

IBDP HISTORY 100 AI PROMPTS

for Smarter Revision *and* Exam Prep

*Active recall, exam technique, and
mark-scheme thinking – without cheating.*



by James R. Martin

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How to Use This Book

For a long time, high-quality tutoring has been a major contributor to elite academic achievement. Used well, AI can now act as a powerful tutor that most students and parents could not previously afford.

This book is a **starting point**, not a rulebook. Each prompt is designed to help you revise, test your understanding, and think more clearly — not to give perfect answers. You are encouraged to **adapt, improve, and remix** these prompts.

You are learning how to think carefully about the questions you ask — a skill that will matter far beyond these exams.

Note on Exam Boards and Syllabi

This guide is designed for students following the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP) History course, assessed through Paper 1 (source-based), Paper 2 (thematic essay), and Paper 3 (HL only, regional option). The prompts align with IB assessment criteria including knowledge and understanding, critical thinking, and the use of historical concepts.

Both Standard Level (SL) and Higher Level (HL) students will find these prompts valuable. SL students sit Papers 1 and 2 and complete an Internal Assessment (IA). HL students additionally sit Paper 3, which covers a regional option in greater depth. Prompts specific to HL content are clearly indicated throughout.

The IB uses specific command terms that students must understand and respond to precisely. Terms such as 'analyse', 'evaluate', 'discuss', 'examine', 'to what extent', and 'compare and contrast' each require a distinct approach and level of critical engagement. Many prompts incorporate these command terms to build familiarity.

IB History is global in scope, and the prescribed subjects, world history topics, and HL options draw on events and movements from every continent. These prompts reflect that global perspective, encouraging students to consider multiple viewpoints, historiographical debate, and the significance of context.

The Internal Assessment requires students to conduct an independent historical investigation using primary and secondary sources. Several prompts in this guide support the development of

research questions, source evaluation, and the reflective skills needed for a strong IA.

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Section 1

Causes, Practices and Effects of Wars

Wars are studied through their causes (long-term, short-term, and immediate), practices (strategies, technology, and mobilisation), and effects (political, economic, social, and territorial). This framework applies to conflicts across different regions and time periods.

IB students must be able to compare wars from different eras and locations, identifying patterns while recognising the unique circumstances of each conflict. Paper 2 essays in this topic require thematic analysis rather than narrative description.

These prompts move from foundational recall of key events and figures through to evaluative questions that mirror the demands of IB markband descriptors at the highest levels.

Prompt 1: Long-term causes of war

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Identify three long-term causes of one twentieth-century war you have studied, such as the First World War or the Spanish Civil War, and explain how each contributed to the outbreak of hostilities. Consider factors such as imperial rivalry, alliance systems, nationalism, and economic competition, and evaluate which long-term cause was most significant in creating the conditions for conflict.

What this helps you practise:

Distinguishing long-term causes from short-term triggers

How to use it well:

Select a specific war and draft your response before

checking. This distinction is essential for Paper 2 cause-based essays.

Prompt 2: Short-term causes and triggers

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Present the short-term causes and immediate trigger of a war you have studied, such as the assassination of Archduke Franz Ferdinand in 1914 or the German invasion of Poland in 1939. For each cause, explain why it accelerated the path to conflict and evaluate whether war could have been avoided at any point, referencing historians such as Fritz Fischer or A.J.P. Taylor where relevant.

What this helps you practise:

Categorising causes by timeframe and significance

How to use it well:

Practise with at least two different wars to build comparative range. IB examiners reward precise categorisation of causation.

Prompt 3: Economic factors in causation

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

To what extent were economic factors, such as competition for markets and resources, trade rivalries, and the desire for autarky, responsible for the outbreak of one war you have studied? Present your argument with specific evidence, considering how economic grievances intersected with political and ideological factors, and evaluate whether economic causation has been overemphasised or underestimated by historians such as Fritz Fischer or Niall Ferguson.

What this helps you practise:

Weighing economic causes against political and ideological factors

How to use it well:

Structure your answer with a clear thesis and

counterargument. This command term requires you to reach a supported judgement.

Prompt 4: Technology and warfare practices

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Analyse the impact of one significant technological development on the conduct of a war you have studied, such as the introduction of tanks and chemical weapons in the First World War or the atomic bomb in the Second World War. Examine how this technology changed military tactics, affected casualty rates and civilian populations, and evaluate whether it shortened or prolonged the conflict.

What this helps you practise:

Linking technological innovation to strategic and human consequences

How to use it well:

Choose technology specific to your case study. IB essays on practices must go beyond description to analyse impact.

Prompt 5: Role of leaders in war

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Compare the roles of political and military leaders in two wars you have studied, such as Churchill and Roosevelt in the Second World War versus Mao Zedong and Chiang Kai-shek in the Chinese Civil War. Evaluate which leadership decisions were most significant in determining the outcome of each conflict, considering strategic planning, alliance management, and domestic morale.

What this helps you practise:

Comparing leadership across different conflicts

How to use it well:

Use this for Paper 2 preparation where cross-war

comparison is expected. Focus on decisions, not biography.

Prompt 6: Home front and total war

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Examine how the concept of total war applied to one conflict you have studied, such as the Second World War or the First World War on the Western Front. Analyse the evidence supporting the claim that the conflict involved the complete mobilisation of national economies, civilian populations, and industrial capacity, considering the blurring of distinctions between combatants and non-combatants through strategic bombing, rationing, and conscription.

What this helps you practise:

Applying the concept of total war with supporting evidence

How to use it well:

Gather specific examples of economic mobilisation, propaganda, and civilian impact. IB markbands reward detailed, relevant evidence.

Prompt 7: Effects on borders and sovereignty

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Discuss the territorial and political effects of one war you have studied, such as the Treaty of Versailles after the First World War or the partition of Germany and Berlin after 1945. Examine how the post-war settlement reshaped borders, sovereignty, and political systems, and evaluate to what extent the settlement created conditions for future instability by referencing historians such as Margaret MacMillan.

What this helps you practise:

Evaluating post-war political and territorial consequences

How to use it well:

Link effects to specific treaty provisions or political changes. Paper 2 questions on effects require precise, well-supported analysis.

Prompt 8: Social effects of war

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Evaluate the social effects of a war you have studied on one specific group, such as women entering the industrial workforce during the Second World War or African American soldiers returning from service to face continued segregation. Analyse how the war experience challenged or reinforced existing social structures, and assess whether the changes proved permanent or were reversed in the post-war period.

What this helps you practise:

Assessing the permanence of wartime social change

How to use it well:

Choose a focused group rather than generalising.

The evaluative element asks you to judge significance, which lifts responses into higher markbands.

Prompt 9: Resistance and opposition to war

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Examine what forms of resistance or opposition to war emerged in a conflict you have studied, such as conscientious objection during the First World War, anti-war movements during the Vietnam War, or partisan resistance in occupied Europe. Assess how significant these movements were in influencing government policy, public opinion, and the eventual outcome of the conflict.

What this helps you practise:

Analysing the effectiveness of anti-war movements

How to use it well:

Consider conscientious objection, political

opposition, and popular protest. This angle can distinguish your essays from more conventional responses.

Prompt 10: Historiographical debate on war causes

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Present two competing historiographical interpretations of the causes of a war you have studied, such as the Fischer thesis attributing primary responsibility for the First World War to German expansionism versus the revisionist view emphasising shared European responsibility. Evaluate which interpretation you find more convincing, considering the evidence and methodology each historian employs, and reflecting on the TOK question of how a historian's perspective and cultural context shape their interpretation of the same events.

What this helps you practise:

Engaging with historiographical perspectives and forming a judgement

How to use it well:

Name specific historians where possible. IB markbands at the highest level reward awareness of different perspectives and historiography.

Prompt 11: Comparative war essay

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Compare and contrast the causes of two wars from different regions or time periods, such as the First World War in Europe and the Falklands War in the Americas. Identify common patterns in causation such as nationalism, territorial disputes, and failures of diplomacy. Analyse what factors unique to each conflict's historical context help explain why war broke out at that particular time and place.

What this helps you practise:

Structuring a thematic comparison across two case studies

How to use it well:

Use a thematic structure rather than treating each war separately. Paper 2 rewards integrated comparison, not sequential description.

Prompt 12: Peace settlements and their consequences

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Evaluate the effectiveness of the peace settlement that ended one war you have studied, such as the Treaty of Versailles in 1919 or the San Francisco Peace Treaty of 1951. To what extent did the settlement address the root causes of the conflict, establish a lasting framework for international stability, and balance the demands of victors and the defeated, considering the historiographical debate about whether punitive or reconciliatory approaches better prevent future wars?

What this helps you practise:

Assessing the relationship between peace settlements and long-term stability

How to use it well:

Consider territorial, economic, and political provisions. Linking peace settlements to subsequent events demonstrates the causal thinking IB examiners value.

Section 2

Authoritarian States

This topic examines how authoritarian leaders emerged, consolidated power, and maintained control, as well as the impact of their rule on society. IB students study examples from different regions to develop a comparative understanding of authoritarianism.

Key themes include the conditions that enabled the rise of authoritarian leaders, the methods used to establish and maintain single-party or dictatorial rule, and the extent to which these regimes achieved their aims. Paper 2 essays require thematic, comparative analysis.

The prompts progress from identifying key features of authoritarian regimes through to evaluating their long-term legacy, reflecting the Bloom's taxonomy progression expected in IB assessment.

Prompt 13: Conditions for the rise of authoritarianism

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Identify the political, economic, and social conditions that enabled the rise of one authoritarian leader you have studied, such as Hitler in Weimar Germany, Stalin in the Soviet Union, or Mao in China. Analyse how factors including economic crisis, political instability, ideological appeal, and the weakness of existing democratic institutions created opportunities for authoritarian movements to gain popular support and seize power.

What this helps you practise:

Categorising and prioritising conditions for authoritarian emergence

How to use it well:

Focus on conditions rather than narrative. IB examiners reward analysis of why conditions mattered, not just what happened.

Prompt 14: Methods of consolidating power

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Present a Paper 2-style task: ask me to identify three specific methods used by an authoritarian leader such as Hitler, Stalin, or Mao to consolidate power in the period immediately following their rise to authority, including the elimination of political rivals, control of state institutions, and the creation of a personality cult. For each method, probe whether I can explain its effectiveness and provide supporting evidence from primary and secondary sources.

What this helps you practise:

Identifying and explaining methods of power consolidation

How to use it well:

Be specific about legal changes, purges, propaganda, or institutional control. Paper 2 questions frequently ask about consolidation methods.

Prompt 15: Role of ideology

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Analyse the role of ideology in the rise and maintenance of one authoritarian state you have studied, distinguishing between the official ideological programme such as Marxism-Leninism or National Socialism and its practical application in policy. Evaluate whether ideology was a genuine driving force that shaped decision-making or primarily a propaganda tool used to justify the

consolidation of personal power and the suppression of opposition.

What this helps you practise:

Distinguishing between ideology as belief and ideology as instrument

How to use it well:

Consider whether the regime acted consistently with its stated ideology. This analytical distinction lifts responses above description.

Prompt 16: Propaganda and control of information

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Examine the propaganda techniques used by one authoritarian state such as Nazi Germany's use of film, radio, and mass rallies under Goebbels, or the Soviet Union's socialist realist art and controlled press. Analyse how effectively the regime controlled the flow of information and shaped public opinion, and evaluate whether propaganda was more important than coercion in maintaining popular consent for authoritarian rule.

What this helps you practise:

Evaluating the effectiveness of state propaganda

How to use it well:

Include specific examples of media control, censorship, and messaging. Effectiveness is the key evaluative criterion here.

Prompt 17: Use of force and coercion

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

To what extent did one authoritarian regime you have studied rely on force and coercion to maintain power? Consider the balance between repressive mechanisms such as secret police organisations like the Gestapo, NKVD, or Stasi, political purges, and imprisonment in labour camps, and consensual

means such as propoganda, social welfare programmes, and ideological indoctrination in youth organisations and schools.

What this helps you practise:

Weighing repression against other methods of maintaining control

How to use it well:

Avoid assuming all control was through terror. IB essays that consider consent, co-optation, and legitimacy score higher.

Prompt 18: Economic policies of authoritarian states

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Evaluate the economic policies of one authoritarian leader, such as Stalin's Five-Year Plans for rapid industrialisation and forced collectivisation of agriculture, or Hitler's rearmament programme and autarky policies. Analyse whether these policies achieved their stated aims of economic modernisation and self-sufficiency, and at what human cost in terms of famine, forced labour, living standards, and the suppression of economic freedom.

What this helps you practise:

Assessing authoritarian economic policy outcomes and their costs

How to use it well:

Use specific data where available. Evaluative questions require you to weigh achievements against failures and costs.

Prompt 19: Social policies and cultural control

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Analyse how one authoritarian state attempted to reshape society through social and cultural policies, such as the Nazi Gleichschaltung programme

coordinating all aspects of German social life, or Mao's Cultural Revolution attacking traditional Chinese values and intellectual culture. Assess the extent to which these policies succeeded in creating the regime's vision of a new social order, and evaluate whether imposed cultural change outlasted the regime itself.

What this helps you practise:

Analysing the reach and limits of social engineering under authoritarianism

How to use it well:

Consider education, youth movements, gender roles, and cultural production. Specificity of evidence is rewarded in IB marking.

Prompt 20: Opposition and dissent

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Discuss the nature and significance of opposition to one authoritarian regime, such as the White Rose movement in Nazi Germany, the Hungarian Uprising of 1956, or the Kronstadt Rebellion against Bolshevik rule. Analyse why organised opposition was often limited in its effectiveness due to surveillance, censorship, and the threat of imprisonment, and evaluate whether internal dissent or external pressure posed a greater threat to the regime.

What this helps you practise:

Explaining constraints on opposition within authoritarian systems

How to use it well:

Consider internal and external opposition, passive and active resistance. This topic frequently appears in Paper 2 questions.

Prompt 21: Comparing two authoritarian leaders

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Compare and contrast the methods used by two authoritarian leaders from different regions, such as Mao Zedong in China and Fidel Castro in Cuba, to consolidate and maintain power. Examine similarities and differences in their use of ideology, personality cults, mass mobilisation campaigns, economic restructuring, and repression of dissent.

Evaluate which leader's methods were more effective in ensuring long-term regime stability.

What this helps you practise:

Structuring a comparative analysis of authoritarian methods

How to use it well:

Use a thematic framework (propaganda, force, economic policy) to organise your comparison. Integrated comparison is essential for top marks.

Prompt 22: Legacy and historical judgement

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Evaluate the long-term legacy of one authoritarian state, such as the continuing debate over Stalin's role in Soviet modernisation or the contested memory of Mao's leadership in contemporary China. Analyse how historians differ in their assessment of this regime, considering whether its economic achievements can be weighed against its human rights record, and evaluate what factors influence how the regime is remembered in the country today.

What this helps you practise:

Engaging with historiographical debate on authoritarian legacy

How to use it well:

Reference at least two historical perspectives. Reaching a supported personal judgement demonstrates the critical thinking IB values.

Prompt 23: Impact on women and minorities

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Assess the impact of one authoritarian regime on the status of women or a minority group, such as the Nazi regime's policies towards women emphasising Kinder, Kuche, Kirche, or Mao's proclamation that women hold up half the sky alongside the Marriage Law of 1950. Analyse whether any changes in status during the regime period represented genuine social transformation or were primarily instrumental, serving the state's economic and ideological objectives.

What this helps you practise:

Evaluating social impact on specific groups under authoritarianism

How to use it well:

Avoid generalisation by focusing on one group with specific evidence. This approach demonstrates the detailed knowledge IB markbands reward.

Section 3

The Cold War: Superpower Tensions

The Cold War topic covers the rivalry between the United States and the Soviet Union from 1945 to 1991, including ideological competition, proxy wars, crises, and detente. IB students examine events from multiple perspectives, avoiding a single-narrative approach.

Key areas include the origins of the Cold War, the spread of the conflict to Asia and other regions, crises such as Berlin and Cuba, and the eventual end of superpower tensions. Paper 2 essays require thematic and analytical treatment of these events.

These prompts develop from foundational knowledge of key events through to sophisticated evaluation of historiographical debate, preparing students for the demands of IB assessment at the highest markband levels.

Prompt 24: Origins of the Cold War

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Outline the key factors that led to the emergence of Cold War tensions between the USA and USSR by 1947, including wartime disagreements at Yalta and Potsdam, ideological incompatibility between capitalism and communism, the power vacuum in post-war Europe, and specific events such as the Truman Doctrine and Marshall Plan. Evaluate which single factor you consider most significant in transforming the wartime alliance into post-war rivalry.

What this helps you practise:

Identifying and prioritising the origins of superpower rivalry

How to use it well:

Consider ideological, political, and strategic factors. Prioritising causes is a skill IB examiners look for in higher-scoring responses.

Prompt 25: Ideological rivalry

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Analyse the role of ideological conflict between American liberal capitalism and Soviet Marxism-Leninism in shaping Cold War tensions from 1945 to 1991. Evaluate whether the conflict was fundamentally about competing visions of political and economic organisation, or whether strategic and geopolitical interests such as spheres of influence, military bases, and access to resources were the primary driving forces behind superpower rivalry.

What this helps you practise:

Weighing ideological versus strategic explanations for the Cold War

How to use it well:

Develop a clear thesis. Paper 2 essays that establish and sustain an argument score higher than those that simply describe events.

Prompt 26: Key crises of the Cold War

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Select one Cold War crisis, such as the Berlin Blockade of 1948 to 1949, the Cuban Missile Crisis of 1962, or the Soviet invasion of Czechoslovakia in 1968, and examine its causes, key events, and consequences for superpower relations. Evaluate to what extent the crisis represented a genuine risk of nuclear confrontation, and analyse how its resolution shaped subsequent Cold War dynamics and diplomatic strategies.

What this helps you practise:

Applying a structured cause-event-consequence framework to a crisis

How to use it well:

Keep your focus analytical rather than narrative. IB questions on crises ask for significance, not a blow-by-blow account.

Prompt 27: Proxy wars and the spread of the Cold War

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

To what extent was the Korean War of 1950 to 1953 or the Vietnam War a proxy conflict between the superpowers, where the USA and USSR pursued their rivalry through local allies rather than direct confrontation? Analyse what role local and regional factors such as nationalism, decolonisation, and civil conflict played independently of superpower involvement, and evaluate whose interests were ultimately served by the outcome.

What this helps you practise:

Balancing superpower and local explanations for Cold War conflicts

How to use it well:

Acknowledge both global and regional dynamics. IB examiners reward nuance over one-sided arguments.

Prompt 28: Detente and its limits

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Discuss the reasons for the emergence of detente between the USA and USSR in the 1970s, including mutual exhaustion from the arms race, the Sino-Soviet split, and economic pressures. Evaluate how successful agreements such as SALT I and the Helsinki Accords were in reducing Cold War tensions, and analyse why detente collapsed by the

end of the decade with events such as the Soviet invasion of Afghanistan in 1979.

What this helps you practise:

Assessing the achievements and limitations of detente

How to use it well:

Consider SALT, Helsinki Accords, and trade alongside ongoing tensions. Balance is key to a strong evaluative response.

Prompt 29: The role of leaders in the Cold War

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Compare the impact of two Cold War leaders on the development of superpower tensions, such as Kennedy and Khrushchev during the early 1960s or Reagan and Gorbachev during the 1980s. Analyse whether individual leadership decisions, personalities, and ideological convictions were more important than structural factors such as economic strength, military capacity, and alliance systems in shaping the trajectory of the Cold War.

What this helps you practise:

Evaluating the significance of individual agency versus structural factors

How to use it well:

Choose leaders from different phases of the Cold War for richer comparison. This type of question tests your ability to weigh factors.

Prompt 30: Nuclear weapons and deterrence

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Examine the role of nuclear weapons in shaping Cold War relations, analysing how the doctrine of mutually assured destruction created a nuclear stalemate that paradoxically prevented direct superpower conflict. Evaluate whether the nuclear arms race, including developments from the

hydrogen bomb to intercontinental ballistic missiles and the Strategic Defence Initiative, made the world more or less safe, and assess the significance of arms control agreements such as the Nuclear Non-Proliferation Treaty.

What this helps you practise:

Analysing the paradox of nuclear deterrence and its consequences

How to use it well:

Consider concepts such as mutually assured destruction and brinkmanship. Engaging with the paradox shows critical thinking.

Prompt 31: The end of the Cold War

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Evaluate the relative importance of three factors in bringing the Cold War to an end by 1991, such as Gorbachev's reforms of glasnost and perestroika, the economic exhaustion of the Soviet Union from military spending, and Reagan's confrontational foreign policy and arms build-up. Analyse which factor was most decisive in ending the superpower rivalry, and consider whether the Cold War ended because of deliberate policy choices or structural forces beyond any leader's control.

What this helps you practise:

Weighing multiple explanations for the end of the Cold War

How to use it well:

Consider Gorbachev's reforms, economic pressures, and the role of the US. Interaction between factors is a hallmark of top-level analysis.

Prompt 32: Cold War impact on non-aligned states

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Assess the impact of the Cold War on one country or region outside the two superpower blocs, such as Korea, Vietnam, Cuba, or the Middle East. Examine how superpower rivalry influenced domestic politics, economic development, military conflicts, and social structures in this region. Evaluate whether external Cold War pressures were more significant than internal factors in shaping the region's historical trajectory during this period.

What this helps you practise:

Applying Cold War analysis to non-aligned or developing nations

How to use it well:

This perspective broadens your range of examples for Paper 2. IB values global awareness and multiple perspectives.

Prompt 33: Historiographical debate on Cold War responsibility

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Present the orthodox interpretation attributing Cold War responsibility primarily to Soviet expansionism, the revisionist view emphasising American economic imperialism and the Truman Doctrine, and the post-revisionist synthesis recognising shared responsibility. Evaluate which school of thought you find most convincing, and consider the TOK question of whether historiographical interpretation reveals more about the historian's own political context than about the historical events themselves.

What this helps you practise:

Engaging with and evaluating historiographical schools of thought

How to use it well:

Name historians where possible. Awareness of historiography is explicitly rewarded in the highest IB markbands.

Prompt 34: Cold War propaganda and culture

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Analyse how both superpowers used propaganda and cultural influence during the Cold War, such as American-funded Radio Free Europe and the cultural diplomacy of jazz tours, alongside Soviet promotion of socialist realism and the space programme as evidence of communist superiority. Assess which side was more effective in winning hearts and minds internationally, considering the role of the Non-Aligned Movement and decolonisation.

What this helps you practise:

Comparing superpower propaganda strategies and their global reach

How to use it well:

Consider film, sport, space race, and radio broadcasting. This topic adds cultural depth to conventional political analysis.

Section 4

Rights and Protest

This topic explores movements for civil rights and social change, examining how groups challenged discrimination and sought greater equality. IB students study case studies from different regions, typically including the US civil rights movement and apartheid in South Africa.

Key themes include the nature and extent of discrimination, the methods used by protest movements, the role of leaders and organisations, and the degree to which rights were achieved. Paper 2 essays require comparative analysis across case studies.

These prompts progress from identifying forms of discrimination through to evaluating the long-term legacy of protest movements, supporting the full range of Bloom's taxonomy skills required by IB assessment.

Prompt 35: Nature of discrimination

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Act as an IB examiner and ask me to outline the forms of discrimination faced by one group prior to the emergence of a protest movement, such as African Americans facing Jim Crow laws, segregation, and disenfranchisement. Probe my understanding of legal, social, and economic dimensions of discrimination, and consider the TOK question of how the reliability of historical sources about discrimination depends on whose perspectives are preserved in the record.

What this helps you practise:

Categorising forms of discrimination across legal, social, and economic domains

How to use it well:

Specificity matters. IB examiners reward detailed contextual knowledge over vague generalisations about inequality.

Prompt 36: Origins of protest movements

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Analyse the factors that explain the emergence of a rights movement at a particular historical moment in one case study you have studied, such as the American Civil Rights Movement gaining momentum in the 1950s following the Brown v Board of Education ruling and the Montgomery Bus Boycott. Evaluate why the movement emerged when it did, considering the impact of the Second World War, urbanisation, media coverage, and the Cold War context.

What this helps you practise:

Explaining the timing and conditions for the emergence of protest

How to use it well:

Consider social, economic, and political catalysts. Explaining timing demonstrates analytical depth beyond simple causation.

Prompt 37: Methods of non-violent protest

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Analyse the effectiveness of non-violent methods of protest in one movement you have studied, such as Martin Luther King Jr's strategy of peaceful marches, sit-ins, and civil disobedience during the American Civil Rights Movement. Evaluate which specific tactics were most successful in achieving legislative change, and assess whether non-violence

was effective because of its moral authority or because it attracted media sympathy and federal government intervention.

What this helps you practise:

Evaluating the effectiveness of specific non-violent protest tactics

How to use it well:

Link tactics to outcomes. IB essays on methods must assess effectiveness, not just describe what protesters did.

Prompt 38: Role of key leaders

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Examine the role of one key leader in a rights movement you have studied, such as Nelson Mandela in the South African anti-apartheid movement or Martin Luther King Jr in the American Civil Rights Movement. To what extent was progress dependent on this individual's vision, strategy, and personal courage, and to what extent would the movement have achieved similar results through collective action and structural forces regardless of individual leadership?

What this helps you practise:

Assessing individual leadership versus collective action in social movements

How to use it well:

Balance the leader's contribution against grassroots activism. IB values nuanced judgement over hero narratives.

Prompt 39: Government responses to protest

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Evaluate how a government responded to a rights movement you have studied, such as the Eisenhower and Kennedy administrations' responses to the Civil Rights Movement or the apartheid government's

reaction to the ANC in South Africa. Assess whether government actions, including legislation, judicial rulings, police responses, and political rhetoric, ultimately helped or hindered the progress of the movement toward its stated objectives.

What this helps you practise:

Analysing the dual impact of government responses on protest movements

How to use it well:

Consider legislation, repression, and negotiation. Government response is a common Paper 2 angle that tests evaluative thinking.

Prompt 40: The role of international pressure

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Assess the significance of international pressure in advancing the goals of one rights movement you have studied, such as international sanctions and sporting boycotts against apartheid South Africa or global media coverage of the Birmingham campaign in 1963. Evaluate whether domestic activism or external diplomatic and economic pressure was more important in compelling governments to enact meaningful reform and dismantle discriminatory structures.

What this helps you practise:

Weighing domestic and international factors in the progress of rights movements

How to use it well:

Consider sanctions, media coverage, and diplomatic pressure. This comparative angle strengthens evaluative essays.

Prompt 41: Violent versus non-violent approaches

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Compare the effectiveness of violent and non-violent approaches within one rights movement, such as the contrast between King's non-violent direct action and the Black Power movement's advocacy of self-defence in the American Civil Rights era. Analyse whether the use of violence helped or hindered the broader movement's objectives, considering how each approach affected public sympathy, government response, and legislative outcomes.

What this helps you practise:

Comparing and evaluating different strategic approaches to protest

How to use it well:

Avoid a simplistic 'violence bad, non-violence good' framing. IB rewards balanced analysis that considers context and outcomes.

Prompt 42: Women's roles in protest movements

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Discuss the role of women in one rights movement you have studied, such as Fannie Lou Hamer, Ella Baker, and Rosa Parks in the American Civil Rights Movement or Winnie Mandela and Albertina Sisulu in the anti-apartheid struggle. Analyse how their contributions have been recognised or overlooked in historical accounts, and evaluate whether gender-based historiographical neglect has distorted our understanding of how these movements operated.

What this helps you practise:

Analysing gendered contributions and historiographical representation

How to use it well:

This adds depth to conventional case study analysis. Considering whose stories are told demonstrates historiographical awareness.

Prompt 43: Legal and constitutional change

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Evaluate the significance of one piece of legislation or legal ruling in the progress of a rights movement, such as the Civil Rights Act of 1964, the Voting Rights Act of 1965, or the end of the pass laws in South Africa in 1986. Analyse whether legal change represented a genuine turning point in dismantling discriminatory structures or merely a symbolic concession, and assess how effectively the legislation was implemented and enforced in practice.

What this helps you practise:

Distinguishing between legal reform and substantive social change

How to use it well:

Examine implementation and impact, not just the law itself. This distinction is central to high-quality IB evaluative essays.

Prompt 44: Legacy and ongoing challenges

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

To what extent did one rights movement achieve its stated goals of equality and justice? Analyse specific achievements such as legal desegregation, voting rights, or the end of apartheid, alongside the challenges that remained after the movement's most active phase, including persistent economic inequality, institutional discrimination, and social attitudes. Evaluate whether the movement fundamentally transformed society or left significant unfinished work.

What this helps you practise:

Evaluating the long-term impact and unfinished business of rights movements

How to use it well:

Reach a balanced judgement that acknowledges both

achievements and limitations. This evaluative skill is essential for top IB marks.

Prompt 45: Comparative protest movements

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Compare and contrast the methods and achievements of two rights movements from different regions, such as the American Civil Rights Movement and the Indian independence movement led by Gandhi. Analyse what factors including colonial context, religious and cultural traditions, international alliances, and leadership philosophies explain the different strategies each movement adopted and the different degrees of success they achieved.

What this helps you practise:

Structuring a cross-regional comparison of protest movements

How to use it well:

Use thematic categories to organise your comparison. Paper 2 demands integrated comparison, not two separate mini-essays.

Section 5

The Move to Global War

This topic is studied for Paper 1 (source-based examination) and focuses on the causes of two 20th-century conflicts that became global in scope: Japanese expansion in East Asia and German/Italian expansion in Europe and Africa during the 1930s.

Students must develop skills in source analysis, including evaluating the origin, purpose, content, and value and limitations of primary and secondary sources. Paper 1 requires both source skills and contextual knowledge.

These prompts build from factual recall of key events through to critical source evaluation and synthesis, mirroring the progression of Paper 1 questions from comprehension through to comparative source analysis.

Prompt 46: Japanese expansion in the 1930s

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Outline the key steps in Japanese expansion in East Asia during the 1930s, including the invasion of Manchuria in 1931, withdrawal from the League of Nations in 1933, and the full-scale invasion of China from 1937. Analyse the strategic objectives such as securing raw materials and establishing the Greater East Asia Co-Prosperity Sphere, and the ideological motivations including pan-Asianism and militarist nationalism driving this expansionist foreign policy.

What this helps you practise:

Identifying the sequence and motivations of Japanese expansion

How to use it well:

Ensure you know the chronology and can link events

to broader strategic aims. Paper 1 source questions require solid contextual knowledge.

Prompt 47: German foreign policy 1933-1939

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Analyse the stages of German foreign policy from 1933 to 1939, including the reintroduction of conscription, the remilitarisation of the Rhineland in 1936, the Anschluss with Austria, the Sudetenland crisis and Munich Agreement of 1938, and the invasion of Czechoslovakia. Evaluate at what point, if any, war became inevitable, considering the debate between intentionalist historians like Hugh Trevor-Roper and structuralists.

What this helps you practise:

Sequencing and analysing the escalation of German aggression

How to use it well:

Consider the debate over intentionalist versus structuralist interpretations. Analytical precision strengthens source-based responses.

Prompt 48: Appeasement and its consequences

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Evaluate the policy of appeasement pursued by Britain under Neville Chamberlain and France under Edouard Daladier towards Nazi Germany in the 1930s, culminating in the Munich Agreement of September 1938. Analyse whether appeasement was a reasonable policy given the desire to avoid another catastrophic war, military unpreparedness, and public opinion, or a fatal miscalculation that emboldened Hitler and made a larger war inevitable, referencing historians such as A.J.P. Taylor and R.A.C. Parker.

What this helps you practise:

Assessing appeasement with contextual awareness rather than hindsight

How to use it well:

Avoid anachronistic judgement. IB source questions reward the ability to understand decisions within their contemporary context.

Prompt 49: The failure of collective security

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Examine why the League of Nations failed to prevent aggression in the 1930s, considering its structural weaknesses including the absence of the United States, the lack of an independent military force, and the unanimity requirement for decision-making.

Evaluate which specific failures, such as the Manchurian Crisis of 1931 and the Abyssinian Crisis of 1935 to 1936, were most significant in undermining the principle of collective security.

What this helps you practise:

Evaluating institutional failure in the context of international relations

How to use it well:

Consider Manchuria, Abyssinia, and the structural weaknesses of the League. Link failures to the broader move toward war.

Prompt 50: Italian expansion and Abyssinia

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Discuss the significance of the Italian invasion of Abyssinia in 1935 for international relations in the 1930s, analysing how this event exposed the weakness of the League of Nations collective security system, damaged Anglo-French relations over the Hoare-Laval Pact, and encouraged further acts of aggression by revisionist powers. Evaluate how this crisis contributed to the breakdown of the

post-Versailles international order and the movement toward a second global war.

What this helps you practise:

Connecting a specific event to broader patterns in international diplomacy

How to use it well:

Significance is the key concept. Explain why this event mattered beyond its immediate military outcome.

Prompt 51: Source analysis: origin and purpose

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Analyse a historical source related to the move to global war, such as a diplomatic telegram, newspaper editorial, or political speech from the 1930s. Identify its origin including the author, date, and publication context, and explain its purpose in terms of the message it was intended to convey and the audience it was designed to influence, evaluating how these factors shape the source's perspective on international tensions.

What this helps you practise:

Evaluating source origin and purpose in relation to historical value

How to use it well:

Practise with different source types (speeches, memoirs, cartoons, treaties). Paper 1 requires systematic source evaluation skills.

Prompt 52: Source analysis: value and limitations

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Given a source about 1930s international relations, such as a League of Nations report, a government memorandum, or a contemporary press account, assess its value for a historian studying the causes of the Second World War. Consider what the source

reveals about contemporary attitudes, decision-making processes, and political pressures, while evaluating its limitations including potential bias, restricted access to information, and the perspective of the author.

What this helps you practise:

Conducting balanced value and limitations analysis

How to use it well:

Always link value and limitations to the specific enquiry question. Generic source evaluation scores poorly in Paper 1.

Prompt 53: Comparing and contrasting sources

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Compare and contrast two sources on the same aspect of the move to global war, such as British and German perspectives on the Munich Agreement or Japanese and Chinese accounts of the Manchurian invasion. Analyse where the sources agree and differ on key facts, interpretations, and emphasis, and evaluate how you can explain these differences considering the authors' nationalities, political positions, access to information, and the intended purpose of each source.

What this helps you practise:

Synthesising multiple sources to identify agreement and divergence

How to use it well:

Cross-referencing sources is a high-level Paper 1 skill. Focus on explaining differences, not just listing them.

Prompt 54: The role of ideology in expansion

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

To what extent was ideological belief, such as militarism and the Bushido code in Japan, fascist expansionism in Italy, or Nazi racial ideology and

Lebensraum in Germany, a driving force behind territorial expansion in the 1930s? Evaluate whether these expansionist policies were primarily motivated by ideological conviction or by pragmatic considerations such as economic need, strategic vulnerability, and domestic political pressure.

What this helps you practise:

Weighing ideological versus pragmatic motivations for expansion

How to use it well:

Consider whether ideology drove policy or was used to justify decisions made for other reasons. This distinction shows analytical depth.

Prompt 55: Domestic factors and foreign policy

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Examine how domestic political and economic conditions in one state influenced its aggressive foreign policy in the 1930s, such as the Great Depression's impact on Japanese militarism or Germany's economic recovery programme fuelling rearmament. Analyse how internal factors including unemployment, political instability, and nationalist sentiment created pressure on governments to pursue expansionist policies as a means of diverting public attention.

What this helps you practise:

Linking domestic conditions to foreign policy decisions

How to use it well:

Consider economic crises, political instability, and public opinion. Paper 1 contexts reward understanding of the domestic-foreign policy connection.

Prompt 56: Synthesis essay on causes of global war

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Using your knowledge and source analysis skills, construct a sustained argument about the most significant factor in the move to global war in either Europe or Asia-Pacific. Synthesise evidence from primary and secondary sources with your own historical knowledge to evaluate competing explanations, such as the failure of collective security, the role of appeasement, economic conditions, and ideological expansionism, reaching a supported evaluative conclusion.

What this helps you practise:

Synthesising knowledge and source skills into a coherent argument

How to use it well:

This mirrors the final Paper 1 question, which requires you to use sources and your own knowledge. Practise integrating both elements.

Section 6

Source-Based Skills for Paper 1

Paper 1 is a source-based examination taken by both SL and HL students. It tests the ability to comprehend, analyse, compare, and evaluate historical sources in relation to a specific prescribed subject.

Students must develop a toolkit of source skills including identifying origin, purpose, and content; assessing value and limitations; comparing sources; and synthesising source material with their own knowledge to construct an argument.

These prompts develop source analysis skills progressively, from basic comprehension through to the synthesis and evaluation required for the highest marks in Paper 1.

Prompt 57: Comprehension of a source

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Read a historical source about the causes of a twentieth-century conflict and identify three key messages or claims it conveys about the political, economic, or ideological factors involved.

Demonstrate comprehension by explaining each message in your own words, distinguishing between the author's explicit statements and any implicit assumptions, and evaluate how accurately the source represents the historical situation based on your own contextual knowledge.

What this helps you practise:

Extracting key messages and distinguishing explicit from implicit meaning

How to use it well:

Start with clear, factual reading before moving to

analysis. Paper 1 Question 1 tests comprehension and is worth easy marks if done carefully.

Prompt 58: Identifying bias in sources

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Analyse a historical source about the origins of a twentieth-century conflict for evidence of bias by examining the author's language, selection of facts, omission of alternative perspectives, and framing of events. Identify specific words or phrases that suggest a particular viewpoint, and evaluate how this bias affects the source's value for a historian studying the causes of the conflict while recognising that bias itself can be historically informative.

What this helps you practise:

Detecting bias through language, framing, and selective emphasis

How to use it well:

Bias does not make a source useless. IB examiners reward students who explain how bias can itself be valuable evidence.

Prompt 59: Purpose and intended audience

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Determine the purpose and intended audience of a historical source, such as a propaganda poster, political speech, or diplomatic correspondence from the interwar period. Analyse how understanding the author's purpose, whether to persuade, inform, justify, or commemorate, helps you evaluate the reliability and utility of the source, and explain how the intended audience shapes the language, tone, and content of the document.

What this helps you practise:

Connecting authorial purpose to the reliability and utility of evidence

How to use it well:

Consider propaganda, justification, information, and persuasion as possible purposes. Linking purpose to value is a key Paper 1 skill.

Prompt 60: Contextualising a source

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Place a source within its historical context by identifying the events, trends, political conditions, and social attitudes that help explain why this source was produced at that particular time. Analyse how understanding the context, such as the political climate of appeasement in 1938 or the early Cold War tensions of 1947, changes your interpretation of the source's content and enhances your assessment of its significance.

What this helps you practise:

Using contextual knowledge to deepen source interpretation

How to use it well:

Your own knowledge adds depth to source analysis. Paper 1 rewards students who connect sources to wider historical developments.

Prompt 61: Corroboration across sources

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Given two sources on the same topic, such as the origins of the Cold War viewed from American and Soviet perspectives, assess the extent to which they corroborate each other. Identify where they agree on facts or interpretation, analyse how you would explain any significant differences considering the authors' nationalities, political positions, and access to evidence, and evaluate what these differences reveal about the topic.

What this helps you practise:

Cross-referencing sources to assess corroboration and divergence

How to use it well:

Explain why sources agree or disagree, linking to origin and purpose. Simple identification of agreement is not enough for high marks.

Prompt 62: Visual source analysis

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Analyse a visual source such as a political cartoon from the 1930s depicting appeasement, a wartime propaganda poster, or a photograph from a rights protest. Identify what message the visual source conveys through its imagery, symbolism, and composition, evaluate what techniques the creator uses to influence the viewer's response, and assess its value and limitations as evidence for a historian studying the period.

What this helps you practise:

Applying source analysis methods to visual and non-textual evidence

How to use it well:

Visual sources require the same analytical framework as text. Consider composition, symbolism, and intended impact alongside origin and purpose.

Prompt 63: Evaluating a historian's interpretation

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Assess a secondary source extract from a historian such as Eric Hobsbawm, Richard Overy, or John Lewis Gaddis. Identify what central argument the historian makes, evaluate what primary evidence supports their interpretation, and analyse what other historians have challenged about this view.

Consider how the historian's own ideological perspective and the era in which they wrote may have influenced their analysis.

What this helps you practise:

Critically evaluating secondary source arguments and their evidence base

How to use it well:

Treat secondary sources analytically, not as unquestionable authority. Paper 1 includes secondary sources and expects critical evaluation.

Prompt 64: Synthesising sources and own knowledge

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Using both source material and your own contextual knowledge, construct a response to an enquiry question about the move to global war or another Paper 1 topic. Demonstrate your ability to integrate evidence from primary sources with relevant factual knowledge about the historical context, showing how source evidence and own knowledge complement each other to build a more complete and nuanced analytical argument than either could provide alone.

What this helps you practise:

Integrating source evidence with own knowledge in a structured argument

How to use it well:

The final Paper 1 question requires synthesis. Practise weaving source references into your argument rather than treating them separately.

Prompt 65: Limitations of source types

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Discuss the limitations of one type of historical source, such as political memoirs written by leaders like Churchill or De Gaulle, government documents

subject to censorship, or contemporary newspapers reflecting editorial bias, for studying a specific topic.

Analyse how factors such as hindsight, self-justification, selective declassification, and intended audience affect the source's reliability, and evaluate strategies historians use to mitigate these limitations.

What this helps you practise:

Understanding the inherent limitations of different source categories

How to use it well:

Avoid generic criticism. Link limitations to the specific enquiry and explain how other sources might compensate.

Prompt 66: Command terms in source questions

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Test me on the difference between what IB Paper 1 expects when it asks me to compare and contrast two sources, requiring identification of similarities and differences in content, origin, and perspective, versus when it asks me to evaluate, requiring a judgement about a source's value and limitations for a historian. Challenge me to explain how the expected response structure, use of evidence, and analytical focus differ between these two command terms in practice.

What this helps you practise:

Distinguishing IB command term requirements in source-based responses

How to use it well:

Misreading command terms is a common source of lost marks. Practise identifying what each term demands before writing.

Prompt 67: Reliability versus utility

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Quiz me on the distinction between a source's reliability, meaning the extent to which its content can be trusted as an accurate account, and its utility for a historian studying a particular topic. Challenge me to justify whether an unreliable source such as a biased propaganda leaflet might still be highly useful for understanding the methods and aims of a particular regime, and to explain how purpose, audience, and context inform both assessments.

What this helps you practise:

Distinguishing reliability from utility in source evaluation

How to use it well:

This conceptual distinction underpins high-quality source analysis. IB examiners reward students who move beyond simple reliable/unreliable judgements.

Section 7

Essay Writing for Paper 2

Paper 2 is a thematic essay examination where students choose two questions from their studied topics. Success depends on analytical structure, relevant evidence, and sustained argument rather than narrative description.

IB markbands reward responses that demonstrate detailed knowledge, critical analysis, awareness of different perspectives, and a clear, coherent structure. Understanding what distinguishes each markband is essential for achieving top marks.

These prompts focus on the craft of essay writing for IB History, developing skills from paragraph construction through to sustained evaluative argumentation.

Prompt 68: Constructing a thesis statement

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Write a thesis statement in response to this Paper 2-style question: To what extent was ideology the most important factor in the rise of one authoritarian leader? Your thesis should take a clear evaluative position that goes beyond simply agreeing or disagreeing, acknowledge the complexity of the question by recognising multiple contributing factors such as economic conditions and political circumstances, and establish an analytical framework that guides the reader through your subsequent argument.

What this helps you practise:

Crafting a focused, arguable thesis that directly addresses an IB essay question

How to use it well:

Your thesis sets the direction of your essay. Spend time refining it before writing. A weak thesis leads to a weak essay.

Prompt 69: Planning an essay structure

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Create a detailed paragraph plan for a Paper 2 essay on this question: Compare and contrast the methods used by two authoritarian leaders to consolidate power. For each planned paragraph, specify the analytical point, the supporting evidence from specific regimes such as Hitler and Stalin, and how the paragraph contributes to your overall comparative argument. Include both thematic and case-study elements in your structure, and explain how you will maintain an evaluative thread throughout.

What this helps you practise:

Planning a structured, thematic essay response under timed conditions

How to use it well:

Spend five minutes planning before writing in the exam. A clear plan prevents narrative drift and ensures you address the question throughout.

Prompt 70: Writing analytical paragraphs

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Write one analytical paragraph for a Paper 2 essay on the causes of a twentieth-century war. Begin with a topic sentence that makes a clear causal claim, support it with specific and accurate evidence including dates, events, and named individuals, and conclude with explicit analysis explaining how this evidence supports your broader argument.

Demonstrate the difference between descriptive narrative and genuine historical analysis throughout.

What this helps you practise:

Constructing claim-evidence-explanation paragraphs

How to use it well:

Each paragraph should advance your argument.
Avoid paragraphs that describe without analysing.
This structure is the building block of strong IB essays.

Prompt 71: Using evidence effectively

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Present three pieces of evidence you would use to answer a Paper 2 question on the effects of one war, such as the social, economic, and political consequences of the Second World War in Europe. For each piece of evidence, explain what it specifically demonstrates, how it supports your analytical argument, and why it is more effective than a general statement, illustrating the difference between precise evidence and vague generalisation.

What this helps you practise:

Selecting and deploying relevant evidence in support of an argument

How to use it well:

Evidence must be linked to your argument, not dropped in as standalone facts. IB markbands penalise responses that list facts without analysis.

Prompt 72: Addressing counterarguments

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Take a position on a Paper 2 question such as 'To what extent was propaganda the most important tool used by authoritarian leaders to maintain power?' and then present the strongest counterargument emphasising the role of coercion and economic success. Demonstrate how you would acknowledge this counterargument in your essay while

maintaining your overall evaluative position with supporting evidence from specific regimes.

What this helps you practise:

Integrating counterarguments to strengthen evaluative essays

How to use it well:

Engaging with counterarguments shows critical thinking and moves your essay into the top markbands. Do not simply dismiss alternative views.

Prompt 73: Comparative essay structure

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Outline two possible structures for a comparative Paper 2 essay: one thematic approach that examines each method or cause across both case studies within each paragraph, and one sequential approach that deals with each case study in turn before drawing comparisons. Evaluate the advantages and disadvantages of each structure for maintaining analytical comparison throughout the essay, and recommend which approach works best for different types of comparative questions.

What this helps you practise:

Choosing between sequential and thematic structures for comparative essays

How to use it well:

Thematic structure almost always scores higher in IB. Practise integrating your case studies within each paragraph rather than separating them.

Prompt 74: Writing effective conclusions

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Write a conclusion for a Paper 2 essay on the causes of the Cold War that goes beyond simply restating your introduction. Your conclusion should synthesise your argument by weighing the relative significance of the factors you have discussed, reference the

historiographical debate between orthodox, revisionist, and post-revisionist interpretations, and reach a clear, supported evaluative judgement that demonstrates the analytical depth expected in the highest markband.

What this helps you practise:

Synthesising arguments and reaching a supported judgement in conclusions

How to use it well:

A strong conclusion adds value by showing the overall significance of your argument. It should feel like the natural destination of your essay.

Prompt 75: Time management in Paper 2

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Design a time allocation strategy for Paper 2, where you have forty-five minutes per essay. Allocate specific minutes to planning including thesis formulation and paragraph outlining, writing the introduction with thesis statement, composing three to four analytical body paragraphs with evidence, and writing a synthesising conclusion. Explain how you will ensure you address the command term requirements and maintain analytical quality under examination time pressure.

What this helps you practise:

Developing a realistic time management strategy for timed essay examinations

How to use it well:

Practise writing full essays under timed conditions. Many students lose marks not from lack of knowledge but from poor time management.

Prompt 76: Markband self-assessment

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Using the IB History Paper 2 markband descriptors, assess a practice essay you have written on the

methods of one authoritarian leader. Identify which specific markband level your response achieves by evaluating the accuracy and relevance of your knowledge, the quality of your analysis versus description, and the depth of your evaluation. Explain what targeted improvements would raise it to the next markband level.

What this helps you practise:

Applying IB markband criteria to self-assess and improve essay quality

How to use it well:

Familiarise yourself with markband descriptors. Understanding what examiners look for is as important as knowing historical content.

Prompt 77: Integrating historiography into essays

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Demonstrate how you would integrate a historiographical perspective into a Paper 2 essay paragraph, such as incorporating Ian Kershaw's concept of working towards the Fuhrer or John Lewis Gaddis's post-revisionist analysis of Cold War origins. Explain how referencing competing historical interpretations from named scholars elevates your analysis beyond narrative description and demonstrates critical thinking in the highest markband.

What this helps you practise:

Weaving historiographical references naturally into essay arguments

How to use it well:

Historiography should support your argument, not replace it. Use historians' views as evidence alongside factual detail for top-markband responses.

Prompt 78: Responding to IB command terms

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Take the IB command terms evaluate, discuss, and to what extent and explain what each term requires in a Paper 2 history essay. For each command term, write an opening sentence for a sample question that demonstrates how you would signal to the examiner that you understand the analytical approach required, distinguishing between the balanced consideration required by discuss and the judgement-based approach demanded by evaluate.

What this helps you practise:

Distinguishing the demands of different IB command terms in essay responses

How to use it well:

Misreading the command term is one of the most common reasons students underperform. Practise identifying and responding to each term precisely.

Section 8

HL Regional Option: History of Europe or the Americas

Higher Level students sit Paper 3, which covers a regional option studied in greater depth. Options include the History of Europe, the History of the Americas, and the History of Asia and Oceania, among others. These prompts use European and American examples but the skills are transferable.

Paper 3 requires three essays in two and a half hours, demanding efficient planning, deep knowledge, and sustained analytical writing. The additional depth expected at HL means students must demonstrate more nuanced understanding and broader contextual awareness.

These prompts develop the extended analytical skills required for Paper 3, including engagement with complex historiographical debates, detailed regional knowledge, and the ability to sustain arguments across longer essays.

Prompt 79: Political developments in a region **Copy this prompt into your AI tool:**

Analyse the key political developments in one country in your regional option during a specified period, such as the Weimar Republic in Germany from 1919 to 1933 or political instability in Argentina from 1930 to 1976. Identify the most significant turning points, evaluate what factors drove political change including economic crises, ideological conflicts, military intervention, and social movements, and assess the consequences for governance and civil liberties.

What this helps you practise:

Identifying and analysing political turning points within a regional context

How to use it well:

Paper 3 expects greater depth than Paper 2. Develop detailed case study knowledge and be prepared to write three substantive essays.

Prompt 80: Social and economic change

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Examine the relationship between economic change and social transformation in one country within your regional option, such as the impact of industrialisation on class structure in nineteenth-century Britain or the effects of import substitution policies on urban migration in twentieth-century Latin America. Analyse whether economic modernisation led to greater social mobility and equality or deepened existing social divisions and created new forms of inequality.

What this helps you practise:

Linking economic and social change within a regional case study

How to use it well:

Use specific data and examples. Paper 3 rewards the detailed, in-depth knowledge that distinguishes HL from SL responses.

Prompt 81: Revolution and its consequences

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Evaluate the causes and consequences of one revolution in your regional option, such as the French Revolution of 1789, the Russian Revolution of 1917, or the Cuban Revolution of 1959. Analyse the political, economic, and social grievances that fuelled revolutionary sentiment, and assess to what extent the revolution achieved its stated aims of

liberty, equality, or social justice in the decades following the initial seizure of power.

What this helps you practise:

Assessing revolutionary causes and outcomes against stated aims

How to use it well:

Consider short-term and long-term consequences. The evaluative element requires you to reach a judgement supported by evidence.

Prompt 82: The impact of war on a region

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Discuss the political, economic, and social impact of one major war on a country or region in your HL option, such as the impact of the First World War on the collapse of European empires or the effects of the Second World War on economic recovery and political realignment in Western Europe. Evaluate which dimension of impact, whether political restructuring, economic disruption, or social transformation, proved most significant in the long term.

What this helps you practise:

Analysing multi-dimensional impacts of war on a specific region

How to use it well:

Organise your response thematically rather than chronologically. Paper 3 questions demand analytical depth over narrative coverage.

Prompt 83: Independence and nation-building

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Analyse the challenges faced by one country in your regional option during a period of independence or nation-building, such as post-colonial state formation in Africa, Latin American nation-building in the nineteenth century, or German unification under

Bismarck. Evaluate how issues including ethnic diversity, economic underdevelopment, external interference, and competing political visions complicated the process of constructing a stable and legitimate national government.

What this helps you practise:

Evaluating the obstacles to post-independence state formation

How to use it well:

Consider political, economic, social, and external challenges. Prioritising and explaining significance demonstrates high-level analytical thinking.

Prompt 84: Regional integration or conflict

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

To what extent did one regional development, such as European integration from the Treaty of Rome to the Maastricht Treaty, or inter-American relations through the Organization of American States, achieve its stated aims of economic cooperation and political stability? Evaluate the successes and failures of this process, considering the perspectives of both major and minor member states and the challenges of maintaining unity.

What this helps you practise:

Evaluating the success of regional cooperation or the causes of regional conflict

How to use it well:

Define the aims clearly before assessing success. Paper 3 essays require you to establish criteria for evaluation.

Prompt 85: Cultural and intellectual movements

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Examine the significance of one cultural or intellectual movement within your regional option,

such as the Enlightenment in eighteenth-century Europe, the Harlem Renaissance in 1920s America, or the Negritude movement in the francophone world. Analyse how this movement influenced political thought, social attitudes, and artistic expression, and evaluate its lasting impact on the region's cultural and political identity.

What this helps you practise:

Connecting cultural developments to political and social change

How to use it well:

Cultural history can enrich your Paper 3 essays. This topic allows you to demonstrate breadth beyond conventional political history.

Prompt 86: The role of external powers

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Assess the influence of external powers on political developments in one country in your regional option, such as United States intervention in Latin American politics during the Cold War or Soviet influence on Eastern European states. Evaluate whether external interference was the primary driver of political outcomes or whether domestic factors including local political movements, economic conditions, and cultural dynamics were more significant in shaping the country's trajectory.

What this helps you practise:

Evaluating the impact of external intervention on regional politics

How to use it well:

Consider both direct intervention and indirect influence. Balance is essential for a strong evaluative response.

Prompt 87: Demographic and migration patterns

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Analyse the causes and consequences of migration within or into one country in your regional option, such as the Great Migration of African Americans from the rural South to northern cities in the United States, or mass immigration to Argentina in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries. Evaluate how migration shaped the country's demographic composition, labour markets, urban development, cultural identity, and political tensions.

What this helps you practise:

Examining the multi-dimensional impact of migration on a regional society

How to use it well:

Migration connects economic, social, and political themes. This topic can provide fresh angles for Paper 3 essays.

Prompt 88: Historiographical debate on a regional topic

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Present at least two contrasting historiographical interpretations of a key event or period in your regional option, such as the debate between those who view the French Revolution as a bourgeois revolution and those who emphasise popular agency, or competing assessments of Reconstruction in the United States. Evaluate which interpretation is more convincing by analysing the evidence and methodology each historian employs.

What this helps you practise:

Engaging with regional historiographical debates at HL depth

How to use it well:

Paper 3 implicitly rewards historiographical awareness. Being able to discuss competing interpretations signals the depth expected at HL.

Prompt 89: Paper 3 timed essay practice

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Choose a past Paper 3 question or a question in the style of Paper 3 on your regional option and plan and write a full essay response in fifty minutes under timed conditions. Demonstrate detailed regional knowledge, analytical depth, and historiographical awareness appropriate for HL level. I will assess your response against the Paper 3 markband criteria evaluating knowledge, understanding, analysis, evaluation, and the quality of your argument.

What this helps you practise:

Writing a complete HL essay under timed examination conditions

How to use it well:

Regular timed practice is essential for Paper 3. You must write three essays in 150 minutes, so efficient planning and writing are critical skills.

Section 9

Internal Assessment and Historical Investigation

The Internal Assessment (IA) is a historical investigation completed independently by both SL and HL students. It requires students to formulate a research question, conduct research using primary and secondary sources, and present a structured analysis within a word limit of 2200 words.

The IA is assessed against specific criteria: identification and evaluation of sources, investigation, reflection, and use of a range of evidence. It accounts for 25% of the SL grade and 20% of the HL grade, making it a significant component of the overall assessment.

These prompts support each stage of the IA process, from selecting a topic and formulating a research question through to evaluating sources, structuring the investigation, and completing the required reflection.

Prompt 90: Choosing an IA topic

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Suggest five potential IA topics based on areas of history that genuinely interest you, ensuring each focuses on a specific historical question rather than a broad survey. For each topic, explain why it would be suitable for a two-thousand-word investigation, considering the availability of both primary and secondary sources, the scope for critical analysis of competing interpretations, and the potential for a focused evaluative argument.

What this helps you practise:

Generating viable IA topics based on personal interest and source availability

How to use it well:

Choose a topic you find genuinely engaging. The best IAs come from authentic curiosity. Ensure sources are accessible before committing.

Prompt 91: Formulating a research question

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Take one of your potential IA topics and refine it into a focused, analytical research question that goes beyond description to require evaluation or judgement, such as 'To what extent was the Treaty of Versailles responsible for Hitler's rise to power?' I will assess whether the question is appropriately narrow in scope, genuinely debatable, and capable of sustaining a critical investigation using available primary and secondary source material.

What this helps you practise:

Narrowing a broad topic into a focused, investigable research question

How to use it well:

A strong research question is specific, debatable, and researchable. Spend time refining it before beginning your investigation.

Prompt 92: Identifying relevant sources

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

For your chosen IA topic, identify three primary sources such as speeches, treaties, photographs, or government documents, and three secondary sources from historians offering different interpretations. Explain what each source contributes to your investigation, how primary sources provide direct evidence of the period, and

how secondary sources offer analytical frameworks and historiographical context for your argument.

What this helps you practise:

Selecting a balanced range of primary and secondary sources for investigation

How to use it well:

Variety of source types strengthens your IA. Include both primary evidence and scholarly interpretation to demonstrate research breadth.

Prompt 93: Evaluating two key sources (Section 1)

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Select two sources that are central to your IA and evaluate their value and limitations with reference to their origin, purpose, content, and historical context, following the OPCVL framework. For each source, explain specifically what it reveals about your research question, identify potential biases or gaps in the evidence it provides, and assess how its limitations might affect the conclusions you can draw from it.

What this helps you practise:

Conducting detailed source evaluation for the IA Section 1 requirement

How to use it well:

Section 1 of the IA requires detailed evaluation of two sources. Practise the OPCVL framework but ensure your evaluation is specific to your question.

Prompt 94: Structuring the investigation (Section 2)

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Outline the structure of your IA investigation section, organising your argument into clear analytical paragraphs that each address a distinct aspect of your research question. Explain what

primary and secondary evidence will support each paragraph's central claim, how you will integrate source material with your own analysis, and how you will maintain a clear evaluative thread linking your evidence back to the overarching research question.

What this helps you practise:

Planning a logical, evidence-based structure for the IA investigation

How to use it well:

The investigation should present a sustained argument, not a narrative summary. Plan your paragraphs around analytical points, not chronology.

Prompt 95: Building an argument with evidence

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Write one paragraph of your IA investigation that makes a clear analytical point supported by evidence from your primary and secondary sources.

Demonstrate how you integrate direct quotation and paraphrase from sources with your own critical analysis, maintaining a clear distinction between presenting evidence and interpreting it. Ensure the paragraph advances your overall argument rather than merely describing what the sources say.

What this helps you practise:

Integrating source evidence into an analytical paragraph

How to use it well:

Every paragraph should advance your argument. Avoid lengthy quotations; paraphrase and analyse instead. Quality of analysis matters more than quantity of sources.

Prompt 96: Addressing counterarguments in the IA

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Identify one significant counterargument or alternative interpretation relevant to your IA research question, such as a revisionist historian's challenge to the orthodox view of your topic. Explain how you would address this counterargument in your investigation by evaluating its evidence and methodology, and demonstrate that engaging with opposing perspectives strengthens rather than weakens your overall analytical argument.

What this helps you practise:

Acknowledging and engaging with alternative perspectives in independent research

How to use it well:

Engaging with counterarguments demonstrates critical thinking. The best IAs consider multiple perspectives rather than presenting a one-sided case.

Prompt 97: Writing the reflection (Section 3)

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Draft the reflection section of your IA, discussing what you learned about the methods and challenges historians face when investigating the past, such as evaluating conflicting sources, managing bias, and constructing narratives from incomplete evidence. Reflect on the TOK question of whether history as a way of knowing can ever achieve objectivity, or whether all historical knowledge is inevitably shaped by the historian's perspective, cultural context, and the available sources.

What this helps you practise:

Reflecting on the process and challenges of historical investigation

How to use it well:

The reflection must focus on methodology and the nature of historical knowledge, not on personal

feelings or content summaries. This is a common area for lost marks.

Prompt 98: Word count management

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Review a draft section of your IA and identify specific areas where you could reduce word count without losing analytical quality, such as eliminating unnecessary background narrative, tightening quotations to include only the most relevant phrases, removing repetitive analysis, and combining paragraphs that address similar points. Explain how strategic editing ensures every word contributes to your critical argument within the two-thousand-word limit.

What this helps you practise:

Editing for concision and analytical density within word limits

How to use it well:

The word limit forces discipline. Cut descriptive passages and strengthen analytical ones. Every sentence should serve your argument.

Prompt 99: Referencing and academic integrity

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Demonstrate your understanding of the referencing conventions required for the IB History IA, including consistent use of footnotes or in-text citations, a correctly formatted bibliography distinguishing between primary and secondary sources, proper citation of different source types including books, journal articles, archival documents, and digital resources, and the IB's expectations regarding academic integrity and the acknowledgement of all sources consulted.

What this helps you practise:

Understanding and applying IB referencing requirements and academic integrity standards

How to use it well:

Consistent referencing is essential. Use a recognised system (footnotes or author-date) and apply it throughout. Academic integrity is taken very seriously by the IB.

Prompt 100: IA self-assessment against criteria

Copy this prompt into your AI tool:

Using the IB History IA assessment criteria covering evaluation of sources, investigation, reflection, and use of a range of source material, evaluate a draft of your investigation. Score yourself in each criterion against the markband descriptors, providing specific examples from your draft that justify each score, and identify the most impactful revision you could make to improve your overall mark.

What this helps you practise:

Self-assessing against IB IA criteria to identify areas for improvement

How to use it well:

Read the criteria carefully and mark your own work honestly. The most common weaknesses are in Section 1 evaluation and Section 3 reflection. Focus your revision there.

Final Closing Note

You have now worked through 100 prompts designed to help you think more clearly, revise more effectively, and prepare more confidently for your GCSE.

Remember: the goal was never to rely on AI for answers. The goal was to use it as a tool to test, challenge, and strengthen your own understanding.

The strongest students are not those who avoid difficulty, but those who engage with it deliberately. Each mistake you identified, each explanation you improved, and each gap you filled has strengthened your thinking.

As you continue your studies, aim to depend less on prompts and more on your own judgement. AI can support you — but your reasoning, clarity, and persistence are what earn marks.

Approach your exams calmly. Think carefully. Write clearly.

You are more prepared than you think.

Using AI Beyond This Book

The prompts in this book are starting points, not final forms.

As you grow more confident, begin modifying them:

- Add constraints (for example, “limit to three key points”).
- Increase difficulty gradually.
- Ask the AI to challenge your reasoning.
- Request alternative explanations.
- Ask it to critique your thinking rather than provide answers.

The most powerful use of AI is not asking it to tell you things — it is asking it to test and refine your thinking.

In the future, those who understand how to use tools intelligently will have an advantage. Treat AI as a tutor, not a shortcut. The skill of asking better questions will continue to matter long after your exams are over.

About the Author

James R. Martin holds an MSci in Physics from the University of Bristol and a PGCE with a Physics focus from the University of Oxford. He has over a decade of experience teaching and tutoring students aged 11–18 across a range of subjects, including Physics, Biology, Chemistry, Mathematics, Economics, and Electronics.

He has worked with multiple syllabi, including GCSE, A-Level, KS3, and the International Baccalaureate Diploma Programme (IBDP), supporting students of varying abilities to develop clarity, confidence, and exam success.

His work focuses on effective revision strategies, independent thinking, and the responsible use of artificial intelligence as a tool to strengthen — not replace — understanding.

Other Titles in This Series

The *100 AI Prompts for Smarter Revision* series supports students across GCSE, A-Level, and IB DP subjects.

GCSE

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- Mathematics
- Physics
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- History
- Computer Science
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- Religious Studies
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- French
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A-Level

- Mathematics
- Further Mathematics
- Physics
- Chemistry
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- English Literature
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- Politics
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