Y312 Popular Culture and the Witchcraze of the 16th and 17th Centuries

This theme focuses on the rise and decline in witchcraft during the 16th and 17th centuries and how far it emerged out of the popular culture of the time. It will examine the reasons for the increase and subsequent decline in persecutions, the nature of the Witchcraze, the reactions of the authorities and its impact on society. Learners should consider the Witchcraze in a variety of countries and regions in order to be able to establish patterns and make comparisons; (however, essays will not be set on particular countries). There are a wide range of European countries, as well as America, that can be used as examples and learners should draw on a range of examples from these. The strands identified below are not to be studied in isolation to each other. Learners are not expected to demonstrate a detailed knowledge of the specification content, except for the named in-depth studies, but are expected to know the main developments and turning points relevant to the theme.

Thematic Study: Popular Culture and the Witchcraze of the 16th and 17th Centuries	
Key Topics	**Content Learners should have studied the following:**
Popular culture	Urban and rural popular culture; popular and elite culture, their definitions; participation in popular culture and the withdrawal of the elite; the significance of ritual; the role of pageants and the festivals of misrule; public humiliation; moral regulation; the role of magic in society; challenges to popular culture; religious change; political change; economic change; social control.
The main reasons for the growth and decline in the persecution of witches	Developments from the Papal Bull of 1484 and the Malleus Maleficarum (1486) to the end of the period; causes of growth and decline, including religious changes and confessional strife, economic causes, social structure, changes and divisions within society, scapegoats and minorities, popular culture and cultural changes, growth of rationalism and enlightened thinking, understanding of medicine and remedies; persecution from above or below; the role of wars and natural disasters, including plague and the mini Ice Age.
The persecuted	The geography of the Witchcraze in Europe and North America; regional variations; towns; countryside; religious variations, gender, age, social and employment composition of those prosecuted for witchcraft.
Responses of the authorities to witchcraft	Legal developments including the Inquisitorial system of criminal procedure, secular courts on both a local and regional scale; campaigns against medieval superstition; torture, trials, felony, burnings, sleep deprivation, confessions; survival of popular beliefs, impact on the Reformation; mistrust and fear, denunciations; impact on legal procedure.

Depth studies	Content Learners should be aware of debates surrounding the issues outlined for each in-depth topic:
The Witchcraze in Southern Germany c.1590–1630	Popular culture in Southern Germany; the impact of the Reformation; political, social and economic changes and their impact on order and conformity; the reasons for the increase in persecution; the frequency, nature and geography of witchcraft in the region; the responses of the authorities and its impact on society.
Hopkins and the witch hunt of 1645–1647	The religious, political, social and economic situation and their impact on order and conformity; moral regulation and the challenges to popular culture in the 1640s; the reasons for the persecution; the frequency, nature and geography of the persecutions; the response of the authorities to witchcraft and its impact on society
The Salem witch trials	The religious, political, social and economic situation and their impact on order and conformity; Salem's relationship with England and the legal situation; the reasons for the persecution; the frequency, nature and geography of the persecution; the response of the authorities to witchcraft and its impact on society