IB European History

Mrs. Barnes

Command Terms

IB uses a series of command terms when asking historical questions. You must be familiar with the demands of each command term so that you can answer the question as fully and as appropriately as possible. Each command term will have its own directives, its own nuances, and its own requirements. Your job is to know how to approach each command term which means you must consider varying formats, structures, and purposes.

**Analyze** This is intended to be a powerful invitation for the candidate to offer a well-argued and detailed examination of a particular event or development. Break down the topic in order to bring out the essential elements or structure. Identify parts and relationships in order to interpret information and reach conclusions. A clearly written analysis will indicate the relevant inter-relationship between key variables, any relevant assumptions involved, and will also include a critical view of the significance of the account as presented. If this term is augmented by “…the extent to which,” then the candidate should be clear that a personal judgment is also sought.

*Analyze the factors that led to the end of the Cold War.*

**Compare** This term invites candidates to describe two situations or outcomes and to present the similarities and differences. Thus, a mere description does not meet the requirements of this key word. Both situations or outcomes must be compared and contrasted throughout.

*Compare and contrast the foreign policy goals of Hitler and Mussolini.*

**Discuss** This prompt invites candidates to express their own opinions and to make any observations that are appropriate to the main wording of the question. Candidates should offer a balanced review that includes a range of arguments, factors, or hypotheses. If, however, the question is presented in the form of a quotation, it should be assumed that the passage has been chosen with the specific purpose of stimulation a discussion upon each of its parts. The question is asking for the candidates opinions, these should be presented clearly and supported with as much evidence and sound argument as possible. (Similar format and demands for: “Comment upon…” and “Consider…”)

*Discuss the view that the United Nations General Assembly has become a forum for propaganda rather than constructive debate.*

**Evaluate** This word means that candidates should make an appraisal of the situation or claim. To do this, it is necessary to weigh the nature of the evidence available, what appear to be the convincing elements of the debate, any implications and limitations, and also the less convincing elements in someone’s viewpoint. You must make judgements about the ideas, works, solutions or methods in relation to a selected criteria.

*“This is not a peace. It is an armistice for twenty years.” Evaluate Marshall Foch’s assessment of the Treaty of Versailles.*

**Examine** This term means to “enquire into.” It is used to encourage candidates to reflect, to take a critical look at something, and to present their own analysis of the particular issue or topic raised in the question. Candidates should consider an argument or concept in a way that uncovers assumptions and interrelationships of the issue.

*Examine the impact of the Great War on two countries.*

**To what extent** The wording implies that the relevant topic under consideration is one where there is a debate of some kind. Thus, the candidate is expected to give a judgment having weighed the strength of opposing views. The candidate’s line of argument should, of course, be supported with as much evidence as can be provided. (Similar format and demands for: “How far…”)

*To what extent can nationalism be considered the cause of the Great War?*

Notes and Comments: