

NSS Assessing Student Learning for the History Curriculum: Workshop on how to set assessment tasks in progression for the S4-S6 History curriculum (New) Part I

Issues related to DBQs setting

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Issues related to DBQs setting

- I. Steps of Question Setting**
- II. Objectives of the question paper?**
- III. Question tasks and their level of thinking**
- IV. Marking Scheme – how detailed/prescriptive?**
- V. Questions to ask upon finalizing a DBQ paper**
- VI. Purpose of the assessment: formative or summative?**

I. Steps of Question Setting

- **Select a theme/topic/key point in the curriculum.**
- **Collect resources via various channels (e.g. Internet, newspaper, reference books, etc.).**
- **Adapt the resources into sources for use in questions.**
- **Phrase questions with reference to the Sources.**
- **Check against “Questions to ask when preparing a question paper”.**

II. Objectives of the question paper?

Assessment Objectives of DSE History:

(A) Acquire knowledge & understanding of:

- 1. basic historical concepts, such as cause and effect, change and continuity, and similarities and differences;**
- 2. diverse standpoints and perspectives inherent in different ways of representing and interpreting the past;**
- 3. the beliefs, experiences and behaviours of their own nation as well as of other nations, and the ways in which they have shaped the development of the contemporary world;**

II. Objectives of the question paper?

Assessment Objectives of DSE History:

(A) Acquire knowledge & understanding of:

4. the inter-relations of major events and movements that have occurred in the local community, the nation, Asia and the world in the 20th century; and
5. the major historical developments and trends that have shaped the contemporary world.

II. Objectives of the question paper?

Assessment Objectives of DSE History:

(B) master the skills of:

- 1. distinguishing fact from opinion; detecting biased viewpoints, ambiguous assumptions and unsubstantiated arguments; and building up proper historical perspectives;**
- 2. comparing and interpreting historical data; arriving at reasoned conclusions based on available evidence; and recognising the fact that history is subject to reassessment based on the interpretation of new evidence;**
- 3. ascertaining and explaining the extent to which historical documents and archives reflect contemporary attitudes, values and passions;**

II. Objectives of the question paper?

Assessment Objectives of DSE History:

(B) master the skills of:

- 4. presenting** logical and coherent arguments through the proper selection and organisation of historical data;
- 5. searching for, selecting, analysing and synthesising information** through various means, including the Internet, and considering various ways of arriving at conclusions and making appraisals; and
- 6. applying historical knowledge and skills** in everyday life.

(DSE History C & A Guide, Section 5.3, pp.53-34)

II. Objectives of the question paper?

Ask yourself:

Which assessment objective(s) of DSE History do I want to achieve in the DBQ paper I am going to set?

i.e. What knowledge, understanding, and skills do I want to assess whether the students have acquired/mastered?

III. Question tasks and their level of thinking

5 Common Tasks in History papers:

- 1. Identifying**
- 2. Explaining**
- 3. Comparing**
- 4. Arguing**
- 5. Evaluating**

III. Question tasks and their level of thinking

Level of Thinking:

Low —————→ **High**

- 1. identifying**
- 2. explaining**
- 3. comparing**
- 4. arguing**
- 5. evaluating**

III. Question tasks and their level of thinking

1. **Identifying**: key word(s) in question setting:

1.1 Describe (描述)

1.2 Identify/State (指出)

1.3 In what ways /How (如何)

1.4 List (列舉)

1.5 Suggest (提出)

1.6 Trace (追溯)

III. Question tasks and their level of thinking

1. **Identifying**: example questions:

A cartoon about the
Cuban Missile Crisis

What is the cartoonist's attitude towards Soviet – US relationship?

What message did the cartoonist intend to convey?

III. Question tasks and their level of thinking

2. **Explaining**: key word(s) in question setting:

2.1 **Account for/Explain** (解釋)

2.2 **Analyse** (分析)

2.3 **Discuss** (討論)

2.4 **Examine** (探討)

2.5 **Why** (為何)

III. Question tasks and their level of thinking

2. **Explaining:** example questions:



How does the picture above reflect a pro-government view of the Bloody Sunday incident?

Explain your answer by citing *two* clues from Source C.

(“HKCEE 2004 Hist 1 Q.2”)

III. Question tasks and their level of thinking

3. **Comparing**: key word(s) in question setting:

3.1 Identify/What are the similarities and differences between (指出相同及相異之處)

3.2 Compare/Contrast/Compare and Contrast (比較)

III. Question tasks and their level of thinking

3. **Comparing:** example questions:

Source A: The following map shows Italy in 1815.



Source B: The following map shows Italy in 1861.



Describe *one similarity* and *one difference* in relation to the political conditions of the Italian peninsula as reflected in Sources A and B.

(“HKCEE 2004 Hist 1 Q.1”)

III. Question tasks and their level of thinking

4. **Arguing**: key word(s) in question setting:

4.1 **Comment on** (評論)

4.2 **Do you agree/think** (你是否同意/認為)

4.3 **Justify** (提出理據支持)

III. Question tasks and their level of thinking

4. **Arguing:** example questions:



Do you agree that the Western powers were ‘hatching a new Nazi chick’ as stated in the cartoon? Explain your answer with relevant historical facts from the period 1945-50.

(“HKCEE 2004 Hist 1 Q.4”)

III. Question tasks and their level of thinking

5. **Evaluating**: key word(s) in question setting:

5.1 Assess (評估)

5.2 Evaluate (評價)

5.3 How far/ To what extent do you
(你在多大程度上/在什麼程度上)

III. Question tasks and their level of thinking

5. **Evaluating:** example questions (HKCEE 2006 Hist Q.1):`

The text below is an abstract from a historian's work in which the achievements of the Nationalist Government in the 1920s and 1930s were discussed.

On balance, at the end of its first decade the Nationalist government appeared stronger than it really was. On the surface, it looked as though it were forging a new order out of chaos — having pacified or reached working arrangements with the new warlords and the dissident politicians, and formed a United Front with the various parties and groups against Japanese aggression....

Yet beneath the veneer of progress lay the serious fundamental problems of social and economic injustices and the chronic ill of deficit spending. Of the three goals it set out to achieve in 1928—nationalistic revolution, democratic reconstruction, and social reform — the government by 1937 had made considerable progress towards the first, modest advance towards the second, but failed miserably in the third....

According to Source A, what were the goals set out in 1928 by the Nationalist Government of Nanjing? (1 mark)

To what extent were such goals achieved by 1937? Explain your answer with reference to Source A. (2 marks)

III. Question tasks and their level of thinking

What tasks to set for certain year-level?

In principle: as year-level (S4, S5, S6) goes up, tasks go from lower to higher level of thinking.

Identifying → **Explaining** → **Comparing** → **Arguing** → **Evaluating**

But real situation varies according to a number of factors:
student ability, time constraints on teaching, etc.

IV. Marking Scheme – how detailed/prescriptive?

Level Marking: When an assessment item tests a certain higher-order skill, students who can only manage to reach a certain level under that will be awarded corresponding marks.



Do you agree that the Western powers were ‘hatching a new Nazi chick’ as stated in the cartoon? Explain your answer with relevant historical facts from the period 1945-50.

L1 Candidates can take an anti-West position and hold the view that Western aids could help the revival of German Nazism. *[max. 3]*

L2 Disagreeing, with reference to relevant historical facts and pointing out that the Western powers did not support Nazism *[max. 6]*

e.g. - Germany did not become a Nazi state despite receiving economic aids from the Western powers.

(“HKCEE 2004 Hist 1 Q.4”)

V. Questions to ask upon finalizing a DBQ paper

- *Aims and objectives:* Does the paper reflect the stated examination aims and objectives?
- *Coverage:* Do the questions cover the syllabus adequately? Are the questions within the limits of the syllabus?
- *Standard:* Is the paper of the right standard, in the sense that the paper as a whole provides a fair test for the average student? Is there room for stretching the more able students?

V. Questions to ask upon finalizing a DBQ paper

- *Basic knowledge/skills versus higher-order skills:*
Is there an appropriate balance between questions testing basic knowledge/skills and those testing higher-order skills?
- *Wording:* Do the questions contain any ambiguities? Are the questions easily understandable, precise and definite, so that even a weak student can understand what they are about, while a brilliant candidate will not read difficulties into them?

V. Questions to ask upon finalizing a DBQ paper

- ***Marking:*** Is the marking scheme clear, concise, easy to follow, and sufficiently flexible to allow a reasonable degree of discretion for markers?
- ***Language versions:*** Where the paper is bilingual, are the two language versions identical in meaning?

VI. purpose of the assessment: formative or summative?

Formative assessment: assessment for learning

Summative assessment: assessment of learning

In the school setting: S4, S5, S6, mostly formative assessment, including Mock exam.

In a formative assessment,

- **the assessment objectives addressed in the question paper would be those knowledge, understanding and skills that have been taught across the span of time that the assessment covers (e.g. S4 Term 1),**
- **students would be informed of their performance not merely their grades/marks but also the strengths and weaknesses of their answers in tackling the questions, and**
- **students would be given suggestions on how to enhance the knowledge, understanding and skills that they have demonstrated to be relatively weak in.**

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