

Identifying High Potential Learners in History

Summary

This advice sheet contains a checklist of criteria, originally compiled by the QCDA (Qualifications and Curriculum Development Agency), to help with identifying learners who are demonstrating high learning potential in history. It is aimed at secondary school subject teachers, as well as high learning potential lead teachers.

Below is a list of the characteristics commonly shown by learners who are demonstrating high learning potential in history. A learner need not be showing all of these to be considered a high potential learner, but would most likely be demonstrating a majority of them.

Learners who show high learning potential in history:

Literacy

- perform at levels of literacy that are advanced for their age
- show particular skill at inference and deduction when reading texts
- synthesise information to present a cogent summary
- use subject-specific vocabulary confidently
- follow and contribute effectively to a line of argument in discussion by making relevant contributions and substantiating points with evidence
- access complex source materials with growing independence

Historical Knowledge

- have an extensive general knowledge, including a significant amount of historical knowledge
- develop with ease a chronological framework within which to place existing and new knowledge
- demonstrate a strong sense of period as a result of study

Historical Understanding

- grasp quickly the role of criteria in formulating and articulating an historical explanation or argument
- understand and apply historical concepts to their study of history
- are able to draw generalisations and conclusions from a range of sources of evidence
- seek to identify patterns and processes in what they study, while being aware of the provisional nature of knowledge
- appreciate that answers arrived at depend largely on the questions asked
- recognise how other disciplines can contribute to the study of history and draw readily on what they learn in other subjects to enhance their historical understanding

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Enquiry:

- are able to establish and follow a line of enquiry, identifying and using relevant information
- are good at reasoning and problem solving
- think flexibly, creatively and imaginatively
- show discrimination when selecting facts and evaluating historical evidence
- manipulate historical evidence and information well
- appreciate the nature of historical enquiry
- question subject matter in a challenging way
- are intrigued by the similarities and differences between different people's experiences, times and places and other features of the past
- thrive on controversy, mystery and problems of evidence

Further Information

www.schoolhistory.co.uk/forum/index.php?showtopic=4603	A history teachers' discussion forum about gifted and talented.
www.history.org.uk/publications/resource/853/teaching-history-124-teaching-the-most-able	Historical Association resources for teaching history to the most able.
<i>Meeting the Needs of Your Most Able Pupils in History</i> by Steve Barnes	Book published by David Fulton with guidance on identification, planning, differentiation and support. Also has CD with lesson plans.
<i>Focus on Gifted and Talented: Britain 1066 – 1500</i> by Steve Waugh and Denise Waugh	Photocopiable teacher book, written by expert authors, providing dedicated lesson ideas and resources for working with more able learners.
<i>Focus on Gifted and Talented: Britain 1500 – 1750</i> by Steve Waugh and Denise Waugh	Photocopiable teacher book, written by expert authors, providing dedicated lesson ideas and resources for working with high potential learners.

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