides
- The Second World War
- Italy under Fascism and the rise of the Resistance and the steps towards a Democratic Republic

20th Century history follows three main themes:

1) From the Cold War to the late 20th Century turn-around: the UN, The German Issue, the two Blocs, the Kruschev and Kennedy era, the fall of the soviet system, the creation of Europe, the processes behind Globalization, the IT revolution and new hostilities in the Global Realm.

2) Decolonization and the struggle for development in Asia, Africa and Latin America: the birth of the state of Israel and the Palestinian issue, the Non-Aligned movement, the growth of China and India as world powers.

3) Italian Post-WWI history: the Recovery Program, the economic boom, Reforms in the 60's & 70's, terrorism, Tangentopoli (corruption in politics and administration) and the collapse of politics at the beginning of the 1990's.

Some topics regarding today's world are analysed in a way that takes into account their 'geographic' features, as well as the other subjects relevant to their study.

On completing upper secondary school a student is expected to be familiar with the main events and long-term trends in European and Italian history from ancient history to the present day and how they relate to the wider context of World History. Students are also required to use terminology appropriately and be able to apply categorizations specific to the study of history for making interpretations. They are also expected to be able to read and assess different sources. Student should be able to regard history as an important tool for making sense of today's world: taking a critical stance, comparing different outlooks and interpretations and tracing the roots of what we have today.

GEOGRAPHY – at upper secondary Licei

The first two years of upper secondary (14 -16 years of age)

Main content: the study of the planet today

First year (3 periods of geo-history)

- Landscape and urbanization
- Globalization and its impact
- Cultural diversity (languages and religions)
- Migration, population and demographic issues
- The interaction between the environment, the economy and society
- International inequality
- Sustainable development (energy, water resources, climate change, nutrition and biodiversity)

Second year (3 periods of geo-history)

- Geopolitics
- The European Union
- Italy
- Europe and its leading member states
- The continents and their leading states

Alongside essential knowledge about Italy, Europe and other continents' further topics and issues are covered through case studies which will help reinforce key, up-to-date knowledge that will then be built on at a later stage in the 5 years of upper secondary.

On completing this two-year curriculum students are also expected to be able to deal with the most common forms of cartographic representations, recognising both physical and political characteristics. Consequently, a student should be aware of the interrelationship between the environment and socio-economic, cultural and demographic factors in a given area. Above all, a student is expected to be able to describe and de-construct present-day issues, linking, on a multiple scale, "long-term" historical factors with transformation processes, morphological and climatic conditions, the distribution of resources as well as economic and demographic

factors.

Geography is dropped at the end of the first two years of upper secondary by most courses of study (humanities, sciences, social sciences, music, visual arts, languages, science & technology) while it is continued (as part of a special subject tailored to Travel & Tourism or Law & Business Studies) in some courses at vocational secondary schools.

No teaching methodology guidelines are provided for either subject, neither are there any indications on how teaching should be structured (modules, teaching units, theme units) as the educational model is student-centred and therefore works towards across-the-board knowledge and skills that will be assessed at the end of each stage.

THE CURRICULA OF THE FEDERAL REPUBLIC OF GERMANY

General features

In Germany, education and culture are fundamental competences of the 16 *Laender*. There is not, therefore, a single body of legislation relating to education, rather there is the combination of 16 different systems and a permanent body which consists of the Ministers of Education of the various *Laender* (*Kultusminister Konferenz*) with the purpose of ensuring relatively homogeneous educational conditions and to facilitate mobility between one *Land* and another. The educational curricula and the examinations vary considerably among the *Laender*, the differences reflecting not only geographical realities but also the political attitudes of the different regional governments.

There are some common elements, such as the existence of a compulsory lower secondary school after primary school (*Grundschule*), with three courses of study to suit the differing intellectual attitudes of the students: the *Gymnasium*, the *Realschule*, and the *Hauptschule*, corresponding to “academic”, “intermediate” and “technical” streams. The duration of the three courses of study varies according to the *Land* from a minimum of 5 (for some technical schools) to a maximum of 6 years for the “intermediate” and “academic” schools, which are then completed by a further 2 or 3 years of higher studies to allow access to university or college (post-secondary, academic school). Completion of *Hauptschule*, instead, allows the student to move on to Vocational School, a school providing professional training lasting 2 or 3 years where, alongside school studies, there is practical preparation for entry into the world of work (Dual System). From the *Realschule* the student can have access to higher technical schools organised for various syllabuses (*Fachoberschule*, *Berufoberschule* i.e. Trade or Professional School) from which it is possible, subject to passing an entrance examination, to attend certain university courses in Applied Sciences.

There is no systematic and specific teaching of History and Geography in German primary schools: the subject “Understanding the Personal Environment”, however, includes elements of civic education, history and local studies. In the lower secondary schools, instead, there are considerable differences in treatment linked both to the *Land* of residence and to the differences between the three curricula. The study of History and Geography is combined with that of Social Studies in the *Haupt-* and *Realschule* or *Mittelschule* while in the academic curriculum History and Civic Education are separate subjects, although linked to one another.

There are also differences in treatment in the upper secondary schools. The academic schools, which prepare the student for university, in general provide very few history courses at a higher level while the non-academic schools following the Dual System (technical training in part through apprenticeship, in part in the classroom) and those full-time do not, as a rule, cater for compulsory teaching of history.

Unlike other European countries, there is no separate teaching of national, European or World history; there is, however, at each level a course which combines all three although the selection of relevant items proposed in the courses indicates a structure which tends to be Euro-centred as non-European countries and cultures are almost completely absent. Only China, sometimes, is put forward as an example of anti-colonial revolution, Japan as an example of an industrial success story and India and Brazil as examples of developing countries. The United States and Russia are treated in greater detail, both after 1917 and in relation to Europe in the period of the Cold War. One

could state that, in general terms, no entirely and precisely “national” course of history for schools exists but that, from the time of the Holy Roman Empire, the German experience has been intertwined with that of Europe.

History and Geography curricula in the Bavarian school system

In the Bavarian *Land*, secondary schooling is divided into the three courses of study described above to allow the family and the student to choose, immediately after primary school, the educational direction which can best satisfy the pupil's own aptitude and aspirations regarding work. At the termination of this first period of secondary education, diplomas are awarded which allow access to the higher secondary schools. It is possible, after completion of lower secondary school, to transfer to a different curriculum at the upper level, depending on marks obtained and by passing an entrance exam. Compulsory education consists of primary and lower secondary school (from 6 to 15 years of age).

History and Geography, together with Social Studies, is an option in the *Hauptschule* curriculum; the subject is taught from Year 5 to Year 9/10 in the frequency of two hours per week in the first two years and three in the final three/four years. History in the *Realschule* is also an optional subject, from Year 6 to Year 10 two periods per week. At the *Gymnasium*, History is taught from year 6 to year 10, with two periods per week to Year 9 and with a further hour combined with Social Studies in the final year.

The Introductory Notes to the curricula (2009/10) contain detailed and specific indications of the objectives to be achieved, in terms of knowledge and skills, for the different subjects covered, organised according to differing levels of ability. The subject is also taught through a foreign language and bilingual projects are envisaged for all three courses of study.

HISTORY/ SOCIAL STUDIES/ GEOGRAPHY

First year of lower secondary school: *Hauptschule* curriculum – Year 5 of compulsory education (age 10).

Main content: introduction to social sciences

- Family life and school life
- A glance at the world
- Prehistory
- Religion and the environment
- Disabled people in our society
- The development of the culture of Ancient Egypt
- Ancient Greece.

Second year of lower secondary school: *Hauptschule* curriculum – Year 6 of compulsory education (age 11).

Main content: introduction to social sciences

- Dealing with conflict in a democratic society
- Ancient Rome
- Bavaria
- Leisure time
- The Middle Ages
- The town and the countryside.

Third year of lower secondary school: *Hauptschule* curriculum – Year 7 of compulsory education (age 12).

Main content: introduction to social sciences

- The European conquest of the New World
- Climate
- The community as political environment
- The era of religious wars
- Absolutism
- The French revolution
- Adolescence in a constitutional state
- Germany
- The forces of nature as a threat to the human species

Fourth year of lower secondary school: *Hauptschule* curriculum – Year 8 of compulsory education (age 13).

Main content: introduction to social sciences

- Europe
- The Industrial Revolution and nationality
- Germany and the Welfare State
- Territory and resources
- Imperialism and the First World War
- Democracy and the Nazi dictatorship
- The democratic state in Germany
- Germany: a federal state

Fifth year of lower secondary school: *Hauptschule* curriculum – Year 9 of compulsory education (age 14).

Main content: introduction to social sciences

- Germany and the post-1945 World
- One World: the political change after 1970
- Global cooperation for security and peace
- The peoples of other nations
- China
- Present day events

HISTORY

Second year of lower secondary school. *Realschule* curriculum – Year 6 of compulsory

education (age 11)

Main content: the Ancient and Medieval eras

- The peoples of prehistory and antiquity; Ancient Greece and the origins of European culture
- The Roman Empire
- The era of transition between the ancient world and the Middle Ages
- Review, contextualisation and further study.

Third year of lower secondary school. *Realschule* curriculum – Year 7 of compulsory education (age 12)

Main content: the Ancient and Medieval eras

- The origins of medieval Europe
- Economy, society and culture in the Middle Ages
- Europe between the Middle Ages and the first modern age
- The Reformation and the struggle for European supremacy
- Review, contextualisation and further study.

Fourth year of lower secondary school: *Realschule* curriculum – Year 8 of compulsory education (age 13)

Main content: the Modern Age

- Europe and the making of the nations of the first modern age
- The Baroque and the Enlightenment and their influence on Europe
- Essential aspects of the modern age
- Antagonisms between the Restoration and emancipation
- Review, contextualisation and further study.

Fifth year of lower secondary school: *Realschule* curriculum – Year 9 of compulsory education (age 14)

Main content: contemporary history

- Industrialisation and system change in the European states
- Europe and the World in the Age of Imperialism
- The First World War and the post war period
- The rise and fall of the Weimar Republic
- Soviet totalitarianism, the Second World War and its consequences
- Review, contextualisation and further study.

Sixth year of lower secondary school: *Realschule* curriculum – Year 10 of compulsory education (age 15)

Main content: the World today

- The division of Europe characterised by the contrast between East and West
- Global politics in the period of bipolarism
- The differences in development within the divided Germany
- The re-alignment between Europe and the World
- Review, contextualisation and further study.

Second year of lower secondary school: *Gymnasium* curriculum – Year 6 of compulsory education (age 11)

Main content: from the first humans to the Empire of the Franks

- The individual as part of history
- Prehistoric peoples
- Egypt: the first advanced culture
- The Greek-Hellenistic world
- The Roman Empire
- From Antiquity to the Middle Ages
- Exercises in further study appropriate to the age group

Third year of lower secondary school: *Gymnasium* curriculum – Year 7 of compulsory education (age 12)

Main content: from the Middle Ages to Absolutism

The medieval foundations of Europe

- Construction of the nation state in the first modern age
- The new intellectuals and the spatial horizons
- Absolutism
- Exercises in further study appropriate to the age group

Fourth year of lower secondary school: *Gymnasium* curriculum – Year 8 of compulsory education (age 13)

Main content: from the Enlightenment to the end of the First World War

- Europe in the Age of Revolution
- Politics, society and economy in Germany between 1850 and 1914
- Imperialism and the First World War
- Exercises in further study appropriate to the age group

Fifth year of lower secondary school: *Gymnasium* curriculum – Year 9 of compulsory education (age 14)

Main content: the ideological and political conflicts of the 20th Century

- The Weimar Republic
- Nazism and the Second World War
- The policy of the Blocks, the division of Germany and East-West conflicts until the 60's
- Changes in Western policy in the shadow of the Cold War
- Exercises in further study appropriate to the age group

Sixth year of lower secondary school: *Gymnasium* curriculum – Year 10 of compulsory education (age 15)

Main content: the dissolution of the bipolar world

- Global politics shift, and changes in Germany between the 60's and the 80's
- The collapse of the Eastern Block and the reunification of Germany
- Europe and the World after the East-West conflict
- Work on an interdisciplinary project in Social studies

The curricula for the second level of secondary schools, which date back from 1990, have recently been revised. All the subjects foreseen for the different courses have been incorporated within a wider framework (following a trend by now consolidated within Europe) which identifies the final objectives of the educational process, the general and specific objectives of learning and the methodology of teaching. The teaching approach favours integration of the disciplines in the area of “Social Studies” and provides specific paradigms for the different levels of learning.

With reference to History and Social Sciences in general, particular attention is paid to the creation of the consciousness of temporality, to the shaping of the individual, to knowledge of one's local territory and to an understanding of the present. The ultimate target is education in democratic citizenship and tolerance, respect for legality and diversity, both ethnic and religious, of which a significant example has been identified in knowledge of Jewish history and culture. Despite the methodological and epistemological innovations introduced by the new curricula, the prevalent history is political history, around which periodization is also structured, linked only in certain periods with the history of culture and of ideas.

In those schools following an academic curriculum the entire arc of history is revisited, from Ancient Greece to the Enlightenment and the Age of Revolution in year 11 and, in Year 12, the Bavarian and German routes to the formation of the nation state until the 19th Century, the formation of the Weimar Republic, the genesis of the totalitarian states in Europe and Germany under National Socialism. The final year (Year 13) is dedicated to the intensive study of the period following the Second World War, tackled from European and World perspectives, with particular reference to Germany between the 1950's and the 1980's. The second part of the year is dedicated to the process of the construction of a united Europe, the new players in World politics and to the North – South conflict. Although the curricula set only a part of the scheduled hours for the compulsory objects of study, the remaining time is often not utilised for themes or further study chosen ad lib by the teachers because of the tough, national final exam.

The History and Geography curricula of the Northrhine-Westphalen school system

The scholastic system in Northrhine-Westphalen is very similar to that adopted at national level. After four years of primary school, the student has access to three possible channels of secondary education which in turn guarantee access to three different courses of study at the upper level of high school, with the possibility of transferring from one curriculum to another if marks conform to the entrance levels laid down. The most up to date for the “academic” curriculum date from 2006; the teaching of History and Geography is linked with that of Political Science, the combination of these disciplines forming the block of “Social Sciences”. This instruction is set for the entire period of *Gymnasium* secondary schooling, both at first and second level, with the discipline syllabuses separate, but combined in an interdisciplinary manner to confront jointly the thematic focuses planned for each scholastic year and level of learning. These major thematic fields cover:

1. The establishment and the development of democracy
2. The economy and work
3. The changes and problems concerning globalisation
4. The political and economic consequences of environmental changes
5. Transformations and risks of the new technologies
6. Identity and life styles during the transformations of society in the modern age

7. Social justice between free individuals and structural inequality
8. The maintenance of peace and resolution of conflicts.

Within the teaching of Social Studies, specific themes relating to “economic education” are also taken up and these contribute to the completion of the key aspects of the geography-history-social area. These are:

1. The power of consumption – strategies of distribution
2. The market place – processes of marketing: competition, concentration and the power of the market
3. Financial transactions – the stability of currency
4. Production, technological progress and structural changes
5. Labour and the professions during industrial changes, the service and information society
6. Income and social welfare: the principles of enterprise and social justice
7. Environmental change / the relationship between economics and ecology
8. The economics of the social market – the changes caused by globalisation

GEOGRAPHY

Geography is taught from the sixth to the ninth class of “academic” lower secondary school with the number of hours varying according to the class and the subject matter. The fundamental objective is to create competent students capable of interacting at cognitive and emotional level with phenomena close to hand or distant, understanding the processes involved. Each theme examined is contextualised in its spatial dimension and is tackled taking into account the major interdisciplinary thematic fields referred to above, so that each single topic constitutes a conceptual nucleus to be approached also from the historical, social and economic perspectives. The majority of the Geography curriculum is dedicated to the contemporary process of globalisation as seen from both the physical and socio – economic viewpoints.

First year of lower secondary school: *Gymnasium* curriculum – Year 5 of compulsory education (age 10)

Principle contents:

1st thematic area: living together in different forms of community

- The structure of the city
- The differences in infrastructure between town and country

2nd thematic area: work and ambitions in economic areas with different positioning

- The factors which determine the selection of localities for industry (convenience, traffic, labour force), for agriculture (climate, soil, market) and for services (connections, education)
- Structural changes in agriculture and industry; the production and subsequent processing of food
- The impact of an excessive use of water resources.

3rd thematic area: the consequences of recreational activity on areas used for them and on their environmental structure

- Recreational opportunities in the context of the natural environment and the tourism opportunities in coastal and mountain areas
- Physical and socio-economic changes to a community caused by tourism
- The concept of “soft tourism” as a means of avoiding natural calamities and protecting the landscape.

some important issues:

- The regions within Germany with a variety of types of agriculture.
- The major industrial districts and industrial concentrations of the member states of the European Union
- The major areas of German tourism in the various European states.

Third, fourth and fifth year of lower secondary school: *Gymnasium* curriculum – (7th, 8th and 9th year of compulsory education) – (age 12, 13 and 14)

4th thematic area: the threats to inhabited areas posed by anthropogenic factors

- The threats to inhabited areas posed by geographical risks (earthquakes, volcanoes and tornadoes)
- The threats to inhabited areas posed by harmful human intervention (soil erosion, desertification, global warming, floods).

5th thematic area: life and economic activity in areas of differing landscapes

- Temperature and water resources as limiting factors for cultivation and the possibilities for overcoming natural limitations
- Changes in the use of dry environments with their positive and negative consequences
- The geographical structure of the rain forests, their potential and problems
- Temperate zones as environments for agricultural use
- Landscape areas as examples of the combined action of climate and vegetation on territory.

6th thematic area: changes – a comparison between the states and the different global areas

- The various indicators for assessing the level of economic development of regions and states, and their significance
- The development of open areas based on the availability of resources, the possibilities for their employment and the economic objectives
- The imbalance in the changes in the distribution of goods as one of the reasons for the differences between the rich and poor countries in the world
- Changes and the risks of tourism in the Third World for the development of those regions.

7th thematic area: growth and distribution of the World’s population as a global problem

- Reasons for and consequences of the different regional distributions, level of development and age profiles of the populations of the industrialised and advanced countries
- Growth and limitations in the industrial cities and developed regions
- Territorial consequences of migrations caused by political and economic factors.

8th thematic area: changes to economic and political structures due to globalisation

- Changes to localisation due to global division of labour; agricultural production in the areas of contrast between natural factors, world trade and environmental impact
- Competition among the European regions due to structural change, transformation and integration
- The Global City as symbol of the change in global commercial relationships.

A number of complex issues are confronted in themes 4 to 8 above:

- The Earth's landscapes
- The fragile zones of the planet
- The socio – economic classification of the earth
- The active and passive economic areas within the member states of the European Union
- The flow of trade among the economic regions of the World.

HISTORY

History is taught from the sixth to the ninth class of “academic” lower secondary schools, the number of hours varying according to the class and the subject matter. The fundamental objective is to create competent students capable of interacting at cognitive and emotional level with phenomena close to hand or distant in time, understanding the sense of the basic processes of becoming a historian from both a diachronic and synchronic perspective. Each theme examined is contextualised in its spatial/temporal dimension and is approached bearing in mind the major interdisciplinary thematic fields mentioned above such that each single argument constitutes a conceptual nucleus to be tackled also from a geographic, social and economic perspective. The different thematic areas are developed in progression from one class to the other, constituting a single course coincident with the essential phenomena and facts of the course of history. A large part of the curriculum is dedicated to the treatment of the phenomena of contemporaneity in largely European perspective but with reference to the global picture regarding more recent history. There is no “national history” perspective although certain specific subjects are dedicated to the German experience from Unification to post – WW2 period.

First and second year of lower secondary school: *Gymnasium* curriculum – (5th and 6th year of compulsory education) (age 10 – 11)

Main content:

1st thematic area: primitive cultures and the first complex societies

- The oldest evidence of human life in the World
- The Palaeolithic form of life and the Neolithic revolution
- An example of a complex society

2nd thematic area: the life environment of ancient societies. The Greek *poleis* and the *Imperium Romanum*

- The life environment in the Greek *poleis*

- Rome: the development of a city state and a world empire
- The magistracy, community and daily life in imperial Rome

3rd thematic area: the knowledge of ancient peoples regarding other peoples

- Ideas of the World and geographical knowledge in Africa, Europe and Asia.
- Intercultural contacts and their influences (e.g. Herodotus or the campaigns and the Territories conquered by Alexander the Great)

4th thematic area: Medieval Europe

- Romanisation, Christianity and the Germanic tribes
- The feudal system
- Forms of political participation in France, England and Romano-Germanic Empire

Third, fourth and fifth years of lower secondary school: *Gymnasium* curriculum – (7th, 8th and 9th years of compulsory education) (ages 12, 13 and 14)

Main content:

6th thematic area: new worlds and new horizons

- The mental, cultural, social, political and economic processes
- Urban society
- The Renaissance, Humanism and the Reformation
- Europe and non – Europe: discoveries and conquests

7th thematic area: Europe in transformation

- Revolution, evolution and restoration: tendencies in Europe
- Absolutism in France
- The French Revolution
- The Revolution of 1848/49 in Germany and German Unity in 1871
- The Industrial revolution – a regional example

8th thematic area: Imperialism and the First World War

- The movements of imperial expansion
- Imperial policy in Africa and Asia
- The rivalry between the great powers
- Characteristics of the First World War

9th thematic area: the new international coordinates

- Russia from the 1917 Revolution to Stalinism
- The USA: the rise to World power

10th thematic area: National Socialism and the Second World War

- The deconstruction of the Weimar Republic
- The National Socialist authoritarian system; individuals and groups between consent and resistance
- Deportation, persecution and execution of European Jews, Roma, Sinti and dissidents between 1933 and 1945
- War of total destruction
- Flight and expulsions in the European context

11th thematic area: World realignment and the situation of the two Germanys

- The division of the World into “blocks” with differing economic and social systems – the

- Formation of the Federal Republic, its integration into the West, the division of Germany
- The collapse of the communist system, United Germany
- Transnational cooperation: United Europe and the United Nations

12th thematic area: peoples of yesterday and today understanding each other

- The invention of writing and the digital revolution
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- A journey from distant times to the present day
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- The perception of self and the perception of the other in a historical perspective

THE POLISH CURRICULA

The Polish school system is structured in four levels of education: the secondary school represents the third and fourth level of education and is targeted at youngsters from the 13 to 19 years of age. In the lower secondary/junior high school (*Gymnasium*), the Ministerial curricula in current use since 1999 caters for 5 periods of **History** per week for three years and 5 periods of **Geography** per week for three years. As one can see, the teaching of these disciplines, which are independent of one another, has a major importance in the base curriculum of the middle school. Also in the higher secondary (*Lyceum*), which again lasts for three years (age 16/7 to 19), History is taught for 6 hours per week and Geography for 1 or 2 hours depending on the class. Learning skills have recently been introduced for both disciplines alongside the traditional didactic requirement of knowledge. The value of operative learning and the importance of the use of sources and the material particular to each discipline has, in fact, been highlighted in the curriculum guidance in such a way that the pupil is enabled to find the information regarding the subject under discussion autonomously. Among the basic objectives identified, great importance is placed on the teaching of a sense of time and of space, with the consequent cognitive operations of periodization and localisation; the perception of geographical and historical phenomena as processes; the contextualisation of these phenomena as they occurred in the past with reference to the present and the identification of different factors at their base; the acquisition and use of the correct vocabulary for the subject; the capacity to combine the disciplines, recognising the social, political and economic aspects in a national, regional and global perspective.

In class activity, the teacher is required to favour those teaching practices capable of motivating the students and encouraging their curiosity and interest in the subject, enabling learning by discovery in a manner which brings out the potential and the individual attitudes of the students. In this way the student should be able to transfer the knowledge and skills acquired in the foundation phase for history/geography to the objectives of subsequent learning by using the conceptual tools belonging to each discipline; one moves on, therefore from “knowing” to the creation of a genuine “way of thinking” in historic/geographic terms. In particular, when referring to geographical education the importance of the mutual relationship between nature and the human factor is emphasised in order to make the characteristics of a particular territory and the modification of the natural environment due to economic, social or cultural factors understood. For these reasons both the physical and social sciences are correlated in the geography discipline. The main **abilities** to be acquired are: the capacity to observe and to use information sources of various types (maps, photographs,

illustrations, diagrams, statistical data, text books) employed in workshop-style lessons; the capacity to relate to reality, classifying it by correct use of geographical concepts; the ability to relate geographic images to the physical space under observation; the ability to produce “mental maps” using the processes of analysis, synthesis, abstraction and generalisation of geographic data. These cognitive instruments allow the pupil to be able to express meaningful judgements and critical valuations about the surrounding environment and the changes caused by human activity and by natural phenomena. The principle objective is that of stimulating interest and curiosity in the students towards knowledge about the World, their own nation and region, not confined to their time at school but in everyday, adult life. The pedagogic approach should encourage relational communication among those belonging to a common age-group and community, but also understanding towards “other” social, cultural, ethnic and linguistic groups.

GEOGRAPHY TOPICS

1. Position, identification and characteristics of the corresponding geographical objects in photographs, aerial and satellite photographs and on topographical maps;
 - a) choice of a proper map to gain particular geographical information;
 - b) defining geographical position and mathematical and geographic points and areas on the map;
 - c) localization on maps (also contour maps) of continents and most important geographical objects in the world and in Poland (lowlands, uplands, mountains, rivers, lakes, islands, seas, states etc.);
 - d) analysis and interpretation of the content of geographical, thematic and tourist maps;
 - e) projects and descriptions of a travel route on the basis of tourist, topographic and road maps.

2. Shape and motion of the Earth and their consequences.
 - a) main features of the Earth’s shape and size; defining coordinates on the globe;
 - b) concepts: Earth’s rotation, solar time, standard time; features of Earth’s rotation; reasons for time zones implementation and the international date line borders; using time zones map to define the differences in standard time and solar time on the Earth;
 - c) features of the Earth’s orbit; changes in illumination of the Earth and the length of day and night in different latitudes and seasons of the year;
 - d) most important geographic consequences of the Earth’s motion.

3. Chosen issues of physical geography.
 - a) influence of main climate-forming factors on climate;
 - b) characteristics on the basis of charts and numerical data of the course of air temperature and precipitation during the year in the chosen weather stations situated in different climatic zones; range of and average air temperature; examples of the connection between the Sun’s altitude and air temperature;
 - c) climatic diversity of the Earth on the basis of analysis of air temperature and precipitation maps, and maps of the Earth’s climatic zones;
 - d) dependence between illumination zones of the Earth and climatic zones, influence of the climate on diversification of plants and soil of the Earth;
 - e) main features of plate structure of lithosphere; connections between plate structure of lithosphere and volcanic activity and earthquakes;
 - f) concept of weathering and erosion; terrain shaping role of flowing water, sea waves, wind,

continental glaciers and mountain glaciers;

g) identifying in the terrain forms of relief created as a result of the activity of terrain shaping factors.

4. Position and natural environment of Poland.

a) characteristics, on the basis of maps of different types, of location of one's region in Poland and the location of Poland in the world and in Europe; administrative division of Poland; voivodeships and their capital cities;

b) most important events (images) from geological past of Poland: coal creation, creation of mountains, sea inundations, glaciations; dependence between contemporary relief of Poland and chosen geological events;

c) main types of rocks in the region and in Poland; pin-pointing most important areas of their occurrence on a map; examples of rocks use in different fields of human activity;

d) main features of climate in Poland; their connection with shaping factors; origination mechanism of wind and sea breeze;

e) main types of natural resources of Poland and the region: woods, water, soil, natural resources; with the use of a map, their location and economic significance.

5. Population of Poland.

a) basic concepts in demography: population growth, births and deaths, life expectancy;

b) reading different sources of information (among others a statistical yearbook and population pyramid) data on: the population of Poland, number of births and deaths, population growth, sex structure, average life expectancy in Poland; size and main directions of migration from and to Poland;

c) characteristics, on the basis of population density maps, of diversity of population distribution in Poland and the region of residence, as well as natural, historical and economical factors;

d) differences in employment structure of the society in Poland and the region;

e) main current problems of the job market in Poland and the region;

f) analysis, comparison of city areas in Poland and the region of residence; reasons of the development of big cities in Poland.

6. Selected issues in applied geography of Poland.

a) main features of use of the land, size and property of farms, sowing and breeding in Poland on the basis of map analysis, charts and numerical data;

b) causes of diversity in chosen crop distribution (wheat, potatoes, sugar beet) and breeding of cattle and pigs in Poland;

c) structure of energy use in Poland and the evaluation of its influence on natural environment;

d) causes of changes in industry in Poland and the region, and successfully-developing branches of industrial production in Poland;

e) types of services; fast development of chosen services in Poland and the region;

f) tourism assets in Poland and description of sites from the List of World Heritage;

g) description on the basis of the map of density and quality differences of the transportation system in Poland and its influence on the development of other fields of business activity;

h) necessity of natural and cultural environment protection in Poland; forms of its protection, specific activities for its protection in the region.

7. Geographic regions of Poland.

- a) main geographic regions of Poland;
- b) natural environment of main geographic regions of Poland, with particular consideration of one's region (also on the basis of field observations);
- c) most important economic features of geographic regions of Poland and their connection with natural conditions;
- d) tourism assets of chosen geographic region, with particular consideration of its cultural value;
- e) main features of the Baltic Sea location and environment; economic significance of the Baltic Sea and causes of its water degradation.

8. Neighbours of Poland – geographic diversity, changes.

- a) geographic characteristics of the natural environment of the countries bordering with Poland; social and economic diversity;
- b) causes of dynamic economic development of Germany;
- c) contemporary social and economic changes of Ukraine;
- d) environmental, nationalistic, cultural and economic diversity of Russia;
- 5) main features of the natural environment, economy and forms of cooperation with the country that is the closest neighbour of the region of student's residence.

9. Europe. Environment – human – economy relationship.

- a) political map of Europe;
- b) location of Europe and main features of its natural environment on the basis of geographical and thematic maps;
- c) regional, cultural, national and ethnic diversity of contemporary Europe, and main causes and results of the diversity;
- d) connection between main features of natural environment of Northern Europe and main directions of economic development;
- e) farming in France or other European country as an example of the connection between environmental conditions and direction and effectiveness of agricultural production; identification of features of commercial farming;
- f) main directions and causes of changes in industrial structure of the chosen industrial region (or district) of Western Europe;
- g) main location, size and spatial & structural features and significance of Paris or London as the world metropolis;
- i) influence of mountains on natural environment features and economy of Alpine countries;
- j) connection between the development of tourism in Southern Europe and environmental conditions, and cultural heritage of the Mediterranean.

10. Selected regions of the world. People – environment – economy relationships.

- a) Asia as an area of great geographic contrasts;
- b) natural conditions of the areas where oldest Asian civilizations were formed;
- c) analysis of charts and numerical data on population and urban development in China; diversity of population distribution in China; directions of economic development of China and changing significance of China in the world economy;
- d) significance of social and cultural factors in creation of the contemporary economy of Japan against the background of unfavourable features of its natural environment;
- e) connection between cultivation rhythm and „rice culture” and features of monsoon climate of South-East Asia;

- f) social and economic contrasts in India; causes of rapid development of modern technologies;
- g) region of the Near East from the point of view of cultural features, oil resources, directions and level of economic development; places of military conflicts;
- h) occurrence of climatic-vegetable-soil regions in Africa;
- i) case study: Sahel zone, relation between forms of human farming and water resources; need for rational management in the environment with severe shortage of drinking water;
- j) connection between sustenance problems, diseases occurrence (AIDS among others) and living standard in African countries to the south of Sahara;
- k) main features and causes of cultural and ethnic diversity in North and South America;
- l) conflicting interests: ecological effects of deforestation of the Amazon Rainforest and its economic use; development features and problems of the biggest cities in Brazil;
- l) relations between the economy and natural environment in main economic regions in the USA; role of the USA in the world economy;
- m) main features of the Australian economy against the background of natural environment;
- n) location and geographical environment features of the Antarctic and Arctic; main features and causes of natural environment changes of the circumpolar zone.

In the teaching of **history**, also great importance is placed on the use of various types of sources, both written and iconographic, from which, at the end of the three years, the students should be able to search out the information relevant to the arguments dealt with in the classroom. The order of the subject matter is strictly chronological based on the temporal progression “earlier, during and subsequent” which also furnishes the architecture of the narrative communication and the definition of the relationship of cause and effect. The students must be capable of recognising such nexuses within a historiographic text and reproduce them in the preparation of short informative or deductive texts.

Among the essential **skills** identified by the curricula, a priority is, in fact, given to the acquisition of the ability to arrange the historical facts and phenomena in time over and above that of recognising the characteristics of the processes of change in social and political life and the continuity in development of cultural life. The acquisition of the ability to localise and contextualise the events and to reproduce the methods of historical research complete the picture of the basic skills. **Education in history** has also attributed to it the function of preparing the young for dealing with the future responsibilities of citizenship and civic participation; important personalities and moments from history, not only national, who or which have had a positive influence on the present can contribute to this objective. A knowledge of history can, therefore, represent an example of connection between past and present and between national identity and an understanding of the World, furnishing the students with those conceptual instruments which enable them to form value judgements and critical reflections on current historical processes and their everyday life. The ability of the teacher to motivate the students in learning the discipline, making use of active and laboratory-style teaching practices capable of exciting their interest and promoting their cognitive and intellectual development, contributes significantly to this objective.

Political history assumes a major importance in the development of the curriculum, especially concerning national events, even if, in the most recent formulation of the themes to be tackled in the class room, subjects such as social and cultural history, which in any case contribute to reinforcing the viewpoint of the development of civilisation, have made their appearance. Further study related to the regional context is also envisaged, with the aim of encouraging in the students an interest in

discovering the places and protagonists of the history of their territory.

A total of 39 subject areas are foreseen for the full middle school course, which cover the chronological span from the Prehistoric to the First World War.

1. Earliest human history.

- a) comparison of nomadic life with settled life and effects of starting a settled life;
- b) relationship between geographical environment and human living conditions.

2. The civilizations of the Middle East.

- a) characteristics of the society and belief system in Egypt;
- b) the meaning of writing and law in the process of forming states;
- c) types of writing formed on the territory of Mesopotamia and Egypt.

3. Ancient Israel.

- a) basic symbols and main rules of Judaism;
- 2) differences between polytheism and monotheism.

4. Greek civilisation.

- a) influence of geographical environment on economy and political development in Ancient Greece;
- b) system of exercising power and society organization in Sparta and Athens in the Age of Pericles;
- c) factors integrating ancient Greeks – language, belief system, theatre and the Olympic Games.

5. Roman civilization.

- a) system of exercising power and society organization in republican Rome and the empire;
- b) causes and results of Roman expansion, attitudes of Romans towards slaves and conquered nations;
- c) influence of Greek culture on Roman culture;
- d) internal and external causes of the fall of Ancient Rome.

6. Ancient heritage.

- a) Most important achievements of material and spiritual culture of the antique world in various fields: philosophy, science, architecture, art, literature;
- b) examples of ancient civilization achievements that influence contemporary civilization.

7. Christianity.

- a) expansion of Christianity;
- b) causes and results of persecuting Christians in the Roman state.

8. Arab people and the Islamic world.

- a) directions and scope of the Arabic conquest;
- b) basic rules and symbols of Islam;
- c) the role of Arab people in passing on cultural heritage between the East and the West.

9. Beginnings of the civilization of western Christianity.

- a) monarchy of Charles the Great, the Papal State and the Empire in Western Europe;
- b) Charles the Great's activity and the Carolingian Renaissance;
- c) main ideas of a universal Empire of Otto III;

d) rapport between the emperor and the papal power in 10–11th century.

10. Byzantium and eastern Christianity.

- a) the Byzantine Empire;
- b) the role of Byzantium as a continuation of the Roman Empire and achievements of Byzantine culture (law, architecture, art);
- c) causes and results of the Church schism in 11th century.

11. The society of Europe in the Middle Ages.

- a) typical institutions of the fief;
- b) idea of the estates and social divisions in the Middle Ages;
- c) economic, political and cultural functions of the Medieval towns.

12. Material and spiritual culture of Romance Europe.

- a) the role of the Church in the development of culture in the field of science, architecture, art and everyday life of the Medieval society;
- b) main elements of chivalrous culture and urban culture;
- c) monuments of the Medieval culture, differences between Roman architectural style and Gothic style including examples from one's own region.

13. Poland of the first Piast dynasty.

- a) Poland of the first Piast dynasty members;
- b) Characteristic features of patrimonial monarchy;
- c) circumstances of baptism of Piasts and cultural, social and political consequences of the Christianization of Poland;
- d) achievements of the first Piast dynasty members in the field of politics, economy and culture.

14. Poland's feudal fragmentation and unification.

- a) Poland in the period of feudal fragmentation;
- b) resolutions of Bolesław III Wrymouth statute;
- c) most important events connected with the relationship between Poland and the Teutonic Knights in the period of the Piast dynasty;
- d) social and economic changes in the period of feudal fragmentation and connection between the development of settlement movement and economic growth;
- e) achievements of Casimir I the Restorer in the field of internal politics (defensive politics, urban development, law, science) and foreign politics;
- f) changes of social and religious structure in the Kingdom of Poland after annexation of the Ruthenian lands.

15. Poland in the age of the Union with Lithuania.

- a) causes and results of Polish-Lithuanian Union;
- b) most important events connected with Polish-Teutonic relations in the age of the Jagiellon dynasty;
- c) development of powers of the Polish nobles (*szlachta*).

16. The great geographical discoveries.

- a) expeditions of Christopher Columbus, Vasco da Gama, Ferdinand Magellan and colonial

possessions of Portugal and Spain;

b) influence of geographical discoveries on social, economic and cultural life of Europe and the New World.

17. Humanism and Renaissance.

a) sources of Renaissance culture development and its characteristic features;

b) greatest achievements: Leonardo da Vinci, Michelangelo, Raphael, Erasmus of Rotterdam, Nicolaus Copernicus and Galileo;

c) the role of print in Renaissance idea popularization and the development of European civilization.

18. The schism in western Christianity.

a) the features that led to the schism in the western Church;

b) aims and activity of Martin Luther and John Calvin, circumstances of the origin of the Anglican Church;

c) aims of the Council of Trent convention and decisions made to strengthen Catholicism.

19. Poland and Lithuania in the times of the last Jagiellon rulers.

a) foreign policies of the last Jagiellon rulers;

b) circumstances of real union founded between Poland and Lithuania, and its main decisions;

c) religious relations in the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and their specific character against the European background;

d) greatest achievements in the Polish literature of the Renaissance, including writings of Mikołaj Rej, Jan Kochanowski, Andrzej Frycz Modrzewski;

e) representative examples of Renaissance art on the territory of Poland, taking into consideration particularly one's own region.

20. The society and system of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth.

a) government institutions of the gentry democracy and their powers;

b) circumstances of enactment and main assumptions of the Warsaw Confederation and the Henrician Articles;

c) rules of free election;

d) nature of changes of the political and structural system of the Commonwealth (Rzeczpospolita) of 17th century;

e) typical features of Baroque culture, with reference to the examples in architecture and art in the region.

21. The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth and its neighbours in 17th century.

a) main causes of wars of the Commonwealth against Sweden, Turkey and Russia;

b) causes, aims and consequences of the uprising led by Bohdan Chmielnicki in Ukraine;

c) social, economic and political consequences of wars in 17th century;

d) causes and signs of political, social and economic crisis in the Commonwealth in the 2nd half of 17th century.

22. Forms of modern state.

- a) France of Louis XIV, absolute monarchy;
- b) the example of England, main features of a constitutional monarchy;
- c) constitutional monarchy vs. absolute monarchy, taking into consideration the scope of the sovereign power, rights and duties of the subjects, the role of state institutions (parliament);
- d) specificity of the Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth against the European background.

23. Europe in 18th century.

- a) ideas of the Enlightenment in science, literature, architecture and art;
- b) separation of powers according to Montesquieu and rules of the Social Contract by Jean-Jacques Rousseau;
- c) reforms in the Age of Enlightenment in Prussia, Russia and Austria.

24. The Polish-Lithuanian Commonwealth in 18th century.

- a) causes and manifestations of the crisis of Poland in the times of the Saxon;
- b) changes of the international position of the Commonwealth in 18th century;
- c) projects of system reforms by Stanisław Konarski and Stanisław Leszczyński, and signs of economic growth and cultural revival in the times of the Saxon.

25. Revolt of the subjects – the American War of Independence.

- a) causes and results of the War of Independence;
- b) contribution of Poles in the fight for the independence of the USA;
- c) main governmental institutions of the United States and the way the Constitution of the United States of America implemented in practice the tripartite system of division of political powers.

26. The Commonwealth in the times of Stanisław August Poniatowski.

- a) circumstances of creation of the Commission of National Education, its tasks and achievements;
- b) debates of the *Great Sejm* and the Constitution of May 3; reforms of the *Great Sejm* and decisions of the Constitution of May 3;
- c) circumstances of establishing the Targowica Confederation and its results;
- d) typical features of the Polish Enlightenment and examples of the art of Classicism including regional ones.

27. Fight to preserve independence in the last years of 18th century.

- a) 1st, 2nd and 3rd partition of Poland and territorial changes after each of them;
- b) objectives and results of Kościuszko Uprising;
- c) internal and external causes of the fall of the Commonwealth.

28. The French Revolution.

- a) main causes of the revolution and its results;
- b) typical features of the Jacobin dictatorship;
- c) main ideas of the French Revolution included in the Declaration of the Rights of Man and the Citizen.

29. The era of Napoleon.

- a) changes in Europe in the era of Napoleon in the scope of social, economic and political relations;
- b) circumstances of the organization of the Polish Legions and the establishment of the Duchy of Warsaw, the features of the governmental form and the territory of the Duchy of Warsaw;

c) Napoleon's politics in reference to "the Polish issue" and the attitude of Poles towards Napoleon.

30. Europe after the Congress of Vienna.

- a) rules and resolutions of the Congress of Vienna, taking into consideration its decision concerning Poland;
- b) main ideas of Liberalism, Socialism and national ideas in Europe in 1st half of 19th century.

31. Development of industrial civilization.

- a) typical features of the Industrial Revolution;
- b) examples of positive and negative results of the industrialization process, including natural environment;
- c) most important inventions and discoveries of 19th century and economic and social consequences of their application;
- d) changes in the quality of life of different social groups in 19th century on the basis of written, iconographical and statistical sources.

32. Europe and the world in 19th century.

- a) causes and results of the American Civil War;
- b) similarities and differences in the process of uniting Italy and Germany;
- c) causes, directions and range of colonial expansion of European states in 19th century;
- d) positive and negative effects of colonial policy from the perspective of Europe and colonized communities and states.

33. The area of Poland after the Congress of Vienna.

- a) new arrangement of the borders of the partitioning countries within the area of Poland after the Congress of Vienna;
- b) political system of the Kingdom of Poland;
- c) achievements of the Kingdom of Poland in economy, culture and education.

34. Society in the former Commonwealth in the period of national revolts.

- a) the November Uprising and the January uprising;
- b) causes and comparison of the course of the uprising and the character of national uprisings;
- c) direct and long-term results of insurgents' nationalistic movements;
- d) main trends and personalities of the Great Emigration.

35. Life after partition.

- a) ways the partitioning powers treated the inhabitants of the former Commonwealth's area;
- b) different attitudes of the society toward the partitioning powers;
- c) living conditions of society in three annexed areas in 2nd half of 19th century, including the opportunities giving a lead to social activity and national development;
- d) main trends of political life in the annexed areas at the end of 19th century.

36. Europe and the world at the turn of 19th and 20th century.

- a) results of technical revolution and civilization progress, including natural environment;
- b) causes and results of the process of democratization of political life;
- c) new cultural phenomena, including the birth of mass culture and moral transformation.

37. World War I and its results.

- a) main causes of conflict arising between European powers at the turn of 19th and 20th century;
- b) specificity of military actions, with special attention paid to technical means.

38. Russian revolutions.

- a) political, social and economic reasons of the outbreak of the Russian Revolution of 1917;
- b) circumstances of power takeover by the *Bolsheviks* in Russia;
- c) direct consequences of the February Revolution and the October Revolution for Russia and Europe; Europe's response to the events in Russia.

39. Polish issue in World War I.

- a) attitude of the partitioning powers to "the Polish issue" and opinions of followers of different political orientation;
- b) evaluation of Polish military effort;
- c) international conditioning for the Polish issue.

The History curriculum of the upper secondary school (*Lyceum*) is organized into 5 teaching hours per week and is divided into 126 principle subjects. The structure is rigidly chronological. The order of the themes follows the temporary continuum from prehistory to the collapse of the communist system and the fall of the Berlin Wall. It consists, therefore, in large part of a reiteration of the subjects covered at *Gymnasium* with the addition of some temporary issues, from the post WWI period to the 1990s.

The principle objectives identified are:

1. A general understanding of the historical facts.
2. The employment of the main types of sources.
3. The ability to formulate critical analyses and to assume the method of historical thought.

The weight given to the themes is in general distributed evenly throughout the historical course, with the exception of the second half of the 20th Century, to which a greater depth of study is given. The curriculum envisages propaedeutic lessons which introduce pupils to the study of history, dealing with methodological or lexical issues or those concerning temporal subdivision.

The themes selected are mainly concerned with political history to which matters of economic, social and cultural history are added in certain passages.

National history is tackled, mainly, from the beginning of the Modern Age, intersecting with European events of the 14th/15th Centuries while, in a later period, it forms a course by itself to which ample time is dedicated for in-depth study. An interesting element is the spatial dimension concerning the European perspective, which is treated in its entirety. The historical account is not limited, therefore, solely to Western Europe, with its customary themes linked to French, English, German, etc. history but is also open to the principal events concerning the peoples and nations of Eastern Europe, thus enabling a unitary representation of the continent. From the 18th Century the spatial dimension expands still further to take in the phenomena associated with colonialism, imperialism, the World Wars, de-colonisation and the international politics of the post-WW2 era with particular reference to the collapse of the Yalta "system".

[1] A. Cavalli (a cura di), *Insegnare la storia contemporanea in Europa*, il Mulino, Bologna, 2005.