

Paper 1:

The IB History Paper 1 is an exam that is easy to master with extensive practice and the completion of many past papers. This is because, although the sources and topic change every year, the questions that go along with the sources remain the same, making it a perfect opportunity to boost your grade if you know how to answer them. Once you select a topic (At my school the topics were Civil Rights and Apartheid for Paper 1), there are only four questions you must answer which are worth 24 marks. The first question is split into two parts, and it usually asks you to write down the meaning of a textual source as well as a visual one. Next, you will be asked to determine the advantages and disadvantages of the origin, purpose, and content of a source. Here it is essential that you mention two values and two limitations, and that they target all three aspects of the source to obtain full marks (Origin, purpose, and content). The two questions that follow these ones are the lengthiest, with one asking you to compare and contrast two sources and the other to write a mini essay using all four sources and your own knowledge. For the compare and contrast question, you must mention at least two similarities and two differences, referencing each source two times. Finally, for the short essay, you must mention all four sources and attempt to embed your own knowledge or sources into your response to ensure you obtain the full 9 marks. Attached is a source that you can practice with, with questions based on the structure of the exam:

A cartoon by Abe Berry, published in The Star newspaper in Johannesburg, 1966.

*Go to next page.



First question, part a – 3 marks:

According to Source A, in what ways were the lives of non-White South Africans affected by the separation of amenities?

First question, part b – 2 marks:

What is the message of the cartoon in Source B?

Second question – 4 marks:

With reference to its origin, purpose and content, assess the value and limitations of Source A for historians studying the impact of the separation of populations and amenities in apartheid South Africa.

Paper 2:

The IB History Paper 2 exceeds the Paper 1 in terms of difficulty, as it requires students to complete two essays on two different topics in only 1 hour and 30 minutes. Additionally, students are expected to memorize appropriate evidence to reinforce the arguments they bring up throughout their argumentative essays. The topics that were selected by my school were Independence Movements (Algeria and Vietnam) as well as the Cold War. Unlike for Paper 3, students can still attain top scores with only two large body paragraphs as opposed to three. It is imperative to distinguish between History essays and English essays; for the essays you write in history it is important to keep the introduction and conclusion concise to leave more room for the analysis. To ensure that you achieve top scores with your analysis, it is important to say “This source is significant because” as it forces you to critically analyse it. In addition, students may also compare and contrast evidence to underline their differences. Below, I have attached a plan to a typical Cold War essay question about evaluating the impact of two leaders on the development of the Cold War:

Leaders: Stalin + Truman

Negative impact: Nuclear weapons employed and utilised, Hiroshima + Nagasaki 1945, statistics on deaths, Soviet development of Nuclear bomb, deterrence, mutually assured destruction

Positive impact: NATO vs WARSAW Pact, Molotov plan, Marshall plan, Marshall plan economic aid stats, 400 million dollars to Greece + Turkey, Come on Sam it's up to us again political cartoon

Paper 3:

Next, there is the IB History Paper 3 for higher level students, an exam which is regarded by many as the hardest exam in the IB. This stems from the fact that students are required to write three essays in 2 hours and 30 minutes, making it the lengthiest exam in terms of time and content. Notwithstanding this, with a good strategy and a strong foundation in the content, students can excel under these circumstances. However, what pushes students towards a 7 is the evidence they possess and the manner in which they analyse it. Therefore, it is crucial to create an evidence bank for all of the topics that will be tested on Paper 3, for me those were Slavery, Civil Rights, and the Cold War in the Americas. Unlike Paper 2, students are allowed to answer two questions from the same topic, giving students the opportunity to write about the topic they are most knowledgeable about. Under this description, I have placed a short excerpt from my evidence bank to illustrate how one may be organized:

Reasons for, and origins of, slavery

Quotes:

- “I am apt to suspect the Negroes [sic] to be naturally inferior to the whites” (Hume)
- “as incapable as children” (Jefferson)
- “I advance it therefore [...] that the blacks [...] are inferior to the whites in the endowments both of body and mind.” (Jefferson)
- “You can will them to your children as inherited property and can make them slaves for life” (Bible)
- “it provided labour at a price Europeans could afford, in numbers they required and all to profitable economic use” (Walvin)
- “Africans are better suited than Europeans for labour in hot climates.” (Kingsley)

Statistics:

- 95% of the Indigenous populations in the Americas were killed by diseases following European colonization
- 20 million Indigenous people died (Smallpox)
- Profits from the slave trade were said to run as high as 300 percent
- At its peak slave labour was producing over two billion pounds of cotton per year
- African slaves that were war prisoners were usually given to the Europeans for free
- 1.8 million slaves died in the journey through the middle passage (Economically unviable)
- Slavery cost the aggregate economy at least \$40 per year for each enslaved person
- 250-600 slaves could fit on Transatlantic ships
- 12.5 million Africans were brought to the Americas

Key terms:

- Cash-crop agriculture
- Great Chain of Being (Scala naturae)
- Triangular trade
- Transatlantic slave trade
- Production schemes in the New World (Plantations)
- Indentured servitude

Events + dates:

- Transatlantic slave trade began in 1500s
- Charles White's 'Scientific Study of Human Races' 1799
- Leviticus 25:45-47 (Biblical reference)

- In the 17th century the decline of indentured servitude and the increasing demand for labour-intensive cash crops like sugar and tobacco led to the widespread adoption of African slavery in the Americas
- The slave trade was also a lucrative trade that benefited European governments due to the taxes they charged

IA:

Finally, for the internal assessment, students are required to analyse a source in depth, write a lengthy essay on a question they create, and lastly to reflect on the historical method they employed to write the essay as well as the challenges they encountered as historians. Although it is a long internal assessment compared to other subjects, the tasks students are required to complete match with many of those prevalent in the exams, making it relatively straightforward. By signing up to tutoring with me, you may view my internal assessment along with my teacher's comments.