

WHY IS A PLAN SO IMPORTANT?

1. The argument of your essay takes its unique shape in the plan.
2. Your argument is tested in the plan to see if it is convincing.
3. All your resources – thinking and information, are brought together in the plan.
4. You see if you have enough information to answer the essay in the plan. Your resources confront the essay title.
5. Your plan gives an outline shape to the essay in paragraphs or chunks of connected information and ideas.
6. The plan prevents mistakes, inaccuracy, and repetition.
7. The plan makes writing the essay quicker.
 - a. It allows you to concentrate on expressing your ideas,
 - b. helps you keep your place in an essay, because you can see what you have written and what comes next.
8. If you are used to planning, you will produce a more relevant and direct answer in examinations.

IF YOU WRITE AN ESSAY AT HOME

1. Use plenty of space (*it will be easier to read and follow when writing*).
2. Plan in pencil with an eraser (*it will allow you to rearrange and correct information*).
3. Leave a margin (*more notes may than be added as you write*).
4. Analyze the question parts (*this leads to a line of argument*).
5. State the line of argument (*this gives overall direction to the essay and helps the introduction*).
6. Separate out main ideas or areas of knowledge and make them your subheadings (*each may then take a paragraph in your final essay*).
7. Fill in the facts, quotations, comments, thoughts which fit these subheadings (*these will form the main body of your essay*).
8. Keep your notes near at hand (*you will need to search your notes for the details and materials you need*).
9. Use reference and textbooks (*To check your notes and to search out extra information*).

IF YOU WRITE AN IN-CLASS-ESSAY OR AN EXAM ESSAY

Clarity of thought is the most important virtue. This clarity comes from taking a few minutes to think out the way in which an essay should develop. It is astonishing, but true, that each year some candidates write whole essays in pencil, make minor corrections, then rewrite them in ink. This is fortunately rare, but other examples of poor use of plans are frequently seen. Here is an example:

Consider the factors that influenced the Anglo-German relations, 1904-1914

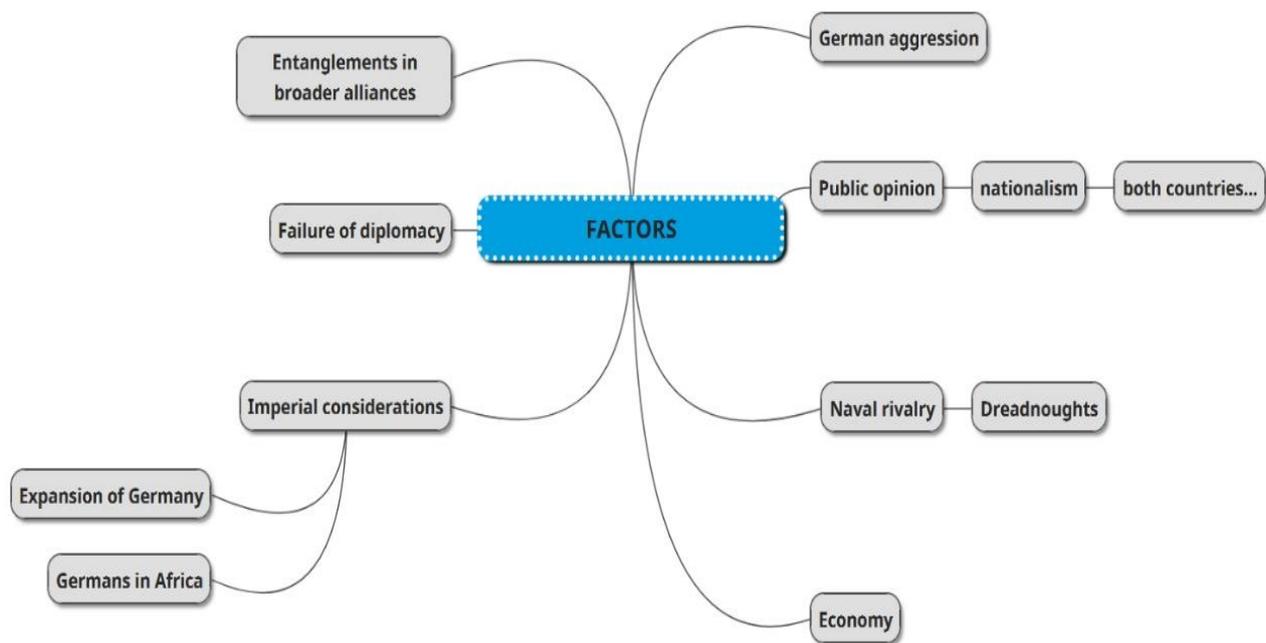
Plan	Morocco 1905 Dreadnought 1906 Agadir 1911 Sarajevo/Schlieffen
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This is, in fact, not so much a plan as a brief reminder of what the candidate considers to be key points. The fact that this student knows them makes their appearance here irrelevant-unless, of course, he fears that they are likely to be forgotten in the next few minutes. Worse than being a waste of time, they might dictate the course of the essay, which would bring disaster. This plan does nothing constructive and could impose a narrative structure and a lack of direction.

Here is a different plan for the same question:

Consider the factors that influenced the Anglo-German relations, 1904-1914

Plan



ADVANTAGES OF THIS TYPE OF A VISUAL PLAN

1. **It provides a structure for the essay.** By the time the plan is complete, the student can visualize the appearance of the whole essay. Key points represent paragraphs. Details can be added where helpful but are not allowed to overwhelm the structure. If, while writing the essay, other important points come to mind, they can quickly be added to the plan and used in the appropriate place. Having identified the key points, they can also be numbered to show the order in which they will be considered.
2. **It is a memory aid.** During the construction of a plan the student is likely to think of a number of main points and details in swift succession. The plan can enable the student who is worried about “*drying up*” to get these ideas on paper quickly.
3. **The plan is not cramped at the top of a page.** It should be written on loose paper (scrap paper – last page on the IB Exam paper). This will allow ample space, and the plan can be consulted at any time without shuffling back to the beginning of the essay.
4. Of course, pattern notes do not work for everyone. A linear plan can do just as well, but leave space to develop ideas further, and having established key points, use numbering so that the plan still has flexibility.
5. By the time that you have thought out a plan, you will be better prepared to write your introduction as a keynote to what is to follow...

PLAN, PLAN, PLAN! 5-7 minutes making an outline on a scrap paper is always worthwhile. It aids structure, fluency and content to the essay.