

Higher Level IB History

Internal Assessment – The Historical Investigation

What is a Historical Investigation?

The historical investigation is a problem-solving activity that enables students to demonstrate the application of their skills and knowledge to a historical topic that interests them and that need not be related to the syllabus. The emphasis must be on a specific historical inquiry that enables the student to develop and apply the skills of a historian by selecting and analysing a good range of source material and managing diverse interpretations. The activity demands that students search for, select, evaluate and use evidence to reach a relevant conclusion. The investigation should be written in the specific format outlined later in this section.

Examples of the types of investigations students may undertake are:

- A historical topic or theme using written sources or a variety of 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 historical problem using documents (this could include newspapers)
- A local history study
- A historical study based on oral interviews
- A historical investigation based on interpreting a novel, film or work of art
- A historical investigation of cultural issues.

Examples of research questions:

- With what justification can it be claimed that it was the leadership of Trotsky that promoted Red victory in the Russian Civil War?
- How did the Alliance system lead to the outbreak of World War One?
- Why, and with what consequences for its citizens, was Dresden (any affected town could be substituted) bombed in 1945?
- How successfully did Hitler promote the ideal of the family in the Third Reich?
- With what justification can it be claimed that the Chinese Great Famine 1959-1962 was a man-made famine resulting from Mao's policies?
- Was Hitler's euthanasia policy distinctively Nazi?
- How significant was the role of industrial workers in creating the environment for the Bolshevik seizure of power in 1917?
- Was the Halifax Regional Municipality's decision to relocate Africville justified?
- How historically accurate is the depiction of ... in the film...?
- To what extent did the influence of the American Government responsible for the cancellation of the Canadian Avro Arrow in 1959?
- How did the experiences of British Second World War veterans serving in Europe compare with those in the Pacific?
- In what ways did the Chinese communists use propaganda to promote their ideology during the Cultural Revolution?
- To what extent was the Nanking Massacre the result of Japanese nationalism?
- How did the coverage of the Falklands/Malvinas War differ in the British and Argentine press?
- To what extent were the Moscow Olympic Games of 1980 affected by Cold War tensions?

Scope of The Historical Investigation

Students will be required to:

- Undertake a historical investigation using a good range of historical sources
- Focus on a topic or event with a cut-off date that is at least 10 years before the submission date for the investigation (therefore, an investigation submitted in 2010 would have a cut-off date of 2000; an investigation submitted in 2016 would have a cut-off date of 2006)
- Provide a title for the historical investigation that should be framed as a question
- Produce a written account of between **1500-2000 words** for SL and HL, which must consist of:
 - A cover page with student name, number, research question and accurate word count
 - A plan of the historical investigation
 - A summary of evidence
 - An evaluation of sources
 - An analysis
 - A conclusion
 - A list of sources.

**The historical investigation will be internally assessed by the teacher and externally moderated by the IB.

Choice of Topic

Students will choose their own topic, with the teacher's guidance and approval. The topic should be worthwhile and of interest to the student.

Teachers must approve the topic for investigation and the research question before work is started. Students must ensure that there are sufficient sources to support the investigation, and that it can be assessed by the criteria for internal assessment.

Students must be aware of ethical considerations when undertaking any investigation. They must show sensitivity and respect confidentiality. Students are required to provide references or acknowledgments for all sources used.

The Written Account

Every student must produce a written account consisting of the following six sections:

- A Plan of Investigation
- B Summary of Evidence
- C Evaluation of Sources
- D Analysis
- E Conclusion
- F Sources and Word Limit

Total: 1500–2000 words

A Plan of the Investigation

100-150 words

Students should:

- State the topic of the investigation, which must be **formulated as a question**
- Define the scope of the investigation – “the what”, identify relevant aspects or areas of study to be explored, indicate timeframe as well.
- Explain the method of the investigation – “the how”, the nature of the sources chosen & why they have been selected; the proposed logical structure of the areas of scope (chronological/thematic) that indicate how the task will be addressed.

B Summary of Evidence

500-600 words

This section should consist of **factual** material that is:

- Drawn from sources that are appropriate for the investigation – **minimum 7 sources cited** (avoid web sites)
- Correctly and consistently referenced
- Organized thematically or chronologically
- Presented in focused point form notes.

** Only the facts – no analysis (this section represents your research notes)

** Your analysis (Section D) can only draw on the facts in this section!

C Evaluation of Sources

250-400 words

This section should consist of:

- A critical evaluation of two important sources appropriate to the investigation explicit reference to the origin, purpose, value and limitation of the selected sources.

** For each source complete a separate OPVL – not a combined comparison.

** Make sure the sources you select are extensively used (and cited) in your summary and analysis.

** Value & limitations with respect to the origin and purpose, not the usefulness of the sources to your investigation

** Consider using different types of sources

D Analysis

500-600 words

This section should consist of:

- An analysis that breaks down complex issues in order to bring out the essential elements, any underlying assumptions and any interrelationships involved
- An understanding of the issue in its historical context
- A critical examination of the factual material presented in section B – avoid narrative
- An awareness of the significance of the sources used, especially those evaluated in section C
- A consideration of different interpretations of evidence, where appropriate.

** This is where you answer your research question – focused arguments supported

by detailed evidence from your Summary of Evidence only!

** Consider the relevant historiography & debates.

E Conclusion**150-200 words**

The conclusion must be clearly stated, consistent with the evidence presented and relevant to the research question. No new information should be included here.

F Sources and Word Limit

A bibliography or list of sources and all citations, using one standard method, must be included; any illustrations, documents, or other supporting evidence should be included in an appendix. If you use an interview as a source the transcript of the interview must be in the appendix. None of these will form part of the word count.

The word count for the investigation must be clearly and accurately stated on the title page.

Historical Investigation Assessment

Historical Investigation Weighting

Higher Level History 20% of your final IB mark

Assessment Criteria**A Plan of Investigation****3 marks**

- 0 There is no plan of the investigation, or it is inappropriate.
- 1 The research question, method and scope of the investigation are not clearly stated.
- 2 The research question is clearly stated. The method and scope of the investigation are outlined and related to the research question.
- 3 The research question is clearly stated. The method and scope of the investigation are fully developed and closely focused on the research question.

B Summary of Evidence**6 marks**

- 0 There is no relevant factual material.
- 1-2 There is some relevant factual material but it has not been referenced.
- 3-4 There is relevant factual material that shows evidence of research, organization and referencing.
- 5-6 The factual material is all relevant to the investigation and it has been well researched, organized and correctly referenced.

C Evaluation of Sources**5 marks**

- 0 There is no description or evaluation of the sources.
- 1 The sources are described but there is no reference to their origin, purpose, value and limitation.
- 2-3 There is some evaluation of the sources but reference to their origin, purpose, value and limitation may be limited.
- 4-5 There is evaluation of the sources and explicit reference to their origin, purpose, value and limitation.

D Analysis**6 marks**

- 0 There is no analysis.
- 1–2 There is some attempt at analysing the evidence presented in section B.
- 3–4 There is analysis of the evidence presented in section B and references are included. There may be some awareness of the significance to the investigation of the sources evaluated in section C. Where appropriate, different interpretations are considered.
- 5–6 There is critical analysis of the evidence presented in section B, accurate referencing, and an awareness of the significance to the investigation of the sources evaluated in section C. Where appropriate, different interpretations are analysed.

E Conclusion**2 marks**

- 0 There is no conclusion, or the conclusion is not relevant.
- 1 The conclusion is stated but is not entirely consistent with the evidence presented.
- 2 The conclusion is clearly stated and consistent with the evidence presented.

F Sources and Word Limit**3 marks**

- 0 A list of sources is not included or the investigation is not within the word limit.
- 1 A list of sources is included but these are limited or one standard method is not used consistently or the word count is not clearly and accurately stated on the title page.
- 2 A list of sources using one standard method is included and the investigation is within the word limit.
- 3 An appropriate list of sources, using one standard method, is included. The investigation is within the word limit.

Total:**25 marks****Planning Your Historical Investigation**

1. Start by identifying a general area of interest. Read, read, and read!
2. Narrow it down to a specific question or area of investigation.
3. Choose a working title that may be changed or refined at a later stage.
4. Make sure sufficient resources can be obtained for the planned investigation.
5. Complete section A, the plan, and evaluate the suitability of the research area.
6. Read widely around the area of study and note down resources used.
7. Review the research question and refine it if necessary.
8. Take notes from resources, gathering evidence and diverse opinions.
9. Ensure accurate use of referencing.
10. Sort evidence thematically or chronologically.
11. Choose two suitable sources to evaluate in section C.
12. Review your analysis. Check for differing viewpoints where appropriate.
13. Write the investigation, according to IB guidelines.
14. Revise
15. Submit your final investigation!

Checklist

It may be useful to refer to this checklist before submitting your historical investigation.

Task

Completed

Does the front cover have your name, candidate session number, word count and thesis question/statement?

Are all the pages numbered?

Have you completed section A, plan of the investigation?

Have you completed section B, summary of evidence?

Have you completed section C, evaluation of sources?

Have you completed section D, analysis?

Have you completed section E, conclusion?

Have you completed section F, sources and word limit?

Have you completed all six sections of the investigation thoroughly?

Does your bibliography contain all the sources used?

Is your bibliography set out in alphabetical order?

Is your investigation within the word limit of 1,500–2,000 words?

Has your teacher asked you to sign the relevant forms?