

Very important tips

How to write a History Essay

What is the question asking?

Consider the command term, any dates, key words and concepts. Make sure you are clear on what is required before starting as you will need to keep referring to the question throughout your essay. Jot down a quick plan.



Introduction

- Show your understanding of the question e.g. by giving one or sentences of context on the topic area
- Define key terms/concepts that are in the question
- Indicate the direction that your argument will take



Main Body

Paragraph 1

Paragraph 2

Paragraph 3

Paragraph 4

Paragraph 5

Paragraph 6

In each paragraph you should:

- Address a new point
- Have a clear opening or 'topic' sentence which links directly to the question and indicates the point/argument of the paragraph.
- Have detailed evidence to support your point
- Link to the previous paragraph so that it helps develop your argument
- Include reference to historiography/perspectives where appropriate



Main Body

- This should link back to the question
- Based on the evidence in the main body of your essay, you should be able to provide a direct answer to the question!

Use the info given in the sources especially data and if ur making a point make sure u use an example from the source given

Write specific name from source

Put specific examples in the justification of RQ

Make sure RQ is within like a century dont make time period too long

Governmental documents are primary

Get to the point quick and dont stretch answers too long

Make sure RQ is really clear and specific like not "adapt" how they adapted examples of them adapting like that

In strengths weaknesses evaluation question write for specific stuff written like names and whatever else make it specific to that particular investigation

add solution to the limitation pointers in the eval question 8 marker

DO NOT USE WE OR ANY PERSONAL OR SECOND PERSON PRONOUNS AT ALL ONLY FORMAL LANGUAGE WITH ALL 3rd PERSON

FOR EXPLAIN COMMAND TERM WRITE CONSEQUENCES AS WELL LIKE GO DEEPER AND EXPLAIN WHAT HAPPENED AFTER IT WITH REAL EXAMPLE LIKE NAME OF POLICY AND ALL THAT

MAKE IT SPECIFIC AGAIN LIKE FOR ANY EXPLAIN COMMAND TERM WRITE ATLEAST ONE EXAMPLE

IF IT SAYS WITH REFERENCE TO SOMETHING THEN EXPLICITLY REFER TO IT LIKE REFER TO PURPOSE FOR VALUES THEN WRITE AS SEEN THE PURPOSE OF THE SOURCE IS **_ THUS THE VALUE PROVIDED TO_** IS the

learn what each key concept is for

resentation should have emotive language

Read the sentences after writing

When writing value/limitation quote from the source or data from the source

Analyse the source question, mention the source name like as seen in source B history tips

black box in byconcept for practice especially conceptual and debatable some of them may even come as is in the final exam remember to practice.

IB is not content based its concept based so they cant ask specifically about factual questions under peace and conflict the concept of peace and conflict must be understood not specific instances.

no mcq or 1 marker

a1 - relevant terminology

a2 - describe/explain using historical examples content and concepts

Points to remember:

- **RQ should be clear and focused: time period, region/countries, connection with the SOI, arguable.**
- **Justification should be written in minimum 100 words. Provide historical examples to support the connection between the RQ and the SOI.**
- **Sub questions should directly relate to the RQ. It should not be merely a repeat of the RQ.**
- **Avoid making closed ended questions. The questions should lead to analytical answers. Avoid adding questions which can be answered in one word or sentence.**
- **Sources must be clearly mentioned (based on reliability and relevance).**
- **Mention the methods to collect and record information clearly and separately.**
- **Writing format must be clearly followed as per task instructions (blog, speech etc).**
- **Refer to the resources posted on how to write a good essay / long answer in the subject.**
- **Detailed evaluation of the research process and results is required for Criterion Biv. Answer the questions in depth. Evaluate refers to writing strengths, limitations and overall appraisal. You may read V and L from the OPVL folder for more information.**
- **Criterion C: Follow the format asked in the question and write according to the audience and purpose. For a long answer, write a proper introduction and conclusion, with at least 3-5 paragraphs in the body of the answer. Cite your sources in MLA format based on your research task.**
- **In the eAssessment, Criterion Ciii refers to the organizational structure of the answer.**
- **Include perspectives in Criterion D answers. Summarize information with well supported evidence from your unit.**

- **Refer to the OPVL folder to understand how to write a detailed source analysis for different types of sources.**
- **For analysing sources in Di (including visual sources), mention the points and support it with evidence from the source.**
- **In all Criterion A questions, use wide range of relevant terminology and explain/describe content and concepts with historical examples.**
- **Read the criteria and strands carefully and address the command term given in the question**

Essay writing tips (long answer)

The essay is key for demonstrating your historical knowledge and understanding, along with your ability to analyse and to form a judgement; this is why it plays such a key role in your assessment!

Examiners will be looking for essays which:

Indicate a firm historical knowledge and evidence of wide reading

Include a relevant selection of information

Analyse the key points

Reach a judgement on the question set

Are clearly structured

'History essays are an art form, but they also benefit from an underpinning of scientific method that is, they benefit from your development of a logical and reasoned approach to writing construction and organisation'.

Black and Macrailld Studying History, MacMillan 3rd ed pg 198

Understanding question

There are several key steps in writing an essay. Your first task in writing an essay is to understand what the question is asking. You have to 'deconstruct' the question. This means focusing on each part of the question:

The topic

– what overall issue/topic is the question focused on?

Any dates that are given – how will it affect your answer?

Key concepts/factors

– these may need defining to make sense of your answer

The 'command' terms giving the instructions of what you have to do. Each part is vital to understanding what the question is asking. If you misunderstand any of the components, you may start off on the wrong track.

Planning

Once you have an understanding of the essay question, you can start to plan your essay.

Why is a plan so important?

You need to have a clear argument sorted out in your head before you start writing the essay so you know the direction your essay will take

It will allow you to see if your argument works – to see if you have enough evidence to support it

It will allow you to sort out your key paragraphs and decide in which order to present them

It will make writing your essay faster

It will help cut out waffle and repetition

If you get in the habit of writing a plan, you will find it easier to do this in the exam which will in turn help you to organise your thinking and your time under time pressure.

Introductions

The introduction is a key part of your essay. In your introduction you will:

Show that you understand the question; this could involve referring to the dates set or events mentioned in the title and putting them into context. It also involves explaining any concepts.

Indicate the scope of your essay

Set out your line of argument

Provide a transition to the first paragraph of your essay

The reader (your teacher or examiner) should feel after reading your introduction that you have a good grasp of the key issues connected to the question and a clear line of argument.

The paragraphs The main body of your essay: paragraphs

Your essay will probably contain around 6 paragraphs. Each paragraph should include:

A clear opening sentence which links to the question and states the key point/argument of the paragraph

Evidence which supports the point given in the first sentence

A final sentence which sums up the argument of the paragraph and leads on to the next paragraph

Using Evidence

Your opening sentence should set out the argument for your paragraph. You then need to develop this idea further and support it with evidence. Selecting the appropriate evidence is key. Only include information that supports your claim – and make it clear why that piece of information supports your claim – don't leave it for the reader to work out! You need to include 'analytical links' to show how your evidence links to the question. Also make sure it also includes precise detail - dates, places, names.... rather than vague, generalised points.

Sequence of paragraphs

Your sequence of paragraphs should lead the reader through a clear line of argument and also show that you are being analytical rather than just describing or telling a story. Different type of questions suggest different ways to organise and structure your argument. See above for the discussion of command terms for more some suggestions about this. The key thing is to use an analytical approach and to avoid a chronological or descriptive approach. However examiners are also looking for a 'sense of chronology' – so make sure you include dates where appropriate and deal with events in the correct order within your line of argument

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Use of historiography

Part of your evidence may include the views of historians or even direct quotes from historians. Your aim is to use historical debate as evidence for your

own argument

The Conclusion

As the final paragraph of your essay and the last bit that your teacher/examiner will read, it is important that you leave a good impression. Try to make enough time in an examination to reach your conclusion as it gives you the chance to remind the reader of your argument.

In your conclusion it is important to
restate your main point or argument

link it back to the title to show that your argument answers the question set

Do not introduce any new points or evidence

Some do's and don'ts of essay writing!

Avoid using first person. Although you are using your personal judgement, this should be based on an objective examination of the evidence.

Make sure that you have correct spellings for key historical figures/events/concepts.

Use appropriate historical vocabulary. Avoid colloquial/slang style language.

Use dates to show that you understand the chronology of the events you are discussing.

Only use official abbreviations. While abbreviations are good for writing notes, an essay is a formal piece of writing and so all words must be written in full.

Note: Br. For Britain or FR for French Revolution are not acceptable!

Do not end a sentence with etc. or 'and so on'. It sends a clear message that you have run out of ideas and/or that you can't be bothered to write down the other points.

Be careful with use of metaphors. While these can add colour to your writing and illuminate certain points or ideas, they can also detract from your key argument and end up being confusing or inaccurate.

Avoid rhetorical questions. Although a rhetorical question can be effective for introducing a topic, it has to be used carefully and if over used will detract from the main purpose of your writing which is to display your knowledge and understanding. You need to be focused on answering the question that the examiner has given you –not setting new questions of your own!

Useful writing

Useful phrases to use when essay writing

Introducing a topic

There were several reasons why this happened

There were several results.....

There were many factors that contributed to this...

It is often argued that....

Adding information/Emphasizing a point

Additionally,

In addition,

Moreover,

Equally important

Furthermore,

For example,

Another point/piece of evidence...

Not only...but also...

While it is true that...

Despite the fact that...

Moreover,

Significantly,

Another key point

Surprisingly,

On the negative side...

On the positive side...

In fact,

It is important to realise that

Indeed,

Comparing/Contrasting

Similarly,...

Likewise,

In both situations/In neither situation...

Compared with...

In the same way...

Equally...

As with...

...are similar in that...

Although...

Conversely,

In spite of this...

On the other hand,

However,

On the contrary,

Nevertheless,

Linking Cause and Effect/Concluding

As a result of...

This means that...

Due to the fact that...

This caused...

Therefore,

Thus...

Consequently,

As a result,

Accordingly,

In conclusion/ To conclude...