

IB History Internal Assessment

Why?

The Internal Assessment is an integral part of the course and is compulsory for HL students. It enables students to demonstrate the application of skills and knowledge, and to pursue their personal interests, without the limitations and other constraints that are associated with written examinations. Students will have the opportunity to be inquirers, thinkers, communicators, principled, knowledgeable, and reflective during the internal assessment process.

What?

The Internal Assessment is a written account of between 1,500-2,200 words, divided into four sections:

1. Identification and Evaluation of sources (approx. 500 words)
2. Investigation (approx. 1,300 words)
3. Reflection (approx. 400 words)
4. Bibliography

There is a 2,200 word limit.

This is the work of the individual student. Group work is not permitted.

It is worth 25 marks: 20% of your IB college credit grade.

How? (How do you formulate a question?)

To maximize student success on both the internal and external assessments for IB as well as to reduce student workload, students are **STRONGLY ENCOURAGED** to select a case study or bullet point within an area of the IB History two year course (HOTA/20th Century) as their subject of inquiry.

- Paper 1 The Move to Global War (German and Japanese Expansion 1933-1940)
- Paper 2 20th Century Topics “Authoritarian States” and “Causes and effects of 20th Century Wars”
- Paper 3 HOTA

Recommendation: For further assurance of success, **past IB exam questions** may be selected as the IA research question and can be found online (CHS IB website). Doing so will help avoid the fatal pitfalls that ensure no matter how hard you work, your final product will never succeed because the research question lacks the opportunity for analysis, is too big, or is too narrow. Do not select exam questions that contain quotes or assert a false premise.

You are creating a question that will allow you to produce a researched argument that provides the opportunity for you to develop an analytical thesis that is proven by evidence. You are not creating a research topic that only allows you to produce a book report that simply outlines the new knowledge you have gained.

Background Reading:

You must first know something about your selected topic before you can create a successful research question. This is the appropriate time to read textbooks, encyclopedias, and even Wikipedia to gain a working knowledge of your topic. Collect the important people, ideas, dates, events, and terms that will enable you to then launch into serious academic research. As you read for understanding and basic knowledge, begin to consider the question that you want to pose. Tools to begin to formulate a question are:

- Command Terms
- Concepts for the history course: Causation, Consequence, Change, Significance, and Perspectives.

Keep in mind that not all questions will create an opportunity for you to argue or analyze. For Example: What foreign aid did Germany provide in the Spanish Civil War from 1936-39 will only create the opportunity for you to narrate and list. A better question would be: To what extent did German foreign aid from 1936-1939 contribute to the win of the Nationalists in the Spanish Civil War. This phrasing creates the opportunity to argue and analyze.

Set the Question and Scope:

Successful questions will include the following:

1. A Command Term (see list) that tells how the knowledge gained will be analyzed.
2. A clearly defined scope: Dates, important people, events to be measured or assessed.

Sample Phrasing of Topics and Questions:

- **An investigation of an event represented in newspaper reports:** How did newspaper reports on the death of Kennedy in 1963 vary, and how reliable were they?
- **An investigation comparing a film and a written account of a historical event:** How and why did the accounts of the storming of the Winter Palace in October 1917 differ in the film, *October*, and in the book, *A People's Tragedy: The Russian Revolution 1891-1924* ?
- **An investigation of the Industrial Policies of Modern Communist states:** To what extent were the first Five Year Plans of Stalin (1928-1932) and Mao (1953-57) successfully implemented?
- **An investigation of the Politics of the Russian Revolution:** Why did Trotsky leave the Menshevik Party and become a Bolshevik in 1904, and how important was his role in the Bolshevik Revolution of October 1917?

Key Concepts of History

There are six key concepts that reoccur throughout the IB History Course. Your question will fall into one of them. Review these concepts to deepen your thinking in regards to your inquiry.

Change

The study of history involves investigation of the extent to which people and events bring about change. Discussion of the concept of change can inspire sophisticated discussions such as encouraging students to think about, and look for, change where some claim none exists, or using evidence to challenge orthodox theories and assumptions about people and events that it is claimed led to significant change. Students' questions and judgments about historical change should be based on deep understanding of content and on comparisons of the situation before and after the events under examination.

Continuity

While historical study often focuses on moments of significant change, students should also be aware that some change is slow, and that throughout history there is also significant continuity. Students can demonstrate deep historical knowledge and understanding by, for example, showing awareness that there are times when there has been considerable continuity in the midst of great historical change. Alternatively, students may question and assess whether a change in political leadership, for example, brought about a change in foreign policy, or whether it was simply mirroring policies of previous governments.

Causation

Effective historical thinkers recognize that many claims made about the past seek to more thoroughly explain and understand how a certain set of circumstances originated. Deep historical understanding is demonstrated where students recognize that most historical events are caused by an interplay of diverse and multiple causes that require students to make evidence-based judgments about which causes were more important or significant, or which causes were within the scope of individuals to direct and which were not.

Consequence

History is the understanding of how forces in the past have shaped future people and societies. Students demonstrate competency as historical thinkers where they understand and can explain how significant events and people have had both short-term and long-lasting effects. Students use evidence and interpretations of those people and events to make comparisons between different points in time, and to make judgments about the extent to which those forces produced long-lasting and important consequences.

Significance

History is not simply the record of all events that have happened in the past. Instead, history is the record that has been preserved through evidence or traces of the past, and/or the aspects that someone has consciously decided to record and communicate. Students should be encouraged to ask questions about why something may have been recorded or included in a historical narrative. Similarly, they should be encouraged to think about who or what has been excluded from historical narratives, and for what reasons. Additionally, students' questions should encourage them to think about, and assess, the relative importance of events, people, groups or developments, and whether the evidence supports the claims that others make about their significance.

Perspectives

IB students should be aware of how history is sometimes used or abused to retell and promote a grand narrative of history, a narrowly focused national mythology that ignores other perspectives, or to elevate a single perspective to a position of predominance. Students are encouraged to challenge and critique multiple perspectives of the past, and to compare them and corroborate them with historical evidence. Students should recognize that for every event recorded in the past, there may be multiple contrasting or differing perspectives. Using primary-source accounts and historians' interpretations, students may also investigate and compare how people, including specific groups such as minorities or women, may have experienced events differently in the past. In this way, there are particularly strong links between exploring multiple perspectives and the development of international-mindedness.

Command Terms

Analyse	Break down in order to bring out the essential elements or structure.
Compare	Give an account of the similarities between two (or more) items or situation, referring to both (all) of them throughout.
Compare and Contrast	Give an account of the similarities and differences between two (or more) items or situation, referring to both (all) of them throughout.
Contrast	Give an account of the differences between two (or more) items or situation, referring to both (all) of them throughout.
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.
Evaluate	Make an appraisal by weighing up the strengths and limitations.
Examine	Consider an argument or concept in a way that uncovers the assumptions and interrelationships of the issue.
To What Extent	Consider the merits or otherwise of an argument or concept. Opinions and conclusion should be presented clearly and supported with appropriate evidence and sound argument

How do you Locate and Handle Sources?

Print Sources

You must select appropriate academic sources. At least **5** sources must be print sources (books, articles, or articles that have been digitized and held in a database).

When using non-fiction books, search for *book reviews* on the book by other historians. Doing so will aide in locating the author's thesis, understanding the historiography of the subject, as well as assist in evaluating the source's values and limitations. Book reviews can be found in historical journals that are held in databases such as OSLIS or in academic search engines like Google Scholar.

Encyclopedias and textbooks are **not** serious academic sources. They can be used to gain working knowledge for you to have the key words, people, events to enable you to begin true research, but do not make the mistake of relying on these sources.

Web Based Sources

Once you have read Wikipedia to gain enough working knowledge on your proposed topic to know the key words, people, and events to search for, you will not use such sources again in the research process if you desire to receive top marks.

Web sources should be consulted and definitely cited even more sparingly. If a web based source is cited, it should be vetted thoroughly. Be cautious of links on a page as even the most serious academic web pages will have links to less trustworthy sources. Sources from .org, .gov are more likely to pass the vetting process.

OSLIS and other Databases

The exception to the advice on web based resources is a digital database. You may use these exclusively or extensively.

The most successful IAs always use articles found in OSLIS.

Pictures/Graphs/Charts

Must be labeled and placed in an appendix section after the bibliography.

Total Number of Sources: Good IAs will use between 8-10 sources total.

How do you take Notes as you Research?

Note Taking

When taking notes, indicate in your notes whether you quoted, paraphrased, or summarized.

Record ALL citation info from a source in your notes, especially the page number!

Failing to follow this advice is where most plagiarism in the final draft occurs. Fabricating page numbers or source information is still a violation of Cleveland's academic honesty policy and will be treated as plagiarism. Be a principled learner and always give credit where it is due.

Each source will have a thesis, not just facts and evidence. **Be sure to include the author's thesis in your notes.** The thesis may be different than the purpose.

When to Quote:

Do not over use quotes in section 2.

The result of overusing quotes will create a final draft that lacks cohesion and weakens the strength of *your* argument. The best time to quote is when an author's words are so unique or profound that you could not possibly recreate the impact in your own words. For example: In the documentary "Shoah" a Polish train driver who ferried Holocaust victims to the camps was asked how he felt about his role in WWII. The driver said "If you could lick my heart, it would poison you."²

The only other acceptable time to quote is when the author's phrase is such that it conveys the material in a precise manner. But again, do not over use other's words, even when properly cited.

How do you cite sources & avoid Plagiarism?

Citations and Academic Honesty:

Use the common plagiarism resource to ensure that you do not intentionally or unintentionally plagiarize. It is located at the end of this IA guide.

It is impossible to over site in the IA. Thus, when in doubt, always give credit where credit is due.

It is the responsibility of each individual student to ensure that proper citation is always used. Failure to properly cite in the submission of the final draft, even for one sentence is an example of plagiarism. Caring and principled students accept and meet this responsibility without fail throughout the entire note taking, rough draft, and final draft process.

How do you Organize your Notes?

Check your question.

Does it need to be altered? Does the command word you originally chose still fit? If you change your question, even a little **NOTIFY YOUR TEACHER!** Communicating with your teacher is the only way to ensure that you are making the right changes.

Organize all of your Knowledge.

Organize your notes NOT by source, but by **chronology or theme**. This means that the notes you have collected will need to be pulled apart and put back together by the organizational approach you have chosen. Create **subtitles** to make your organization obvious.

^{^2} Bruce Ballenger, *The Curious Researcher: A Guide to Writing Research Papers* (New York: Longman, 2009), 128

Check your notes for Relevancy.

Rather than keep all you have learned about your topic, begin to discard information that is not directly germane or relevant to the question you have set. This step is hard to do because you have worked so hard to collect your knowledge, but can be done successfully by constantly referring to your question.

Develop your thesis.

What's the answer to your question? What arguments prove that your answer is correct or valid? These are the key elements of analysis that you must plan for.

How Do you create Analysis in a Rough Draft?

Create an **outline** for "Section 2: The investigation" by using the following structure:

1. My Thesis is (phrase to address command term):
2. My First Reason my thesis is correct is:
 - Did you prove it? List the evidence here AND indicate what source it came from:
3. My Second Reason my thesis is correct is:
 - Did I prove it? List the evidence here AND indicate what source it came from:
4. My Third Reason my thesis is correct is:
 - Did I prove it? List the evidence here AND indicate what source it came from:
5. What other historians' answers to my question are:
6. Conclusion: Why I ultimately came to my answer to the question:

The rough draft should be submitted with properly formatted Citations (Chicago Style Footnotes/MLA...)

The rough draft should be carefully reviewed for common mistakes that result in plagiarism. Be sure to refer to the "Common Plagiarism" resource.

How Do you Format the Final Draft?

_____The scoring criteria must be carefully consulted to ensure each element in the level descriptor is included at a high standard.

_____The layout of the investigation should correspond to the four IB sections listed. Use IB Section Headings; they do not count in the word count.

_____Use your **self-generated sub-titles** you created to organize your notes for Section 2, *The Investigation*, in the final draft. These sub-titles **do** count towards the 2,200 word count, but contribute to student success greatly and are well worth spending the word count.

_____You will use size 12 font, normal page margins and double space all text (except bibliography and footnotes, which are single space).

_____All pages must be numbered.

_____You will create a title page with the following information: Name, Research Subject, Research Question, your Candidate Number, Cleveland's School Code 1229

_____Chicago style or MLA will be used to format the bibliography and footnotes.

How Will my IA be Scored?

Section 1: Identification and evaluation of sources Explained.

A crucial element of this section of the internal assessment task is formulating an **appropriate question** to investigate. The **question's scope** must be clearly defined and be narrow enough to complete in the 2,200 word limit.

This section requires students to analyse in detail **two** of the sources that they will use in their investigation. Sources selected must **appropriate academic sources**. In this section students must:

- Clearly state the question they have chosen to investigate (this must be stated as a question)
- Include a brief explanation of the nature of the two sources they have selected for detailed analysis, including an explanation of their relevance to the investigation.
- Analyze the value and limitations of the two sources in relation to the investigation.

Marks	Criterion A: Identification and evaluation of sources (6 marks)
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1-2	<p>The question for investigation has been stated. The student has identified and selected appropriate sources, but there is little or no explanation of the relevance of the sources to the investigation.</p> <p>The response describes, but does not analyze or evaluate, two of the sources.</p>
3-4	<p>An appropriate question for investigation has been stated. The student has identified and selected appropriate sources, and there is some explanation of the relevance of the sources to the investigation.</p> <p>There is some analysis and evaluation of two sources, but reference to their value and limitations is limited.</p>
5-6	<p>An appropriate question for investigation has been clearly stated. The student has identified and selected appropriate and relevant sources, and there is a clear explanation of the relevance of the sources to the investigation.</p> <p>There is a detailed analysis and evaluation of two sources with explicit discussions of the value and limitations of two of the sources for the investigation, with reference to the origins, purpose and content of the two sources.</p>

Section 2: Investigation Explained

This section of the internal assessment task consists of the actual investigation. The internal assessment task provides scope for a wide variety of different types of historical investigation, for example:

- A historical topic or theme using a variety of written sources or a variety of written and non-written sources.
- A historical topic based on fieldwork, for example, a museum, archeological site, battlefields, places of worship such as mosques or churches, historic buildings
- A local history study.

The investigation must be clearly and **effectively organized** (chronological/thematic with sub-titles that indicate organization). While there is no prescribed format for how this section must be structured, it must contain **critical analysis** that is focused clearly on the question being investigated, and must also include the **conclusion** that the student draws from their analysis.

In this section, students must use **a range of evidence** to support their argument from **appropriate sources**. Web sources of any kind should be used very sparingly. Those sources selected must be vetted to ensure reliability. The exception to this guidance is the use of databases, which contain academic print sources that have digitized.

Marks	Criterion B: Investigation (15 marks)
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1-3	<p>The investigation lacks clarity and coherence, and is poorly organized. Where there is a recognizable structure there is minimal focus on the task.</p> <p>The response contains little or no critical analysis. It may consist mostly of generalizations and poorly substantiated assertions. Reference is made to evidence from sources, but there is no analysis of that evidence.</p>
4-6	<p>There is an attempt to organize the investigation but this is only partially successful, and the investigation lacks clarity and coherence.</p> <p>The investigation contains some limited critical analysis but the response is primarily narrative/ descriptive in nature, rather than analytical. Evidence from sources is included, but is not integrated into the analysis/ argument.</p>
7-9	<p>The investigation is generally clear and well organized, but there is some repetition or lack of clarity in places.</p> <p>The response moves beyond description to include some analysis or critical commentary, but this is not sustained. There is an attempt to integrate evidence from sources with the analysis/ argument.</p> <p>There may be awareness of different perspectives, but these perspectives are not evaluated.</p>
10-12	<p>The investigation is generally clear and well organized, although there may be some repetition or lack of clarity in places.</p> <p>The investigation contains critical analysis, although this analysis may lack development or clarity. Evidence from a range of sources is used to support the argument.</p> <p>There is awareness and some evaluation of different perspectives. The investigation argues to a reasoned conclusion.</p>
13-15	<p>The investigation is clear, coherent and effectively organized.</p> <p>The investigation contains well- developed critical analysis that is focused clearly on the stated question. Evidence from a range of sources is used effectively to support the argument.</p>

	There is evaluation of different perspectives. The investigation argues to a reasoned conclusion that is consistent with the evidence and arguments provided.
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Section 3: Reflection Explained

This section of the internal assessment task required students to reflect on what undertaking their investigation highlighted to them about the **methods** used by, and the challenges facing, the historian.

Examples of discussion questions that may help to encourage reflection including the following.

- What methods used by historians did you use in your investigation?
- What did your investigation highlight to you about the limitations of those methods?
- What are the challenges facing the historian? How do they differ from the challenges facing a scientist or a mathematician?
- What challenges in particular does archive- based history present?
- How can the reliability of sources be evaluated?
- What is the difference between bias and selection?
- What constitutes a historical event?
- Who decides which events are historically significant?
- It is possible to describe historical events in an unbiased way?
- What is the role of the historian?
- Should terms such as “atrocities” be used when writing about history, or should value judgements to be avoided?
- If it is difficult to establish proof in history, does that mean that all versions are equally acceptable?

Marks	Criterion C: Reflection (4 marks)
0	The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.
1-2	<p>The reflection contains some discussion of what the investigation highlighted to the student about the methods used by the historian</p> <p>The reflection demonstrated little awareness of the challenges facing the historian and/ or the limitations of the methods used by the historian.</p> <p>The connection between the reflection and the rest of the investigation is implied, but is not explicit.</p>
3-4	<p>The reflection is clearly focused on what the investigation highlighted to the student about the methods used by the historian.</p> <p>The reflection demonstrates clear awareness of challenges facing the historian and/ or limitations of the methods used by the historian.</p> <p>There is a clear and explicit connection between the reflection and the rest of the investigation.</p>

Total = 25 IB Marks for IB College Grade

Much of this information was adapted from South Salem High School's IB History Internal Assessment Handbook. Thanks for sharing!