

IB History of the Americas Paper 3 Tips

This handout is designed to help you prepare for the IB History of the Americas Paper 3 exam. There are a few comments about the other papers, but only a few.

The structure of the IB History Exam

The IB History exam consists of three papers:

Paper 1 - one hour, primary document analysis

Paper 2 - 90 minutes, answer two essay questions

Paper 3 - 150 minutes, answer three essay questions

Papers 1 and 2 will be based on material from your HOA Year 2 class, while **Paper 3** will cover your HOA Year 1 class.

Papers 1 and 2 will be given the first day, **Paper 3** will be given the second day of history testing.

Content Review - Selecting your Areas

Paper 3 asks that you write three essays, chosen from twenty-four questions. These questions cover all twelve areas of the curriculum. So DON'T try to study everything from your HOA notes! Instead focus on a handful of areas - learn each of them very well. Use the HOA topics list below to really master the content in each area. Most importantly, go through every bullet point for each of the areas you choose. For example:

1. Independence movements

This section focuses on the various forces that contributed to the rise of the independence movements, the similar and different paths that the movements followed and the immediate effects of independence in the region. It explores the political, intellectual and military contributions of their leaders and the sometimes contradictory views that shaped the emergence of the new nations.

- *Independence movements in the Americas: political, economic, social, intellectual and religious causes; the role of foreign intervention; conflicts and issues leading to war*
- *Political and intellectual contributions of leaders to the process of independence: Washington, Bolivar (suitable choices could be Adams, Jefferson, San Martín, O'Higgins)*
- *United States Declaration of Independence; processes leading to the declaration; influence of ideas; nature of the declaration; military campaigns and their impact on the outcome (suitable examples could be Saratoga and Yorktown)*
- *Independence movements in Latin America: characteristics of the independence processes; reasons for the similarities and/or differences in two countries in the region; military campaigns and their impact on the outcome (suitable examples could be Chacabuco, Maipú, Ayacucho, Boyacá and Carabobo)*
- *United States' position towards Latin American independence; events and reasons for the emergence of the Monroe Doctrine*
- *Impact of independence on the economies and societies of the Americas: economic and social issues; new perspectives on economic development; impact on different social groups: Native America*

Being well prepared for this area of Paper 3 means going through each of the listed points above. You can find all twelve areas of the HOA course in the document "HOA Topics 2012" link.

Examination Questions

For Paper 3 you need to answer three of the 24 questions. The questions are not divided up by section but just run 1-24 and are usually arranged chronologically. When the exam begins, you will have five minutes in which to read the questions. You are not allowed to use a pen or a highlighter during the reading period. Scan the list of questions but focus on the ones relating to the section you have studied.

Remember you are to write on the history of the Americas. If a question such as, "Discuss the impact of the Great Depression on the society of one country of the region" is asked, *do not* write about Germany. You will receive no credit for this answer.

After the five minutes reading time is over, you can take out your pen and mark up the exam booklet:

- Circle the three questions you have decided to answer.
- Identify the command terms and important points. For example, if a question asked, "To what extent did Roosevelt's New Deal policies end the Great Depression?" underline *To what extent* and *New Deal policies*. This will help you to focus on the demands of the question.

For each essay take five to seven minutes to write an outline and approximately 43-45 minutes to write the essay.

Command Terms

When choosing the three questions, keep in mind that you must answer the question asked, not one you might have hoped for. A key to success is understanding the demands of the question. IB History diploma questions use key terms and phrases known as command terms. Be sure to consult the glossary of command terms handout.

Answering the Questions

You have two-and-a-half hours to answer the three questions or 50 minutes each. Try to budget your time wisely. In other words, do not spend 75 minutes on one answer. Before you begin each essay, take five to seven minutes and compose an outline of the major points you will raise in your essay. You can check these off as you write the essay itself. This is not a waste of time and will bring organization and coherency to what you write. Well-organized essays that include an introduction, several well-supported arguments and a concluding statement are much more likely to score highly than essays that jump from point to point without structure.

Each of your essays will be marked on a 0-20 scale, for a total of 60 points. The total score will be weighted as 35 percent of your final IB History grade.

Writing Essays

In order to attain the highest mark (18-20), your essay should:

- *Be clearly focused*
- *Address all parts of the question*
- *Demonstrate extensive historical knowledge*
- *Be well structured*
- *Have well-developed synthesis*

Your essay should include an introduction in which you set out your main points. Do not waste time copying the question, but define the key terms stated in the question. Best essays probe the demands of the question. In other words, there are often different ways of interpreting the question.

Next, you should write an in-depth analysis of your main points in several paragraphs. Here you will provide evidence that supports your argument. Each paragraph should focus on one of your main points and relate directly to the question. More sophisticated responses include counter-arguments when appropriate.

Finally, you should end with a concluding statement.

In the roughly 45 minutes you spend on one essay, you should be able to write 3-6 pages. While there is no set minimum, you do need to explore the issues and provide sufficient evidence to support what you write.