**Cambridge IGCSE History Paper 2**

Paper 2 is a two-hour paper worth 33% of your total mark. It is a source-based paper testing your ability to use your knowledge and skill to interrogate and compare a range of sources. It is essentially a source-based investigation into one historical issue drawn from the core content. In June 2015 it will be about why international peace had collapsed by 1939 (i.e. causes of WW2).

**Structure**

* There is no choice of questions. You have to answer them all. The questions will be designed to test how well you can use historical sources but you will also need to use your historical knowledge as well.
* There will be up to eight sources, some pictures and some written, some from the time and some written by historians
* There are no trick sources designed to catch you out, but there will be some sources which agree with each other and some which disagree and some which do a bit of both
* The questions take you step-by-step through the sources and are carefully designed to allow you to show that you can think like a historian. This means more than extracting basic information from a source. It means looking at sources to see what they reveal about:
* Why the source was produced
* The audience for the source and the methods used in the source to convince its audience
* What it reveals about the people who produced it e.g. attitudes, values, concerns, anger (sources will often involve a person or organisation doing one or more of the following: denying, criticising, mocking, praising, accusing, threatening, warning, being afraid, being unhappy, campaigning, being outraged etc.)
* It can be helpful to use your contextual knowledge, comment on the tone of the source and point out its purpose, but only if doing these things are supporting your answer to the question being asked

**Question types**

There is no set structure to the types of questions and order of the questions apart from that the last question will ask you to draw a conclusion to a hypothesis using all the sources. There is also no set way of answering any type of question. However, the following types of questions are typical and there are some points worth bearing in mind (comments in quotation marks are taken from the report on the June 2014 exam):

**Type 1: Analysing the message of a source**

This type of question uses a source where the author or artist is trying to make a particular point. The source could be part of a speech, or a cartoon or a poster. If asked about the message of a cartoon consider:

* For or against? What is the cartoonist for or against? Cartoonists do not draw cartoons simply to tell the public something is happening. Usually cartoons criticise or disapprove of something or mock/ridicule people. Bear in mind cartoonists often criticise the official stance of their own country (although this is more likely if the country is a democracy – i.e. a British cartoon might well be critical of British politicians, but a German cartoon of the 1930s is unlikely to be critical of Hitler)
* How do you know? What details in the cartoon tell you what the cartoonist’s view is? Try to explain sub-messages (i.e. individual parts of the representation) and the overall message
* Why now? Why is the cartoon being drawn at this time? This will require reference to your knowledge of the events/people being represented

**Type 2: Similarity/difference**

These questions are designed to get you to think on two levels:

* Similarities and/or differences in the content of sources
* Similarities and/or differences at a more subtle level e.g. the attitudes shown in each source. For example, two sources might agree about events or details but differ in purpose or attitudes.
* Take care to use the key words **different/differ** and **similar** in your answer

‘The usual, but not invariable, format for the first question is to ask for a comparison of two sources. Candidates need to be aware that there will always be both similarities and differences between the two sources, so answers dealing only with surface comparisons on one side can gain only modest marks. Additionally, the highest level answers will generally do something more than simple comparison of source detail, perhaps detecting similarities or differences in the arguments or opinions of the sources taken as a whole.’

**Type 3: How useful**

All sources are both useful in some ways and have limitations. Biased/unreliable sources are useful in certain ways. Consider what the source referred to is useful for. All sources are useful in telling you something about the attitudes or concerns of the person or organisation that created them. Give examples of useful content. Also consider the information given about the **provenance** and **nature** of the source to explain ways in which its use will be limited.

**Type 4: Purpose**

To tackle this type of question you need to work out the message of the source then think about what the author of the source would want to achieve by getting that message across. Usually this would involve:

* Changing people’s attitudes
* Changing people’s behaviour (e.g. getting them to join a movement or contribute funds to a particular cause)

**Type 5: Surprise**

The aim of these questions is for you to show you understand the period being studied and how historians use sources. For example, are the events described in the source surprising (untypical) in the context of the time; is it surprising that the creator of the source was saying what they were saying in this place at this time. However, if you have full knowledge and understanding nothing should ultimately surprise you. Therefore, a good approach is to explain why at first a source might seem surprising but to then explain why, however untypical, it hasn’t come as a complete shock (again, consider the provenance of the source and your knowledge of events from the time to explain this).

If you are asked to refer to another source in explaining whether or not a source surprises you, make sure you do so, but do not feel limited to referring only to the other named sourced.

‘In questions that ask whether or not you are surprised by a source, it is essential to make it clear whether or not you are surprised, and by what. Only then can an explanation of why you are surprised have a proper focus. Many answers would benefit from greater clarity in these respects.’

**Type 6: Reliability**

Explain in what way you think the sources are reliable or unreliable about particular people, issues or events. I.e. if you say the source is reliable or unreliable, make sure you explain what it is reliable or unreliable about. E.g.:

* If you know or can work out something about the author, explain why you think he/she is reliable or unreliable about particular people, issues or events
* If there is any emotive language or a biased tone, explain why you think this shows the author has a particular point of view or purpose which makes the source reliable or unreliable about particular people, issues or events
* Is the source reliable or unreliable because it fits with or contradicts your own knowledge?
* Do other sources in the paper support or contradict the source? (the exam board have specifically said it is acceptable to evaluate sources with reference to other sources on the paper even if they are not mentioned in the question)

‘When asked whether or not you trust a source, it is reasonable to assume that there might be some reason not to, though, of course, there may also be aspects of it that are trustworthy. Some answers simply accepted what the source said, often on the basis that it was true because it agreed with the candidates knowledge of the events. Alternatively, the source was rejected on the basis that it was biased, written too long after the events, or by someone who was not even [there]. Answers based only on asserting (lack of) reliability meet only surface requirements; what is required is an explanation of how and why the source may be seen as (un)reliable. In other words the answer needs to evaluate the source.

**Type 7: Conclusion**

This usually starts with a statement and then asks you to explain whether the statement is true or not. You need to:

* Address both sides of the argument – the yes/no or agree/disagree sides. There will be enough relevant information in the sources to make a number of points on each side of the argument
* When you make use of a source in your answer refer to it by letter and explain how the content of the source supports or challenges the statement
* You can write one paragraph about evidence for the statement then one about evidence against, however, the most recent examiners’ report said ‘The best approach is to go through the sources in turn. Grouping the sources is a bad idea as candidates often draw conclusions about the group which are not true of all the sources in the group.’
* Before drawing your conclusion, evaluate the reliability of at least two sources to assess the relative weight of the points on each side of the argument (e.g. one piece of analysis from an objective historian might be far more convincing than three pieces of propaganda from the time of the issue being discussed)

‘The question is about the sources and the evidence they give in relation to the given hypothesis. It is not about the hypothesis, so if an answer doesn’t make any mention of the sources it will not get far. Secondly, the question asks ‘how far’, which is a clear signal that the source will contain evidence both for and against the hypothesis. Answers on one side only will therefore be limited in the credit they receive. Finally, the source content must be used to show how it either supports or questions the hypothesis. What does *using* a source mean? Ideally it will mean the identification of an aspect of the source (not necessarily a quote, a precis will do just as well) that is relevant to the argument.