**Higher History**

Exam skills



*How to answer Essay questions*

**How to answer essay questions**

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This guide will explain to you how to write an essay for the Higher History exam.

The Contents list below takes you through all the possible questions you may need answers to.

**Remember:** ask your teacher if you need extra helpwith this.



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**The Exam**

* Final exam will take **2 hours 20 minutes**
* Exam is in two parts:

o Essay questions x 2

* 1. Sources questions x 3
* **All sections** must be completed within the 2 hours 20 minutes
* Exam is out of **60 marks** (**20 marks** per essay and for all source questions)
* Final mark is out of **90 marks** (including Assignment)

**Suggested timing**

You have to complete all questions within the allotted time. It is up to you how to do this but you **may wish to use the timings** below:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Essay question 1 | 40 minutes |
|  | Essay question 2 | 40 minutes |
|  | Sources questions | 60 minutes |

For **each** **essay** you should use the following time suggestions:

|  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- |
|  | Write a plan | 2 minutes |
|  | Write an introduction | 4 minutes |
|  | Write the main section | 30 minutes |
|  | Write a conclusion | 4 minutes |

**Marking information**

Each essay is worth **20 marks**. The marks are given as follows:

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Criteria** | **Marks** |  | **Summary** |
|  |  |  |
| Introduction | 2 |  Describe context to the question; |
|  |  |  Introduce question/line of argument; |
|  |  |  Outline factors you will discuss. |
|  |  |  | 2/3 points above = **1 mark**. 3/3 points = **2 marks** |
|  |  |  |
| Knowledge | 6 | Aim to discuss up to six key issues/factors. **1 mark** for |
|  |  | each relevant factor/piece of evidence. |
|  |  | Evidence must be factually correct, detailed and |
|  |  | relevant to the question being answered. |
|  |  |  |
| Analysis | 6 | **3 marks** for analysis, **3 marks** for analysis +. If an essay does not have any analysis + max it can achieve is 13. |
|  |  |  Analysis points can cover: |
|  |  | - Discuss the links between all factors; |
|  |  | - | Contradictions within/between factors; |
|  |  | - | Historiography |
|  |  |  |
| Evaluation | 4 | **1 mark** for simple. **2 marks** for complex.Evaluation points can cover: |
|  |  | -The extent to which a factor is important.-The relative importance of factors-Counter arguments/alternative views-Overall significance of factors |
|  |  |  |  |
| Conclusion | 2 |  | Analyse/summarise all factors; |
|  |  |  Reach an overall conclusion; |
|  |  |  Give evidence for your conclusion |
|  |  |  | 2/3 points above = **1 mark**. 3/3 points = **2 marks** |
|  |  |  |  |
|  | 20 |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |

**Types of questions**

Essays ask you to consider a historical question that has a range of potential answers.

They can start in different ways, but the examples below give an idea of the possible questions you could face.

 **To what extent…?**

*To what extent did the fascist powers use diplomacy to achieve their aims?*

 **How fully…?**

*How fully did the 1906 1914 Liberal Social Reforms meet the needs of people in Britain? -*

 **How important was…?**

*How important was the role of pressure groups in Britain becoming more democratic between 1851 and 1928?*

 **How accurate is it…?**

*How accurate is it to describe Britain as a fully democratic country by 1918?*

 **“QUOTE.” How valid this view?**

*“WW1 is the reason that women have the vote.” How valid is this view?*

Whatever the question you are asked, the purpose is to discuss a range of different issues and factors before giving an overall answer.

|  |  |
| --- | --- |
|  | **Past Paper questions** |
|  | **Britain 1851-1951****2016**To what extent were changing political attitudes the most important reason why Britain became more democratic between 1851-1928?The part played by women in the war effort was the main reason why some women received the vote in 1918. How valid is this view?To what extent did the social reforms of the Liberal government, 1906-1914, meet the needs of the British people?**2015**Britain was a fully democratic country by 1918. How valid is this view?The Liberal reforms of 1906-1914 failed to improve the lives of the British people. How valid is this view?To what extent did the reforms of the Labour government of 1945-1951 meet the needs of the British people?  22**2014**   |
|  | “Britain became more democratic between 1851 and 1928 due to |
|  | industrialisation and urbanisation.” How accurate is this view? |
|  | How significant was the militant Suffragette campaign in helping |
|  | women achieve the vote? |
|  | How important were fears over national security as a reason why the |
|  | Liberal government introduced social welfare reforms, 1906-1914? |
|  |  |
|  |  |

|  |
| --- |
|  |
| **The Growth of Nationalism in Germany (Germany 1815–1939)****2011**How important were cultural factors in the growth of national feeling in Germany between 1815 and 1850?To what extent was resentment towards Prussia among the German states the main obstacle to German unification by 1850?How important were economic factors in the rise to power of the Nazi Party between 1919 and 1933?**2012**How strong was nationalism in Germany by 1850?To what extent were the weaknesses of the Weimar Republic the major reason for the rise of the Nazi Party between 1919 and 1933?“Through their economic policies the Nazis gave the people what they wanted.” How valid is this as a reason for the Nazis maintaining power between 1933 and 1939?**2013****Germany 1815–1939**“By 1850 **political nationalism** had made little progress in Germany.” How valid is this view?How important was **the attitude of foreign states** in the achievement of German unification by 1871?“**Propaganda** was crucial to the maintenance of power by the Nazis.” How accurate is this view?**2014**How important was the **Zollverein** in the growth of German nationalism between 1815 and 1850?“The **German princes** were the most important obstacle to German unification before 1850.” How valid is this view?To what extent was **Prussian military strength** the main reason for German unification being achieved by 1871?**2015**To what extent had **nationalism** grown in Germany by 1850?To what extent were **religious differences** the main obstacle to German unification by 1850?How important was **resentment towards the Treaty of Versailles** in the rise of the Nazis to power by 1933?**2016**How important were **cultural factors** as a reason for the growth of nationalism in Germany, 1815-50?To what extent was **Austrian strength** the main obstacle to German unification, 1815-1850?To what extent were **weaknesses of the Weimar Republic** the main reason why the Nazis achieved power in 1933?**Essay types-**Growth of national feeling in Germany.Obstacles to German Unification.Reasons for German Unification.The rise of the Nazi Party.The Nazis in power. |

**Essay layout guide**

*Use this guide to tell you what is needed for each section in your essay.*

**REMEMBER:** always plan your essay before you start



**Introduction** Give the context if the time you are discussing **e.g.**

what are the key events, etc?

Explain what the question you will be answering is and

give a suggestion of your line of argument (conclusion)

Outline the factors you will discuss in your essay

(ideally six)



**Main section** Discuss up to six topics which address the question

being asked

Within each topic, outline the relevant facts you know

that relate to the question

Also include a section of analysis in each part too. This

means explain how your evidence fits in with the

question **i.e.** is this factor the main cause, or are there

reasons it is not important?

***\*\*\**** *One way to do this is to split each topic into two*

*paragraphs; one giving relevant facts, one giving*

*analysis/evaluation.* ***\*\*\****

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**Conclusion** Summarise your main findings

Give in an overall answer to the question

Give evidence/reason(s) for your answer

**Planning your essay**

Planning your essay it will save you from realising halfway through writing that you have something. When planning there are four key issues you should consider:

* **What is the exact question?**

Check the question? What is it asking you to do? Are there any relevant dates included? Does it have an *isolated factor*?

* **What will your context be?**

What do you know about the time that the essay covers? Are there any useful facts which would help you introduce the essay?

* **What factors will you discuss?**

What do you know about the essay’s topic? Can you think of different factors that may have affected it (not just the isolated factor, if there is one)? You should aim to discuss six separate factors.

* **What will your conclusion be?**

What is your conclusion going to be? That one is most important? That all factors have a role but the main one is xxx?

**Plan layout**

It is up to you but you could create a spider diagram to help you plan your essay, similar to the one below:



**How to write: Introduction**

Your **Introduction** is worth up to **2 marks**.



**The introduction must cover the following:**

**Context**

Background about what is happening at the same time as the essay’s topic

**Factors**

Outline the specific issues/factors which you will discuss as part of your essay.

**Line of argument**

Explain what the question you are discussing is, including a **line of argument** (your conclusion).

 **Example introduction **

**How successful were the Labour welfare reforms at meeting the needs of the British people between 1945-1951?**

In 1945 Clement Attlee, the leader of the Labour Party, won a landslide and unexpected victory against the Conservatives. He immediately set out to try and deal with needs of the British people who had been ravaged by world war. The Labour Party looked to the Beveridge Report as a blueprint for change. **(Context/Background to issue)** However, a huge debate still exists about the extent to which Labour achieved their goals and meet the British people’s needs. **(Question identified)** The report highlighted five key social problems that had to be tackled to meet the needs of the people: Want, Disease, Ignorance, Squalor and Idleness. **(Factors identified)** It can be argued that the Labour welfare reforms were mostly successful/mostly unsuccessful in meeting the needs of British people 1945-1951. **(Line of argument)**

**How to write: Knowledge**

Your **Knowledge** is worth up to **6 marks**.



Each piece of relevant knowledge is worth **one mark**.

Ensure it is **relevant** to the question. Random facts which do not help answer the question will not gain you any marks. Make sure you use DATES!

 **Example Knowledge **

One of Labour’s biggest success in meeting the needs of the British people was the National Health Service (NHS). The NHS was to be free, comprehensive and universal. **(One mark for a Knowledge supporting a** **factor)** It allowed everyone in the country to have to access to medicalattention, regardless of income. Many diseases that had been rampant before the NHS died off and the medical needs of the people were met. However the NHS was a victim of its own success as Labour was not prepared for the numbers of people using it. This meant that not only

did they have to charge for some areas such as dental and eye care **(One** **mark for a Knowledge supporting a factor)**, they used funds fromdifferent government areas as the costs were too high compared to what was originally thought. This meant less money going towards meeting the needs of people in other areas of government policy. Also the decision to charge for some health services undermined the effectiveness of the NHS, limiting access for some.

**How to write: Analysis**

Your **Analysis** is worth up to **6 marks**.



Each piece of relevant analysis is worth **one mark**.

This could cover:

* Establishing contradictions or inconsistencies within factors
* Establishing contradictions or inconsistencies between factors
* Establishing links between factors
* Exploring different views, including **Historiography**

 **Example Analysis **

One of Labour’s biggest successes in meeting the needs of the British people was the National Health Service (NHS). The NHS was to be free, comprehensive and universal. Available from 1948, it allowed everyone in the country to have to access to medical attention, regardless of income, such as maternity facilities, spectacles and dental treatment. Many diseases that had been rampant before the NHS died off and the medical needs of the people were met. On the one hand this reform was successful in meeting the needs of British people because it greatly improved the health of millions of people in Britain**. (One mark for analysis within a factor)**. However, on the other hand the NHS was a victim of its own success and was limited in meeting the needs of the British people, as Labour was not prepared for the numbers of people using it. In addition, due to government spending of 358 million per year the government in 1941 was forced to introduce prescription charges for dentistry and eye care and therefore not fully meeting the needs of all British people. **(Analysis + from within a factor)**. Therefore the Labour reform introduced to combat disease was mostly successful/mostly unsuccessful in meeting the needs of British people 1945-1951.

**How to write: Evaluation**

Your **Evaluation** is worth up to **4 marks**.



Each piece of relevant evaluation is worth **one mark**. Or 2 for complex.

This could cover:

* The extent to which the factor is supported by evidence
* The relative importance of factors
* Counter arguments including alternative interpretations
* Overall impact of factors when taken together
* Importance of factors in relation to the context

 **Example Evaluation **

In evaluation, despite the overwhelming criticism directed towards the Labour government between 1945-1951 in terms of the soaring costs of providing a comprehensive national health service, it can be argued that it was a worthy sacrifice for the revolutionary range of services that it offered to millions of people. This view is supported by historians Sked and Cook in their words that the NHS was “almost a revolutionary social innovation since it improved the quality of life of most of the British people.” When compared against government action intended to combat squalor it is clear that the NHS was more successful in meeting the needs of British people. An opinion echoed by the words of historian Timmins who said “Traditionally, housing has been branded the welfare state failure of Bevan and the 1945 Labour Government.” Therefore it can be argued that the NHS was more successful than the reforms introduced to deal with squalor in meeting the needs of the British people.

**(Two marks for complex evaluation)**

**Extra Evaluation Help**

**How would this look if it was a simple evaluation?**

In evaluation, despite the overwhelming criticism directed towards the Labour government between 1945-1951 in terms of the soaring costs of providing a comprehensive national health service, it can be argued that it was a worthy sacrifice for the revolutionary range of services that it offered to millions of people. When compared against government action intended to combat squalor it is clear that the NHS was more successful in meeting the needs of British people as many were still left without houses. A view supported by the historian Timmins. Therefore it can be argued that the NHS was more successful than the reforms introduced to deal with squalor in meeting the needs of the British people.

(**1 mark for simple evaluation**)

**How to write: Conclusion**

Your **Conclusion** is worth up to **2 marks**.



It must cover the following:

* **Factors**

Summarise all your main factors, including the extent that each is relevant

* **Answer**

Reach an overall conclusion about the topic

* **Evidence**

Provide reasons and evidence to support your conclusion

 **Example Conclusion **

In conclusion, it is clear that whilst the 1945-51 Labour government did make some improvements to people’s lives, they did not fully meet their needs. On the one hand Labour introduced many changes that profoundly improved the lives of people in Britain, not least the introduction of health care through the NHS, significantly reducing unemployment and extending education opportunities. On the other hand, many weaknesses existed, including failing to meet house building targets and sickness benefit not being universally available. **(Balance Summary of** **factors / Evidence).** Overall, taking into account the short time they had in power and the damage caused by World War Two the Labour reforms achieved a huge amount and laid the foundations for the modern Welfare State. Therefore they met the needs of the British people to some extent but not fully. **(Overall judgement)**

**Example essay**

This example answer deals with the following question:



 **How successful were the Labour welfare reforms at meeting the**

 **needs of the British people between 1945-1951?**

In 1945 Clement Attlee, the leader of the Labour Party, won a landslide and unexpected victory against the Conservatives. He immediately set out to try and deal with needs of the British people who had been ravaged by world war. The Labour Party looked to the Beveridge Report as a blueprint for change. **(Context/Background to issue)** However, a huge debate still exists about the extent to which Labour achieved their goals and meet the British people’s needs. **(Question identified)** The report highlighted five key social problems that had to be tackled to meet the needs of the people: Want, Disease, Ignorance, Squalor and Idleness. **(Factors identified)** It can be argued that the Labour welfare reforms were mostly successful/mostly unsuccessful in meeting the needs of British people 1945-1951. **(Line of argument)**

Want was one of the first social evils to be tackled. The National Insurance Act of 1946 was introduced to allow those too sick to work or those unemployed to maintain a basic standard of living.**(1 mark of Knowledge used to support a factor)** In theory this sorted a great deal of social problems however the only way to get the benefits when off sick was to pay 156 weekly contributions, which is three years’ worth. If the person was too sick and couldn’t contribute this money then they received nothing. **(1 mark for Analysis of aspects within a factor)** This meant that although the Labour government met the needs of many workers, there was still a large portion of people that did not receive this help and therefore Labour failed to meet the people’s needs. **(1 mark for Evaluating an individual factor)**

One of Labour’s biggest successes in meeting the needs of the British people was the National Health Service (NHS). The NHS was to be free, comprehensive and universal. Available from 1948, it allowed everyone in the country to have to access to medical attention, regardless of income, such as maternity facilities, spectacles and dental treatment. Many diseases that had been rampant before the NHS died off and the medical needs of the people were met. On the one hand this reform was successful in meeting the needs of British people because it greatly improved the health of millions of people in Britain**. (One mark for analysis within a factor)**. However, on the other hand the NHS was a victim of its own success and was limited in meeting the needs of the British people, as Labour was not prepared for the numbers of people using it. In addition, due to government spending of 358 million per year the government in 1941 was forced to introduce prescription charges for dentistry and eye care and therefore not fully meeting the needs of all British people. **(Analysis + from within a factor)**. Therefore the Labour reform introduced to combat disease was mostly successful/mostly unsuccessful in meeting the needs of British people 1945-1951. In evaluation, despite the overwhelming criticism directed towards the Labour government between 1945-1951 in terms of the soaring costs of providing a comprehensive national health service, it can be argued that it was a worthy sacrifice for the revolutionary range of services that it offered to millions of people. When compared against government action intended to combat squalor it is clear that the NHS was more successful in meeting the needs of British people as many were still left without houses. A view supported by the historian Timmins. Therefore it can be argued that the NHS was more successful than the reforms introduced to deal with squalor in meeting the needs of the British people.

(**1 mark for simple evaluation**)

Education was seen as a good way to close the gap between lower and upper classes and so meet the needs of the people. The Education Act meant children had to stay in school until age 15. **(1 mark for Knowledge used to support a factor)** This meant they got a better education and were more likely to get better jobs. Labour also implemented the 11+ exam which sat at the age of 11 to decide what type of school the pupil would go to. The high scorers went to grammar schools and the other to secondary modern schools **(1 mark for** **Knowledge used to support a factor)** This was meant to allow lower class children to achievegreater potential, however the system was still biased towards the upper class (who were most likely to pass the 11+) and therefore did not meet the needs of all the people. **(1 mark** **for Evaluating an individual factor and linked back to the question)**

During the war millions of houses had been destroyed and a third of all remaining home were damaged as well. **(1 mark for Knowledge used to support a factor)** This meant Labour would have to focus on building more homes to meet the needs of the people. As there was already a housing shortage problem even before the war Labour had a huge task and aimed to build 200,000 houses per year. **(1 mark for Knowledge used to support a factor)** However after the war Britain lacked resources and manpower **(1 mark for Analysis of aspects within a factor)** to build the homes and so, even with the mass production of prefabricated houses, the housing needs of many people were not met. **(1 mark for evaluating an individual factor)**

Unemployment rates during this time were down massively compared to a decade before. The Beveridge Report had stated that unemployment would never fall below 3% yet Labour smashed this and reached 2.5%. **(1 mark for Knowledge used to support a factor)** Many say that Labour met the needs of the people as they helped reduce the unemployment rate, which allowed people to work and be financially better off. However it can be argued that it was not Labour policies but simply the consequence of recovering from a war that caused unemployment to drop. **(1 mark for Analysis of different interpretations of a factor)** So during the time of the Labour government the employment needs of people were certainly met, but it is debatable if this was due to Labour or not. **(1 mark for evaluating an Individual** **factor)**

In conclusion, it is clear that whilst the 1945-51 Labour government did make some improvements to people’s lives, they did not fully meet their needs. On the one hand Labour introduced many changes that profoundly improved the lives of people in Britain, not least the introduction of health care through the NHS, significantly reducing unemployment and extending education opportunities. On the other hand, many weaknesses existed, including failing to meet house building targets and sickness benefit not being universally available. **(Balance Summary of** **factors / Evidence).** Overall, taking into account the short time they had in power and the damage caused by World War Two the Labour reforms achieved a huge amount and laid the foundations for the modern Welfare State. Therefore they met the needs of the British people to some extent but not fully. **(Overall judgement)**