

# 'The Formula' for successfully writing a Paper 1 - HL History Exam

## PAPER 1

- Content of Paper 1 focussed upon one of two case studies;
- Consists of four sources - including a mixture of primary and secondary sources;
- Written sources are rarely more than 200 words long;
- There is, usually, at least one visual source such as a cartoon or photograph;
- The 4 questions, adding up to 24 possible points, follow a predictable format, with a clear mark-scheme;
- Make sure your answers are focussed and succinct;

### **Question 1a):**            **Worth 3 marks, spend a maximum 5 minutes on 1A. Understanding historical sources - reading comprehension.**

For 3 marks, give at least 3 clear points from the source. When using quotations from the source avoid just copying large parts of the source. Be frugal!

#### ***How to write the answer?***

"According to source A {re-word part of question to give meaning for your answer} .....; According to source B .....; According to source C ....."

### **Question 1b):**            **Worth 2 marks, spend a maximum 5 minutes on 1B. Understanding historical sources - political cartoon/image analysis.**

For 2 marks, give two clear (and separate) points about the 'message' conveyed in the source, supporting each point with evidence from the source. If it is a cartoon you are analysing, make sure you have fully understood the key figures and symbols before you start to write about its messages!

#### ***How to write the answer?***

"One message conveyed by the source regarding {re-word part of question} is that ..... because the source shows. A second message conveyed by the source is that ..... because the source shows."

## Question 2:           Worth 4 marks, spend max 10 minutes on. Source evaluation: OPcVL.

Evaluate the source, with one paragraph for values & another paragraph for limitations as they relate to the origins of the source (aim for three ideas for each):

- **Origin** (if a primary source has been reprinted in another book, look at the original source not where it was re-printed!);
- **Purpose** (of the source as a whole, not just the specific extract) and what;
- **Content**;
- **Values** of this source to a historian studying this topic;
- **Limitations** these provide for a historian studying the given topic.

Before writing your answer read through the source carefully, paying particular attention to the italicized 'origin' text above the source. Though your answer should focus on the provenance of the source (O,P,C), look carefully at what the source is saying and see if there are any signs of emotional language, etc, that might be useful in your response.

Ideally you will find two clear values and two clear limitations per source, but it might turn out you find two values but only one limitation - don't worry if this happens, it is determined by the source you are given. Indeed, make sure that you concentrate on giving values and limitations that are **specific to the source** and **not general comments** (i.e. it is useful as it is a primary source; it is limited as it is a secondary source and the author wasn't there, etc etc.).

### *How to write the answer?*

#### Write a 'Values' paragraph following this structure:

"The origin of this source is ..... (what, who, when, where - take from the source details) The purpose of this source is ..... (why it was made, for whom). The content of the source is ... This source is valuable because .....(refer to origin). The source is also valuable because ..... (refer to purpose).

#### Write a 'Limitations' paragraph following this structure:

The source is limited because .....(refer to origin). The source is also limited because ..... (refer to purpose)."

#### **Common Limitations of Sources:**

1. Subjective (emotion laden); evidence?; language?; tone?; style?;
2. Public vs. Private;
3. Selective use of information;
4. Political bias / source credibility;
5. Historian - nation / class / political bias;
6. Propaganda;

7. Exaggeration (motivation for?);
8. Scope of source (chronological / thematic / regional);
9. Secondary Source published years ago;

**Question 3:**            **Worth 6 marks, spend about a maximum 15 minutes. Compare and Contrast sources.**

For 6 marks, you need to write two paragraphs that include a **running comparison/contrast** of the two sources, carefully **supported by quotes**. Make sure that you focus on **answering the terms of the question** - i.e., it might be asking you to compare/contrast in relation to a very specific topic, not just the sources in general.

Ideally you will be able to find two clear points of comparison and two clear points of contrast, but don't worry if you end up having two of one and one of the other - it depends a little on the sources you are given to compare! Write the first paragraph on points of comparison, and the second on points of contrast. Before writing your answer, read through the sources carefully and underline key quotes that you plan to use.

***How to write the answer?***

**An outline or plan before writing is absolutely essential!**

Two separate paragraphs: "Both sources agree that ..... Source C says that ..... and Source D says that .... The sources also agree that ..... Source C says that ..... and Source D says that ...."

**Question 4:**            **Worth 9 marks, spend about a maximum 25 minutes. MINI-ESSAY using a synthesis of all sources and own knowledge!**

This is the most challenging question, and the one worth the most marks, which is why you need to allow enough time to produce a decent answer here. Crucial to remember is that you must use both **all the sources** and **your own detailed and specific knowledge** in your answer - if you use only the sources (and no additional knowledge), or only own knowledge (and no sources), the maximum you can score is 5 marks. You must use a **synthesis** of sources and your own knowledge to **produce a clear response to the question!** In this sense, it is just like a full essay: you need to focus on clearly addressing the question, developing a clear argument, and challenging any assumptions in the question if you can.

***How to approach this mini-essay?***

**An outline or plan before writing is absolutely essential!**

**Some Final Tips:**

1. **Do not panic!** Read the documents. Do not be surprised if the subject is obscure. Analyze!
2. **Make sure you understand the question.**
3. **Do not mix up the sources.**
4. Remember that **there is no one right answer** on source analysis questions. Point + specific proof from source.
5. Remember that the **documents are not necessarily facts.**
6. **Cite the documents** that you use. (e.g. “Source C argues...”)
7. Note the **date** of the documents.
8. **Concise and exact responses.**