

Historical investigation

Weighting: 25% SL, 20% HL

Purpose of internal assessment

Internal assessment is an integral part of the course and is compulsory for both SL and HL students. It enables students to demonstrate the application of skills and knowledge, and to pursue their personal interests, without the time limitations and other constraints that are associated with written examinations. The internal assessment should, as far as possible, be woven into normal classroom teaching and not be a separate activity conducted after a course has been taught.

The internal assessment requirements at SL and at HL for history are the same. All students complete a historical investigation into a historical topic of their choice. The internal assessment allows flexibility for students to select a topic of personal interest. The topic need not be related to the syllabus and students should be encouraged to use their own initiative when deciding on a topic. The free choice of topic means that the historical investigation provides a particularly good opportunity for students to engage with topics that are of personal interest, or topics related to their own local or national history.

Please note: Each individual student must complete an individual historical investigation—group work may not be undertaken.

Time allocation

Internal assessment contributes 25% to the final assessment in the SL course and 20% in the HL course. This weighting should be reflected in the time that is allocated to teaching the skills and understanding required to undertake the work, as well as the total time allocated to carry out the work. It is recommended that a total of approximately 20 hours (SL and HL) of teaching time should be allocated to the work. This should include:

- time for the teacher to explain to students the requirements of the internal assessment
- class time for students to work on the internal assessment component and ask questions
- time for consultation between the teacher and each student individually
- time to review and monitor progress, and to check authenticity.

Guidance and authenticity

The historical investigation submitted for internal assessment must be the student's own work. However, it is not the intention that students should decide upon a title or topic and be left to work on the internal assessment component without any further support from the teacher. The teacher should play an important role during both the planning stage and the period when the student is working on the internally assessed work. It is the responsibility of the teacher to ensure that students are familiar with:

- the requirements of the type of work to be internally assessed
- the assessment criteria; students must understand that the work submitted for assessment must address these criteria effectively.

Teachers and students must discuss the internally assessed work. Students should be encouraged to initiate discussions with the teacher to obtain advice and information, and students must not be penalized for seeking guidance. As part of the learning process, teachers should read and give advice to students on one draft of the work. The teacher should provide

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oral or written advice on how the work could be improved, but should not edit the draft. The next version handed to the teacher must be the final version for submission.

It is the responsibility of teachers to ensure that all students understand the basic meaning and significance of concepts that relate to academic honesty, especially authenticity and intellectual property. Teachers must ensure that all student work for assessment is prepared according to the requirements and must explain clearly to students that the internally assessed work must be entirely their own. All work submitted to the IB for moderation or assessment must be authenticated by a teacher, and must not include any known instances of suspected or confirmed academic misconduct. Each student must confirm that the work is his or her authentic work and constitutes the final version of that work. Once a student has officially submitted the final version of the work it cannot be retracted. The requirement to confirm the authenticity of work applies to the work of all students, not just the sample work that will be submitted to the IB for the purpose of moderation. For further details, refer to the IB publication *Academic honesty in the IB educational context, The Diploma Programme: From principles into practice* and the relevant articles in *General regulations: Diploma Programme*.

Authenticity may be checked by discussion with the student on the content of the work, and scrutiny of one or more of the following.

- The student's initial proposal
- The first draft of the written work
- The references cited
- The style of writing compared with work known to be that of the student
- The analysis of the work by a web-based plagiarism-detection service

Please note: The same piece of work cannot be submitted to meet the requirements of both the internal assessment and the extended essay.

Internal assessment details—SL and 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.

- 1. Identification and evaluation of sources**
- 2. Investigation**
- 3. Reflection**

Students have a free choice of topic for their historical investigation—the topic need not be related to the syllabus, and students should be encouraged to use their own initiative when deciding on a topic. However, 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

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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.

Section 1: 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.

A crucial element of this section of the internal assessment task is formulating an appropriate question to investigate. The six key concepts for the history course (causation, consequence, continuity, change, significance and perspectives) can be a very useful starting point in helping students to formulate a question.

Section 2: 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 3: 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?

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- 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 and marks

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.

- 1. Identification and evaluation of sources.** The suggested word allocation is *500 words*. This part can give you a maximum of **6 marks**.
- 2. Investigation.** The suggested word allocation is *1,300 words*. This main part of the IA can give you a maximum of **15 marks**.
- 3. Reflection.** The suggested word allocation is *400 words*. This part can give you a maximum of **4 marks**.

Bibliography. A bibliography and clear referencing of all sources must be included with every investigation, but these are not included in the overall word count.

Total (2,200 word limit). Total maximum marks = **25 marks**

Using assessment criteria for internal assessment

A number of assessment criteria have been identified for the internal assessment task. Each assessment criterion has level descriptors describing specific achievement levels, together with an appropriate range of marks. The level descriptors concentrate on positive achievement, although for the lower levels failure to achieve may be included in the description.

Teachers must judge the internally assessed work at SL and at HL against the criteria using the level descriptors.

- The same assessment criteria are provided for SL and HL.
- The aim is to find, for each criterion, the descriptor that conveys most accurately the level attained by the student, using the best-fit model. A best-fit approach means that compensation should be made when a piece of work matches different aspects of a criterion at different levels. The mark awarded should be one that most fairly reflects the balance of achievement against the criterion. It is not necessary for every single aspect of a level descriptor to be met for that mark to be awarded.
- When assessing a student’s work, teachers should read the level descriptors for each criterion until they reach a descriptor that most appropriately describes the level of the work being assessed. If a piece of work seems to fall between two descriptors, both descriptors should be read again and the one that more appropriately describes the student’s work should be chosen.
- Where there are two or more marks available within a level, teachers should award the upper marks if the student’s work demonstrates the qualities described to a great extent; the work may be close to achieving marks in the level above. Teachers should award the lower

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marks if the student's work demonstrates the qualities described to a lesser extent; the work may be close to achieving marks in the level below.

- Only whole numbers should be recorded; partial marks (fractions and decimals) are not acceptable.
- Teachers should not think in terms of a pass or fail boundary, but should concentrate on identifying the appropriate descriptor for each assessment criterion.
- The highest level descriptors do not imply faultless performance but should be achievable by a student. Teachers should not hesitate to use the extremes if they are appropriate descriptions of the work being assessed.
- A student who attains a high achievement level in relation to one criterion will not necessarily attain high achievement levels in relation to the other criteria. Similarly, a student who attains a low achievement level for one criterion will not necessarily attain low achievement levels for the other criteria. Teachers should not assume that the overall assessment of the students will produce any particular distribution of marks.
- It is recommended that the assessment criteria be made available to students.

Internal assessment criteria (SL and HL)

The historical investigation for both SL and HL is assessed against three criteria.

- Criterion A: Identification and evaluation of sources (6 marks)
- Criterion B: Investigation (15 marks)
- Criterion C: Reflection (4 marks)

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

0 = The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.

1–2 = 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. The response describes, but does not analyse or evaluate, two of the sources.

3–4 = 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. There is some analysis and evaluation of two sources, but reference to their value and limitations is limited.

5–6 = 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. 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.

Criterion B: Investigation (15 marks)

0 = The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.

1–3 = The investigation lacks clarity and coherence, and is poorly organized. Where there is a recognizable structure there is minimal focus on the task. 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.

4–6 = There is an attempt to organize the investigation but this is only partially successful, and the investigation lacks clarity and coherence. The investigation contains some limited

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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.

7–9 = The investigation is generally clear and well organized, but there is some repetition or lack of clarity in places. 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. There may be awareness of different perspectives, but these perspectives are not evaluated.

10–12 = The investigation is generally clear and well organized, although there may be some repetition or lack of clarity in places. 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. There is awareness and some evaluation of different perspectives. The investigation argues to a reasoned conclusion.

13–15 = The investigation is clear, coherent and effectively organized. 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. There is evaluation of different perspectives. The investigation argues to a reasoned conclusion that is consistent with the evidence and arguments provided.

Criterion C: Reflection (4 marks)

0 = The work does not reach a standard described by the descriptors below.

1–2 = The reflection contains some discussion of what the investigation highlighted to the student about the methods used by the historian. The reflection demonstrates little awareness of the challenges facing the historian and/or the limitations of the methods used by the historian. The connection between the reflection and the rest of the investigation is implied, but is not explicit.

3–4 = The reflection is clearly focused on what the investigation highlighted to the student about the methods used by the historian. The reflection demonstrates clear awareness of challenges facing the historian and/or limitations of the methods used by the historian. There is a clear and explicit connection between the reflection and the rest of the investigation.