

# How to write Section 1 of your IB History IA

## Step 1

Clearly state the exact question you have chosen to investigate, e.g. “This study will investigate the question...” or “This investigation will explore the question...”

## Step 2

Next, give a clear explanation of the relevance of the source to the investigation. Why are these sources important in helping you answer your question?

- Do they give a detailed account?
- Do they provide an interesting/important perspective?

*Example*

*This investigation will explore the question “To what extent was Pieter Willem Botha an influence to the peaceful end of Apartheid?” The two key sources I will look at come from a history professor and from a speech from Botha himself, which will give me two important different perspectives for my investigation.*

## Step 3

- Identify/choose two important sources that you have used in Section 2.
- The sources can be either primary or secondary or one from each.

## Step 4

- Take one source at a time and complete Steps 5 and 6 for each
- Write about 200 words for each source evaluation.

## Step 5

- Analyse the value and limitations of the source in relation to the investigation, with reference to their origin – one paragraph

Origin – who produced the source and when?

Value of the Origin

*The origin of the source helps give it value because ...*

- What is the author's/producer's background?
- Is the author a specialist or historian?
- Someone important?
- When was it produced?
- Where was it produced?
- Someone there at the time?
- Are they benefiting from hindsight?

#### Example

Source 1: Eades, Lindsay Michie. *The End of Apartheid in South Africa*. Westport: Greenwood, 1999

*The origin of the source helps give it value because Eades is an expert in the field of history, lecturing at the University of Transkei in South Africa from 1989 to 1991 and being a history professor at Chowan College, East Carolina University and Greensboro College in North Carolina. As well as this, by being published in 1999, the author has been able to look at the subject more in depth and analyze the effects of such incident. Furthermore, the fact that Eades is not South African makes the analysis of the book more objective."*

Limitation of the origin

*However, the origin of this source also limits its value...*

- Are they bias?
- Are they from a particular country?
- Does their political/social/sconomic background have influence?
- Was their position influential?
- Are they writing without the benefit of hindsight?

#### Example

*However, the origin of this source also limits its value because, since it was not written during the apartheid era, some of the information might not be completely accurate. Likewise, the date of publication also limits its value because more information concerning the end of apartheid might have come to light since it was published.*

## Step 6

Analyse the value and limitations of the two sources in relation to the investigation, with reference to their purpose and content – one paragraph

Purpose – why was the source produced?

Content – what does the source say?

Value of the Purpose

*The purpose of the source is to ..... [Explain why it was produced in the first]. This is of value because...*

- It is very specific to the time period/country/theme/group of the investigation?
- The content provides a good overview/detailed account?
- Shows the feelings a particular group/country... at the time?

### Example

*The purpose of Eades' book is to go over the changes made to transform the government and the challenges that this new government faced concerning the end of apartheid as well as going through the divisions of the South African society. This is of value because a variety of primary documents, including F.W. deKlerk's policies as well as Freedom Charters from politicians with knowledge on the topic, are of great use when exploring the causes to the end of apartheid.*

### Limitation of the Purpose

*However, the purpose and content has limitations because ....*

Some examples:

- It is too broad/narrow an overview?
- It is too personal/written in private/for the public?
- It was produced to persuade the audience?
- It only shows one groups/countries/persons views?

### Example

*However, by focusing [the content] mainly on the changes made to transform the government, the author does not make much reference to Botha himself; instead he focuses more on F.W. deKlerk's policies. As well as this, her basis of her analysis is based on official documents, not taking into account the possibility that these political documents are biased since politicians looked for positive publicity.*

Don't forget to repeat Steps 5 and 6 for the second source.

The IA examples used are from an exemplar published by the IBO – to read the full IA please [click here](#).