

# *“Where can History and Geography take me?”*

Here are some former Firrhill pupils to tell you!



“I am a MA Sociology graduate from the University of Edinburgh, a Trustee at Edinburgh Rape Crisis Centre, Lead Volunteer for Girl Voice at Girlguiding Scotland, and was a Phase 1 member of the First Minister’s National Advisory Council on Women and Girls.

Studying history was hugely helpful throughout my degree: it gave me some context for the issues I studied at University; introduced me to some core concepts which became important during my degree; equipped me with an essay structure I still use today; and allowed me to develop the critical thinking skills which make for strong marks at University.

The political focus of the Higher course in particular allowed me to question the world around me and understand how it had changed for the better in the past, lessons which have been hugely influential in my campaigning work which has seen multiple legislative changes, such as the provision of free period products and an exhaustive gender equality review of the education system.

**To summarise, studying history helped me to understand what was going on at Uni when I started, to thrive and succeed throughout my degree, and to have a critical lens on the world which has driven me to change it for the better.”**

“I studied higher history at Firrhill back in 2006 and then advanced higher in 2007 (got an A in both which I'm still pretty proud of). I knew I wanted to go to university but wasn't sure what I wanted to do as a career so decided to study history because I enjoyed it so much.

I chose to study History at the University of Glasgow with a focus on early Scottish history and even tried a bit of archaeology. When I graduated, I got a job in finance where I stayed for a few years until eventually landing a job with the Grants Team at Historic Environment Scotland where I get to use both my finance and history background.

My job allows me to help bring sites of historical importance back into use. I get to travel across Scotland to visit and learn about historic sites and honestly, none of it would have been possible without studying history at Firrhill.”

“It was the variety of subjects on offer within the history department that got me hooked and wanting to study more, from Skara Brae in S1 right through to the Picts and Romans in Northern Britain in S6. These different subjects inspired me to go and study history at the UoG, and from here I had made up my mind I wanted history to be part of my career. I decided to do a traineeship in the archives at UoG where I worked with records going back to the university's foundation in 1451.

This gave me the experience of working with historic documents that i needed to go on to do a Masters in Archives and Records Management at UCL where I became a qualified archivist, and got to study palaeography. This then opened the door for me to go for the position of Assistant Archivist at the Bank of England Archive - i never imagined studying history at school would take me to working with the historical records of the UK Central bank in the City of London.

I recently moved on to become the Business Archives Surveying Officer for Scotland, where I work with and advise on the historic records of businesses and organisations, from distilleries to textile mills.

**The analytical skills I learnt studying history have really helped to prepare me for the work I do now!”**

“My love of History from an early age was nurtured throughout my time at Firrhill.

The enthusiasm and knowledge of teachers inspired and motivated me to not only have a continued interest in History but pursue a career in the subject.

The vast breadth of topics we covered and the skills of historical analysis I obtained prepared me to undertake a degree in History, while the passion for the subject shown by the teachers at Firrhill inspired me to go on to be a History teacher myself.”

“Choosing to study history at Firrhill was the best choice I've made throughout my time in education. Throughout the six years I spent at high school, I was lucky enough to learn about 5,000 years of history from neolithic Orkney to slavery in the USA and a whole lot of fascinating stuff in between. I think what is really great about history at Firrhill is that there's a real importance placed on not only learning dates and facts, but on developing how to think critically and independently. This has been hugely beneficial in preparing me for my degree, and I'm certain that I owe a lot of my best marks in the last four years to this department (I still regularly use the same methods of thinking and argument structures in my university work)!

However, I think the best thing about the history department is the way that you're taught. The genuine passion that the staff have about what they're teaching is infectious and truly makes for a wonderful experience. If it wasn't for the 6th year course on early Scottish history I wouldn't have ended up doing the archaeology degree that I love, and if not for the excellent teaching throughout I would have found my time at uni much more difficult! I'm potentially taking an offer to do a PhD in archaeological science this coming year. I can genuinely say that I wouldn't be in this position without the skills and passion for the past that the staff at Firrhill helped me realise.

**In conclusion, history at Firrhill is the best!”**

“My experience of studying History at Firrhill was a big help during my Cambridge interview, helping me to think objectively about the two different sides of a debate.

Now that I’m starting out on a career in law, I am finding the research skills that I gained from my Advanced Higher History dissertation just as helpful.

On top of that, it is a genuinely interesting subject which has helped me understand the world we live in today, whether that be the Black Lives Matter movement or tensions between Russia and the West.”

“What I loved most about History was that everyone was encouraged to do the absolute best they could and that made an A achievable for everyone – the department encourages everyone to believe they can do even better than they think they can.”

"My favourite thing about geography and probably the main reason I chose it was the actual department and the teachers. I always really struggled in school but found the ethos of the geography department was always really patient and helpful. This made the subject much more enjoyable in my opinion.

I really enjoyed the content of geography and have found that I have used it outside of school. I enjoy traveling and you'd be surprised at how much of what you learn in geography can actually help you outside of an exam!"

"I managed to get an A in my higher geography exam and that therefore meant I had the grades to study Mental Health Nursing at university. Whilst working in the hospitals there is aspects of higher geography that I have used, some of which include already having existing knowledge on Malaria and primary health care strategies used across the world.

The population topic allowed me to understand the problems associated with data collection in censuses etc. One of the topics I have gone into study at university 'Assessing community and patient wellness' this directly correlated with this information I learned in higher. It looked into how peoples living conditions and the postcodes that they live in can negatively impact their health and hinder recovery."

“My teacher made Geography exciting and relatable by telling us stories of where he'd been, his hitch hiking across America sticks with me fondly! I was fortunate enough to travel a lot as a child and this led to me wanting to follow in his footsteps and share my experiences with others.

I always loved Geography at school, it was my favourite subject. I went on to Study it at university where my love grew stronger and I've now been a Geography teacher myself for 6 years!

“Studying Geography at Firrhill has made me realise that I really want to study Geography in the future and to help people and our planet.”

# WHY STUDY HISTORY?

History helps us tell the future - teaching us about the past. That makes it a great way into a whole host of careers.



## Skills

- Analysis
- Research
- Essay writing
- Communication
- Problem-solving
- Arguing



## Careers

- Law
- Politics
- Public sector
- Business
- Marketing
- Economics
- Teaching
- Academia
- Insurance
- Archaeology



## Related subjects

- English Literature
- Languages
- Media studies
- Law
- Politics
- Philosophy
- Psychology
- Economics
- Sociology



## Helps towards degree courses in...

- Archaeology
- Economics
- Classics
- Languages
- English
- History of art
- Law
- Politics
- Teaching
- Religious studies

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## REASONS TO STUDY

# History

### 1. HISTORY IS RELEVANT

To make sense of the present, it is essential to understand the past. Everything that is happening around us has been influenced by that which preceded it.

### 2. TRANSFERABLE SKILLS

Studying history helps students develop key skills that span all major fields of study, including critical reasoning, communication and analytical skills.

### 3. LEARN FROM THE PAST

History often repeats itself. Studying history helps students to identify where we have been going wrong, comment on it, and attempt to avoid it in the future.

### 4. CULTURAL AWARENESS

By examining the history of different cultures, students gain a better understanding of different cultures and their origins.

### 5. INDEPENDENCE

Knowledge of history requires hard work. It is a subject dominated by reading and research which helps students to become independent and self-sufficient.

### 6. AN INVESTMENT IN YOUR FUTURE

Studying history can be an impressive and attractive feature on a CV, opening many doors for your future career.

### 7. BECOME A BETTER CITIZEN

Studying history helps students to develop essential skills to become informed citizens, with a good understanding of the world, the past and cultural diversities.

### 8. IT'S INTERESTING

History is full of drama, action and emotions. It's impossible not to be captivated by the fascinating events of the past that have helped to shape the world as we know it in the present day.

### 9. UNDERSTANDING OF THE WORLD

History provides us with the framework of knowledge we need to understand how the world worked in the past and how it works now.

### 10. IT TELLS US WHO WE ARE

History tells the story of how we came to be as we are in the present day. Therefore to study history is to understand the origin of our existence and who we are.

## These are some of the things people have said about Geography:

“Geography is life. It is impossible to conceive of rounded human beings who have not grasped the fundamentals of geography.”

*Film Director and Chair General Teaching Council.*

“Geographers are often in the front line of the world’s war zones and disaster areas and enabling people to update their views of the earth and its inhabitants.” *Secretary General of the United Nations.*

“Geographic information is critical to promote economic development, improve our stewardship of natural resources and protect the environment.”

*Bill Clinton, Former President of the USA.*

“Geography graduates are highly employable.”

*Times Educational Supplement Reporter.*

“Global warming, the spread of deserts, water shortages, the migration of peoples, the battles over resources such as oil and issues of world trade and debt (and world conflicts) ... All this is part of modern geography.”

*Education Guardian Reporter.*

“Of all subjects, it is Geography that best draws together the techniques of research, planning, communications and presentation that employers demand today.” *Director, Transport Research.*

“Geography fieldwork is exciting, interesting, develops decision making and enquiry skills and allows us to appreciate other people’s values and attitudes.” *Lecturer in Geography.*

## Geographers are among the most employable people!

If you have studied geography you will have the following advantages:

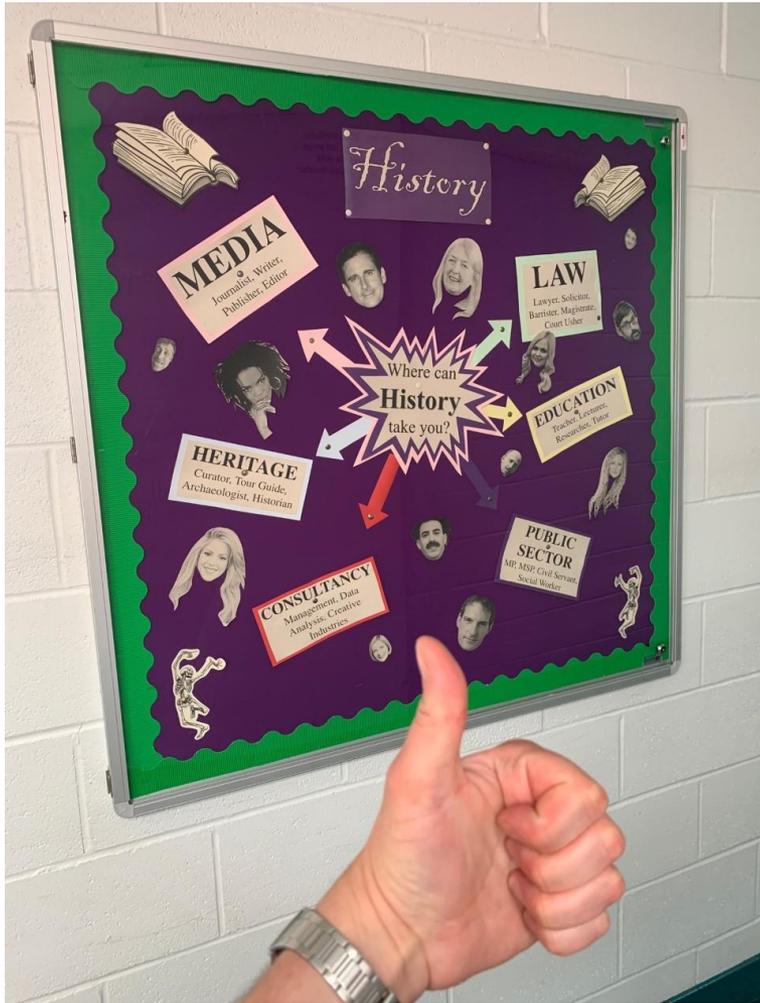
- You will know about local, national and global issues and be able to talk about them
- You will have developed skills such as using maps, photographs and diagrams, explaining your ideas clearly to others.
- You will be aware of events around you and appreciate that people have different views and there are different solutions to issues.

Check this out. Which jobs involve:

- Using maps and data
- Knowing about the environment
- Making decisions about location
- Working with people
- air traffic controller • archaeologist • architect • cartographer • civil engineer • conservationist • estate agent • environmentalist • farm worker • financial adviser • foreign correspondent • geologist • geophysicist • GIS technician • graphic designer • holiday rep • hotel manager • hydrologist • landscaper • meteorologist • outdoor pursuits supervisor • peacekeeper • planner • social worker • surveyor • taxi driver • teacher • transport manager • translator • travel agent

For further information about why geography is a sound career choice and to read biographies of geographers, visit the GA website, which includes a link to The Royal Geographical Society (with IBG) website. Also ask your geography teacher.

# So where can History and Geography take you?



**Wherever you want to go!**