Historical Investigation Guidelines
IB History of the Americas / 20th Century Topics

What is it?
A historical investigation consisting of a written account of between 1,500 and 2,000 words (no more, no less), divided into six sections: a plan of the investigation, a summary of evidence, an evaluation of sources, an analysis, a conclusion, and a bibliography or list of sources. The investigation must be a written piece and should be the work of the individual student. Group work is not permitted. It is worth 20 marks.

Who does it?
All higher level (HL) and standard level (SL) history students.

How many words should there be in each section?
This is not specified, but a suggestion is A: 100-150, B: 500-600, C: 250-400, D: 500-650, E: 150-200. Total 1,500-2,000 words. You cannot be over or under the word count, or you will automatically lose marks.

How many marks is it worth?
It is marked out of 20 for both HL and SL and weighted at 20% (for HL) and 25% (for SL) of the final assessment.

What can it be about?
Any genuine history topic, but Bacon must agree upon it with you. My suggestion is that you choose a topic of interest from the IB 20th century history or Americas syllabus that may help you with the IB exams. Kill two birds with one stone! It may not be a topic you have previously researched (like for Extended Essay or a previous history class).

How many sources do you need to use?
As many as will produce an effective investigation. Only sources used in the investigation can be listed on your works cited page. Two of these will be selected for evaluation (section C of the investigation). I suggest a minimum of 6 really good, varied sources. Maximum of 12? Your sources should be diverse – books, periodicals, Internet, interviews, video / audio, etc.

The work must be your own. Sources must be cited properly.

Examples of the types of investigations a student may undertake:
A Historical ...
- Topic or theme using written sources or a variety of sources.
- Topic based on fieldwork; for example a museum, battlefield, etc.
- Problem using documents (this could include newspapers).
- Project based on local events, people, or places.
- Project based on oral interviews
- Investigation based on interpreting a novel, film, piece of art, etc
Summary of Process
1. Start by identifying a general area of interest in history.
2. Narrow it down to a specific question / area of investigation.
3. Choose a working title that may be changed / refined at a later stage. This will be in the form of a question.
4. Make sure you can obtain sufficient resources for your planned investigation!!!!! (I suggest at least 5 or 6 really, really good ones, and maybe 5 or 6 eh, ok ones! You may not use all of them in your final investigation, but at least you could find enough info).
5. read widely around the area of study and note all resources used
6. look for competing or differing interpretations of your topic. IB loves this!
7. Review your thesis question and refine it if necessary.
8. Take notes from your chosen resources, including exact references.
9. Complete section A (the plan) and show it to Bacon.
10. Re-read your notes and decide where they would fit into the sections of the investigation.
11. Complete your investigation, according to IBO guidelines.

The methodology of your research is what this investigation is all about. It is a report of the research you would do if you were actually going to write a full research essay on your topic. How would you go about answering your thesis? What sources would you use? Where would you find those sources? And, in a nutshell, what is your conclusion or answer to the question based on your limited research?

Important Due Dates

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Month</th>
<th>Event</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Sept.</td>
<td>Library pre-research (2 or 3 class periods)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct.</td>
<td>Preliminary Topic / subject approval (Thesis Statement Assignment)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Oct.</td>
<td>Library research (3 or 4 class periods)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Nov.</td>
<td>Plan of investigation and list of sources</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec.</td>
<td>Library research / writing session (2 or 3 class periods)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec.</td>
<td>First draft (turnitin.com) no exceptions!!!!!</td>
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<tr>
<td>Dec.</td>
<td>Conferences (after school)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Feb.</td>
<td>Final draft (2 copies – we’ll talk more about this)</td>
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A. Plan of Investigation (100-150 words)
In order to come up with a good question or thesis, you must do some pre-research. Pick a topic, research it, come up with a basic question, read some more about it, refine your question, write some of your paper, and then tweak the question a bit more. The question should be specific, focused, detailed and targeted. The more specific, the better!!!!

Scope: Your plan must include your thesis, and you need to explain why your topic is important, why it deserves research, and why you are narrowing your focus to your specific thesis. Explain why your research is so broad or so narrow.

You will need to write about the methods of your research. This is not a narrative of how you are going to drive to the library, sit at a computer, and type in some words. Nor is a story about how you looked through lots of period magazines. It is a narrative of how you would search
through speeches of your historical figure, look for who attended the speeches, research what the local and national newspapers said about the speech, find a copy of the speech, look for video or audio of the speech, etc etc etc. What is it that you need to do in order to answer your thesis question? No matter what you do or how you do it, your research must have a clearly structured plan. You can’t do it all on the internet!

“I need to find letters from...” and why...
“I need to look at others who were there...” and why...
“I need to see pictures (satellite and aerial) of the geography of the area to better understand...”
“I need to locate personal journals from...” and why...
“I will sort through court records to....”

The Plan of Investigation must include:
The subject of the investigation in the form of a question
the methods to be used in the investigation

B. Summary of Evidence (research) (500-600 words)
JUST THE FACTS.

Prove you did the research. Prove you looked through a variety of sources. Prove you didn’t just sit at the computer and search the internet. Prove you were thorough. Prove you went to a museum and looked at the archives! You may even want to bullet the evidence, but make sure you write in sentence form (this helps your word count)! Whatever you do, make sure you cite all your sources. Be careful, only use something in your investigation if it is meaningful and provides evidence to help answer your question. Just using a laundry list of lots of facts and figures and quotes from lots of books or websites doesn’t help. More is not better. I would suggest primary AND secondary sources for your research. Summarize, summarize, summarize.

Do not include your analysis of the sources, and don’t actually answer the thesis in this section! You will do this later. It is just an organized summary of the facts you found from the sources you discovered in your research. You may include quotes if you want to, but make sure you put them in context. You don’t have to use quotes though. I found this, and this, and this, and this.

Be careful - any information you use anywhere else in the paper must be presented in this section. You can’t pull out new information and use it in your conclusion if it does not also appear in your summary of evidence!! All information you summarize should help “prove” what your conclusion is.

Any illustrations, documents, or other relevant evidence should be included in an appendix and will not be included in the word count.

This section MUST BE ORGANIZED (thematically or chronologically) and MUST BE REFERENCED and provide evidence of thorough research. It can be in either bulleted list or continuous prose.

C. Evaluation of Sources (OPVL) (250-400 words)
This section should be a critical evaluation of the two (2) most important sources appropriate to the investigation and should refer to their ORIGIN, PURPOSE, VALUE, and LIMITATION. More then two sources may be evaluated but the emphasis should be on the thorough evaluation of two sources rather than a superficial evaluation of more than two. You are the historian, so explain how useful the source is to you. What are its values and limitations?

NOTE: The purpose of this section is to assess the usefulness of the sources; NOT to describe their content or nature. (you already described their content in section B)

You do not have to compare the two sources! Think of it as a paragraph or so OPVL for one source, and a paragraph or so OPVL for another source. Easy marks!

“Limitation” – you now have access to the entire document, so you can’t use the argument of the document only being an excerpt like you might be able to use in the Paper 1 exam. Look for other limitations the source has.

D. Analysis (500-650 words)
This is the substance of the paper. These are your thoughts about the subject. This is your analysis of the sources, your findings, your ideas. You may want to present differing interpretations of the answer to your question.

Whatever you do, you should try to place it in historical context. This will add weight and perspective to your study. What else was going on at the time? Take a larger view than just your bit of information...what associated events may lend themselves to an understanding of the historical importance of your subject?

You are elaborating on and analyzing what you wrote about in section B. The elements you identified in section B will now be broken down into key issues or points. Now you are analyzing what all the facts from section B mean. How are they related? How do they conflict with each other? What do they mean? What is your interpretation of the facts?

The analysis should include:
the importance of the investigation in its historical context
analysis of the evidence
if appropriate, different interpretations

E. Conclusion (150-200 words)
The conclusion must be clearly stated and consistent with the evidence presented. You should NOT INCLUDE ANY NEW INFORMATION NOT ALREADY PRESENTED EARLIER IN YOUR PAPER!!!!!!

This is a follow-up to section D. It requires an answer or conclusion, based on the evidence already presented (again, no new evidence or surprises) which either partially of fully addresses the question stated or implied in the investigation.

This should be consistent with the rest of your paper. Don’t try to pull a fast one on anyone!
F. List of Sources (not counted in word count)
A bibliography or list of sources must be included although it will not count in total word count.

All sources, whether written or otherwise (including interviews) should be listed. This must be alphabetized. Format does not matter, as long as you are consistent and use only one format!

Where should you research??
1. Presidential libraries
2. Databases
3. Professional journals (most recent research only)
4. Government websites (.gov)
5. Educational websites (universities) (.edu)
6. Books
7. Museums (Hagley and Winterthur have great libraries depending on your topic)
8. Public Archives

Make sure you research the source. At Newark I had a student use a paper that they found online as a resource. It was a really good paper about something to do with the economic situation of Native Americans on government reservations or something like that. Problem was that when I looked into it, the paper was written by a third grader (with a lot of help from Mom or Dad) for his elementary school history class and his teacher had published it on some website. I’m not kidding. It was a third grade paper! (also ask me about 2007/2008 senior papers)

CHECK THE SOURCE. MAKE SURE IT IS RELIABLE.

Last time I checked, a third grader’s paper was not a reliable source for a historical investigation such as this, no matter how good his sources were if Daddy wrote the paper! (remind me to tell you about the Class of 2008 and a certain paper that cited middle school papers as research!)

Final thoughts ...
This is an easy way to get lots of marks toward History! The hardest part and most time-consuming part of the investigation is the actual research. Writing this paper is the easy part because it is only about the process of how you are doing your research. You are not actually writing the paper out like you would in college. It should take you lots more time researching, reading, and sifting through sources than writing 1500-2000 words. Most of you text or IM 2000 words on a daily basis. As you research, your topic or question may evolve. This is a good thing. Keep coming back to me and let me know where you are in the process. 1) I am curious, and 2) I may be able to help you.

Prove to IB that you know how to do meaningful research and you will score well. Follow my tips and suggestions, pay attention to the attached mark rubric and you can determine your own score +/- 1 mark.
Following the format, I guarantee everyone can get at least 12 marks for this work if you make somewhat of an effort! Most (I believe all) of you should easily be at or above 15 marks!! Unlike the exams in May, your score is completely in your hands! Spend some time on this, follow the guidelines, and do a good job!

Give yourself lots of time to do the research!!!! Spend time at the library – UDEL, New Castle, Mount Pleasant, Hagley, etc. You may be able to write the investigation in a short period of time, but the research will take time!

Assessment Criteria for Historical Investigation

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A. Plan of Investigation</th>
<th>3 marks</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>B. Summary of Evidence</td>
<td>6 marks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. Evaluation of Sources</td>
<td>5 marks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>D. Analysis</td>
<td>6 marks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>E. Conclusion</td>
<td>2 marks</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>F. Sources and word limit</td>
<td>3 marks</td>
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<tr>
<td><strong>TOTAL</strong></td>
<td><strong>25 marks</strong></td>
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What is a thesis?
A thesis statement declares what you believe and what you intend to prove. A good thesis statement makes the difference between a thoughtful research project and a simple retelling of facts. A good thesis supported by substantive research will earn higher marks!

A good tentative thesis will help you focus your search for information. But don't rush. You must do a lot of background reading and research before you know enough about a subject to identify key or essential questions. You may not know how you stand on an issue until you have examined the evidence, or if you do have an opinion, you may even change your mind! You will likely begin your research with a working, preliminary or tentative thesis, which you will continue to refine until you are certain of where the evidence leads.

The thesis statement is typically, but not always, located at the end of your opening paragraph. (The opening paragraph serves to set the context for the thesis.)

Remember, your reader will be looking for your thesis. Make it clear, strong, and easy to find.

A strong thesis statement ...
- Takes some sort of stand or position, it is provocative
- Justifies further discussion
- Clearly expresses one main idea
- Is specific and focused
- Is original, not formulaic or generic
- Provides the reader with a map to guide him/her through the work
- Avoids “I think,” “I believe,” “In my opinion …”
- Does not simply restate the question – it goes beyond this
- Clearly asserts your own conclusion based on evidence

YOUR ASSIGNMENT
1. Choose a general topic
2. Begin to research your topic (both in class and on your own)
3. Narrow your focus
4. Begin to formulate your thesis
5. Do some more research
6. Create 15 preliminary questions based on your limited research, that require “uncoverage” of your topic
7. Your questions should be relatively specific based on your topic, not generic.
8. Turn in your rough thesis and 15 questions for a major grade.

Now go back and do more research to begin to uncover the answers to your questions. If you can successfully do this, your topic is probably valid and your thesis statement may not have to change very much. Formulate more questions that you may want to address in your paper as you do more research. All of this, by the way, is part of your plan of investigation.

If you cannot answer most of your preliminary questions after further research, your topic and thesis will most likely have to be altered or be scrapped altogether.
How does the Historical Investigation affect my grade in HOTA?

If you procrastinate or typically have trouble meeting deadlines, then you have your work cut out for you. PLEASE let me know if I can help.

Remember, your Investigation also counts as 20 percent of your overall History IB score. It is the only score you have absolute control over. Do well on this, and you are that much closer to getting your Diploma or Certificate.