Notes and Reminders about the Historical Investigation

Candidates who exceeded the word limit of 2,200 words lost marks for section C. Examiners do not to reward material beyond the word limit.

Section 1 (Suggested words: 500)

* **Appropriate Question and Objective**
  + Is answerable within 1300 words
  + Includes a specific person, place, event
  + Includes a specific time period or era
* **Sources**
  + Good mix of both primary and secondary sources
  + Ten total sources is a good goal
    - 6 minimum
  + Lots of academic articles and history books written by expert historians
  + Very few websites
  + Sources selected should **present different perspectives** on your question
* **Evaluation of Sources (2 most important ones)**
  + Clearly state the values and limitations of the author for ***your investigation*** (analysis)
  + Clearly state the values and limitations of other origins for ***your investigation***
  + Clearly state the values and limitations of the purposes for ***your investigation***
  + Clearly state the values and limitations of the content for ***your investigation***

Section 2 (Suggested words: 1300)

General Tips

1. Clear organization
2. Well developed analysis focused around your research question
3. Include a wide range of sources
4. Must engage multiple perspectives and evaluate them to inform your conclusion
5. Reach a consistent conclusion
6. Must engage sources from Section 1 in this section, should represent different perspectives on your question,

Structure

**WRITING STRUCTURE**

* **Introduction**
  + Short background that includes historical context: what was the world like during the time period you are investigating?
  + Thesis that includes main ideas for both author’s arguments
* **One arguments from author** 
  + Use your facts as evidence to make an argument to answer your question
  + Should be broken into paragraphs, each with their own main idea and supporting evidence/facts from your research
* **Second argument from different author**
  + Use your facts as evidence to explain how somebody else might be able to argue a different perspective about your question
  + Should be broken into paragraphs, each with their own main idea and supporting evidence/facts from your research
* **Conclusion**
  + Reasonable answer to your question, based completely on the facts that you have used in the investigation
  + You explained what the historian authors thought happened, now tell us what YOU think actually happened!

**WRITING MECHANICS**

* **Formatting**
  + One consistent, proper way of citing all facts, both in-text and in the bibliography (Chicago Style)
  + One consistent way of laying things out - same font, same font size, same indentation and borders throughout, etc.  (Make it look good)
* **Bibliography**
  + Included at the end (Chicago Style) with all sources used in the investigation

Section 3 (Suggested words 400)

In this section, you need to reflect upon how your investigation gave you a real-world experience of what historians deal with in the creation of historical knowledge. You should identify one question and your response should make explicit links to your methodology.

Here are some possible questions you could explore:

1. What challenges in particular does archive-based history present?
2. How can the reliability of sources be evaluated?
3. What is the difference between bias and selection?
4. What constitutes a historical event?
5. Who decides which events are historically significant?
6. Is it possible to describe historical events in an unbiased way?
7. What is the role of the historian?
8. Should terms such as “atrocity” be used when writing about history, or should value judgments be avoided?
9. If it is difficult to establish proof in history, does that mean that all versions are equally acceptable?
10. How can we tell the history of the “unrecorded” (oppressed minorities, individuals, illiterate, etc...)