

Name: _____

IB Internal Assessment First Draft Summer Assignment: Major Grade

Due Date: 8/7/2026

From IB HG 2020: “*the topic must be historical, and **therefore cannot be on an event that has happened in the last 10 years**. Students should choose their own topic, with their teacher’s guidance and approval. Teachers must approve the topic and question for investigation before work is started. It is crucial that there are sufficient sources to support the investigation, and that the investigation can be assessed by the criteria for internal assessment. Teachers must also make students aware of any relevant ethical considerations when undertaking their investigation, for example, the need to show sensitivity or to respect confidentiality. The investigation is an opportunity for students to demonstrate the application of their skills and knowledge to a historical topic of their choice. 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 range of source material and considering diverse perspectives. The activity demands that students search for, select, evaluate and use evidence to reach a relevant conclusion consistent with the evidence and arguments that have been put forward.*”

Example Questions

- How systematic were the deportations of the Jewish population of Dusseldorf to Minsk between 1941 and 1942?
- How significant were economic problems as a cause of the Bamberg Witch Trials (1623–1633)?
- What were the most important reasons for the failure of Operation Market Garden?
- To what extent was weak leadership responsible for the collapse of the Egyptian Old Kingdom in 2125 BC?

Understand the format:

Historical investigation

Duration: 20 hours

Weighting: 25% SL, 20% HL

Students at both SL and HL are required to complete a historical investigation into **a topic of their choice**.

The historical investigation is made of up three sections.

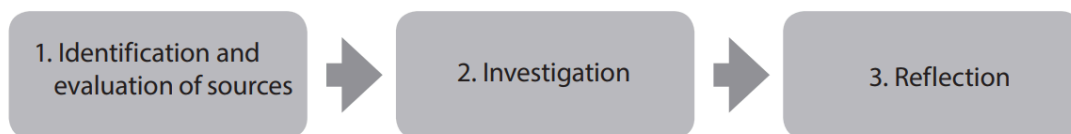


Figure 8

Historical investigation

Section A: Identification and evaluation of sources

This section requires students to analyse in detail two of the sources that they will use in their investigation. The sources can be either primary or secondary 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
- analyse two sources in detail. With reference to the origins, purpose and content, the student should analyse the value and limitations of the two sources in relation to the investigation.

Section B: Investigation

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. 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. Please note that students can use primary sources, secondary sources, or a mixture of the two.

Section C: Reflection

This section of the internal assessment task requires 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 include 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?*

- *Is it 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 judgments be avoided?*
- *If it is difficult to establish proof in history, does that mean that all versions are equally acceptable?*

Word limit

The word limit for the historical investigation is 2,200 words. A bibliography and clear referencing of all sources **must** be included in the investigation, but are not included in the overall word count.

Below are suggested word allocations for each section of the historical investigation. Please note that these word allocations are suggestions only.

Section	Suggested word allocation	Associated assessment criteria	Marks
1. Identification and evaluation of sources	500	A. Identification and evaluation of sources	6 marks
2. Investigation	1,300	B. Investigation	15 marks
3. Reflection	400	C. Reflection	4 marks
Bibliography	Not applicable	Not applicable	Not applicable
Total (maximum word limit)	2,200 words		Total: 25 marks

Outline - Gradeable Experience May 2025, recommended prior to writing IA

Format:

A. Identification and Evaluation of Sources

- Question restated

?

- OPCVL for source 1

- i. Origins - identify POV, name the source in its entirety:

-
- 1. Value or Limitation? Why?
-

- ii. Purpose - Identify purpose of source:

-
- 1. Value or Limitation? Why?
-

- iii. Content - Summarize the source:

-
- 1. Value or Limitation? Why?
-

- c. OPCVL for source 2

- i. Origins - identify POV, name the source in its entirety:

-
- 1. Value or Limitation? Why?
-

- ii. Purpose - Identify purpose of source:

-
- 1. Value or Limitation? Why?
-

- iii. Content - Summarize the source:

1. Value or Limitation? Why?

B. Investigation

a. Historical Background Hook Idea: _____

b. Thesis

c. Identify Claim 1: _____

i. Identify Evidence:

1.

2.

3.

ii. Analysis (Justify the Claim, FULL SENTENCES):

iii. Perspectives : Identify the Historian or Variable

d. Identify Claim 2: _____

i. Identify Evidence:

1.

2.

3.

ii. Analysis (Justify the Claim, FULL SENTENCES):

iii. Perspectives : Identify the Historian or Variable

e. Identify Claim 3: _____

i. Identify Evidence:

1.

2.

3.

ii. Analysis (Justify the Claim, FULL SENTENCES):

iii. Perspectives : Identify the Historian or Variable

C. Reflection

a. Challenges faced by historians in researching this topic

i. 1:

1. Examples:

a.

b.

2. Why is it a challenge?

ii. 2:

1. Examples:

a.

b.

2. Why is it a challenge?

- iii. 3:
1. Examples:
 - a.
 - b.
 2. Why is it a challenge?
-

Mark Bands for IA

25 Total Points

Each mark is worth 4 points on the 100 points scale

Criterion A: Identification and evaluation of sources (6 marks)

Marks	Level descriptor
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 analyse 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 discussion 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>

Criterion B: Investigation (15 marks)

Marks	Level descriptor
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> <p>There is evaluation of different perspectives. The investigation argues to a reasoned conclusion that is consistent with the evidence and arguments provided.</p>

Criterion C: Reflection (4 marks)

Marks	Level descriptor
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 demonstrates 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>

Frequently Asked Questions for the IA:

How many sources should I have?

Minimum 5, maximum like 12. No History.com, Britannica, or Wikipedia. Use a range of primary and secondary sources.

What sources should I evaluate in section 1?

Your most middle of the road ones. A few weaknesses, a few strengths.

How specific do I need to be in my investigation?

Insanely so. Do not try to evaluate the extent of more than 1 factor/entity - you don't have the word count for multiple. Instead, focus on a central claim and a counterclaim or two.

I don't know what a challenge is, can I just say finding sources was hard?

... No, use your brain cells. The internet makes most sources accessible, regardless of the paywall. It's a bad argument, you will get 0 points. Therefore, go for the more abstract ideas. See the sample IA on Semester 2's canvas (Internal Assessment module) - think about TOK style challenges - what makes a source reliable? How can time distort memory? What signifies history? The list goes on.

Can I go over the word count?

Examiners are trained to stop reading at the word count. So, no.

Can I quote?

Shockingly, yes. Use MLA formatting rules. Don't over quote and under-analyze. Paraphrasing is INFINITELY stronger. Default to paraphrasing with citations and only use quotes sparingly if the language is impossible to paraphrase and make the same point.

Can I put a figure (graph, picture, etc) in my IA?

ONLY in the investigation and ONLY if it directly proves a point of analysis that requires the visual. You add the footnote citation or an appendix according to your MLA/Chicago formatting rules.

How do I do MLA formatting?

Use Owl -

https://owl.purdue.edu/owl/research_and_citation/mla_style/mla_formatting_and_style_guide/index.html