

HOW TO WRITE AN IB HISTORY PAPER

STEP	EXAMPLES
<p><i>Step 1 – Read the question carefully. Make sure that you are careful when answering</i></p>	<p>Evaluate the successes and failures of one ruler of a single-party state</p> <p>This question is referring to the dictator’s rule or when they were in power, not their rise</p> <p style="text-align: center;">Hitler – 1933 Mussolini – 1922 Lenin – 1918 Mao – 1949 Castro – 1959</p>
	<p>Analyze the methods used and the conditions which helped in the rise to power of one ruler of a single-party state</p> <p>Answer both methods used (tactics, strategies) AND the conditions (previous state of the country)</p> <p>Since the question is asking about their rise, determine the events that started with his rise until the end of his rise. Don’t go into how they maintained power:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hitler’s rise ended in 1934 with the Night of the Long Knives, death of Hindenburg, and the Army Oath ▪ Mussolini’s rise ended in 1925 with the death of Matteoti, Acerbo Law, purges, banning of political parties, creation of tribunals and the OVRA, and censorship ▪ Lenin’s rise ended in 1921 with the end of the Russian Civil War and the Red Terror ▪ Mao’s rise ended in 1952 with the three-antis and five-antis campaigns, as well as all the reforms he made ▪ Castro’s rise ended in 1961 with the defeat of the Cuban exiles in the Bay of Pigs invasion
	<p>Compare and contrast the influence in their own countries of Hitler and Mao</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ DO NOT write one separate paragraph on Hitler and another on Mao, but interlink the paragraphs
	<p>For what reasons, and with what results, was “limited” warfare a feature of the second half of the 20th Century?</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Answer both for what reasons (why; what were the causes) AND with what results (what happened)
	<p>Analyze the results of the First World War.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Don’t just write about the Treaty of Versailles and remember that there were many countries affected around the globe, not just Germany
	<p>Assess the role of terror and force in maintaining the ruler in power in two totalitarian states each chosen from a different region.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Write about two dictators equally if possible

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<p><i>Step 2 – Jot down an outline before you begin answering. This will help you gather your thoughts and organize your essay. You get 5 minutes or so of planning before writing your Paper 2 and Paper 3</i></p>	
<p><i>Step 3 – Develop your thesis statement.</i></p>	<p>What is a thesis?</p> <p>It usually a single sentence somewhere in your first paragraph that presents your argument to the reader. The rest of the paper, the body of the essay, gathers and organizes evidence that will persuade the reader of the logic of your interpretation. It is also a road map for the paper; in other words, it tells the reader what to expect from the rest of the paper.</p> <p>What is a strong thesis?</p> <p><i>Do I answer the question?</i> Re-reading the question prompt after constructing a working thesis can help you fix an argument that misses the focus of the question.</p> <p>Is my thesis statement specific enough? Thesis statements that are too vague often do not have a strong argument. If your thesis contains words like "good" or "successful," see if you could be more specific: <i>why</i> is something "good"; <i>what specifically</i> makes something "successful"?</p> <p><i>Does my thesis pass the "how and why?" test?</i> If a reader's first response is "how?" or "why?" your thesis may be too open-ended and lack guidance for the reader. See what you can add to give the reader a better take on your position right from the beginning.</p> <p><i>Does my essay support my thesis specifically and without wandering?</i> If your thesis and the body of your essay do not seem to go together, one of them has to change.</p> <p>Examples –</p> <p><i>The North and South fought the Civil War for many reasons, some of which were the same and some different.</i></p> <p><i>While both sides fought the Civil War over the issue of slavery, the North fought for moral reasons while the South fought to preserve its own institutions.</i></p> <p><i>While both Northerners and Southerners believed they fought against tyranny and oppression, Northerners focused on the oppression of slaves while Southerners defended their own right to self-government.</i></p>
<p><i>Step 4 – Start writing your introduction. Keep the introduction concise --- about 3-4 sentences maximum, but don't neglect it either.</i></p>	

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<p><i>Step 5 – Write your body paragraphs. This is where you’ll get most of your marks. Leave no question unanswered – especially the how and why – but make your point as quickly as possible without dwelling on whatever you’re writing. Make sure to use higher level thinking, rather than all lower level thinking.</i></p>	<p>Lower-Level Thinking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Facts ○ Lists ○ Definitions ○ Descriptions <p>Ex – Imperialism caused WWI.</p> <p>Higher-Level Thinking</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Examples ○ Explaining the importance of an event or action ○ Explaining the causes and effects of an event or action ○ Analyzing an event or action – stating how and why ○ Saying the “because” part <p>Ex – Imperialism caused WWI because countries felt compelled to maintain their status as a great power by acquiring natural resources and areas of trade. This resulted in countries arguing over who dominated and controlled colonies in Morocco, the Middle East, and the Balkans.</p>
<p><i>Step 6 – Start writing your conclusion. Keep the conclusion concise --- about 3-4 sentences maximum, but don’t neglect it either. It should summarize the main themes in the essay and not cover new material</i></p>	