

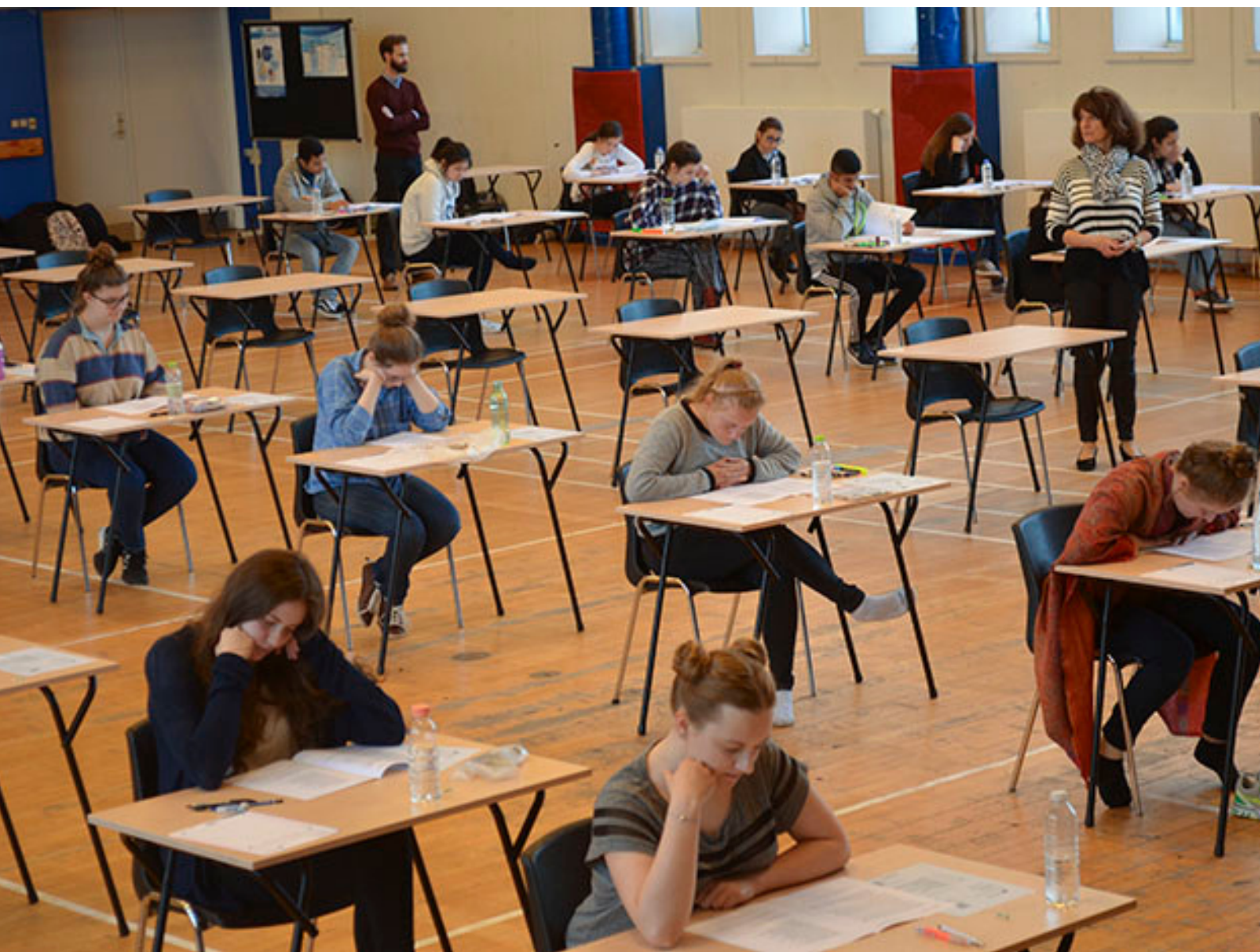
# ESSAY

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IB GLOBAL POLITICS

HOW TO  
WRITE A  
SUCCESSFUL  
PAPER 2  
ESSAY



# INTRODUCTION

## PAPER 2 HAS ALWAYS BEEN AN IMPORTANT PART OF THE ASSESSMENT FOR THE IB GLOBAL POLITICS COURSE

Paper 2 will require you to answer 3 essay questions from a choice of 8 in 2 hour 45 minutes (2 questions in 1 hour 45 minutes for SL) and carries an overall weighting of 60% at higher level and 45% at standard level

This guide is intended to help you develop the skills required for success in the exam and you are strongly advised to make full use of it as we practise exam technique throughout this year.

Remember, nobody writes grade 7 standard essays overnight. This is a skill that requires practice as well as a very good understanding of the course content and supporting case studies

**Paper 2 is worth at least 40% of your final grade**

# HOW IS A PAPER 2 ESSAY ASSESSED?

Your Paper 2 exam will be assessed externally. This means it will be marked by an IB examiner rather than by your teacher.

When assessing your essay the examiner will use two methods - markbands and markschemes.

**Markbands** are a comprehensive statement of expected performance against which responses are judged. They represent a single holistic criterion divided into level descriptors. Each level descriptor corresponds to a range of marks to differentiate student performance. A best-fit approach is used to ascertain which particular mark to use from the possible range for each level descriptor. The same markbands are used for all Paper 2 essay questions.

**Markschemes** are specific to each question and guide the examiner in terms of the type of content they should expect from a student answering that question. It is important to remember that markschemes are not exhaustive and that you will be given credit for any other **appropriate** examples or arguments even if they are not mentioned in the markscheme. Each Paper 2 essay will have its own markscheme.

When examiners are marking exam papers they will also mark a number of seeds. These are questions that have been marked by the Chief Examiner for Global Politics and this ensures that all examiners are marking to the same standard and interpreting the assessment criteria in the same way.

It is essential that you are familiar with the command terms and assessment objective levels for Global Politics. Put simply, AO1 - Knowledge and Understanding - requires you to 'learn and comprehend the meaning of information'; AO2 - Application and Analysis - requires you to 'use your knowledge to explain actual situations, and to break down ideas into simpler parts and see how the parts relate'; and AO3 - Synthesis and Evaluation requires you to

'rearrange component ideas in a new whole and make judgments based on evidence or a set of criteria'.

As you can see, AO3 is the more difficult of the three levels so it is essential that you are familiar with the AO3 command terms that you will encounter in a Paper 2 essay question. These are given on the following page.

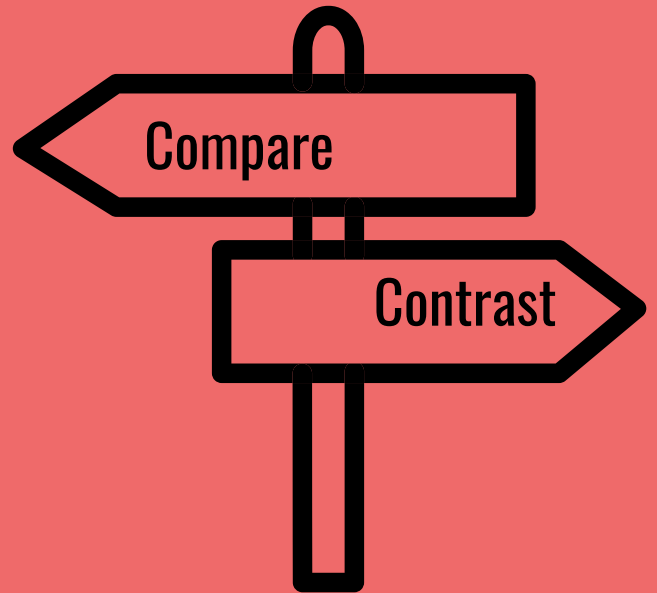
'Conceptual understanding and ability to work with the key concepts of the course is particularly important in this paper. Some questions use the key concepts of that particular unit. Still other questions draw on key concepts from several units. Even where the key concepts are not explicitly mentioned in a question, students should demonstrate a conceptual understanding of global politics. In their answers, students are invited to draw on their understanding of any relevant political concepts, depending on the arguments they put forward.'

Marks are awarded for demonstrating understanding of relevant political concepts and prescribed content, making reference to specific relevant examples, justifying points and exploring and evaluating counterclaims, or different views on the question.'

**It is essential  
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# COMMAND TERMS

The following command terms are used in Paper 2 and, in order to effectively write a Paper 2 essay, you must understand exactly what each command term asks of you



1

## COMPARE

Give an account of the similarities between two (or more) items or situations, referring to both (all) of them throughout

2

## COMPARE AND CONTRAST

Give an account of similarities and differences between two (or more) items or situations, referring to both (all) of them throughout.

3

## CONTRAST

Give an account of the differences between two (or more) items or situations, referring to both (all) of them throughout.

4

## DISCUSS

Offer a considered and balanced review that includes a range of arguments, factors or hypotheses. Opinions or conclusions should be presented clearly and supported by appropriate evidence.

5

## EVALUATE

Make an appraisal by weighing up the strengths and limitations

6

## EXAMINE

Consider an argument or concept in a way that uncovers the assumptions and interrelationships of the issue.

7

## JUSTIFY

Give valid reasons or evidence to support an answer or conclusion

8

## TO WHAT EXTENT

Consider the merits or otherwise of an argument or concept. Opinions and conclusions should be presented clearly and supported with appropriate evidence and sound argument

# A TOP BAND ESSAY

The generic markbands for paper 2 state that a top level essay will have the following characteristics.

You will not have a copy of these markbands with you in the exam so learn them now.



1

A **very well-structured** and **balanced** response that addresses the demands and implications of the question

2

**Comprehensive knowledge and in-depth understanding** of global politics is applied in the response consistently and effectively, with **examples integrated**.

3

The response demonstrates a **very good grasp of the key concepts** of the course.

4

All of the **main points are justified**. Arguments are clear, coherent and compelling.

5

**Counterclaims**, or different views on the question, are **explored and evaluated**.



# ADVICE FROM EXAMINERS

EVERY YEAR THE IB PUBLISHES A SUBJECT REPORT WHICH INCLUDES FEEDBACK FROM EXAMINERS ON EACH COMPONENT. HERE YOU CAN SEE SOME ADVICE FROM EXAMINERS TAKEN FROM THE PAST FEW SUBJECT REPORTS

## 1. Read the question and plan your answer

'A surprising number of candidates neglected to adequately analyse and/or evaluate the question fully. It will always be better if a candidate takes the time to carefully read the question in front of him/her and to identify its key demands before planning and crafting an appropriate and complete response' (Nov 2019)

## 2. Use theory when appropriate

'There was still the disconcerting tendency to insert theoretical references into a discussion when the value added of doing so was unclear' (Nov 2019)

## 3. Show how your examples are relevant

'Weaker responses displayed a lack of specificity when it came to real world examples. Again, it is incumbent upon candidates to fully develop any such examples in the context of the question at hand; it should not be up to examiners to join the dots' (Nov 2019)

## 4. Avoid prefabricated responses

'It is apparent that some students still persist in producing somewhat prefabricated responses, centred on either a specific real-world example covered in class and/or on one of the central debates within the subject. .... It will always be better for a candidate if he/she takes the time to carefully read the question in front of him/her, identifying its key demands so as to best ensure that the response clearly addresses its key demands' (May 2019)

## 5. If you use theory then show how it is relevant

'There is also a tendency to make such references in the broadest terms possible, which only further detracts from their salience and/or effectiveness' (May 2018)

## 6. Use key concepts accurately

'It is clear in some instances questions were misread or the candidate was unfamiliar with the key concept(s) at the heart of a question and so substituted a different term in its stead. For instance, 'stability' might be replaced by 'equality' or 'legitimacy' by 'sovereignty'. While such terms may be interrelated, it is very important that candidates have a solid and separate understanding of each the fundamental concepts in Global Politics.' (May 2017)

## 7. Counterclaims are essential

'Too many candidates continued to stumble when it came to providing counterclaims or alternative ways of viewing the question. Given the IB's central focus on critical thinking, this was a serious oversight' (May 2017)

**'It will always be better if a candidate takes the time to carefully read the question in front of him/her and to identify its key demands...'**



# STRUCTURING YOUR ESSAY

A CLEAR STRUCTURE FOR YOUR ESSAY IS ESSENTIAL. AS STATED IN THE TOP MARKBAND THE EXAMINER WILL BE LOOKING FOR 'A VERY WELL STRUCTURED AND BALANCED RESPONSE'

But, just to make like difficult, there is no prescribed structure so you will need to adapt the structure to the demands of the question.

However, we will discuss a possible structure here that has the potential to be adapted for a wide variety of questions.

There are two things that you should be in mind from the outset.

Firstly, an essay is an argument and there are always two sides to every argument.

Secondly, an essay without supporting evidence is not an essay. It is just unsupported assertion and it will not get you any marks.

Before going any further, it is worth reminding yourself of the command terms on page XXX

**'A VERY WELL  
STRUCTURED  
AND BALANCED  
RESPONSE  
THAT ADDRESS  
THE DEMANDS  
AND  
IMPLICATIONS  
OF THE  
QUESTION'**

## INTRODUCTION

Your essay **must** have an introduction. This is where you will identify and define key terms in the essay title and lay out, very briefly, the discussion that follows. It is important that this is brief as you are going to need to get on to the main body of your essay as soon as possible.

## MAIN BODY

The main body of your essay is going to be made up of several paragraphs - how many will depend on the question and the number of claims and counterclaims you intend to discuss.

It makes sense to consider using a consistent formula for each paragraph such as PEEL. This means that each paragraph will address a specific claim or counterclaim and that each paragraph will have the following components:

1. **POINT** - This is a one sentence where you state, very clearly, the point you are making in the paragraph. This point should always be a claim in support of the essay prompt or counterclaim to the essay prompt and/or one of your claims.
2. **EVIDENCE** - This is where you provide evidence to support the point you are making. This evidence can be in the form of a real world example/case study or perhaps a theoretical perspective from the course.
3. **EXPLANATION** - Now that you have made your point and shared the evidence in support of that point you need to explain how and why that evidence is helping to support your point. This is also where you need to be careful to ensure that you are evaluating the evidence you provide. How useful is it? Remember, some real events and case studies may support a point more strongly than others. Acknowledge this, if appropriate.
4. **LINK** - Make a link - either back to the question itself or the to the preceding or following paragraph. Say how you have moved towards answering the question; how you have evaluated a claim made in a previous paragraph; or that this claim can be questioned and that you are about to do that now.

## CONCLUSION

Your essay **must** have a conclusion and it is important that you do not simply treat this as a sentence to stick on the end of your essay because you have almost run out of time.

Your conclusion should be very explicit in stating what you believe to be the answer to the question and showing why you believe you are correct. This can be done by, for example, coming to a judgment as to the relative strength of the claims and counterclaims you have identified throughout your essay.

## ORDERING YOUR PARAGRAPHS

Given the need to address both claims and counterclaims in your essay there are two obvious ways to do this.

The first is for you to address all of the claims in your first few body paragraphs before then addressing the counterclaims. However, this approach runs the risk of your essay becoming too 'list-like' and thus not as integrated as the examiner would like to see.

The second way you can approach this is by alternating claim and counterclaim paragraph by paragraph. The advantage of this method is that it allows you to consider the counterclaims to each claim as you proceed, using each to evaluate the other.

There is also, of course, the possibility of addressing both claims and counterclaims in the same paragraph but this would require some modification of the essay structure discussed here as well as running the risk of not going deep enough into each point.

However, ultimately, the choice is yours depending on what you judge to be the best approach having seen the question.

On the following page you can see an example of a possible essay structure for a previous exam question

**'Comprehensive knowledge and in-depth understanding of global politics is applied in the response consistently and effectively, with examples integrated'**



# EXAMINE THE CLAIM THAT INCREASED INTERACTIONS AND INTERCONNECTEDNESS IN GLOBAL POLITICS HAVE FUNDAMENTALLY CHANGED THE NATURE OF STATE SOVEREIGNTY

This is just a very limited example. You will go into more depth and add more claims and counterclaims as required

Here is an example of how you could use the PEEL essay structure to answer a Paper 2 style essay question

## 1 INTRODUCTION

Show that you understand the key concepts identified in the question - sovereignty. You might choose to identify key principles of sovereignty such as territorial control and non-interference. You might distinguish between types of sovereignty - internal and external. You may also show you understand what is meant by interconnectedness by using other key concepts - not identified explicitly in the question - such as globalisation

## 3 PARAGRAPH 2: COUNTERCLAIM

**POINT:** States are not necessarily threatened by globalization and crises of the nature outlined in the previous paragraph

**EXPLANATION:** States may respond to interconnectedness in a variety of ways and make adjustments domestically to counteract the effects of adverse in interconnectedness

**EVIDENCE:** Much of the response to the 2008 financial crisis was at a state level such as economic bailouts provided by the UK government to UK banks

**LINK:** This links to the preceding paragraph by offering a counterclaim.

## 2 PARAGRAPH 1: CLAIM

**POINT:** Globalization, the rise of non-state actors and the increasing interconnectedness of the world

**EXPLANATION:** These are all challenges to state sovereignty as, now, what happens in one state has an increasing effect on what happens in another state. You may choose to make specific reference to Liberalism to support this view

**EVIDENCE:** The global financial crisis in 2008, sparked by the US sub-prime mortgage market, had wide reaching effects on economies worldwide.

**LINK:** This shows that states are unable to manage crises of this nature on their own and suggests that the claim in the prompt is valid, at least to some extent.

## 4 PARAGRAPH 3: CLAIM

**POINT:** States are losing influence

**EXPLANATION:** Traditionally Global Politics - and some theories such as Realism still do - has viewed states as all important. However, it can be argued that states are losing sovereignty and influence through pooling in an increasingly interconnected world

**EVIDENCE:** The pooling of sovereignty by states in organisations such as the EU; single currencies in Europe and West and Central Africa

**LINK:** This is a second clear point in support of the claim made in the prompt.

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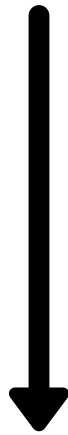
## PARAGRAPH 4: COUNTERCLAIM

**POINT:** Statehood is still highly desired, valued and not willingly surrendered.

**EXPLANATION:** Not only is surrendering a degree of sovereignty in itself a sovereign decision, but most secessionist groups still seek statehood

**EVIDENCE:** Scottish National Party, Catalan nationalists amongst many others.

**LINK:** This counters - to a large degree, the claim made in the preceding paragraph and suggests that statehood is still desired for the most part.



7

## PARAGRAPH 6: COUNTERCLAIM

**POINT:** In practice, human rights is not seen - or at least used - as a basis for intervention in sovereignty of another states

**EXPLANATION:** The R2P doctrine grew out of failure of the international community to intervene in the 1990s in Rwanda as well as other states. Yet there is no evidence of intervention of in sovereignty solely on the basis of human rights abuses

**EVIDENCE:** Zimbabwe, North Korea

**LINK:** This critically evaluates the previous claim by suggesting that while it may hold true in theory, it is not necessarily true in practice



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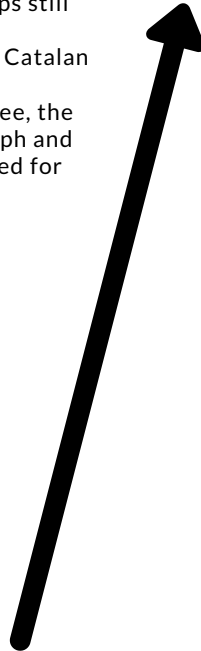
## PARAGRAPH 5: CLAIM

**POINT:** Human rights and Responsibility to Protect doctrine suggests greater intervention in other sovereignty

**EXPLANATION:** An evolving understanding of human rights as universal has led to it being seen as acceptable - or even desirable - to intervene in the sovereignty of another state as this is seen as subordinate to sovereignty.

**EVIDENCE:** As a result of failure to protect human rights in Kosovo, Srebrenica and Rwanda in the 1990s, there has been much talk of the right - and responsibility - of states to intervene to counter human rights abuses

**LINK:** This provides a third - albeit ongoing - claim in support of the decreasing importance given to sovereignty in the international system



8

## CONCLUSION

This is where you will weigh up the overall strength of the claims and counterclaims you have presented - summarising your evaluation of their strengths and weaknesses in order to answer the question.

It is important to remember that, in Global Politics, the truth is almost never one extreme or the other, but generally lies somewhere on the spectrum in between. It is your job, here, to say where on that spectrum the answer lies.