Sources and the prescribed subject

IB DP History Paper 1: source skills and the move to global war

History: sources and the prescribed subject

- answer each of the four Paper 1 questions in the time its marks allow;
- analyse a source's **origin**, **purpose**, **value** and limitation;
- compare two sources point by point;

History: sources and the prescribed subject (2)

- combine sources with your own knowledge in an argued answer;
- know the key events of the prescribed subject *the move to global war*, 1931–1941.

The four questions

- The sources are a mix of **primary sources** (made at the time: speeches, letters, photographs, cartoons) and **secondary sources** (written later by historians).
- For Question 1, use only the source: your own knowledge earns nothing there.
- Spend the most time on Question 4, which has the most marks.

Origin, purpose, value, limitation

- **Origin** : who made it, when, where, and what type of source it is.
- **Purpose** : why it was made and for whom: to inform, to persuade, to justify, to entertain.
- **Value** : what it can reliably tell a historian, because of its **origin**, **purpose** or content.
- **Limitation** : what it cannot show, or where it may mislead.

Comparing and using sources

- For Question 3, **compare** means find similarities, and **contrast** means find differences.
- Link the two sources in every point:
- > Both Source A and Source C show that Britain wanted to avoid war in > 1938, but while Source A presents this as wise, Source C presents it > as weakness.
- Aim for at least two similarities and two differences.

The five prescribed subjects

- Each exam puts all four sources on one **case study**, so you must know both of your school's case studies.
- Check the conditions before using the result.

The move to global war

- After the First World War, the **League of Nations** (1920) was meant to keep the peace by **collective security** : if one state attacked another, all members would act together against it, first with **economic sanctions** and, if needed, with force.
- In the 1930s Japan, Italy and Germany expanded by force, and **collective security** failed.

The move to global war (2)

- The key question is why.
- Causes historians weigh: the Great Depression, which hit Japan's silk exports and made resources in Manchuria attractive; the growing power of the army over the civilian government; nationalism; and the weakness of the League, which had no army of its own and whose most powerful members did not act.

Sources for this lesson

- International Baccalaureate, *History guide* (first assessment 2017) and specimen Paper 1.
- D. Low, "Rendezvous", *Evening Standard* (20 September 1939).
- **League of Nations**, *Report of the Commission of Enquiry* (the Lytton Report, October 1932).
- R. Overy, *The Origins of the Second World War* (4th edition, 2017); R. Mitter, *China's War with Japan, 1937–1945* (2013).

Common errors

- Using your own knowledge in Question 1, which asks only what the source says.
- Describing a source's **origin** ("it is a cartoon from 1939") without saying how that makes it valuable or limited for the historian's **purpose**.
- Saying a **biased** source is useless; bias is evidence of the author's view and its audience.

Common errors (2)

- Comparing sources by describing one and then the other, instead of point by point.
- Answering Question 4 from own knowledge only, or from the sources only; it needs both and a judgement.
- Spending too long on early questions and rushing the 9-mark Question 4.

Key terms

- **Primary source**: a source made at the time of the events, such as a speech, letter, photograph or cartoon.
- **Secondary source**: a source written later by a historian.
- **OPVL**: **origin**, **purpose**, **value** and limitation: the four things to analyse in a source.

Key terms (2)

- **Collective security**: the idea that states act together, through the **League of Nations**, to stop an aggressor.
- **Appeasement**: giving in to some demands of an aggressive state to avoid war.
- **Anschluss**: Germany's takeover of Austria in March 1938.

Check yourself

- 1.
- How many marks and minutes does each Paper 1 question have? 2.
- What is the message of David Low's cartoon of 20 September 1939?
- Give two details that show it. 3.