

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-45663-1 - History Teaching: The Era Approach

P. Carpenter

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

HISTORY TEACHING

The Era Approach

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-45663-1 - History Teaching: The Era Approach

P. Carpenter

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-45663-1 - History Teaching: The Era Approach

P. Carpenter

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

HISTORY TEACHING

The Era Approach

BY

P. CARPENTER

M.A., B.LITT.

Assistant Tutor, Cambridge Institute of Education



CAMBRIDGE
AT THE UNIVERSITY PRESS

1964

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-45663-1 - History Teaching: The Era Approach
P. Carpenter
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org

Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107456631

© Cambridge University Press 1964

This publication is in copyright. Subject to statutory exception and to the provisions of relevant collective licensing agreements, no reproduction of any part may take place without the written permission of Cambridge University Press.

First published 1964

First paperback edition 2014

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library

ISBN 978-1-107-45663-1 Paperback

Cambridge University Press has no responsibility for the persistence or accuracy of URLs for external or third-party internet websites referred to in this publication, and does not guarantee that any content on such websites is, or will remain, accurate or appropriate.

Contents

<i>Preface</i>	<i>page vii</i>
1 THE FOUNDATIONS OF THE HISTORY SYLLABUS	I
2 THE TRADITIONAL SYLLABUS AND ITS ORIGIN	14
3 A CRITICISM OF THE TRADITIONAL SYLLABUS	26
4 THE ERA APPROACH	37
5 DISADVANTAGES OF THE ERA APPROACH	49
6 THE ERA APPROACH IN ACTION (I): PREPARATION AND PLANNING	59
7 THE ERA APPROACH IN ACTION (II): EXPLORATION AND REPORTING	70
8 CONCLUSION	81
<i>Appendices</i>	
1 A SUGGESTED SYLLABUS	85
2 A LIST OF REFERENCE BOOKS	95
<i>Index</i>	<i>101</i>

Cambridge University Press

978-1-107-45663-1 - History Teaching: The Era Approach

P. Carpenter

Frontmatter

[More information](#)

Preface

The era approach to the teaching of history may be summed up as the intensive study, on the part of the pupils, of short and unrelated passages of time. In the schools into which it has found its way, primary as well as secondary, it is known by various names or, more often than not, by no particular name. This is significant, for attempts to attach a label to it have not been altogether successful. Of the labels most frequently used, two (project and period) are too vague, and the others (topic and patch) too restricted in concept.

The word 'project' (sometimes known as 'centre of interest') conjures up in the minds of many teachers an undertaking of group activity on a grand scale, in which more than one subject in the school curriculum is involved. The term 'period' is also misleading, since it is by definition a portion of the time the length of which is indefinite, unless specifically stated. It is then usually associated with the historical periods offered for examination purposes.

'Topic' does not meet the case either, for it is commonly understood to refer to a specific theme which, for the purpose of closer inspection, has been taken out of its chronological or contemporary context. Nor is a more recent label, 'patch', entirely satisfactory. In the first place, it is inelegant, suggesting something scrappy. Furthermore, though originally intended to denote the treatment in depth of particular ages, it is often identified with units of work *within* these ages.

Much confusion has resulted from the indiscriminate use of the above terms, and it is to avoid adding to the confusion that the neutral term 'era' has been chosen. Apart from this initial act of baptism, no originality can be claimed. The practices which are discussed are already well established

Cambridge University Press
978-1-107-45663-1 - History Teaching: The Era Approach
P. Carpenter
Frontmatter
[More information](#)

P R E F A C E

in the classroom, and the issues that lie behind them have occupied the minds of countless generations of history teachers.

The purpose of the present book is not to advocate the era approach as the solution to the problems of teaching history in schools, but to give a factual description of it and to attempt to make an objective assessment. In order to arrive at this assessment, it has been necessary to go into the question of selection of historical material as a whole and to refer at some length to more traditional ways of presenting the subject. The temptation to make a comparison with other departures from tradition has, however, been resisted. For to do them justice would have entailed subjecting them to an equally searching examination, and that was clearly outside the compass of this book.

Finally, a word on how the book came to be written. As a schoolmaster, the author became increasingly dissatisfied with the type of history teaching he inherited and experimented with a number of alternatives. Later on, at the Oxford University Department of Education, he was fortunate to be a colleague of Miss R. M. Goodrich who did some interesting work with her students along era lines. What eventually decided him to put pen to paper was his inability to suggest a book on the approach when asked to do so in the course of his lecturing.

If what follows should go some way towards filling a gap, it is thanks not only to Miss Goodrich, but to the extraordinarily generous help received from Mr T. Cairns, of Sunderland Training College, which can never be adequately acknowledged. The author is also indebted to Mr G. L. Middleton, of the Cambridge Institute of Education, for his assistance with proof reading.

P. C.

May, 1964