SS Peter & Paul Catholic Primary School

History Language Continuum

The vocabulary our children are taught, year by year · 2026–27

Vocabulary is specified in every unit and falls into two kinds. Tier 2 is thinking vocabulary — the words historians use to reason, which transfer across every period. Tier 3 is subject vocabulary — the people, places and terms belonging to the period studied. Both are taught explicitly and required in the written outcome.

Year	Tier 2 · thinking vocabulary	Tier 3 · subject vocabulary
Reception	old, new, before, after, long ago, same, different, remember, order	family, grandparent, photograph, object, toy, story, explorer, castle, long ago
Year 1	past, present, change, remember, compare, significant, then, now, before, after	transport, steam engine, Victorian, nurse, hospital, seaside, locomotive, bathing machine, Crimean War, Florence Nightingale, Mary Seacole, Edith Cavell, Wright Brothers, George Stephenson
Year 2	before, after, century, significant, cause, consequence, evidence, source	flight, aviation, pioneer, Great Fire, bakery, Pudding Lane, Samuel Pepys, Christopher Wren, St Paul's Cathedral, diary, primary source
Year 3	BCE, CE, civilisation, ancient, artefact, primary source, secondary source, cause, consequence, chronology	Stone Age, Bronze Age, Iron Age, Neolithic, Skara Brae, Stonehenge, pharaoh, hieroglyphics, pyramid, Tutankhamun, mummification, Julius Caesar, Boudica, Hadrian's Wall, Roman, legionary, aqueduct
Year 4	settlement, invasion, kingdom, source, evaluate, bias, significant, perspective, legacy, oral history	Anglo-Saxon, Viking, Sutton Hoo, Danelaw, Alfred the Great, burh, thane, ceorl, wergild, longship, monastery, Lindisfarne, Beowulf, Bede, Alcuin, fyrd, Valhalla, pagan
Year 5	colonialism, empire, perspective, bias, oral tradition, repatriation, class inequality, constitutional, legacy, colonial thread	Kingdom of Benin, Oba, Benin Bronzes, lost-wax technique, punitive expedition, Act of Supremacy, Reformation, Church of England, Spanish Armada, Francis Drake, Surrey Iron Railway, Wandle, Merton Abbey Mills, William Morris, Arts and Crafts, Arthur Liberty, Industrial Revolution, Titanic
Year 6	democracy, legacy, terrorism, persecution, genocide, propaganda, appeasement, source, corroboration, justified, counter-argument, Never Again	polis, Acropolis, Parthenon, Ekklesia, ostracism, agoge, helot, Hellenisation, Socrates, Alexander the Great, Gunpowder Plot, Monteagle Letter, divine right, Magna Carta, Blitz, Luftwaffe, Operation Pied Piper, Holocaust, Auschwitz, Anne Frank, VE Day, VJ Day, UDHR

Disciplinary vocabulary — how historians talk about their work

EYFS & Year 1	Year 2 – Year 3	Year 4 – Year 5	Year 6
old, new, long ago, remember, order, timeline, object, photograph, story	timeline, decade, century, primary source, secondary source, cause, consequence, useful, limitation	evidence, evaluate, author, purpose, perspective, bias, reliability, oral history, interpretation, judgement	corroborate, propaganda, under duress, contested, significance, justified, counter-argument, historically constructed

Precision of language is a core historical skill. Where a pupil says a source 'tells us' something, the teacher upgrades it in the moment: a historian would say the source 'suggests' it — and would ask who wrote it, and why.