

Preparing for the examination

Paper 1

You should be clear about the following points:

- You will have 1 hour in which to answer 4 set questions
- You already know the content and concepts of each of the two case studies
- You will not know which case study will be given, nor the specific theme of the documents – but you should revise ALL the bullets in the curriculum document so that you understand each theme
- You might not be familiar with every document on the paper or the names or events mentioned – but don't panic – Paper 1 assesses your historical understanding and your ability to put sources into their historical context

For each type of question, you need to apply the correct technique:

- Question 1 – historical comprehension / interpretations
- Question 2 – evaluation of the value and limitation of a source from its origin, purpose and content
- Question 3 – analysis of comparisons and contrasts
- Question 4 – essay response which synthesizes the sources and your own knowledge

Make sure to learn relevant material for each of the bullet points set for this paper. You should also practise planning mini-essay responses.

Go to the following page for more details on what is required for each question and for tips on how to answer each question:

The four questions on Paper 1 will always be structured in the same way. This is a great advantage for students as they can learn the specific skills needed to answer each question.

This page provides guidelines for answering each question. At the bottom of this page you will find a PowerPoint slideshow that you can use to explain these points to students. You will also find a range of help sheets for students.

Question 1 (5 marks)

This is in two parts: a 3 mark question and a 2 mark question.

Question 1 assesses historical comprehension of the sources; own knowledge should not be included in the written answer. (Though it will of course help in the understanding of the sources).

Part a

This is a 3 mark question. Thus 3 separate points are needed. Students should make it clear to the examiner that they are addressing 3 points by using Firstly, Secondly, Finally. This will also remind them to look for 3 separate points!

It is possible to quote from the source to support a point, though quotes should be brief, maybe two or three words in support.

Part b

This is usually linked to a visual source and will ask for the 'message' of the source. Again, it is testing comprehension and again, two separate points are needed. Each separate point should be supported by details in the source.

Question 2 (4 marks)

Question 2 requires the evaluation of one source for its value and limitations (for a historian studying a particular issue) by the examination of the source's origin, purpose and content. Students must therefore become familiar with studying the provenance of the source (which will be given at the start of the source) very carefully and looking at the style and content of the language. They should be asking the following questions:

For origin:

- Who wrote/said/drew the source?
- When was it written or published?
- Where did the person write it/say it/draw it?
- What type of source is it – e.g. a memoir, a diary or a cartoon?

For purpose:

- Why was the source created? (private/public purposes?)
- Who was the intended audience?

For content

- Is the language objective or does it sound exaggerated or one-sided?
- What is the tone of the source?
- What information and examples are used to support arguments?

Note that it is not necessary for students to focus on whether the source is primary or secondary; this distinction does not in itself help to analyze the value of the source.

Question 3 (6 marks)

Question 3 asks students to compare and contrast two sources.

The key skill here is 'linkage', getting the students to adopt a running comparison throughout the question (rather than dealing with the sources one by one and then having a linking paragraph at the end).

Students should have one paragraph focusing on similarities and one paragraph focusing on the differences.

There is no need for an introduction or conclusion.

Question 4 (9 marks)

In question 4, students need to write a mini-essay and to synthesize the material in the sources with their own knowledge.

As it is an essay, they will need a brief introduction and a brief conclusion which addresses the question.