How to understand political cartoons
Cartoons use certain techniques to put across their message.

- They are usually not realistic portrayals but rather exaggerate certain features of the people drawn – this is known as a caricature.
- They include certain symbols to represent or highlight the issues under consideration.
- Sometimes they include words or a caption that draw the viewer’s attention to certain issues.
- They are not usually neutral and do not show all the points of view on the topic but intentionally put across a particular interpretation or attitude.
- They assume you have some knowledge of the event being drawn; from your knowledge you should be able to work out what the cartoonist’s attitude to the topic is.

Always check who made the cartoon and when, as this will help you to work out the artist’s point of view.
What are the strengths and limitations of primary sources? Why are primary sources useful?

- Primary sources come from the actual time that is being studied.
- They add a richness of understanding as we get information from objects, documents, official records, music, photographs, diaries, oral histories and so on.
- They give us access to information about ordinary people's lives or attitudes.
- They can give a more personal version of the past.
- They give us specific details about experiences and events of the time.
- Archaeological and oral evidence gives us the history of early societies that did not keep written records.

What are the limitations of primary sources?

- They can be changed deliberately, or can be broken or damaged.
- Most primary evidence does not exist anymore because it has been lost or destroyed. Therefore we get an inaccurate record of what life was like.
- Stories in oral history may be very one-sided, or large parts of them may be forgotten over time and therefore inaccurate.
- Primary evidence reflects only an immediate response from the time. They cannot give an overview or objective view.
**SKILLS SUPPORT**

How to understand the strengths and weaknesses of Internet research compared with using books

**Strengths of using the Internet**
- The Internet is an excellent place to find information and includes a wide range of different topics.
- It includes the latest information and includes topics which may not be covered in books.
- The Internet is easily accessible to people who have access to computers at home, at school, or in public libraries.
- It is quick and easy to use.

**Weaknesses of using the Internet**
- Some of the information is not reliable, as anyone can put information on the Internet; they do not have to be authorities on the subject and usually their work is not checked by anyone else.
- It can take a long time to find what you need, as there is too much choice.
- It is often difficult to tell who has written the information online and what biases they have.
- You need to develop a sense of which sites will be reliable. For example, the ones ending in 'edu' are based at universities, so should be more accurate.
- Source N comes from Wikipedia. Although this is a useful site to start your research, you need to be aware that it is an open site which can be changed by anyone who reads it. You therefore have to study other sites to know whether the information on Wikipedia is reliable.

**Strengths of published books and articles**

Books and articles are:
- written by experts
- checked for accuracy by an official reader and then revised
- carefully compiled and proofread by editors.
- Much of the relevant or important information is sorted for you already and is logically structured.

**Weaknesses of published books**
- Sometimes there are not many books on certain topics.
- You have to buy your own books, which are expensive, or have access to good public libraries which may not be close to your home.
- They are not as up-to-date as the Internet (as it takes a few years to revise and re-publish a book).
How to know whether a source is biased or neutral

Bias can be found in most sources whether they are written or visual, primary or secondary. The table below summarises the key points to look out for when analysing whether a source is biased.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>A source is biased when</th>
<th>A source is neutral when</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The words used contain emotion (They are emotive.) For example: ‘The brave freedom fighters’ or ‘the desperate peasants.’</td>
<td>The words are neutral; they do not show emotion. For example: ‘The Americans sent troops to Vietnam.’</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The facts selected give information from one side of the argument only. Other facts or arguments are left out.</td>
<td>The facts selected give information from different sides of the argument. The account is factually balanced.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The person who made the source wants to put across a particular point of view.</td>
<td>The person who made the source wants to put across an objective account. That is, the source includes a range of perspectives.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The person who made the source wants to make sure that the reader sides with the perspective he or she is presenting.</td>
<td>The person who made the source sets out the various arguments and wants the reader to make up his or her own mind.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The person who made the source has reason to be one sided. That is, he or she is subjectively involved.</td>
<td>The person who made the source is an objective commentator.</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
2 Compare the different approaches taken to education in Tanzania and the Congo. (10)

**SKILLS SUPPORT**

How to construct longer pieces of writing using a number of sources: This ‘TIE’ method is one way of doing this:

- Read the question and identify its different parts.
- Read the sources and identify the main topics (T) or sections that are relevant to the question.
- Write down the issues (I) that are relevant to each topic.
- Find evidence (E) from each source that backs each issue you have identified. Go through the whole source line-by-line taking out each relevant idea – there may be one, two or more.
- So each paragraph will link to the main topic (T) and include one or more relevant issue/s (I) and a lot of evidence (E). (See the example below.)
- As you write your answer check that you follow this TIE structure. (The I and E sections are the most important).
SKILLS SUPPORT
How to analyse the value and limitations of secondary sources

What is a secondary source?
A secondary source is any account of an historical event which is created after the event occurred. They are usually written sources and give descriptions, interpretations, or analyses of what happened in the past.

What value are secondary sources as sources of evidence?
Secondary sources can give thorough and interesting content and analyses, as they draw on large amounts of evidence. They can explain broad trends, give summaries, make comparisons, and give overviews. They can be objective and give balanced accounts. They have the benefit of hindsight. The account may be more objective as the writer is not involved in the events being analysed. The writer has had the benefit of consulting a range of primary sources on the event.

What are the limitations of secondary as sources of evidence?
Secondary sources can be one-sided. They can reflect the point of view of the writer. They seldom show the emotional impact of the events on people’s lives.
**SKILLS SUPPORT**

How to approach essay writing

Read the question carefully
- Identify the key words, and see how many parts there are to the question. If the verbs say 'outline' or 'describe', your main task is to give a factual account of what happened. If it uses 'assess', 'analyse' or 'discuss', you have to make an argument throughout your essay.
- Sometimes questions ask you to explain more than one thing. Make sure you answer all the parts of the question.

Plan your essay
- Brainstorm (write down without judging) all the ideas you have on the topic.
- Look at all your ideas and see which ones link together; they will go into one category or group. Arrange the ideas into the various groups. (These categories will form the different paragraphs of your essay.)
- Sort through the material. Decide what is relevant to the question you have been given. This is a very important step. You must select the information that is relevant to the question asked and not just write everything you know about the topic in general.
- Decide in what order the information should progress. There must be logical connections from one paragraph to the next.
- Now you have your categories and the order of the information that the essay will follow. Add more factual detail where you think there are gaps.

The introduction
- Your introduction must relate directly to the topic, and show the overall argument you will develop through the essay.
- It is important to write a strong, powerful, clear introduction, particularly in examination essays. A marker can see very clearly from your introduction whether you understand what is required or not. So it is important to think carefully about what you will say before you start writing. It should be about 5 to 7 lines.
its caption in your answer) (b)
b) the Selma to Montgomery marches. (6)

**SKILLS SUPPORT**

How to assess the usefulness of photographs as historical evidence

Photographs are a wonderful way into the past, but they need to be looked at as carefully as any other source to see whether they are useful or reliable.

The strengths of photographs as evidence

- They show the actual event or period.
- They show us information about cultural norms, fashions, building styles, technological developments and social conventions.
- They are an accessible medium for all people.
- They are used with other photographs and sources they can help us to develop an understanding of the period.
The limitations of photographs as evidence

- They only show one moment in time.
- They may not be typical of the whole place or time.
- The photographer may focus on one aspect and leave out something that would change our view of what happened.
- They are not neutral; they will reflect the photographer's interests or bias.
- A photograph can be inaccurate because it has been altered.

Therefore, be careful of making generalisations about the whole period based on one photograph.
SKILLS SUPPORT

How to assess the value and limitations of oral testimony as evidence

The value of oral or eyewitness accounts from the time
- They give direct evidence of the opinions and attitudes of the people involved
- They show the immediate responses and put across the emotions of the people
- They are important to fill out certain parts of our knowledge that would otherwise be absent, for example:
  - in a country where many people are not literate and so leave no written record
  - when the state has control over what is published because of censorship regulations.

The limitations of oral or eyewitness accounts from the time
- They are not objective – they will be biased depending on the person’s relation to the content
- They tend not to give broad overviews or analyses
- They may not be representative of the time, so we must be careful not to make generalisations about people’s attitudes based on too few accounts.
What are the value and limitations of statistics as historical evidence?

- Statistics are useful because they show trends, they are unemotional and they are objective as they give summaries of measurable data.
- Statistics can be misleading if they are not based on a wide enough range of evidence, if they are approximate and if they are too selective (for example specially chosen to show a particular trend) or if they are manipulated by a government to reflect the kinds of trends that will help to justify its policies.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Exam questions require you to:</th>
<th>What you need to do to answer the question:</th>
<th>Example of this type of question:</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Answer a straight content question</td>
<td>Show your knowledge and understanding (that is what you have learned).</td>
<td>What developments during the 1960s strengthened China's international status?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Find evidence in the source to support your answer</td>
<td>Select details from the source. (Or the question may require you to quote from the source to support your answer.)</td>
<td>President Julius Nyerere had three main goals after independence. What does Source B tell you these goals were?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compare the content of different sources</td>
<td>Explain the issues raised or areas of content given in two or three sources — also look for similarities and differences or contradictions.</td>
<td>Does Source A corroborate what is said in Source B? Explain your answer with reference to both sources.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Identify and analyse the argument or interpretation</td>
<td>State the message and then pick out and explain the parts of the source which back this up.</td>
<td>Identify the perspective on the amnesty process given in this source. Explain your view.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Compare the interpretation given in different sources</td>
<td>Explain the analytical emphasis or perspective given and show how you know this.</td>
<td>Which interpretation does Source A support and is this point of view supported by Source B? Or: Compare how Sources X and Y differ in their assessment of the success of the TRC.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assess the bias of the interpretation</td>
<td>Look for emotive language, or exaggeration, or repetition to stress a point, or over-simplification and one-sidedness.</td>
<td>Is the source neutral or subjective? Explain your answer. Or: How does the language used show the bias of the author?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Evaluate the reliability of a source</td>
<td>Check its factual accuracy (based on your own knowledge); then look at who wrote it, when and why; and comment on its bias.</td>
<td>How does the writer's position in relation to the events influence his or her interpretation? Or: Can you trust this person's account as accurate?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assess the usefulness of a source as evidence</td>
<td>Identify the categories of information it gives; and what it shows about the attitudes, feelings and values of people at the time.</td>
<td>Does the bias of this source undermine its value as evidence? Or: In what ways is oral testimony a useful kind of evidence?</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Assess the value and limitations of a source</td>
<td>Look at origin and purpose; range of content; one-sidedness.</td>
<td>What are the limitations of this source? Historians wanting to find out about the success of the TRC?</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
How to identify different types of essay questions

There are three main types of essay questions that you could get in the examination:

- **Narrative** – This requires a detailed explanation of the events in chronological order. (See practice essay 1 as an example.)

- **Discursive** – This requires analysis of events; you need to develop an argument throughout. (See practice essay 2 as an example.)

- **Argumentative** – This requires weighing up the significance of events and issues. You need to develop a relevant analysis and an independent line of argument throughout. (See practice essay 3 as an example.)
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Tick one of the columns on the right for each point</strong></th>
<th><strong>Yes</strong></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Introduction</strong> - it should be about 3–4 sentences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Does it address all the parts of the question and show the overall argument you will make?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Is it succinct and focused on what is required or does it include irrelevant background information?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Body of the essay</strong> - it should be structured in paragraphs and be about 800–900 words long</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Does it identify and cover all the major issues?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• In each paragraph is there sufficient accurate and relevant information to support the argument?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Does it develop clearly and logically from one idea to the next?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Does each paragraph relate directly to the question asked?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Conclusion</strong> - it should be about 3–4 sentences</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Does it synthesise (sum up) the main argument that you have developed throughout the essay and give it a convincing ending?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>General</strong></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Is your expression formal and accurate throughout?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Is your argument well structured, convincing, relevant and logical?</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
4 Read the Skills Support and explain to what extent Sources C and D are useful in learning about patterns in global economics. (6)

5 Explain how the collapse of the Soviet Union and the end of the Cold War had both positive and negative effects on Africa. (6)

**SKILLS SUPPORT**

How to assess the value of statistical evidence

**Strengths of statistical evidence**
- It gives an overview of trends or comparisons in a succinct way.
- It is objective and based on measurable evidence.
- When in a graphic form it gives a useful visual picture of the trends.

**Limitations of statistical evidence**
- It has to be based on a broad spread of data otherwise it can be misleading or inaccurate.
- In many places data is not available.
- The evidence gathered may be from too narrow or small a range to give a realistic view.
- The evidence may be selective (that is especially selected to show a specific trend).
SKILLS SUPPORT

How to ask different types of questions

Closed questions: Most of the questions you get asked in tests and examinations are closed questions. That means they have one or a few correct answers. Closed questions can be factual questions like: ‘How did the Bretton Woods conference lay the foundations for the modern world economy?’ or analytical questions like: ‘How balanced is this historian’s interpretation?’

Open questions: These are questions that take you beyond the obvious. Open questions seldom have definite answers but rather open up a range of possible ideas. They require you to use your mind, heart and imagination. Open questions can be:

- Psychological questions: These deal with issues about how people feel and think and look at why people do what they do (For example: ‘How can big corporations exploit workers just so that they can make big profits?’ or ‘What kind of mindset does a person need to be an initiator and facilitator of positive change?’ or ‘What makes people so short-sighted that they knowingly destroy the environment for short-term gain?’)

- Philosophical questions: These are the ‘bigger’ questions that deal with moral issues and the meaning behind these events for humankind. (For example: ‘Do people learn to be cruel or are they born that way?’ or ‘Do people need external rules to make them behave in a civilized way?’ or ‘Is the way we treat animals and the environment a measure of our humanity?’)
Historians will study us and find it difficult to understand how we acted and thought in the way we did.

**SKILLS SUPPORT**

The importance of developing the skill of empathy

- Empathy is the skill of being able to step outside your own frame of reference and norms to try to understand the perspective and actions of people who come from a different background or time period and who hold different beliefs to your own.
- Empathy is different from sympathy where you feel sorry for someone in their situation. It is rather an attempt to step into the shoes of another person and to experience things from their perspective.
- Empathy helps you to see events from various points of view and enables you to reach a better understanding of the dynamics and complexities of the issues.
- Empathy enables you to understand, rather than holding onto a single perspective as 'truth' or blaming and judging others.

Has history taught us more about the 'human condition'?