The Comparison of Japan and England about History Curriculum
— A Case Study of Lower Secondary Education

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1. Introduction

Japan’s Lower Secondary Education Courses of Study announced in March 2008 and The Practical Guide for Lower Secondary Education Courses of Study (hereafter referred to as The Practical Guide) issued in July have shed light on the reality of social studies in lower secondary education as outlined in the Course of Study 2008 Edition¹. This paper will review characteristics of history-related fields, and by referring to the history curriculum of the National Curriculum of England which was revised in 2007 and implemented since 2008, this paper will examine future challenges in history education research.


In the 2008 Edition of the Course of Study Lower Secondary Social Studies basic policy reforms are summarised into the following three points based on the Amended Fundamental Law of Education and the Central Council for Education Report².

- Acquire fundamental / basic knowledge, concepts, and skills
- Enhance language activities
- Enhance studies of religion, various traditions and culture, and social participation.

And, the following five areas for reforms in history-related fields are outlined based on the basic policy reforms³.

1) Increase focus on studies to understand the Megatrends in Japan’s History
2) Foster skills to explain and examine history
3) Increase focus on modern history studies
4) Focus on studies of various cultures and traditions
5) Enhance world history content, which acts as a backdrop for Japan’s history

This paper will clarify the characteristics of each of these points.

1) **Increase focus on studies to understand the Megatrends in Japan’s History**
   
   Continuing focus on studies to understand the Megatrends in Japan’s History is said to be for the purpose of achieving the basic policy reform 1) Acquire fundamental / basic knowledge, concepts, and skills. These reforms are outlined below.

   a. **Clarifying Objectives**

   The key objective of lower secondary social studies history education outlined in existing Courses of Studies was “understand the megatrends in Japan’s history and the characteristics of each era...”, but in the 2008 Edition this objective was changed to “facilitate understanding of the megatrends in Japan’s history based on the characteristics of each era”. As a result, the ultimate goal of history studies is for pupils to understand the megatrends of Japan’s history, and there is clearly less emphasis on “the characteristics of each era” as it is now a medium for understanding the megatrends.

   b. **Increased Structure and Focus of Lesson Content**

   In the content for the five items describing study content for each era the standard phrasing “Using XX and YY, facilitate understanding that A is B” is used, and it clearly states which items to use such as XX and YY, and what understanding or interpretation (A is B) to facilitate. Furthermore, based on the studied items and understanding, educators now conduct lessons so pupils can understand the characteristics of each era, while conducting activities where pupils can use the content that they have studied to describe the main characteristics of each era in the final phase of study, and identify similarities and differences between each era based on the content of their studies. As a result, by clarifying an understanding and interpretations of each era and in the final stage of each era have pupils recognise the characteristics of each era, a more systematic approach is achieved that aims to bring structure to understanding the megatrends of Japan’s history by repeating this process.

   Furthermore, in one of the items indicating study content, it states that “researching the history of one’s local area” and this shows that there is an increased emphasis on studies promoting understanding of megatrends in Japan’s history while providing specifics and a real feel for the content by covering historical events from one’s local area. Also in terms of world history, it is stipulated just as in previous editions that “in order to understand
the megatrends in Japan's history, the content of world history which acts as the backdrop for Japan's history should be enhanced. As a result, the content of teaching materials is designed for studies about local history, world history and Japan's history, with the focus mainly being on a national history level.

c. Structuralizing and Specification of Study Methods

In one of the items listed under the treatment of content, studies on the era divisions and recognizing the transitions of each era should be implemented in principle as an introduction to the study of history. Furthermore, the Practical Guide instructs educators in the final stages of history studies to have pupils reflect on the megatrends of Japan's history and think about these in general terms relating to Japanese traditions and cultural characteristics, once they have completed their history studies.

Furthermore, in the section on the treatment of content, one of the items for study content states that in principle educators are to conduct activities whereby pupils express each era in general terms as a summary of the five items describing study content for each era. It also instructs educators to do this once they have fostered pupils' issues awareness capabilities so that pupils can inquire about the characteristics of each era in the initial stages of studying each era.

These directives aim to structuralize teaching methods and provide instruction for study processes by simplifying studies into the two layers of 1) stimulating a desire to study in the initial phases of overall history study and to consider Japan's traditions and cultural characteristics as a summary of overall history studies in the final phase, and 2) motivating pupils by establishing problem awareness which is done as an introduction at the start of studying each era, as well as conducting activities to understand the characteristics of each era as a summary activity in the final phase of study of each era. This explains the section where it states that it is necessary to strive to enhance and develop techniques to focus on the "Introduction" so that pupils clearly understand the purpose of studies as well as the "Summary" so that pupils understand the results of their studies in order for pupils to work independently on study activities such as examining, decision making, and expression, as well as formulate a sufficient understanding of the study content overall.

Additionally, in the section regarding the treatment of content, the content for each era directs educators to have pupils pay attention to the differences with former eras, and instructs them to have pupils observe the transition to another era. Also, in other sections regarding the treatment of content, educators are instructed to have pupils recognise the relationship between the content for each era and the present day. In comparison to the previous version, the new
2008 Edition provides educators with clear and detailed instructions such as seen in the teaching methods above.

2) Foster skills to explain and examine history

On of the items in the 2008 edition’s section on the treatment of content includes new items such as “strive to clearly set study content as well as foster pupils ability to think, make decisions, and expressiveness while focusing on studies that include explaining the significance, meaning, and characteristics of historical events and how these relate to other events, setting problems and examining these problems, as well as engaging in discussions. This is explained as being a way to achieve the revised policy of “(2) enhancing language activities”\(^\text{12}\). This "enhancement of the language activities" is also mentioned in the Central Education Council Report as being an “the focus of important improvements for each subject”, and is states that in order to foster children’s thinking, judgement, and power of expression, educators are to enhance language abilities while conducting studies in each subject through activities that leverage knowledge and techniques such as report and essay writing\(^\text{13}\).

For instance, in one of items covering the study content of “activities to express each era in general terms”, pupils will understand the general characteristics of each era by engaging in activities such as expressing a specific era in one word or selecting one aspect that represents the whole era while paying attention to the common features and differences with other eras, also by representing each era in words and diagrams, as well as engaging in discussions. As a result, pupils will learn how to express the characteristics of each era in their own words as well as develop their skills in thinking, judgement and expression\(^\text{14}\).

In addition to these activities, the first topic covering studies on the era divisions and recognizing the transitions of each era as well as items covering the study of each era where it describes “studies for pupils to understand the transitions from era to era” both emphasize that “pupils are to express what they have learned in their own words”\(^\text{15}\).

3) Overview of Other Revisions

a. Increase focus on modern history studies

Based on the directives in the Central Education Council Report\(^\text{16}\), the 2008 Edition aims to optimize the careful selection of pre-modern history topics and continue the focus on modern history studies. In a bid to achieve this, the number of items covering pre-modern to modern history has been
reduced from 11 categories in the previous edition to 9 categories under the premise\(^{17}\) that primary school studies will be effectively leveraged.

On the other hand, in the section on modern and contemporary history, the previous edition included the section “Japan and the World in modern and contemporary times”, however this content has been enhanced by dividing the content into two sections “Japan and the World in Modern History” and “Japan and the World in Contemporary History” the dividing point.

b. Focus on studies of various cultures and traditions

In the previous edition and the 2008 Edition, there is basically no change in the focus on studies of tradition and culture, and the key objective to “have pupils think about the characteristics of Japan’s traditions and culture from a broad prospective” remains unchanged. However, in order to achieve the revised plan to "enhance studies relating to (3) religion, various traditions and culture, and social participation ", there is an emphasis placed on driving pupils’ interest in traditions and cultural elements passed down through generations as seen in the item on study content stating "activities where pupils examine their local history".

Moreover, regarding the enhancement of the studies of religion, content covers movements of such religions as Buddhism, Christianity, and Islamism and studies touching on the arrival of Europeans in Japan and the Reformation that followed as a result are also included.

c. Enhance world history content, which acts as a backdrop for Japan’s history

Based on the directives in the Central Education Council Report\(^{18}\), the 2008 Edition aims to enhance study content related to world history. Specifically, a section on religious movements and ancient civilizations around the world has been added, and a new stand-alone section on the People's revolution, the Industrial Revolution in America and European countries has been created. Moreover, in content on the Cold War, a new section has been added on the End of the Cold War. However, the stance that world history is simply a backdrop to the history of Japan is firmly maintained.

3. Characteristics of Key Stage 3 History in the National Curriculum for England, 2008\(^{19}\)

Since the compilation of the legally binding National Curriculum 1991, history studies in England\(^{20}\) were revised in 1995 and 1999, and partly again in 2007\(^{21}\), before being implemented from 2008\(^{22}\). These editions of the National Curriculum are compiled based on two main pillars; The Programme of Study, which stipulates the study components and breadth of study into study stages, and the Attainment Targets, which is a break down of levels based on the
abilities and skills achieved by a pupil over the course of their studies\textsuperscript{23}. The following will examine the revisions to the Programme of Study for Key Stage 3 (hereafter referred to as KS3), which is equivalent to the Lower Secondary Education Course of Study of Japan 2008 Edition.

a. Characteristics of Previous Programmes of Study

Some representative analysis of the British National Curriculum include that of the 1991 Edition by Takaharu Moriwake, Yoshiharu Toda\textsuperscript{24}, and Nobuo Takenaka\textsuperscript{25}, of the 1995 Edition by Takeshi Tsuchiya\textsuperscript{26} and Masaki Hirako\textsuperscript{27}, as well as of the 2000 Edition by Kentaro Sakauchi\textsuperscript{28}. The following characteristics summarize their observations:

1. Although the National Curriculum aims to foster a sense of British identity through studies of periods in England’s history, it also stipulates independent studies of Europe and the world in order for pupils to see England in relative terms compared to Europe and the world, while at the same time gaining an understanding of the world today. Moreover, even though studies are of historical periods, studies have traditionally been done by topic in Britain.

2. Just as the focus is on gaining knowledge of history there is the same if not more focus on attaining skills (history research skills) to recognise history. These skills not only enable academic interpretations and explanations based on evidence, but also focus on an understanding of meta-history, which includes critical examination of materials, interpretations, and explanations.

Table 1 is an itemized summary of the areas and breadth of study for each edition of the KS3 Programmes of Study\textsuperscript{29}, the observations from the above-mentioned are consistent throughout each edition from 1991 to 2000.


However, the itemized areas and breadth of study for 2008 in Table 1 shows how the presentation has completely changed compared to previous editions. Firstly, the elements of study are divided into Key Concepts and Key Processes, and the number of items has increased and is more concrete. Furthermore, studies that had been previously described as Study Units and the Breadth of Study which stipulated the periods and regions for study are now included under the targeted content of Range and Content and described focusing on main themes that should be covered in studies. Table 2\textsuperscript{30} shows the complete Programmes of Study for 2008. A comparison of the Key Concepts and Key Processes in the 2008 Edition to previous editions, in particularly the 2000 edition, shows the following changes.

- In the section on Knowledge, skills and understanding in the 2000 Edition, the content for “Chronological understanding”, “knowledge and understanding of events, people and changes in the past”, and “historical
interpretation” has been included in Key Concepts, and “historical enquiry” and “organization and communication” have been incorporated in the content for Key Processes.

- The section on “knowledge and understanding of events, people and changes in the past” in the 2000 Edition, are now divided into the stand-alone topics of “cultural, ethical, and religious diversity”, “change and continuity”, and “cause and consequence”.
- The section on “historical enquiry” in the 2000 Edition is now divided into the stand-alone topics of “historical enquiry” and “using evidence”.

Next, a comparison of the Range and Content with previous editions shows the following changes.

- There is no longer a chronological representation of history, and sections d-h of “British history” and sections i and j of “European and world history” respectively show the main themes that should be targeted. As a result, the content is mapped out with a focus on themes, rather than a chronology of history.
- Topics are represented in a multi-level, theme-based manner with local themes covered in sections e and f, national topics covered in d, g and h, and European and World history covered in sections h, i and j. Based on this approach, efforts to foster multiple identities are strengthened.
- Section d mainly focuses on political-related themes, but other sections from f to j not only cover themes on politics, but also include social history perspectives as well as economical, cultural, religious, technological, and scientific themes enabling a diversified approach to studies, and indicating an even greater emphasis on taking a diversified standpoint.
- The explanatory notes about d, e, f, j (in the dotted-lined box), concretely cover the relation with citizenship. The focus on fostering multiple citizenship through history studies are covered in detail on local, national and global levels in section d which covers the development of a democratic society, section e which covers local society, section f which covers the multiethnic and multicultural society, and section j which covers an interdependent society that extends beyond the national borders.

Furthermore, the 2008 Edition is more detailed and is broken down more in terms of components, and in terms of content it is broader, more streamlined, and has greater flexibility than previous editions, which means that schools and educators are given more discretion than previously in terms of the structuring of detailed study units.
4. Direction of History Education in Japan and Britain

Despite the history curriculums of both Japan and Britain being revised at virtually the same time, there are a great number of differences between the two. Here, the differences in content and processes are outlines and examined.

1) Content in history education in Japan and England

a. Formulation of identity in history education

In the case of England, the aim is to foster multiple identities, making these relative to the national identity, by looking at history from such perspectives as local, national, European, and global, valuing cultural, racial and religious diversity in "Key Processes", and considering how to respond to multiracial

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Study Elements</th>
<th>Study Contents</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>1991</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>1 Knowledge and understanding of history</td>
<td>1 The Roman Empire</td>
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<td>2 Interpretations of history</td>
<td>2 Medieval realms: Britain 1066 to 1500</td>
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<td>3 history</td>
<td>3 The making of the United Kingdom: Crowns, Parliaments and peoples 1500 to 1750</td>
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<tr>
<td>* The use of historical sources</td>
<td>4 Expansion, trade and industry: Britain 1750 to 1900</td>
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<td>Historical enquiry and communication</td>
<td>5 The era of the Second World War</td>
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<td></td>
<td>* Unit 2 to unit 5 are fixed to teach chronologically.</td>
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<td><strong>1992</strong></td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>1 Chronology</td>
<td>1 Medieval realms: Britain 1066 to 1500</td>
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<tr>
<td>2 Range and depth of historical knowledge and understanding</td>
<td>2 The making of the United Kingdom: crowns, parliaments and peoples 1500 to 1750</td>
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<td>3 Interpretations of history</td>
<td>3 Britain 1750-circa 1900</td>
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<td>5 history</td>
<td>4 The twentieth-century world</td>
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<tr>
<td>Historical enquiry Organisation and communication</td>
<td>5 An era or turning point in European history before 1914</td>
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<td>6 1914</td>
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<td>7 A past non-European society Across the KS3</td>
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<th>Study Units</th>
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<tr>
<td>a) Aspects of the past in outline, in depth and through a local context</td>
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<td>b) Aspects of the histories of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales; where appropriate, the history of Britain should be set in its European and world context</td>
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<tr>
<td>c) History from a variety of perspectives - political; economic, technological and scientific; social; religious; cultural and aesthetic</td>
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<td>Unit 1 to unit 4 are fixed to teach chronologically.</td>
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Table 1:
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<tr>
<th>1999</th>
<th>Knowledge, skills, and understanding</th>
<th>Breadth of study</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>1</td>
<td>Chronological understanding</td>
<td>6 During the key stage, pupils should be taught the knowledge, skills and understanding through three British studies, a European study and two world studies.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>2</td>
<td>Knowledge and understanding of events, people and changes in the past</td>
<td>7 In their study of local, British, European and world history, pupils should be taught about: a) significant events, people and changes from the recent and more distant past b) history from a variety of perspectives including political, religious, social, cultural, aesthetic, economic, technological and scientific</td>
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<td>3</td>
<td>Historical interpretation</td>
<td>c) aspects of the histories of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales where appropriate</td>
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<td>4</td>
<td>Historical enquiry</td>
<td>d) the history of Britain in its European and wider world context</td>
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<td>5</td>
<td>Organisation and communication</td>
<td>e) some aspects in overview and others in depth</td>
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<th>2008</th>
<th>Key Concepts</th>
<th>Key Processes</th>
<th>Range and Content</th>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>1 Chronological understanding</td>
<td>1 Historical enquiry</td>
<td>a The study of history should be taught through a combination of overview, thematic and depth studies.</td>
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<td></td>
<td>2 Cultural, ethnic and religious diversity</td>
<td>2 Using evidence</td>
<td>b In order to give pupils a secure chronological framework, the choice of content should ensure that all pupils can identify and understand the major events, changes and developments in British, European and world history covering at least the medieval, early modern, industrial and twentieth-century periods</td>
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<td></td>
<td>3 Change and continuity</td>
<td>3 Communicating about the past</td>
<td>c Appropriate links should be made to some of the parallel events, changes and developments in British, European and world history.</td>
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<td>4 Cause and consequence</td>
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<td>British history</td>
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<td></td>
<td>5 Significance</td>
<td></td>
<td>d the development of political power from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century, including changes in the relationship between rulers and ruled over time, the changing relationship between the crown and parliament, and the development of democracy</td>
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<td></td>
<td>6 Interpretation</td>
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<td>e the different histories and changing relationships through time of the peoples of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales</td>
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<td>f the impact through time of the movement and settlement of diverse peoples to, from and within the British Isles</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>g the way in which the lives, beliefs, ideas and attitudes of people in Britain have changed over time and the factors that have driven these changes</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>h the development of trade, colonisation, industrialisation and technology, the British Empire and its impact on different people in Britain and overseas, pre-colonial civilisations, the nature and effects of the slave trade, and resistance and decolonisation</td>
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<td>European and world history</td>
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<td>i the impact of significant political, social, cultural, religious and/or economic developments and events on past European and world societies</td>
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<td>j the changing nature of conflict and cooperation between countries and peoples and its lasting impact on national, ethnic, racial, cultural or religious issues, including the nature and impact of the two world wars and the Holocaust, and the role of European and international institutions in resolving conflicts.</td>
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Table 2: Programme of Study for KS3 History in the National Curriculum for England, 2008

【Curriculum aims】
Learning and undertaking activities in history contribute to achievement of the curriculum aims for all young people to become:
- successful learners who enjoy learning, make progress and achieve
- confident individuals who are able to live safe, healthy and fulfilling lives
- responsible citizens who make a positive contribution to society.

【The importance of history】
History fires pupils' curiosity and imagination, moving and inspiring them with the dilemmas, choices and beliefs of people in the past. It helps pupils develop their own identities through an understanding of history at personal, local, national and international levels. It helps them to ask and answer questions of the present by engaging with the past.

Pupils find out about the history of their community, Britain, Europe and the world. They develop a chronological overview that enables them to make connections within and across different periods and societies. They investigate Britain's relationships with the wider world, and relate past events to the present day.

As they develop their understanding of the nature of historical study, pupils ask and answer important questions, evaluate evidence, identify and analyse different interpretations of the past, and learn to substantiate any arguments and judgements they make. They appreciate why they are learning what they are learning and can debate its significance.

History prepares pupils for the future, equipping them with knowledge and skills that are prized in adult life, enhancing employability and developing an ability to take part in a democratic society. It encourages mutual understanding of the historic origins of our ethnic and cultural diversity, and helps pupils become confident and questioning individuals.

【Key concepts】
1.1 Chronological understanding
   a Understanding and using appropriately dates, vocabulary and conventions that describe historical periods and the passing of time.
   b Developing a sense of period through describing and analysing the relationships between the characteristic features of periods and societies.
   c Building a chronological framework of periods and using this to place new knowledge in its historical context.

   (Explanation) This is essential in constructing historical narratives and explanations. It involves using precise dates to establish sequences of events in an enquiry, using chronological terms and vocabulary (e.g. century, decade, BC and AD) and knowing the names and key features of periods studied. Understanding of periods should develop into a chronological framework describing the characteristic features of past societies and periods. Pupils should identify changes within and across periods, making links between them.

1.2 Cultural, ethnic and religious diversity
   a Understanding the diverse experiences and ideas, beliefs and attitudes of men, women and children in past societies and how these have shaped the world.

   (Explanation) Pupils should explore cultural, ethnic and religious diversity and racial equality. Diversity exists within and between groups due to cultural, ethnic, regional, linguistic, social, economic, technological, political and religious differences. Cultural understanding should be developed through the range of groups and individuals investigated, for example minorities and majorities, European and non-European. People and societies involved in the same historical event may have different experiences and views and may develop a variety of stories, versions, opinions and interpretations of that event.

1.3 Change and continuity
   a Identifying and explaining change and continuity within and across periods of history.

   (Explanation) Understanding of change and continuity is closely linked to a sense of period and an understanding of overarching themes and issues. Pupils should analyse the extent and pace of change, whether the change amounted to progress and if so for whom.

1.4 Cause and consequence
   a Analysing and explaining the reasons for, and results of, historical events, situations and changes.
1.5 Significance
a Considering the significance of events, people and developments in their historical context and in the present day.

1.6 Interpretation
a Understanding how historians and others form interpretations.
b Understanding why historians and others have interpreted events, people and situations in different ways through a range of media.
c Evaluating a range of interpretations of the past to assess their validity.

2.1 Historical enquiry
a identify and investigate, individually and as part of a team, specific historical questions or issues, making and testing hypotheses
b reflect critically on historical questions or issues.

2.2 Using evidence
a identify, select and use a range of historical sources, including textual, visual and oral sources, artefacts and the historic environment
b evaluate the sources used in order to reach reasoned conclusions.

2.3 Communicating about the past
a present and organise accounts and explanations about the past that are coherent, structured and substantiated, using chronological conventions and historical vocabulary
b communicate their knowledge and understanding of history in a variety of ways, using chronological conventions and historical vocabulary.

3 Range and content
This section outlines the breadth of the subject on which teachers should draw when teaching the key concepts and key processes.
a The study of history should be taught through a combination of overview, thematic and depth studies.
b In order to give pupils a secure chronological framework, the choice of content should ensure that all pupils can identify and understand the major events, changes and developments in British, European and
world history covering at least the medieval, early modern, industrial and twentieth-century periods. Appropriate links should be made to some of the parallel events, changes and developments in British, European and world history.

Within these broad parameters, all pupils should be taught aspects of history, including:

**British history**

- the development of political power from the Middle Ages to the twentieth century, including changes in the relationship between rulers and ruled over time, the changing relationship between the crown and parliament, and the development of democracy.

- the different histories and changing relationships through time of the peoples of England, Ireland, Scotland and Wales.

- the impact through time of the movement and settlement of diverse peoples to, from and within the British Isles.

- the way in which the lives, beliefs, ideas and attitudes of people in Britain have changed over time and the factors such as technology, economic development, war, religion and culture that have driven these changes.

- the development of trade, colonisation, industrialisation and technology, the British Empire and its impact on different people in Britain and overseas, pre-colonial civilisations, the nature and effects of the slave trade, and resistance and decolonisation European and world history.

- the impact of significant political, social, cultural, religious, technological and/or economic developments and events on past European and world societies.
and the multicultural societies.

On the other hand, in the case of Japan, the enhanced structure and focus of study content is designed to create a uniform national identity by standardizing the study content and content of understanding and interpretation as well as concentrating content on a national level. As a result, it can be said to deepen pupils’ affection for Japan’s history and foster awareness as Japanese nationals—have been further enhanced than ever before.

The question remains whether history education should play a part of forming one’s identity or not, and if so what part should history education play in this process.

b. The formation of model citizenship in history education

In the case of England, the relationship between history education and citizenship is clearly evident in many of the main themes. In other words, it can be said that these themes were set with the enhancement of citizenship education in mind. Moreover, it also considers the development of multiple citizenship, both on a local level and a global level. In addition to this, it also includes themes that emphasise the relationship between citizenship and human and civil rights movements. History education in England is positively aimed to promote the development of model citizens in order for them to be able to live in the globalizing world.

On the other hand, in the case of Japan, in the section about an increased focus on modern history studies for instance, up until now topics such as the development of party politics in the time of the Taisho Democracy, the spread of democracy, and the development of social movements were included; however, it stated that educators were not to provide detailed full accounts of these\textsuperscript{34}. This has since been amended to “cover topics of the development of party politics in the time of the Taisho Democracy, the spread of democracy, and the development of social movement”\textsuperscript{35}, and based on the premise that
lower secondary social studies subjects including geography, political studies and economics, foster the foundations of model citizenship, it is thought that the focus is placed on the acquisition of basic historical knowledge to foster pupils' national identity when political studies and economics are covered in the third year. Furthermore, there is no mention of exactly how to incorporate the topic of social participation, which was part of the basic policy amendments.

How does history education play a part in the promotion of fostering model citizens? It is not possible to avoid this question when thinking about history education in social studies education.

c. Studies about trends in history education

In the case of England, even though content is no longer listed in chronological order, the topic of chronological understanding is listed in the Key Concepts, signifying that studies of the divisions of each period and the characteristic features of each period are still required. Furthermore, consideration is also given to chronological framework in Range and Content. However, in England pupils not only learn about the periods, but in the National Curriculum there is now the new concepts that pupils should also build a chronological framework of periods and use this to place new knowledge in its historical context, and emphasis is placed on pupils treating the period itself structurally according to a theme. Moreover, one point that continues to be raised is that in England studies are designed so pupils gain an understanding of topics rather than of the trends of history.

On the other hand, in Japan until now the objective was for pupils to understand the overall trends or flow of history and this is particularly emphasized in the current edition. The era divisions that are made up of trends in this case are based on changes in the central political power, and so politics is inevitably a central part of history studies.

The term trend, or literally “flow” in Japanese, means a movement in one direction. And when history is described in terms of trends, then there is a tendency to interpret this in the sense that that the past (cause) leads to the present (result). This type of thinking can lead to pupils believing that there is only one way to interpret history. And this deterministic understanding makes it difficult for pupils to be inquiring and understanding the meaning of learning. For pupils, the act of knowing becomes the objective, and may be seen as simply rote learning.

2) Processes in history education in Japan and England

In England, study elements are divided into Key Concepts and Key Processes, and the Key Processes which was until now divided into historical enquiry as well as organisation and communication, is now broken down and
enhanced into the three main areas of historical enquiry, using evidence, and communicating about the past. However, in Japan, a new section on “foster pupils’ ability to think, make decisions, and expressiveness while focusing on studies that include explaining the significance, meaning, and characteristics of historical events and how these relate to other events, setting problems and examining these problems, as well as engaging in discussions” has been added, and emphasises the cultivation of pupils’ skills in observation and explanation.

In England, looking at the items of historical enquiry, using evidence, and communicating about the past, there is a greater emphasis placed on fostering the ability of thinking of history as a science based on hypothesising and investigating, cultivating meta-historical thinking and skills focused on critical reflection, criticising and analysing history materials, and the ability to express content appropriately according to the rules of historical science. Also, in the Key Concepts in addition to adding the section “understand how historians and others form interpretations”, having pupils experience the process of interpreting, explaining, and organizing history is focused on in England.

On the other hand, fostering skills of thinking, judgment, and expression are also emphasized in Japan. In this case, this is based on more of a specific focus on the enhancement of language activities, which is outlined in the recent basic policy amendments to the Course of Study. In particular, the focus is now placed on fostering pupils’ ability to think, judge, and express through expression activities such as having pupils describe each era in general terms, or having pupils express what they have learnt in their own words. In other words, it shows a focus not only on content, but also on skills to express, communicate and talk about content in pupils’ own words in an easy-to-understand manner.

Questions remain about the quality of explanations that should be sought from history studies, what kind of thinking, judgement and expression skills should be fostered through history studies, and how should these skills be fostered. These are questions which will continue to be addressed into the future.

5. Conclusion

This paper reviewed and compared history studies in Japan and England, by looking at just lower secondary education. Naturally, the history education systems and the climate of the education are different in Japan and Britain. In England, studies from KS1 to KS3 are organized from ancient to contemporary history and cover local, regional, and global content. In Japan, currently world history is a compulsory subject in upper secondary school, and this is likely to
relativize the national history focus of studies up to lower secondary school.

Therefore, the purpose of this paper was to compare lower secondary education in Japan with the curriculum of Britain, and to examine contemporary issues in Japan's history education research.

Notes

2 The Practical Guide, pp.4-6
3 The Practical Guide, pp.11-14
4 The Practical Guide, p.11
5 The Practical Guide, p.11
6 The Practical Guide, p.11
8 The Practical Guide, p.71
9 The Practical Guide, p.14
10 The Practical Guide, p.88
14 The Practical Guide, pp.71-72
15 The Practical Guide, p.89
16 Central Council for Education Report, op. cit., p.81; The Practical Guide, p.4
17 Courses of Study 2008 Edition, p.39, Treatment of Content (2)I
18 Central Council for Education Report, op. cit., p.81
19 After the National Curriculum was revised in 1999 and implemented in 2000, and according to British conventions, the year of implementation is used in most cases to refer to the edition. This paper also uses this convention, and refers to the edition that was revised in 1999 and implemented in 2000 as the “2000 Edition”, and the edition that was revised in 2007 and implemented in 2008 as the “2008 Edition”.
20 The National Curriculum is referred to in stages of study, and Key Stage 1 refers to primary school (ages 5-7), Key Stage 2 (ages 7-11), lower secondary education is Key Stage 3 (ages 11-14), and upper secondary education which is equivalent to high school in Japan is Key Stage 4 (ages 14-16). Hereafter Key Stages are referred to as KS.
21 In 2003, KS4 was revised; however there were no direct revisions of history studies.
22 The 2007 revisions were revisions of lower secondary education of KS3 and KS4.
History was a compulsory subject from KS1 to KS4 in the 1991 edition, however from 1995, this changed to be compulsory only up to KS3. Therefore, revisions of history subjects in the 2008 Edition were only conducted for KS3.

23 Refers to each of the Key Stages; The 1991 Edition is divided into 10 levels, and editions after the 1995 Edition are divided into 8 levels, with 9 levels in total including the level of excellence.


26 "The meaning of thinking capabilities in History Education in England" by Takeshi Tsuchiya, (Bulletin of Centre for Research, Training and Guidance in Educational Practice belonging to Aichi University of Education Vol.2, 1999) pp.151-158

27 "The development of History Education under the National Curriculum of England; focus on Skill Study" by Masaki Hirako (University of Tsukuba Master's Program in Education, Master's thesis), 1998.

28 "The angles and methods of meta-history studies in secondary school; a case study of National Curriculum of England" by Kentaro Sakauchi (Hyogo University of Teacher Education Master's Program Master's thesis) 2006


30 The National Curriculum 2007

31 As quoted in About Multiple Citizenship, "CITIZENSHIP, The civic ideal in world history, politics and education" Third Edition. by Derek Heater Manchester University Press 2004

32 The Study Content that is expressed as Study Units in the 1991 Edition and the 1995 Edition, are referred to as Breadth of Study from the 1999 Edition, and then as Range and Content in the 2008 Edition, so there is a move from study units themselves being legal binding to schools and educators being responsible for deciding on the organisation of units.

33 Regarding multiple identity, please see "The formation of national identity in social studies education" by Masahiro Nii (Japanese Association for the Social Studies publication project 'Challenges of Social Studies that Welcome a New Era'), Daiichi Gakushusha Corporation, pp.141-150.

34 Lower Secondary Education Courses of Study, December 1998, (Ministry of Education,
Culture, Sports, Science and Technology, December 17, 1998, p.28, Treatment of Content (6)O

Course of Study 2008 Edition p.41, Treatment of Content (6)O