

Writing Analytical History Essays – Outline

Your goal as a Pre- IB history student is to write **well-substantiated analytical essays**. Remember during essay tests you are being timed. You will have 50 minutes to write each essay. I encourage you to take approximately five minutes to read the question, highlighting the key words, to make sure you fully understand what is being asked. During this time you should also prepare a brief outline of your essay. This will help you stay focused on proving the thesis and will allow you to make better use of your time.

Introductory Paragraph This paragraph must introduce your topic and present your thesis.

Opening Sentence

- Grab the reader’s attention with something interesting and specific to the topic. Avoid sweeping generalizations (*Throughout history... People always wonder about...*) as they are too vague.

Subsequent Sentences

- Demonstrate an understanding of the question. Clarify any key concepts that are mentioned (“Democracy, Oligarchy, Revolution, etc.) and outline which events/individuals and time period you will consider. What does the reader need to know before he/she is able to understand your thesis?

Thesis Statement

- In one or two sentences clearly state your position and briefly outline your supporting arguments.
- Present your arguments in the same order in which you will address them in your essay.

** In a timed essay test, it is important to include your thesis at the end of the paragraph.

First Supporting Argument (not limited to one paragraph)

Topic Sentence

- Your first supporting argument to prove your thesis is clearly stated.

Proof/Evidence

- Support your argument using **accurate & detailed evidence**: relevant and specific facts, examples, quotes, and the interpretations of historians where applicable. Remember to use historically relevant vocabulary, dates, and include evidence from primary sources.

Explanation

- Clearly explain why the evidence supports your argument. Use analytical links: this suggests..., clearly shows..., which in turn meant..., is significant because...

Connection

- Close the paragraph by wrapping up the argument presented in the topic sentence and connecting it to your thesis.

Second Supporting Argument (not limited to one paragraph)

Topic Sentence

- Your second supporting argument to prove your thesis is clearly stated.

Proof/Evidence

- Support your argument using **accurate & detailed evidence** – relevant and specific facts, examples, quotes, & the interpretations of historians where applicable. Remember to use historically relevant vocabulary, dates and include evidence from primary sources.

Explanation

- Clearly explain why the evidence supports your argument. Use analytical links: this suggests..., clearly shows..., which in turn meant..., is significant because...

Connection

- Close the paragraph by wrapping up the topic sentence argument and connecting it to your thesis.

Third Supporting Argument (not limited to one paragraph)

Topic Sentence

- Your third supporting argument to prove your thesis is clearly stated.

Proof/Evidence

- Support your argument using **accurate & detailed evidence** – relevant and specific facts, examples, quotes, and the interpretations of historians where applicable. Remember to use historically relevant vocabulary, dates and include evidence from primary sources.

Explanation

- Clearly explain why the evidence supports your argument. Use analytical links: this suggests..., clearly shows..., which in turn meant..., is significant because...

Connection

- Close the paragraph by wrapping up the topic sentence argument and connecting it to your thesis.

*****You may include additional supporting arguments as outlined in your thesis. During 45 minute essay tests, you should aim for three supporting arguments.***

Concluding Paragraph *New information must not be introduced.

First Sentence

- Restate your thesis (the answer to the question – use different wording).

Subsequent Sentences

- Clearly summarize your arguments in support of the thesis. Remember, it is your last chance to convince the reader you have proven your thesis!
- Leave the reader with something to think about.